

>> Insight

*For God did not
give us a spirit
of timidity...*

winter '07



*But a spirit of
power, of love
and of
self-discipline*

- 2 timothy 1:7



Fellow Traveller

Denise Ma

Ginny Owens

*You can't change who I am
Or the way that I think
I won't change how you live
Or the words that you speak
But neither of us is a
stranger
To joy or pain
No matter how we're
different
We're very much the same*

chorus:

*Fellow traveller, let me take
you
To a place where I've found
rest
Fellow seeker, let me show
you
Where I've found true
happiness
Fellow beggar, I have good
news
I know where there is bread
I'll show you where there's
bread*

*I don't know where you've
come from
Or where you've been
along your way
But I can tell you what I've
lived through
And how I made it here
today
Let me share with you the
story
Of a hope I've come to
know
A love that's always for me
And a peace that frees my
soul*

*So if you are hungry
Come to the table with me
And you won't go hungry
ever again*

My friends will tell you that I'm a big Ginny Owens fan, and then probably go on to tell you that I talk about her too much! She is one of my favourite Christian artists; not only does she sing and play the piano beautifully, but her self-written lyrics are honest, encouraging, and powerful. On top of it all, she does not have use of her physical eyesight, and the way it affects her ministry is all the more inspirational to me. I want to share this song with you because I find it gives me a fresh perspective on sharing the gospel.

When Ginny Owens describes this song, she explains the idea that "sharing the gospel is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread." When I listen to this song, I am reminded that I am no better than anyone else. Oftentimes, it can be easy to think of Christians as "better" than non-Christians. Of course we don't sin as much. Of course we don't get caught up in silly, immature things that take up our time. We only think and talk about "godly" topics.

...Not true! I can get tangled in this mindset sometimes, and it inflates my ego to dangerous proportions! If this is our attitude, we need to re-evaluate and be a little more honest with ourselves.

We are no better than those around us. We are sinners, just like everyone else. Our actions don't earn us God's love, and we need His grace. What does set us apart though, is our background and our personal experiences. We have this hope inside, and something so precious should not be kept to ourselves. We know what God has done in our lives, and how He's changed us. That is the "bread" we can offer to those who don't know Him.

Brothers and sisters, I hope you can join me in humbling ourselves enough to build strong relationships so we can share our experiences with those God has placed in our lives. Let them know who God is, where our hope and peace have come from, and how they can have it too.

For those who are seeking, I encourage you to keep asking questions. Let us come alongside to walk with you, and show you where there is bread.



Simple Christianity

Derek Ma

What does it mean to be a Christian? What does it mean to be a *good* Christian? So many of us have been Christians for ages and we STILL can't even come up with a decent answer to it.

Put bluntly, I don't believe that Christianity is what it's generally seen as by non-Christians and Christians alike. Many people see it as a religion where you don't have 'fun'. No drinking, no partying, no nothing because as 'Christians', those are our 'rules'. It annoys me to a great extent to see non-Christians, and even more-so Christians evaluate me or my brothers and sisters based on standards that I don't even think are right.

I label my beliefs as simple Christianity because to me... it's simple. I don't live thinking about everything I do and whether they abide by the standards put out by the 'Christian religion'... because I truly think they aren't. I believe that Christians aren't judged by God using the 200,000 commandments, but rather based upon **WHY** they do something. What does this mean first



off? This means that Christianity can no longer be seen as a 'religion' in which people can be judged from the outside because it turns into something personal. Why someone does something can only be known by that person themselves and God... this is the point at which Christianity is no longer religion, but relationship.

If you were to ask me to define and differentiate religion and relationship very quickly, I would label a religion as having rules, guidelines and standards. And although time and time again, our friends, Christian brothers and sisters and even Churches promote and impose these standards upon us, I say to you that Christianity is NOT about these things. To prove

that I'm not a rambling blasphemer, nowhere in the bible does God tell you that the way to live a Christian life is to "not club, not party, not drink", but rather to follow in the footsteps that He has made, to Love God and Love people. (*Matthew 22:37-39*)

So, why is my Christianity simple? Because I believe in only two standards: Love God and Love people. To me, it is not about what people do; whether they portray themselves as super-duper Christians or whether they look like the most immorally unstable person in existence, I have no right to judge, evaluate or rate, not unless I truly know the reason behind the actions they make, **WHY** they do what they do.

Love God and Love people. Do the reasons why you do what you do fall under these two standards?

Because I do not approve of looking down on someone because of what they do, in no way does that mean that I promote clubbing, drinking or partying. I just use these as examples because they are the hot topics as Christians today. But once again, not do I issue a challenge to you to think about where you rate your Christianity based upon the things you do... but I challenge you to start thinking about *why* you do the things that you do.

Simple Christianity. Love God, Love People.

Unwelcomed

Bily Xiao

Being on my co-op term in suburbs east of Toronto, I had decided to check out different churches and see the differences and commonalities we share in the body of Christ. This past weekend I returned for the second time to a certain local church. As with the first time, I felt almost entirely unwelcomed by my college peers there—only the Sunday school teacher (who’s a pastor actually) welcomed me. Neither upon my entrance nor during the “loiter” time after Sunday school did anyone approach me or greet me at all: not even the slightest head nod nor eye contact was made. I sat waiting a bit to see what would happen; I was even sitting right beside some people and looked in their direction, hoping they’d bring me into their talk. Nope.

I made eye contact with a girl couple seats away in that group, hoping she’d pick up on my feelings and include me in the group talk. Nope. I ended up just making something up and asking her when service started. She answered and that was that. Feeling awkward, I left to explore the church building itself and then went to sit on the balcony level waiting for service to start. I sat down in a pew section which seemed to be comprised mainly of families. I sat alone and no one greeted me at all. I felt weird being alone there and especially weird being in the unofficial “family section” so I walked over to the side section. There I noticed some peers and sat down with them.

I greeted them and they responded well, but we didn’t get to chat very much before worship started. After the service, the guy beside me asked what I thought about my church visit—naturally so, being the first time we had met. From there we got to talking and got along just fine in a free, normal conversation. I was actually rather excited to hear the sermon this time, perhaps the most excited I’ve been because of its pertinence to my recent thoughts of CCF and committee; of ministries and resources; of vision and implementation. He seemed rather interested which was cool. We talked a bit about our backgrounds, but soon realized I had to leave to catch my ride. I said my “byes” and he wished me well with a “God bless”. It was a good little talk.

All in all, however, I felt quite unwelcomed and awkward. If I wanted to around Sunday school time, given my outgoing personality and general confidence in meeting people, I could have approached them and really thrown myself into their midst in conversation. But I kind of held back because I was curious to see who would greet me. Unfortunately there was a clear lack of response and I was entirely ignored. The conversation at the end of service wouldn’t have happened had I not took the initiative to sit with people and start conversation.

The experience speaks to me of the importance of a welcoming church—a welcoming people. Not a people who receives those who are already willing to throw themselves in with much



fanfare... well, not only that... but a people who, themselves, go **out** to newcomers/strangers of the church and **out** into the world to bring them **in**.

This kind of thing isn’t anything new for you guys to hear, I’m sure, but I wanted to share my recent experience on this. The opposite would be the kind of welcoming atmosphere where, if we see someone new—milling about, feeling disconnected, feeling awkward—we immediately *latch* on and draw them into a beautiful community. That’s one of the big things I want to see in CCF.

This value of the welcoming atmosphere is especially important to me, and I am particularly sensitive and aware of efforts to do it or the lack of heart for it because I’ve been thrown into new settings myself. When I moved from Vancouver to Richmond, BC I started going to a church and school with not a single familiar face. At church that summer before school I quickly got integrated because of *both* my initiative *and* people who welcomed me lovingly. *Both* the church and the incoming individual have to be **proactive**.

Blessedly I was beginning to integrate myself into the church in Richmond before starting in my new school (where, again, I had

not a single familiar face). By then, however, it became more than willful initiative for me to meet and greet people so that I myself could feel more comfortable: it became both a burden and passion. A **burden** seeing that there were many other people who were new, marginalized, or “anti-social”, who ultimately longed for and needed relationship and support. A **passion** to connect with them and to help them connect with others because of God’s love *overflowing* in me.

The church I visited I’m sure has people of good intentions, people with strong faith, and people who work out the faith in action. I’m certainly not trying to bash the church. But their ‘welcoming’ is certainly one aspect that is in need of much work, and an aspect that is especially important to newcomers. The same goes for CCF.

So what’s your part?

To **CCFers**:

If you might join me in some personal reflection... Are you consumed in your own circle of friends? Do you even notice around you the people that are sitting by themselves awkwardly waiting for CCF to start? Or the people that stand to

the side pretending they’re doing something or looking for someone in the crowd trying to cover up their loneliness? Or the people who walk in circles and weave through the crowd waiting for someone to talk to them and connect with them—waiting for **YOU**?

Indeed, perhaps you needed to catch up with that friend you haven’t seen in a while because of all the busyness. It’s pretty awesome to catch up and reconnect. Perhaps you are busy helping clean up and wrap up whatever there is to be done. That’s necessary and that may be your role, your part, in serving the fellowship. Perhaps you’re already inclined to be introverted or it’s been a tiring week you’ve went through—hehe I hear ya, many are in the same boat. That’s normal and it’s the inarguable state you’re in.

Hopefully you’ll find it important to be **sensitive** to the needs of others: those who are not in your intimate circle of friends or another circle, those who are not plugged into the CCF community, the body of believers and seekers and friends. Hopefully you’ll find it important to **desire** to let God’s love fill you so much that it must be channelled—overflowing to reach others. You know the joys and beauty of our blessed community already. Hook a brotha up, yo!

If your inclinations are **extroverted**, God’s already blessed you with the inclination to go *external*. Go out of your own circle and bring people in! Find those who are distant (in all meanings of the word)!

If your inclinations are **introverted**, God’s blessed you with a “quiet” to which other “quiet” people can relate. Encourage your group of friends not to have their backs to everyone in an uninviting circle! As people wander by, include them in conversation!

To **non-CCFers**:

Non-CCFers... that is, those who do not feel themselves a part of CCF, regardless of the regularity of your attendance. You know who you are, naturally.

I hope that you will bear with us. Us CCFers. Us a microcosm Christians—the body of Christ.

I hope that you will understand that while Christ is perfect—we are not. And while there are some Christians who arrogantly think otherwise, really the truth is we are not. I hope you’ll find that overall we desire to improve and that ultimately we wish to love, even though we struggle with it.

I hope, then, that you will not be turned away from Christ because we, as people, have failings, but that you might be interested in joining us in getting to know the One who is *without* failings.

Why the Body of Christ = The Green Machine

Karl Hui

OK, I admit that I have no idea how to start this article about our call to green living as Christians, but my first thought is about how Christians have been agents of change through history. For example, it was a Christian, Reverend Francis Dane, who ended the Salem Witch hunts in 1693 and it was the Church who led the way in challenging Hitler's Final Solution and took a role in protecting the persecuted during the Second World War.

So even now, in the land of plenty, we do have the calling from the Lord to change our society through promoting environmental stewardship. While some may say that the environment is not a religious issue and shouldn't involve us Christians, there actually is a strong theological basis for good environmental stewardship. As the Honorable Michael Harcourt put it, "It's not for the temporary employees, the politicians (to do)..."

As Christ's body, we have the command to care for creation, and fortunately, God has also provided us the resources to lead the way in societal change. Let me elaborate on these things:

1) We have the command

There is a biblical basis to good environmental stewardship in several places in the Bible. For instance, in Psalm 24:1, it says:

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it

From this passage, it becomes clear that everything in the Earth belongs to God, and what we do with Creation does matter. However, it is also said that God has given the Earth to men (Psalm 115:6, 8:1-9). When all these verses are considered, it is easy to believe that there is a contradiction. The solution to this apparent paradox lies in the fact that the Lord has given the Earth to us *in trust*. It was given to us as a king entrusts ten minas to ten servants (Lk 19:11-27). Therefore, this story can lead us to the conclusion that God does expect us to be answerable to what we've done with the Earth, just as how the servants must answer to their king for their actions. Thus, to pollute, pillage, and desecrate what God has created through clear-cut logging, strip mining, and the number of different ways we exploit nature destructively is no different from disrespecting God Himself.

2) We Have the Resources

Currently, the Western world, which makes up 10% of the world's population, has 90% of the world's wealth and here at UW, God has brought together enough people to form a dozen healthy fellowships. For the

average Canadian student, he or she spends approximately \$3500 per year as of 2001-2002. Therefore, it is quite obvious that together, as a body, all of us have the potential to do amazing things together if we pool our human resources together along with our financial and material resources. For example, my church in Toronto has approximately 300 members, but is able to raise \$65,000 each year at our annual variety show. In Waterloo, there are a dozen fellowships, as mentioned, and even our simple actions can be influential if all of us decide to turn off a light when we leave a room, or when we choose to reduce the amount of waste we produce each week.

From another context, it is important to realize that today's environmental problems are multi-dimensional with something as simple as greenhouse gas emissions will eventually have an effect on global weather and oceanic patterns, which will in turn affect global ecosystems. Therefore, a multi-dimensional, long-term solution will be required. Currently, the global



church is the only institution that can address this problem as no organization can enact change as powerfully as the Church and the Church will certainly exist long enough to complete this task, unlike our politicians that will most likely be gone within a few years.

3) We Love Others Through Green Living

To put forth another reason for environmental stewardship, the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus found in Luke 16 can actually be applied to us in the Developed World and those living in Lesser Developed Countries. While we will likely never see 'Lazarus' in our lifetime, the lifestyle choices we make here in North America will affect all the Lazaruses in Africa, in Asia and all around the world.

For example, by choosing to walk instead of driving or by turning off a light when we leave a room, we send him clean air by putting less exhaust into the air. By refraining from using pesticides on our lawns, we send him clean water. By eating less meat, we discourage him from razing what land he has for livestock used for burgers. By recycling, we choose to let him keep what little he has instead of taking it from him. When we start thinking of people in the big picture in our lifestyle choices, we choose to love them although we will never meet them. Thus, we fulfill the second greatest commandment to "love thy neighbour as yourself" by being good stewards of creation (Mk 12:31).

So looking back, God has given us the Earth, but it is given to us to shepherd, not to exploit. God has made it clear that this blue planet is His, and not ours, and that we will answer to Him regarding how we treat it. We also show love to others based on how we choose to live each day as our actions will either ruin what lesser developed countries have left or preserve it. Looking forward, we as first-world citizens have the manpower and certainly the finances to convince others to care for God's world. What lies in the way is simply the lack of coordination between all of us and the day we begin to serve together is the day we begin to see God change our world His way.

Photography Submissions: Michael Chan
Design & Layout: Derek Ma

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Can God be created by another God?

Adams Wai-Kin Kong

Assumption: Universe was created by God.

Definition of universe: Universe is the spacetime continuum, where human beings exist together with all the matter and energy within it. Spacetime continuum is a four dimensional space constituted by time and three-dimensional space [1].

Big Bang Theory: According to big bang theory developed by Stephen Hawking, the universe had a beginning in 13.7billion years ago [2].

A Necessary Condition of Being Created: If we claim that object *A* is created by object *B*, it implies that there exists a time *t* that before *t*, object *B* existed but object *A* did not exist. Therefore, time is a necessary condition of being created.

Deduction: If the universe was created by God, He existed before the existence of the universe. Therefore, He exists in a space without time. Since the necessary condition of being created is not fulfilled, God cannot be created by another God.

Conclusion: Can God be created by another God? No.

References:

[1]<http://www.biocrawler.com/encyclopedia/Universe>

[2]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Bang

