

God centred

What New Year resolutions have you set for 2024? Do you want to be smarter, kinder, or more popular? These are good goals, but an even better goal would be to put God in the centre of your life. You can read the Bible regularly, and make it a habit to pray to God in all things.

The Bible says,



.... seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Matthew 6:33



So remember, put God first and everything will fall in place!

Mrs Edelweiss Ling

Hear Me When I Call



Have Mercy, O Lord!

Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Genesis 18:23b

Abraham was told by the LORD that He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah because the wickedness in those cities were great. Upon hearing this, Abraham pleaded with the Lord to spare the cities for the sake of the righteous people living there. The Lord agreed not to destroy the cities if there were 50 righteous people. Abraham bargained with the Lord and reduced that number to 10.

However, only Lot, Abraham's nephew, was counted righteous. God mercifully spared Lot as well as his wife and two daughters before destroying the cities by fire and brimstone.

Have you followed Abraham's example and prayed for others? You can pray for your daddy, mummy, brothers, sisters, relatives, friends and even strangers! You can pray for God to save them, if they are not Christians, or to supply their needs, or protect them.

Come to HIM and pray:

Dear heavenly Father, have mercy upon my good friend, Andy. Keep him from bad influence and save him! In Jesus name I pray, amen.

by Mr Nehemiah Leong

Children & Youth
@ VBS
@Family Camp



GemSTORY

Sister Sook Kwin's testimony
We moved to US in 2019 for Champ's work. When I was pregnant with Jethro, I was worried that no one would look after my three older boys when I was in the hospital. The Lord answered my prayers and timed everything perfectly. There was someone to look after my children at night and another in the daytime. I had no worries because they were in good hands!

Even though I hoped for a short labour, my labour was the longest for Jethro - 13 hours! Miraculously there was no pain even without any pain relief. I was also blessed with the right nurse. I thought an older nurse



My ways are not your ways

with children herself would be good, but God in His infinite wisdom, gave me one who was very young and unmarried. She was encouraging and very kind. When Jethro came out by himself without the doctor's assistance, she was the one who caught him!

This experience reminds me again how my Lord and Saviour cares for me like a Father who knows and gives the best to His child. God heard my prayers and answered them according to His will and not my own!

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Isaiah 55:8:



And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Matthew 21:22

Feelings

Gratitude is a positive emotion that makes us feel a sense of thankfulness, relief and happiness. There is, however, another side to this emotion and it is the feeling of indebtedness.

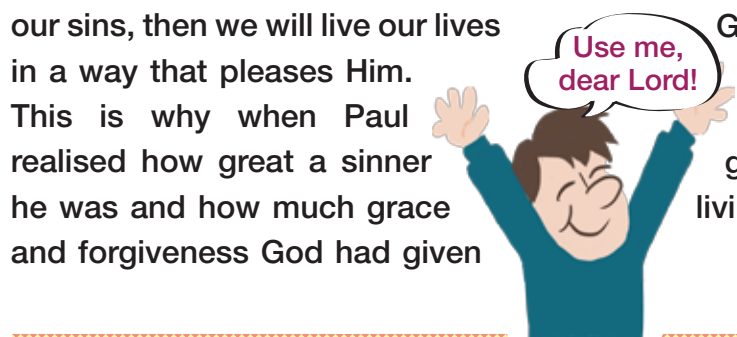
When we feel indebted to someone, we feel we owe that person something and eventually have to pay back the

debt. It is important that we do not become indebted to the wrong person. If we realise that we are debtors to God because He forgave us of our sins, then we will live our lives in a way that pleases Him.

This is why when Paul realised how great a sinner he was and how much grace and forgiveness God had given

him, he lived for Christ. In contrast, when a person gets indebted to an evil person, the consequence is disastrous. According to my grandfather, “Zhu zai” (meaning piglets) were Chinese folks who were forced to work as labourers to pay off bad debts that they had racked up through gambling. A short time of fun resulted in months or years of hard labour. That is exactly how the debt of sin works.

In order to be wise, we must avoid being indebted to the wrong person, and remember how much we are debtors to God. It is only right for us to repay His great love and grace by being a living sacrifice.



by Mrs Mary Hui

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:1

History Of The Church

Spotlight:

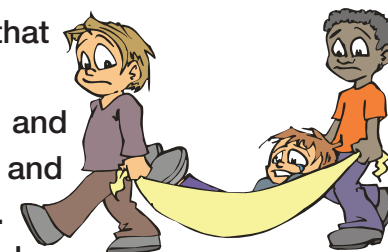
Some reasons why the gospel spread

The early witnesses, moved by a burning conviction that Jesus was the long-awaited Saviour, wanted to share the tidings of salvation with everyone. Christianity also met the needs of the hearers' hearts. What the Stoics taught (to emotionally detach from the world and face suffering with courage), the Holy Spirit produced in Christians naturally. The practical love that Christians showed moved many.

They cared for poor orphans and widows, visited prisoners and helped during natural disasters.

The church also provided burial services. In the second half of the second century in Rome and Carthage, the church bought burial grounds for their members because of the Christian compassion for the dead. This led to Christians becoming associated with catacombs. Lastly, the attitude of the martyrs – courage in the face of torment, courtesy toward enemies, and a joyful acceptance of suffering – made a deep impression on the pagan observers.

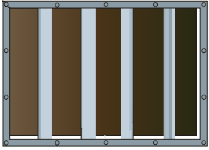
Are we moved to share the gospel with people? Can people see the change in us when we become Christians? How can we show practical Christian love to the needy we meet? May we be brave like these early Christians, who willingly suffered so that Christ's message can reach the world.



MISSION TO THE BARBARIANS

Here are some examples of early missionary efforts in the fourth century.

GREGORY Early 300s to Armenia



In early 300s, Gregory (the Illuminator) from Parthia, was tortured and imprisoned by the Armenian king because he refused to take part in pagan rites. 13 years later, when he cured the king of a terrible illness, the king converted to Christianity. The whole nation followed. The New Testament was translated into Armenian.

FRUMENTIUS Mid 300s to Ethiopia



In 316 A.D., Frumentius from Phoenicia, survived a massacre by Abyssinian locals. He then gained the Axum (now northern Ethiopia) king's trust. When the king died, Frumentius helped raise his son, who became Christian. In A.D. 328, Frumentius was consecrated the first bishop of Axum. Christianity quickly spread throughout the country. Frumentius initiated the translation of the Bible into Geez, the first vocalized Semitic language.

ULFILAS Late 300s to Goths



The Goths who brought about the downfall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 A.D., were Christians. This was mainly due to the efforts of the Greek Ulfilas. Despite hostility from the Visigoths, he taught the Christian faith he had learnt, and instilled in the Goths, a faith that led many to accept martyrdom. Fluent in Greek, Latin and Gothic, he invented the Gothic alphabet and translated the Bible into it.



PATRICK Early 400s to Ireland



Six years of slavery in Ireland did not deter the English Patrick from returning, after he gained his freedom, when, after he dreamt of Irish children begging for the gospel. Despite hostile chieftains and druids, he established over 300 churches. The monks of Ireland focused on preaching, studying and ministering to the poor. The thriving faith among the common people led to Ireland becoming the base for the evangelization of Britain and the Continent.

CLOTILDE Late 400s to the Franks



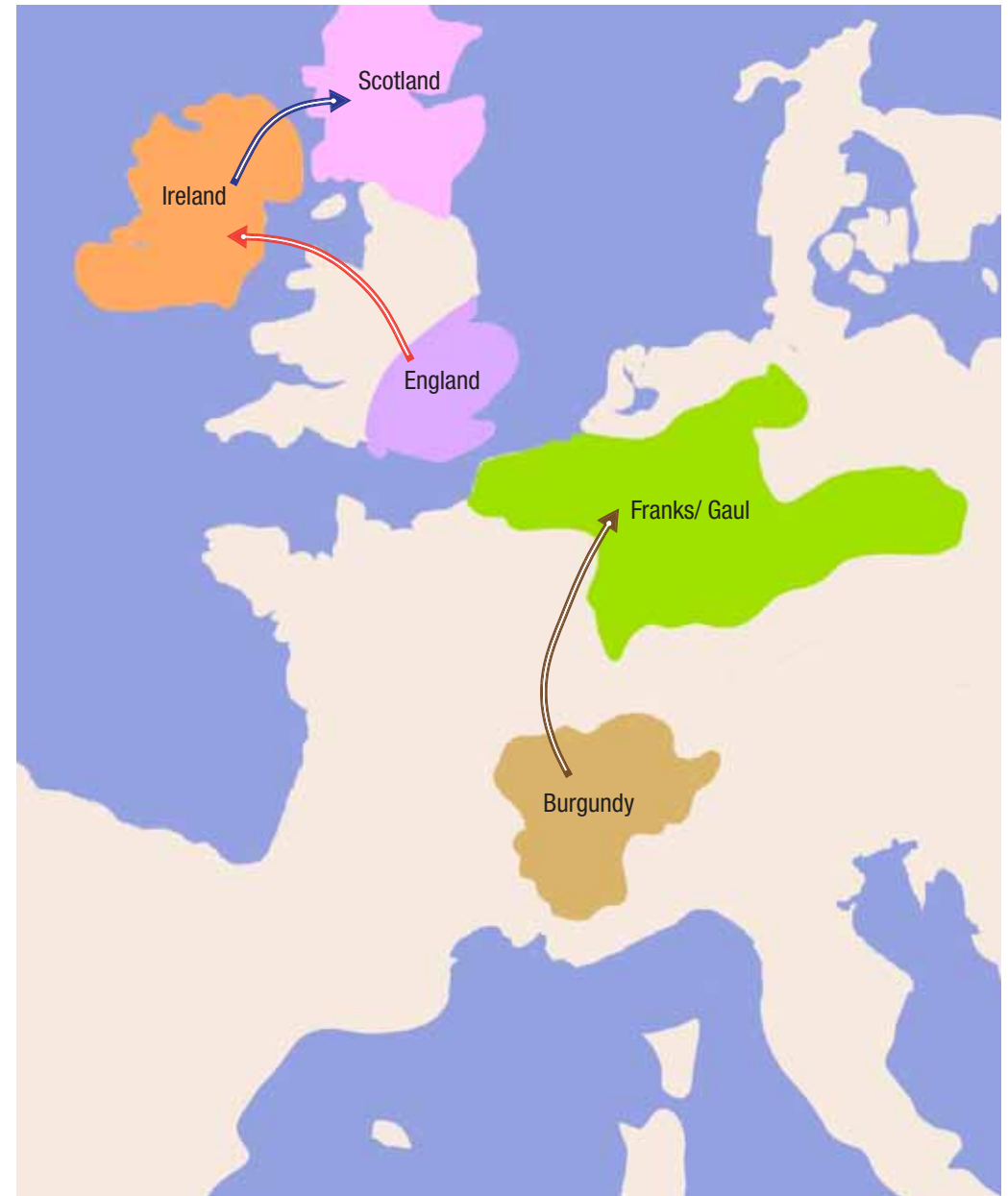
In 493 A.D., Clovis, king of the Franks, married Clotilde, a Christian princess from Burgundy. Clotilde's influence, combined with what Clovis believed was divine aid in battle, led to his conversion in 496. His people followed him. Gaul became a base for missionaries and the Frankish monarchy were firm supporters of the papacy during the early Middle Ages.

COLUMBA AD 563 to Scotland



Columba was forced to leave Ireland in 563 A.D., after causing a battle in which 3,000 men died. Landing in Iona, a Scottish island, he went on to found a monastery there. The monastery became known for its learning, piety and evangelism, even though it was repeatedly ravaged by Vikings.

These missionaries were so filled with God's love that they continued being testimonies for God despite the ill-treatment they faced.
What other lessons did you learn?



→ **PATRICK**

→ **CLOTILDE**

→ **COLUMBA**

Thomas Aquinas



believed that religious doctrines like the Trinity should be left a mystery and never studied. Others believed that anything illogical in the doctrine should be studied and fit into their standard of reason.

Aquinas refused to have mindless faith or lose his faith. He believed that the existence of God could be rationally proven in five ways:

1. All movement in the world needs a beginning -
God, the Unmoved Mover.
2. All cause and effect stems from a beginning –
God, the First Cause.
3. Every existing thing does not owe its existence to itself.
There must be a being who originates only from Himself –
God, the Necessary Being.
4. Things exist in different degrees. There must be a being
who sets a standard -
God, the Absolute Being.
5. The behavior of things in the world implies the existence of
God, the Grand Designer.

What we can learn from Aquinas is that when we face doubts in our Christian walk, we should wrestle with it till we arrive at the truth.


by Ms Michelle Tan



CHEMISTRY

However, drugs don't solve problems. They are poisons and should be used carefully and in appropriate

doses. Incorrect use of any drug will not only physically damage the body, but will distort the user's perception of what is



happening around him and muddying his thinking. Drugs make a person feel slow or stupid and cause him to fail in whatever he is doing. As he has more failures and life gets harder, he wants more drugs to help him deal with



the problem. This is addiction – when the person's body becomes so accustomed to having this drug that he or she can't function well without it.

No one expects or wants to get addicted. While an addict may promise to quit, quitting is very, very difficult.

As Christians, are we addicted to the things of this world and constantly seeking for temporal pleasures? The Bible states:

....my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:19

God can and will grant us everything we need so we need not chase after the things of the earth. Let us instead turn to God and trust Him to provide what is best for us.

by Ms Grace Chung

Choices

I was staying with my father, my wife and all my relatives at Haran. One day, the Lord called me to move away from my father's house to a land that he would show me. He promised to make of me a great nation and a blessing to all families of the earth. I believed His word and departed from Haran, bringing



my wife and nephew with all our possessions. I did not know where I was to go, but I just obeyed, trusting that the Lord would surely lead as he had promised. Did I make a wise decision? To find out more, check out Genesis 12:1-4 and Hebrew 11:8-10.



By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Hebrews 11:8



“Trust and obey For there’s no other way To be happy in Jesus But to trust and obey”

Have Mercy, O Lord!

Which of the following is an intercessory prayer?

- A Dear God, thank you for healing and saving my cousin brother.
- B Dear God, please heal and save my cousin brother.
- C Dear God, please forgive me of all my sins.
- D Dear God, please help me to forgive my cousin brother who did me wrong.



Arrange the boxes in order to find the answer.

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