

InterSections

An Australian journal for Christian encounter and encouragement

Editorial

Welcome to the November 2012 issue of *InterSections*.

Many of us face situations that challenge our spiritual endurance. We may experience a loss at home that keenly affects us. We may live in a hostile environment. We may suffer persecution. Or we may be part of a church which simply offers little spiritual nourishment. How does a Christian live valiantly despite adverse or discouraging circumstances?

This issue of *InterSections* focuses on developing spiritual resilience for Christians in active service. In our *Food for Thought* section, Debby Rowley reflects on how prayer offers a continual renewal before and a journey into the presence of God. Our *Feature* article by Ted Paull looks at persistence and its indispensable contribution to the shaping of Christian character and church life.

In our *Interview* we ask Lito Batoon, who migrated to Australia, about life in the Philippines, his journey of faith and his insights on evangelism. An *International Letter* from Dennis Cady, a former missionary in Asia, reveals a thriving church in Nias, Indonesia.

The Hawkesbury congregation in NSW is featured in our *ChurchScope* section. Roy Courtney traces the beginnings of this 10-year old congregation and its evangelism methods. Finally, our *News* section provides an update on appointments of elders and deacons in Australian congregations and a brief update on Camp Revive in Victoria.

We hope you find this issue encouraging for your own spiritual journey. As always, your feedback, suggestions and comments are welcomed.

The InterSections editorial team

ChurchScope: Church of Christ, Hawkesbury, NSW.

The Hawkesbury church began meeting on 5 May 2002. But its history goes back further. In the early 1970s, when Roy and Nancye Courtney were members of the Kurrajong Church of Christ, the congregation commenced a letterboxing program that included the town of Richmond. The *Star* magazines were used in letterboxing at the time. The idea was that at some time in the future it would be desirable for a congregation of the Lord's people to meet in Richmond.

The Courtney family moved to Richmond in 1976. They were part of the Windsor congregation at this time, but the idea was conceptualised although the opportunity had not presented itself. The Courtney family moved to Ipswich for a year in 1978 where they helped form a congregation at Ipswich with the Schilling family. They then worked with various congregations including Blacktown, NSW; Eastern Shore in Tasmania; South-West in Adelaide; and Windsor in Sydney.

In 2002 the opportunity did present itself to start a work in Richmond and so a few people gathered in the home of Andrew and Karen Giles. At that meeting a decision was made that the Hawkesbury Church of Christ be formed and that we would commence



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meeting on the following Lord's day which was 5 May. The first two weeks this small group of nine adults and eight children met for worship in the Giles home. From then on the church had its regular Sunday meetings in the staff room at the Hobartville Public School.

Dennis and Lorna Rayner began meeting with us shortly afterwards and Dennis has been a great help in the work. Andrew and Karen Giles have been tireless workers, and have been missed since their relocation to Western Australia last year. It has been good to have Darren Gill bringing lessons over the past year. We welcome visiting preachers and both Dennis and Roy visit other congregations.

We've had a membership of twenty eight adults and fourteen children. We have had seven baptisms over this time. Currently we have seventeen members and three children. This is due to people moving away to Victoria, Western Australia and to other parts of New South Wales. Also we have had three people falling away from the faith.

The church has maintained an evangelistic attitude throughout. On the local scene we have used teaching articles in the local newspapers: the *Gazette*, *Courier* and the *Hawkesbury Independent*. At various times these articles have produced favourable and not so favourable responses. People talk to us in the street about what is written so we believe that it is money well invested. We also began letterboxing within a month of the first meeting in May 2002, and this has certainly helped people know who we are, where we meet and what we believe.

Another part of our outreach has been participating in the local Lions Club market days every two months. We have a stall where we answer questions, give away Bibles, New Testaments, bookmarks, fridge magnets, tracts, plaques and other small items. One of the stall attractions for young people, especially teenagers, is a Q&A box. This box has eight compartments with questions on the lids and answers inside. It is a real drawcard because they think they know all the answers!

We also offer correspondence courses and studies. Through our participation in these market days we have

made friends with the other stallholders and the Lions Club members. This is the type of evangelistic work that we began doing whilst working with the Eastern Shore, South West and Windsor congregations. We've just adapted it to a more regular occurrence in Richmond.

When we had more children in the church, we held a Holiday Bible School during the Christmas holidays. This included the whole congregation and gave a good break from normal activities. The children invited their friends to be a part of the fun and learning. We used similar types of lessons during school term holidays. Everybody enjoyed these times.

One thing that we have done over the years is to teach a Basic Bible Course at the local University of the Third Age. Some of our members are also members of the U3A. Three members are on the management committee. The church has to be involved in the community so as to have an input for the Lord. A more recent venture is preparing toiletry packs for patients needing support at the local Hawkesbury hospital.

The congregation also supports the Macquarie School of Biblical Studies in Sydney. This support goes to both students and the school itself. We help support a preacher and his family in northern New South Wales. We also fully support a local preacher in Papua New Guinea and have done so for ten years. We believe that it is important to be steadfast in our support. Another part of our work is providing teaching CDs to smaller congregations and isolated Christians. We believe this to be a very useful work.

We've been fortunate enough recently to be able to assist Christians in Lahore, Pakistan, to purchase a building in which to meet. We have also supported the work that missionary Jim Waldron continues to do in India. We've also helped Voice of Truth International, an evangelistic publishing work pioneered by J C Choate, in the Indian subcontinent.

While the Hawkesbury congregation may be smaller in number, we have maintained a positive attitude of what being in the family of God means. We look forward to growing in the love and grace of God. ■

Roy and Nancye Courtney are part of the Hawkesbury congregation. Roy also teaches at Macquarie School of Biblical Studies in Sydney. roycourtney@live.com.au

InterSections

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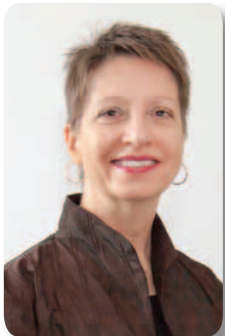
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Food for Thought - communing with God



'Come near to God and he will come near to you' (James 4:8a). Our life as a Christian is a walk with God as we seek to be close to him, to be in communication with him, to be one with him. God in his wisdom knows that we are to live in this world but not to be of the world – to be transformed, made new. But since we are human while striving to be godly, we are still being pulled back to our previous way of life and to our sinful nature (Col 3:1-11).

How then can we be one with God? Through the continual renewal that comes from being in God's presence. God has provided the avenue for us to be present with him through prayer. We enter into his throne room the same way that Esther came before King Xerxes (Esther 5:2) – God has raised his sceptre for us to enter and to have complete, unhampered access to him through Jesus' sacrifice for us.

Jesus' sacrifice was not just in his death, but also in his life, in his choice to give up his face-to-face relationship with God, sitting at his right hand – within touch of his Father. This closeness and proximity had to be sacrificed for the period of time that he was on earth. How difficult this must have been!

How strange it must have felt for Jesus not to have been right there next to God, in the position that he held since the beginning of time. How could Jesus replicate that relationship whilst physically separated on earth from God? Through prayer. By making time to have solitude, by creating spaces in the day to be in God's presence, by conversing with him.

Jesus was reliant on words to offer up to God his recognition of God Almighty – something that he had experienced directly in the creating of the world with God. Jesus used prayer to affirm his submission to God, his hopes for others (including us), and his desires for himself. He knew that he was in the presence of God. He was in conversation, in communion, with his Father. He knew that his Father heard and he had no doubt that his Father would answer – in alignment with the plan for redeeming us.

Jesus went to God in prayer during times of triumph, sorrow, trial and thanksgiving. He knew, just as we can know, the beautiful peace which that brings. What a relief to know that the Spirit is active and alive in our lives - guiding our paths, transforming us as we follow his will. What a blessed assurance!

James reassures us that when we pray according to God's will, he will answer us. The question then is 'How do we know his will?' Through our communication with him. When we spend time in his Word, not to learn about God but to know God, his will becomes more and more

clear to us. When we pray his words back to him, we can be assured we are asking according to his will.

I had never experienced praying Scripture until a few years ago. Peter Randall challenged us at Belmore Road to consider praying Scripture, so I gave it a go. It's powerful. It's a wonderful way to develop oneness with God. What better way to talk with God than with his own words!

One way to start is to begin prayers (as Nehemiah did) with words of praise and a call for God's forgiveness for sin in our lives so that we will be pure and can enter into his presence in prayer (Neh 1:5-7). From there, the Scriptures are full of verses for us to pray. We can also reaffirm our confidence in the salvation he has provided (1 John 2:1-2).

We can thank God for the wondrous love he has shown us (1 John 4:9). Scriptures can help us utilise prayer to put our trust in him (Psalm 46:1-2). We can use Christ's words to submit our will to God as Christ did in Gethsemane (Luke 22:42). God did not prevent Christ's crucifixion but he did send an angel to Jesus to strengthen him as a direct answer to Jesus' prayer.

We can borrow Paul's words to lift others up to God for their continued spiritual growth and love for one another (2 Thess 1:3-5). Colossians 3:12-14 gives us the words to ask God to help us as we strive to become more godly in our relationships with others. We can use Hebrews 10:19-22 to thank God for our direct access to him and can thank him for his Spirit who guides us (Romans 8:5-11).

We don't need a formula or a script. We just need to want to be close to God. We should open our hearts and minds and begin talking to God about all aspects of our lives – telling him how much we love him, how thankful we are for his love and the salvation he has provided. We can tell him about our concern for others in their spiritual lives, our shame for sin in our own lives, our need for him to have his hand actively involved in our physical, earthly lives. We need to come near to him.

Pray as we rise up in the morning, as we come and go from our houses, as we stand to work and as we sit to eat. Pray as we lay down for sleep at night. 'Come near to God and he will come near to you.' That is his promise. ■

Letter from Nias, Indonesia

In the far northwest of Indonesia is Nias island. With 240 million people, Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous nation and is almost 90% Muslim. Uniquely, Nias is one of the few areas of Indonesia where Islam is not the predominant religion. Christianity is the dominant faith – there are large numbers of Lutheran and other Protestant churches, as well as Roman Catholics.

Nias is only 40km by 120km in size with a population of less than 1 million. Yet there are more Churches of Christ on Nias island than in Malaysia and Japan put together. Moreover, while numerous American missionaries from Churches of Christ have lived in the other countries mentioned, surprisingly none has ever lived on Nias.

What is the reason for the success of the Lord's work here? Let me offer some reasons:

1. God has continually smiled on the work in Nias. He has blessed the seed sown and brought forth crops. We have enjoyed peace. There have been no doctrinal divisions among the now 78 congregations of the Lord's church on the island.
2. The pioneering spirit of T. Laiya set the pace. Laiya lived in Medan, North Sumatra, at the time of his conversion to Christ in 1974. He travelled back to his childhood home in Nias as often as possible until his death in 2005. He taught, baptised and trained. Sometimes, foreigners and missionaries based in other parts of Indonesia (like Colin McKee, Gary Soehner, Steve Cate and me) went with him, but most of the responsibility for this outreach was on his shoulders.
3. When I became involved with Nias in 1995, I determined that we were going to ask what was needed for the advancement of the kingdom and then just do it. Rather than taking on a new program only IF we could raise the money - we would go ahead and meet the need, raising what money we could and giving the rest ourselves. Money wasn't the main consideration; the need was.
4. From the start we have insisted that our relationship with Indonesian co-workers be fraternal, not paternal. They have a role to play along with foreign missionaries and workers. We are different but we are brethren.
5. While we do not use foreign funds to support Indonesian ministers working with a specific congregation, we do support eleven circuit evangelists who move among the 78 congregations. In addition to looking for opportunities to start new churches, they teach and train existing Christians. Their work is the foundation of all we do.
6. The awful tsunami of December 2004 followed by an 8.7 earthquake in March 2005 affected Nias deeply. These natural disasters put Nias on the map for Christians all over the world. We were able to raise about US \$650,000 to respond to those disasters. Most meaningful, perhaps, was the building of 15 elementary schools in as many villages on the island. These were public schools in villages where the Lord's church already existed. Their construction allowed the church to get credit for what was done. That was when many in the Nias government and private circles learned about us, saying, 'Those Church of Christ people don't just care about their own members.'

Today, the church in Nias still gives a lot of thought to the role of humanitarian efforts on the mission field. We believe Jesus' words in Matthew 25:31-46 are no more optional than his words in Mark 16:16. When Christians consider benevolence and evangelism it cannot be either/or but must be both/and.



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We have resisted soup kitchens and handouts and have sought ways to help people help themselves. We believe any solution to poverty must include education. Christians now operate several student dormitories in Gunungsitoli, the largest city on Nias. These allow 94 high school and college students, mainly from Christian families in surrounding villages, to have free housing while living in town to continue their education.

Within its premises, the Gunungsitoli church offers vocational courses in computers, English, tailoring and hairdressing. We hope soon to add a course in motorcycle maintenance. Not far away, Jochebed's Choice Children's Home provides a home for 58 children from the poorest of the poor families in Nias. A small farm behind the children's home provides opportunities for the children to participate in planting, cultivating and harvesting activities. Vegetables and fish from the farm help supplement the financial budget of Jochebed's home.

The Nias men and women who work on these programs daily are to be praised for what has been and is being accomplished. To God be the glory. ■

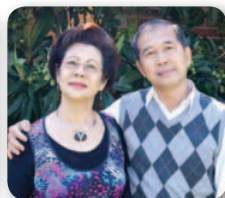


Dennis Cady is married to Susan and they were missionaries in Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia during the 1960s-70s. They are now based in Texas, where Dennis has served as an elder with the Faith Village Church of Christ in Wichita Falls. He continues to visit Nias regularly (see: www.focusingonindonesia.org) and is also involved with Christian projects in Haiti and South Sudan. dcady6@gmail.com

Belmore Road Church:



Ian & Catherine
Campbell



Charles & Swee Lan Hooi



Benny & Pauline
Tabalujan

The Point Church:



David Clark, Michael Evans,
Peter Searson

Gosford Church:



John Stone, David Mowday,
John Gibbins

News

Elder and deacon appointments in Australia

Over the past 12 months there have been several elder and deacon appointments in Australian congregations. The Point congregation in Brisbane mourned the loss of a dear brother and elder: Warren Holyoak who passed away in November 2011, leaving Michael Evans and Peter Searson as elders. In early 2012, David Clark was appointed as an elder, providing valuable support. The current deacons include Arthur Howell, Peter Amos and Stephen Wilson. Lito Batoon recently stepped down as a deacon due to work-related reasons.

At the Belmore Road congregation in Melbourne, Benny Tabalujan was appointed as an elder in July 2012, joining Charles Hooi and Ian Campbell. Steve Burgin stepped down as an elder so he could focus on family matters. Two new deacons were appointed: David Tabe and James Chan. David serves in the children's ministry and James serves in the Chinese ministry.

John Gibbins was appointed as an elder at the Gosford congregation in 2011, joining John Stone and David Mowday in their shepherding role. In the past 12 months, David Payne stepped down as an elder due to relocation to Melbourne. The elders have appointed deacons to assist in serving the varied needs of the church. They include Graham Lawrie, Daniel Mowday and Phillip Drennan.

The Malaga congregation in Perth presently have six elders who work alongside the congregation encouraging the members and continuing to proclaim the gospel. They are David Atchley, Peter Coleman, Ken Deetlefs, Wilbert Sibanda, Paul Tyers and Dennis Vander Kraats. The deacons at Malaga include Quinton Funk, Wayne Harris, Sylvester Lioh, Uteng Phuthi, Brett Tyers and Roger Tyers. ■

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Feature

Persistence and resilience

Many of us live in a society where it is possible to change lots of things: the colour of our hair, the shape of our bodies, our jobs, the places we live in, our friends, our spouses, our diets, our banks, our electricity suppliers. The list goes on and on. These are possibilities that people in some cultures do not have because of government control, a poor economy, peer expectations or other reasons.

Because we are able to change these things we can feel that we have a right to change them. But consider the situation of slaves, such as those in New Testament times. Legally and culturally slaves were bound to serve their masters. Even becoming a Christian would not release slaves from that bondage. However, it was still possible for slaves to live a fruitful Christian life and go to heaven. So, becoming a Christian did not necessarily bring physical freedom on earth. Similarly, a husband or wife who became a Christian was not free to leave their spouse, even if the spouse was not a believer.

Some Christians live in an environment where they experience opposition, ridicule, isolation, limitation and other unpleasant reactions to their convictions. Our attitude that we have a right to change things tends to make us intolerant of such situations that are less than ideal. Instead of finding a way to cope with the difficulties, we are tempted just to give up and remove ourselves from the situation.

What is needed is a spirit of persisting in things that are necessary (or even beneficial) because God wants us to persist. Is it possible not to give up in these situations? Can we, just like the much persecuted apostle Paul, determinedly say, 'We do not lose heart!' (2 Corinthians 4:1)?

Consider the following passages:

'Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.' (Philippians 1:27)

'Test all things. Hold on to what is good.' (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

'Christ was faithful as a Son having authority over God's house, and we are that house, if we hold firm to the end the boldness and the hope which is ours.' (Hebrews 3:6)

These passages teach us two things: God knows that Christians are sometimes tempted to throw in the towel; and that being a believer involves making a commitment to persist in serving the Lord from now to eternity. This involves faith in Jesus and a resolve to do what he wants us to do.

What motivation do we have to stick with these important attitudes? The great example of persistence is Jesus:

'During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered, and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.' (Hebrews 5:7-9)

'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.' (Hebrews 12:1-2)

There was great benefit in Jesus doing the job which God sent him to do—great benefit for us! Jesus had faith (yes, even Jesus needed faith) that the outcome would be positive. He submitted to the cross knowing that he faced torture and death and his lifeless body would be shut up in a cold grave. But he was confident that God would raise him up. He had faith that this way to live and die would achieve great things—and it did!

To follow Jesus we must persist in the day to day, week by week, year after year service to God, no matter what the circumstances.

At the Macquarie church I have twice seen members who thought that the congregation was less than ideal. They left to launch out into new situations as leaders to do things in a 'better' way, to grow and multiply churches. Sadly, a decade or two later, those congregations have ceased to exist, those leaders are not leading and some have simply given up and left the church. They failed to persist when things were not ideal!

But there is another great motivation. Often we feel that persisting is just hanging on: when we grit our teeth and bear it, seeing no progress but only stagnation. In contrast, the Bible presents persistence as an invigorating, growing experience. If we go back to 2 Corinthians 4:1, where the apostle Paul said, 'We do not lose heart!' he follows this up later in the chapter by saying:

'All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.' (2 Corinthians 4:15-16)

We all face the reality or prospect of getting older – along with its frustrations, wrinkles, slowing bodies, increasing responsibilities and complications, and limited income. But for the Christian, there is a makeover every day!

'Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.' (1 Corinthians 15:58) ■

Ted Paull directs the Macquarie School of Biblical Studies. He and his wife, Pam, and their family are part of the Macquarie Church of Christ in Sydney. tedpaull@hotmail.com (<http://msobs.macquariechurchofchrist.org.au>)

Camp Revive 2012

Camp Revive this year was held once again at Candlebark Farm, Healesville, Victoria. Approximately 40 people (mostly youth) attended the retreat, which was hosted by Belmore Road Church of Christ over the weekend of September 29-October 1. This year the camp was focused around the power God gives us through his Word, and the responsibility we have as Christians to share the good news with others.

Jonathan Frank, from the Southwest congregation in New South Wales, was the guest speaker. Drawing inspiration from the *Spiderman* film, Jonathan taught campers about the importance of daily Bible study & prayer, led a piece-by-piece study on the armour of God, and emphasised the importance of sharing God's Word with those around us. Additional classes and devotionals were led by Dale Christensen, Alan & Debby Rowley, Kimberley Frank, David Tabe and Cedric Lim.

The content of the lessons, coupled with an impromptu late-night time of praise and encouragement led by



some of the youth, ensured that campers of all ages left encouraged. Over the weekend, we also participated in games, craft activities, fellowship time, and bonding over the AFL grand final. We look forward to meeting again next year for another weekend of fellowship and encouragement! ■

Laura Payne, Belmore Road Church of Christ, Melbourne.
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Interview cont.

What kind of people have you found to be the most receptive to the gospel?

The friends and families of the members are most receptive to the gospel.

What caused you and your family to move to Australia?

We always prioritised the education of our kids because I believed that the key to combat poverty is education. So, when an opportunity to migrate to Australia was offered, we grabbed it. Lois, our eldest, had already passed the entrance exam at the Saint Louis University in Baguio City and had been awarded a four-year scholarship by the Commission on Higher Education. Still, we opted to move here for the future of our kids and the future of church work in the Philippines.

Do you have any trips back to the Philippines planned?

Our family has an upcoming trip planned in December. We'll visit congregations in Manila, Ilocos, Baguio, Nueva Vizcaya, Isabela and Nueva Ecija. We look forward to stronger relationships between the churches here in Australia and the work in the Philippines.

What have been some of the blessings and challenges you have encountered since moving to Australia?

Our greatest blessing was and is being with The Point Church. We felt the love of the brotherhood. We

experienced support for our family. The greatest challenge is how to reach out to the Filipino community.

How does the church in Australia differ from the church in the Philippines?

Financially, the difference is obvious. But spiritually, the Filipinos are more receptive to the gospel, maybe because poor people are always on their knees fervently seeking God's help. People here are always busy earning money for their bills and for their holidays.

Have you found it different evangelising in Australia to evangelising in the Philippines?

There is a big difference in terms of evangelism and responses. In the Philippines, you can visit people any time. They won't close their doors to spiritual conversations. Should they not be available, they'll just invite you another day.

What do you think are some key things we need to remember as we try to spread the gospel?

The first and foremost thing in evangelism is our desire to obey the command to spread the gospel. If we don't, who will? Let us constantly get involved and slowly we will grow. Let us consistently share our faith and slowly we will mature. And let us continuously show our love and concern for the lost soul and surely God will be glorified. ■

*Lito Batoon is studying to become a nurse. The Batoon family is part of The Point Church in Brisbane, QLD.
litobatoon@yahoo.com. Lito was interviewed by Nathan Holyoak. nathan@helmsdeep.org*

Interview

with Lito Batoon

Lito Batoon and his wife Helen worked with the church in the Philippines for 13 years. They and their three children (Lois, Lena and Lael) emigrated to Australia in 2008 and are members of The Point Church in Brisbane.

Which part of the Philippines are you from?

I grew up in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija, which is part of Central Luzon, the rice granary of the Philippines.

What is the religious landscape in the Philippines?

80% are Roman Catholic with the remaining 20% composed of different denominations like Iglesia ni Cristo, Aglipayan (Philippine Independence Church), El Shaddai, Baptist World Alliance, Methodist, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, and others. As for non-denominational Churches of Christ in the Philippines, there are estimates ranging from 100 to 600 congregations.

How did you become a Christian?

I went to Philippine Bible College in 1977 through a full-scholarship program. There, I searched and studied my Bible. I discussed with denominational leaders and preachers measuring the truth according to the Bible. On 15 August 1979, I felt the need to submit my life to Jesus by baptism for the remission of my sins.

How did you get into fulltime preaching and evangelising?

In 1989, when I finished my biblical studies at Philippine Bible College and secular studies at the Baguio Colleges Foundation (University of Cordilleras), I went back to my city to be with my family. I was employed as a Development Management Officer at the Office of Northern Cultural Communities (ONCC) under the Office of the President, and helped the church on a part-time basis.

But in 1995, when our preacher died in a car accident, the congregation asked me to lead the church work. We started conducting leadership training and gospel meetings, invited Sunday speakers, and involved the members in planning and church planting. Slowly, we grew in number. We built an extension to our small worship place to accommodate 75 people. We were able to plant two small churches (Lupao Church of Christ and Umingan Church of Christ) and we restored two congregations (Talavera Church of Christ and Caranglan Church of Christ). It was indeed a great joy to bring souls to Jesus and lead people in serving Him.

In 1998, the national government merged the ONCC with another organisation. All employees were given the option to continue or to leave. I chose to leave and indicated that the reason for my leaving was to become a fulltime church worker. My in-laws were very negative about my decision to leave my secular job because they were so concerned for my family – they thought we might starve!

But Helen and I were focused on leading the church work in the city and nearby towns. We held on to the promise of Jesus in Matthew 6:33 that he will take care of our physical needs. After working for almost two years without support as a gospel preacher, we received our first support from a



sponsor in Texas in November 1999. We were so glad because, without our knowing, we had been recommended for support. Truly, God provided for us. He blessed our work and our family.

What were the greatest challenges you faced as a preacher in the Philippines?

I think the greatest challenge was preaching without monetary support. Our country was poor and support was so limited. Many preachers were lured by the dollars from other denominations when their support was cut or when their families were in deep financial need. So, Helen and I wisely invested my redundancy pay into our farm. We planted more than 300 mango trees on our 5 hectare farm. We planned to support the education of our kids and the church work from the proceeds of our farm.

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HARDING SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

2013 Hogan-Cate Asian Missions Sabbatical

Harding School of Theology invites applications for the 2013 Hogan-Cate Asian Missions Sabbatical. The sabbatical is made possible by the Hogan-Cate Endowed Asian Missions Fund established at Harding University in honour of missionaries to Asia, Gordon & Jane Hogan and Steve & Jean Cate.

The sabbatical recipient will be an outstanding missionary, church worker or ministry leader based in an *acappella* Church of Christ in Asia (this covers East and North Asia, South East Asia, South Asia, Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific). The sabbatical period is 3-5 months commencing from August 2013.

Whilst based largely at HST in Memphis, Tennessee, the sabbatical recipient will also spend time at the main campus of Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. Funds may be used to cover airfare, food and accommodation, HST tuition fees (audit or credit), visiting churches and ministries and participation in the Harding University Bible Lectureship for spiritual renewal and to promote missions in Asia.

An information sheet and application form are available from www.hst.edu and applications should be emailed to dean@hst.edu on or before Monday, 3 December 2012.

**Harding School of Theology • 1000 Cherry Road,
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