

Testimony.

REFRESHED THROUGH SERVICE

A journey through Companions in Christ.



Mei Yoke is currently worshipping at the 8am service, and serves actively in the prayer ministry.

**Companions in Christ is a 28-week programme focusing on spiritual disciplines of prayer, reflecting and meditation of Scripture. This series offers you an opportunity to experience the transforming power of God's presence and guidance as you open yourself to journey with fellow pilgrims, as well as the Holy Spirit. For more information, you may write in to admin@amkmc.org.sg.*

It was through God's grace and leading that I bravely took on the challenge of facilitating CIC (Companions in Christ) in July 08. What ensued was eight months of close encounters with the Lord! Each week as I prepared for the lessons, the Lord brought me down memory lane once again (as I had gone through the CIC programme as a participant in 2007). This time round though, I discovered greater treasures and deeper insights in God's word as I prepared and facilitated each session.

At the end of this experience, I can truly say that the Lord was there each week empowering me in my weakness and uncertainties. I am awed by the faithfulness of God and by the flow of His Holy Spirit through each meeting. As the weeks passed by, companions warmed up to each other, their sharing and reflections encouraged me greatly. These "God-orchestrated" meetings enabled us to learn

precious lessons from each other as we shared our journeys. I have grown to recognise that God works in a very real and special way in each of our lives. Each companion became a teacher for one another, edifying and comforting one another.

Through this experience, I thank God also for gently teaching me obedience and trust in Him to work and bring His presence to the participants every session. I have indeed seen that He moves mightily when we submit to His leading. CIC has been a wonderful journey for me - certainly a high point in my spiritual life. It is like Jacob being given a new name *Israel* during a special encounter with God and naming the place "Peniel, because I saw God face to face and yet I lived" - to share this joy of experiencing His tangible presence, clear guidance and gracious empowerment.

Out of this journey over the few months, I have a song of thanksgiving to share:

*I am on an upward journey
With my CICs I go
A journey in faith
A journey in focus
On our Lord
Towards our eternal goal
A journey empowered
By His Spirit
A journey I need not take alone
My CICs are always there
Interconnected
As one body in Christ
Shining as light
In this dark world*

Mail Bag.

Have you enjoyed reading THE JOURNEY? If you have, encourage the team by telling us! Similarly, we also welcome your feedback.

Do drop us a note at admin@amkmc.org.sg
(Subject: THE JOURNEY - MAIL BAG).
Fax: 6456 3844 or send to:

THE JOURNEY TEAM
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Please indicate your full name and contact number in the correspondence.

Selected letters may be published in subsequent issues of THE JOURNEY.

Have a story to tell?

Tip us off at admin@amkmc.org.sg
(Subject: THE JOURNEY - CONTRIBUTION)

We welcome contributions to THE JOURNEY. Please let us know before writing your article or story.

Articles should be kept within 800 words. Submission MUST include the writer's profile, photo and all necessary accompanying pictures in high resolution format.

Special Thanks to:
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Upcoming events in November:

- 1. Church Wide Prayer Meeting**
Date: 18 Nov 2009 (Wednesday)
Time: 8.00pm - 9.30pm
Venue: AMKMC Sanctuary
- 2. Healing Service**
Date: 14 Nov 2009 (Saturday)
Time: 7.30pm - 9.30pm
Venue: AMKMC Sanctuary
- 3. Weekly Prayer Meetings**
Dates: 4, 11, 29 Nov 2009 (Wednesdays)
Time: 8.00pm - 9.30pm
Venue: AMKMC Amstutz Hall
- 4. Baptism & Membership Class Sessions 7-10**
Dates: 1, 8, 15, 22 Nov 2009 (Sundays)
Time: 2.00pm - 4.00pm
Venue: AMKMC Level 3, Chapel 1

Our Worship Services:

Traditional Worship @ AMKMC:
8.00am (Sanctuary)
5.00pm (Sanctuary)

Contemporary Worship @ AMKMC:
9.15am (Level 3, Chapel 1)

Contemporary Worship @ AMK Hub
10.30am (Cathay Cinema Hall 5)

No. 1, Ang Mo Kio St 21, Singapore 569383
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Ang Mo Kio  Methodist Church
The Methodist Church in Singapore.



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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ANG MO KIO METHODIST CHURCH

Close your eyes, and for just for one minute think about the subject of 'Worship'.

Now tell me what comes into your mind during that one minute? If I am not mistaken, most of us would have images of a worship leader on stage, with his 7-piece band, leading a powerful song amongst a congregation of thousands of people. There are many raised hands within the congregation; many of the believers are deep in the presence of God. In one of the corners, some of the believers are on their knees - contrite, broken, submitted.

This interesting phenomenon of associating Christian worship with worship bands, Christian music and songs, and postures of hands raised and knees bowed, is a result of a successful Christian music industry that has boomed over the past two decades. The anointing of talented worship leaders and song writers like Don Moen, Darlene Zschech, Chris Tomlin and Paul Baloche has indeed brought us to experience worship like never before. Thanks to these modern day Levites, we are able to leverage on the power of music, weaved with poetic lyrics, to help us move and ascribe praise to our Almighty. Indeed the worship of God with music is a rightful depiction of worship since the days of the Old Testament, but musical worship in itself is surely not biblical worship in its entirety.

Worship is beyond music

Observe your surroundings - church services, ministry time, cell time, etc. Very often, we will hear someone say, "Before we enter into the teaching (or main activity of the session) let's come into a time of praise and worship".

The manner we use to describe Christian singing and music may have created this perception that worship is synonymous with Christian music. Once the singing is over, the congregation ceases to participate in the act of worship. Like a student in a classroom dreaming about after-school

activities while the teacher is explaining a lesson, our minds start to plan for our after-Service activities: where to eat, who to meet, what to do. To the dismay of the preachers, many seated comfortably in the pews (or the comfortable cinema seats) start to doze off. Others attempt to keep awake by entertaining themselves on their mobile phones. Occasionally, you can even notice some who are busily chatting away or furiously typing on their Blackberrys.

On the posture of worship, we have much to learn from the adherents of Eastern religions. Just observe the kind of seriousness employed by these adherents in their conduct of the rituals and prayers. No chatting, no note passing, no Blackberrys. The entire focus is on the object of worship until the ritual is over.

The focus of our Christian Sunday services cannot be confined to just music. **The entire 2-hour Sunday Service is our *Worship* ritual and it should be upheld with all seriousness.** The Bible tells us of God's explicit command for His people to observe the Sabbath Day and keep it Holy (Exo 20:8; 31:12-18) [The word 'observe' is defined by dictionary.com as "to show regard for by some appropriate procedure, ceremony"]. As such, we are to maintain the posture of worship beyond the music segments and throughout the Service, actively receiving and responding to God, ascribing worth to our Almighty King.

Continued on following page...

worship
by calvin lim.



beyond

Worship is beyond Sundays

Whether knowingly or otherwise, the concept of worship for most modern Christians is restricted to Church, Ministry and Sundays. Once the communion is over and the Benediction given, it is life as usual again. We lead dichotomised lives. A double agent straddling between the sacred-secular divide. We live up to the lyrics of a song by Hillsong, "I say on Sunday how much I want revival, but then on Monday, I can't even find my Bible!"

This chasm between Sundays and the rest of the week is not God's idea. Biblically, worship cuts across time, space, location and vocation. **When God created Adam, he was instructed not just to keep the Sabbath, but to work (Gen 2:28; 2:7-8), and in that work, Adam was to worship and glorify God his creator.** Ben Patterson once wrote that "God's original intent was to make us workers so that we might be like Him and have the joy and fulfilment of doing with the world something like the things He Himself does". God made us workers in His image. Just like God himself, the chief Worker, who laboured at the creation of the earth, we are created for productive labour. No work is

Worship is beyond the Christian Community

We have been faithful Christians in the church, giving God our years of service and being regular in our attendance. We do not mind serving fellow Christians or participating in cell groups. We will lead songs, teach the Bible, usher, prepare refreshments, raise funds, volunteer for anything and everything the Pastor tells us to. **We will do anything...but just do not ask us to serve the poor down the street, care for the sick, or share the gospel with the guy in the next office workstation.**

Are these statements familiar in our lives? "I'm not ready and I know too little", says one. "eeee...the place is so dirty and unsafe!", says another "That's the Pastors' job...", says the third. **"But YOU are to love your neighbour as yourself...", says Jesus.**

This quote taken from Leviticus 19:18, was affirmed by Jesus as one of the two great commandments. In the story recorded by Luke, one lawyer was seen challenging

hungry, a drink to the thirsty, love to a stranger, clothes to the unclothed, care for the sick. And when we do these for our neighbours just as we would do for ourselves and fellow Christians, we would have done it as a worship unto our God (Matt 25:4).

Beyond Worship

The answer to the question "What is worship?" is both simple and complex. The journey of our worship cannot be adequately described with a string of words. Each individual has a unique and personal relationship with our Saviour that determines the approach, manner and experience of his worship.

Yet worship is also utterly simple. The gospels recorded this incident of Jesus being challenged by the Jewish leaders with the question, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" In a sense the Jewish leaders are asking the same question: 'What is the most important thing in our Worship?' To this Jesus answered,

"The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31, ESV)

The first of the great commandments, 'Love the Lord your God', was taken from Deuteronomy 6:5, part of the *Shema*, the *credo* of Jewish worship in the Old Testament. In our worship, God is and must be the first, the foremost, and above all else. We are to worship God with our entire being – all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength. Noticeably, Jesus' emphasis was on this single word – "ALL". This is the bottom line - our worship must be with our whole being or nothing at all - that is 24/7; in our churches and in our workplaces; serving Christians and loving non-Christians; on mountain tops and in the valleys; at all times, in all places, anywhere, and everywhere. To this question "What is worship?", the scribes themselves concurred in Mark 12:32-33,

"You are right, Teacher...to Love God with our ALL, and to love our neighbours is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Worship is beyond our 'burnt offerings and sacrifices'. It is not just what we do on Sundays, in Church, or in our cell groups. It is beyond all these, and it demands our soul, our lives, our all.

Mr Calvin Lim serves in the 10.30am service in the worship & music ministry. Both he and Natalie are active members in the Forerunners Families Cell Group.



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too mundane, no work is less spiritual, and no work is more or less important in His eyes. **All work is God's work, and we are to worship Him with both the process and the product of the work we do.** Whether we are serving God's people in church, meeting KPIs in the office, crafting policies in front of our computers, negotiating with clients and vendors over coffee, or preparing meals and raising kids as homemakers, all these are to be done *for the Lord* (Eph 6:7; Col 3:23) and will be our love offering unto our Maker. All these, done according to the principles spelt out in the Bible, will be fragrant *Worship* unto the Almighty. Our worship should thus go beyond music and warm fuzzy feelings, and beyond Sunday Services, beyond the walls of our churches and ministries. Our sanctuary is then in the world, in the conduct of our lives, and in the processes and products of our work.

Jesus on the definition of 'neighbour' (Luke 10:29). "Who is my neighbour?" the lawyer asks.

With the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), our Lord gave a reply that broke all pre-conceived barriers of race, language, and religion. Jesus had deliberately woven His story around two groups of people whom his hearers knew not as good neighbours, but long-standing enemies.

But to our Lord, worship is incomplete if we only show Christian character and service within Christian communities. We cannot profess to love God without loving our neighbours – Christians, non-Christians, and enemies alike. To all of them, we are obliged to love, to serve, and to show all the goodness of God. We are representatives of God before our families, our friends, our colleagues, our workers, and domestic helpers. We are not to expect any return; we should have no pre-conceived agendas, and often we know that they may not even appreciate what we do. Yet we are to do as commanded. We are to give food to the

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE JOURNEY

To review and renovate in order to serve you better, The Journey will be taking a hiatus from November to February. We thank all our readers for their love, prayer and support this year and we look forward to seeing you in 2010!

