

Book Review

-By Jessica Zhuo-

Title: "Church: Why Bother"

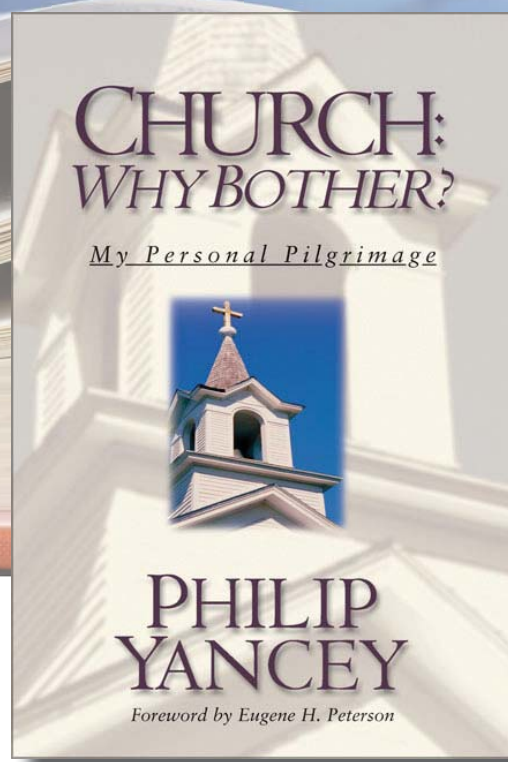
Author: Philip Yancey



Philip Yancey (born 1949) is an American Christian author. Fourteen million of his books have been sold worldwide, making him one of the best-selling evangelical Christian authors. Two of his books have won the ECPA's Christian Book of the Year Award: The Jesus I Never Knew in 1996 and What's So Amazing About Grace in 1998.

Publisher: Zondervan

ISBN 0-310-20200-0



This simple 100-page writing presents the reality of church with brutal honesty. Unlike most books that seek to present the advantages, benefits and beauty of being part of the church community, Yancey shares the journey of his struggle in seeing the imperfections of church and how, in all honesty, he has seen many secular organizations more "church-like" and more loving than the church of Jesus Christ. In this book, Yancey opens his heart to share his pilgrimage from disillusionment to understanding and appreciating what church can be like, and what church should be like; and why God is still bothered with the church.

In his opening chapters, Yancey shares his experiences growing up in a legalistic church environment which "told him what to believe, who to trust or distrust, and how to behave". He eventually realized that faith in Jesus Christ is far more than just an external religiosity. However, Yancey also shares how waking up to this realization caused him a season of not just casting off the shell of hypocrisy, but also the body of Christ. Yancey shares with his readers his journey of how he found balance between the two extremes and eventually grew to understand God's heart for the church and individuals

Readers can look forward to relating with much of what Yancey shares and gleaning many simple yet important truths about life and about the church. One of the most powerful statements Yancey makes in this book as he shares his pilgrimage is "Don't confuse God with life." And in the same way, readers can draw comfort and revelation from a parallel truth - Don't confuse God with church.

Yancey concludes that whenever he starts squirming in church services or gets disgusted and discouraged at what he sees in the church body, he has learnt an important truth through an analogy of an orchestra playing a musical piece composed by a great musician. He writes, "The orchestra will give some people in that audience their only encounter with the great Symphony. Far from perfection, it is nevertheless the only way they will hear (the) message. Although we may never achieve what the composer had in mind, there is no other way for those sounds to be heard on earth."

This read will definitely encourage the weary that are wrestling with the imperfections of church, as well as awaken others from their rosy picture of what they have not yet seen - that the church is made up of imperfect people that are capable of hurting others; and rescue them from the distress and confusion when they see others leaving church for various reasons. At the same time, this book will bring its readers to journey through their own pilgrimage of re-discovering what God had in mind when He instituted the "body of Christ".

Read The Journey Online @ <http://amkmc.org.sg/thejourney.html>

Upcoming in Oct...

1) **31st CHURCH ANNIVERSARY**
Date: 4 Oct 2009

2) **CHURCH WIDE CORPORATE PRAYER MEETING**
Date: 21 Oct 2009
Time: 8.00pm
Venue: AMKMC Sanctuary

Ang Mo Kio Methodist Sunday Church Services
Join us !

Traditional @ 8.00am (Main Sanctuary, Level 1)
@ 5.00pm (Main Sanctuary, Level 1)
Contemporary @ 9.15am (Chapel 1, Level 3)
@ 10.30am (AMKhub, Cinema Hall 5)

Publications Team

Mr Adrian Ng
Mr Alvin Chong
Ms Carol Yip
Ms Clara Lee
Mr Clarence Chew
Ms Cloud Tan
Ms Dawn Koh
Mr Derrick Koh
Ms Esther Tan
Mr James Teh Cher Hao
Mrs Jessica Zhuo
Ms Shoba Balakrishna
Mr Rakesh Singh

About Us

The Journey, official newsletter of Ang Mo Kio Methodist Church, was launched in December 2004. This monthly publication is dedicated to serving the needs of the people by the people. Published material does not necessarily reflect the view of Ang Mo Kio Methodist Church.

Serve with us

We are looking for people within the church who want to serve God with their talents. If you're a budding or professional writer, reporter, designer, photographer or layout artist, we're looking for you! You should also be:

- Passionate about Jesus and love AMKMC
- A regular participant of a cell group in AMKMC
- Willing to work in a team

Email us now at thejourney@amkmc.org.sg

Write to us!

Tell us what you love, or love less, about The Journey, and what you'd like to see more of! We also welcome your God-glorifying testimonies, so feel free to email us at thejourney@amkmc.org.sg. We'd love to hear from you!

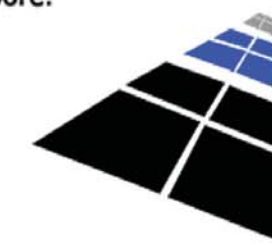
The Journey is published by:

Ang Mo Kio Methodist Church
1 Ang Mo Kio Street 21
Singapore 569383
Tel: (65) 6452 2791
Fax: (65) 6456 3844
E-mail: admin@amkmc.org.sg
Website: www.amkmc.org.sg

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THE JOURNEY

Refreshed

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THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ANG MO KIO METHODIST CHURCH



When Christians are in grave error, there's an urgency for correction. At times this urgency is emotionally fueled by frustration and anger. "Why on earth did you do that? Why couldn't you see that this was sinful!? Are you really a Christian!?" The natural man calls for judgment, to condemn, to tear the person down, to label somebody "Cannot Make It". But Christians are called to be different. I have heard many Christian brothers say that "We must love the person who errs. We must be different from the world."

My question to them is How are we to be different? How can we as Christians, bring correction to those who have erred and yet at the same time, exercise love? Paul teaches us a precious principle by his reaction

in 1 Cor 1:4-9:

1 Cor 1:4-9

I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Consider the context. The Corinthian church was rife with problems. It had to deal with sectarianism (divi-

sions in the church), lawsuits against

"How can we as Christians, bring correction to those who have erred and yet at the same time, exercise love?"

fellow believers which brought ill-testimony to the church, sexual immorality and disorderly worship. As a spiritual father to the young Corinthian church, I think it is plausible to think Paul must have felt some measure of grief over what was happening. (Which parent does not grieve when a child stumbles steep into sin?) Yet, even before address-

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ing their problems head-on (from verse 10 onwards, quite early for a Pauline letter), Paul's first reaction is far from judgemental.

He gives thanks.

Thanksgiving! I found this so particularly strange. I always think it easier to "cut to the chase" out of an urgency for correction. Yet, what I believe Paul is setting out here is a basis upon which to work from. We notice that Paul focuses on God first. Let's be more specific - Paul focuses on 3 things about God with regards to the Corinthian believers: (1) What a gracious God has done, (2) What a gracious God is doing, and (3) What a gracious God will do eventually.

(1) What a gracious God has done (v4,6)

"the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you..."

Every Christian has been redeemed, bought by the precious blood of Christ. This should tell us how precious this erring person is in the eyes of God. I am dealing with a person who has been redeemed just as much as I have been redeemed, who has been forgiven just as much as I have been forgiven. His error, his misgivings, and his sin does not



make him any less redeemed than anyone else; on the contrary, I think all of us are capable of performing various permutations of errors, misgivings and sins. Every Christian is also a work-in-progress (WIP) in the process of sanctification; we still sin

and make mistakes and err simply because we are still in a sinful, erring world.

(2) What a gracious God is doing (v5,6,7)

"...in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge...so that you are not lacking in any gift"

The KJV rendering of this verse goes, "ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge", which I think signifies that chronologically speaking, this enrichment is also a continual process and it is not only one-off. God equips His people as He sees fit in the timeline of His will. Some people are supernaturally gifted to minister immediately upon conversion; others are called gradually to fulfil their calling.

But this also applies to the erring person! An erring person is not disqualified from the work God has called him to do. In fact, Paul is so confident that God is doing a good work in the Corinthians and will continue to do so to keep them in His will that he says Jesus will "confirm [them] to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

(3) What a gracious God will do eventually (v7,8,9)

"...awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ"

Christians know the ultimate destiny of mankind and of this present age. We will forever be enraptured in the worship of a God who is so gloriously beautiful that we only get mere glimpses of Him while we are here. And worshipping together, amongst us in this host of worshippers, are the people whom we once disciplined, corrected and rebuked. We may not see the immediate purpose of why a person will fall into such grievous sin, but we know this - that our God is a faithful God who does not allow those whom He has called in His will to slip away,

and that He will eventually restore them, build them up, and serve Him all the more gloriously.

Conclusion

Or course errors must often be addressed, and one who errs has to be corrected. But before we take the chair of the disciplinarian and judge, let us also remember that we are all "Work In Progress" making our way to eternity. Let's give thanks to God for fellow brothers and sisters who are also in this same transformation before we jump in to rebuke and point them to their errors. For surely it is through truth shared in love that we show them the way to lead them back on the path of righteousness.



Justin is currently serving his National Service. He worships at the 9.15am contemporary service and serves actively in the cell group and the worship ministry.



CHURCH REDEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL REPORT



We praise and thank God for His gracious providence for our church as we embark on the journey to redeveloping the church building. Here are the latest figures:-

No	Title	Amount	Remarks
a.	Target Amount to be raised	\$7,000,000	
b.	Total No. of People Pledging :	570	
c.	Total Amount Pledged	\$1,859,689.93	
d.	Actual Amount Received from Pledges	\$1,814,945.45	
e.	Previous Donations Received	\$529,795.59	Fund rec'd from members/ friends over last 2 years.
f.	2008 Fundraising Events:-		
	1) Movie (Jun 08)	\$22,390.00	
	2) Golf Game (Aug 08)	\$165,600.00	Balance of \$34,400/- being(Event raised \$200,000/-) pledges to be received over 2009 & 2010.
	3) 30th Anni. Dinner (Oct 08)	\$18,292.30	From Sponsors & Table Sales
	4) Commemorative Book	\$34,040.00	
	5) Movie (Dec 08)	\$7,050.00	
	6) Sale of 2009 Calendars	\$35,610.00	
	7) Sale Of Food Items	\$1,630.00	
g.	2009 Fundraising Events:-		
	1) Sale Of Food Items	\$8,580.00	
	2) Fundraising Dinner 2009	\$245,706.66	
	3) Donations from Cells	\$1,060.00	
	TOTAL AMOUNT RAISED TO DATE (d, e, f & g) received	\$2,891,880.84	
h.	Events in progress :		
	1) Fundraising Funfair		
	Gross Sales & Donations	\$6,690.00	
	Expenses to-date	(\$1,430.35)	

And if you're wondering how else you can contribute, here are some ideas and upcoming events for your prayerful participation:

- Pledge towards the church redevelopment.
 - o Pledge envelopes can be obtained from our information counter after service each week. You may also contact the church office for more details.
- Music CD for sale (Nov 2009)
 - o Start saving for Christmas! Our AMKMC maiden album with our very own musicians and composition, as well as your old-time favorite hymns will be ready for purchase in November 2009. Spread the cheer and the message of God's love through music to your family, friends and colleagues this Christmas!
- One time donations
 - o You can also get a donation envelope from the ushers and drop it into the offertory bags or send in your cheque to the Church, making it payable to "Ang Mo Kio Methodist Church (TRAC)" and indicating at the back that it is for the Church Redevelopment Fund.



Shoba (standing, second from the right) with her cell group.

Growing together to serve the community -A Testimony by Shoba Balakrishna-

On 28 Feb, my cell group made our way to St.Theresa's Nursing Home located at Upper Thomson Road for our community project. Although we were not familiar with the location of the home, The Lord guided us right to their doorstep!

As this was my first visit to a nursing home, I was saddened to see many elderly who were sick and helpless, waiting around for their days to pass. We began our work of helping to clean the premises of the home. In particular, an incident touched my heart. As a few of us were cleaning the windows around the TV room, a wheelchair-bound elderly man was shouting out something continuously. My first impression was that he probably needed something or was just bored. To my surprise, I was told that he was worshipping God



in hokkien! I was very encouraged by this sight. For this elderly, the Lord will always be with him even though he may be staying alone in the home and his worship will be pleasing to God's ears forever! This incident will stay with me experience!

My cell group and I were very blessed and privileged to be able to serve at the nursing home and we are thankful for the warm welcome and appreciation offered by the staff of the nursing home.

Shoba is currently a student and is attending Praying Hands cell group.