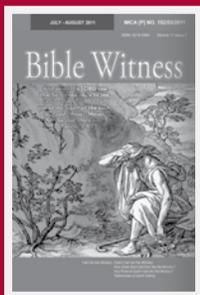


Bible Witness

And when the LORD saw
that he turned aside to see,
God called unto him
out of the midst of the bush,
and said, Moses, Moses.
And he said, Here am I.
Exodus 3:4



Call into the Ministry: God's Call into the Ministry
How Does God Call One into the Ministry?
Any Proof of God's Call into the Ministry?
Testimonies of God's Calling



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GOD'S CALL INTO THE MINISTRY

PRABHUDAS KOSHY

God calls all His elect unto salvation, so we can say that every Christian is called of God. This we read in Romans 8:30 - "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." This call of God comes to God's elect through the preaching of the Gospel and as the Holy Spirit works in their heart to convict and convert - "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:14; cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:5).

Besides, every Christian has a calling from the Lord to serve Him (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:22; Romans 6:18; 12:11). For this purpose, the Lord has equipped every Christian with at least one spiritual gift (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Romans 12:6-8). Hence, all Christians are urged to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58b).

Though all Christians are called to serve the Lord, some Christians are specially called by Him to serve as pastors, teachers,

missionaries or other full-time workers of the church. This calling into the full-time ministry is also referred to by some as God's call unto vocational ministry.

The Scriptures teach us through the life and ministry of God's servants that an absolute conviction of a divine call into the ministry is a necessity for those who serve Him in various ministries of the church. To help us understand God's call into the ministry, the Spirit of God scrupulously recorded in the

Though all Christians are called to serve the Lord, some Christians are specially called by Him to serve as pastors, teachers, missionaries or other full-time workers of the church.

Scriptures the Apostle Paul's deep conviction of his divine calling to be an apostle and preacher of the Gospel.

Paul wrote:

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God" (Romans 1:1). The words "called to be an apostle" are very significant because they affirm Paul's apostleship as divinely ordained. He did not take it up himself but he was called and appointed by God to that office.

In his epistles, Paul asserted his calling in various ways. He insisted unashamedly that it is "by the will of God" or "by the commandment of God" that he is an

apostle of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1). There was not a tinge of doubt in his heart that his ministry as an apostle of the church was commissioned by the Lord. So he wrote in Galatians 1:1 - "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)."

Even the designations that he used for himself in his customary introductions are a further proof of his deep sense of the divine call he received to serve God full-time. Consider these designations: "Apostle of Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1; Titus 1:1); "Minister of Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:16); "Servant of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1). Truly, Paul saw himself as a man appointed by Christ to do His work. He understood that his commitment was first of all to Christ, and always acted in obedience to the One who called him into the ministry.

An abiding conviction about his call to the ministry filled Paul's heart, and it is seen in all his epistles. Paul's preaching was always characterized by a fresh awareness of the divine call he received.

Such unswerving conviction about his call fashioned him to be a single-minded, devoted, enthusiastic minister of the Gospel. In all circumstances, whether convivial or hostile, preaching the Gospel was Paul's singular passion. Even when he was bound in chains, he looked for opportunities to preach the Word. So, in Ephesians 6:19-20, he wrote, "And for me,

that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

Only a man with an unshaken persuasion that God has called and commissioned him for the task can be successful in the ministry.

From Paul, we must learn that the work of the ministry is too difficult and demanding for any man to enter it without a deep sense of a divine calling and appointment. Only a man with an unshaken persuasion that God has called and commissioned him for the task can be successful in the ministry. Such an understanding of God's call into the ministry rejects any notion of a self-assumed office in the work of the church. It also prohibits Christians from appointing those who are not called by God into the ministry of the church.

Let us also take note that it is those who are unsure of a definite call from God that leave the ministry, whereas those who are fully persuaded will remain responsible and effective even in the midst of many adversities.

Has God called you into the ministry?



HOW DOES GOD CALL ONE INTO THE MINISTRY?

PRABHUDAS KOSHY

Does God call a man into the ministry today in the same way He called the Apostle Paul or the prophets in the Old Testament? Do we expect God to appear in a burning bush in the same manner that He called Moses or speak in a vision as He did when He called Paul? If He does not appear through visions and dreams, how then can one know if God is calling him?

After the time of the Apostle Paul, we have hardly any biblical instance of the Lord calling a man into the ministry through His

personal appearance in vision or dream. We read nothing of that sort of calling in the case of men like Timothy, Titus, Apollos and many others who came into the ministry of the Gospel after the apostles. It is very apparent in these days that the Lord does not call His servants to the ministry through dreams and visions as in the days of the Old Testament prophets or as in the case of Paul, the apostle.

Nonetheless, Scripture does reveal how one can know if God calls him into the ministry. By coalescing the teachings of the various portions of Scripture on this topic, we learn that there are two major indications of God's calling of a man into the ministry. Firstly, there is an inward call and secondly, there is an external call.

The inward call is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God in the heart of a Christian to convict and to prompt (or even to burden) him to give his life to the service of the Lord. This sense of God's leading will increase in his heart day by day. The Lord will instil within him an irrepressible desire for the ministry.

The Lord will instil within him an irrepressible desire for the ministry.

Charles Bridges calls the strong desire or burden for the ministry "a primary ministerial qualification"

(*Christian Ministry*, p. 94). Charles Spurgeon identified the first sign of God's call to the ministry as "an intense, all-absorbing desire for the work". Without this stirring desire for service, one should not even consider entering the ministry.

The Apostle Paul spoke of the desire for the work in 1 Timothy 3:1 - "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." In this verse, the verb "desire" appears twice and they are translations of two different Greek words. The first Greek verb *orégō* carries the idea of stretching oneself out to touch or to grasp something. It means reaching for something. The second word *epithuméō* has the idea of having the affections directed towards something - to lust, desire or covet;

A man who is called by God to enter the ministry of the church cannot visualize anything about himself beyond fervently, faithfully and sacrificially serving the Lord.

“It is a laborious and difficult charge; and that they who aim at it should carefully consider with themselves, whether or not they were able to bear so heavy a burden. Ignorance is always rash; and a

it expresses a strong desire. With the use of these two words, the apostle teaches us that in those who would come into the ministry, there will be a strong yearning to be wholly involved in and be dedicated to the work of the church.

mature knowledge of things makes a man modest. How comes it that they who have neither ability nor wisdom often aspire so confidently to hold the reins of government, but because they rush forward with their eyes shut? On this subject Quintilian remarked, that the ignorant speak boldly, while the greatest orators tremble.”

It is significant to take note that the object of the desire is not merely the office but the work that is required by the office. The apostle is then referring to an aspiration to serve rather than a hunger for position, power or prominence in the church. It is an ardent desire for service, and nothing else, that proves one’s call. A man who is called by God to enter the ministry of the church cannot visualize anything about himself beyond fervently, faithfully and sacrificially serving the Lord. So everyone who aspires to be in the ministry of the church should honestly examine himself to see whether there is any other motive apart from serving.

He who is truly called by God into the ministry is not one who desires a life of ease and comfort, but one who longs to do an excellent work for the Lord even at the expense of personal comfort and pleasure. He will not allow anything to prevent him from fulfilling his desire to serve the Lord. He will even be ready to give up his profession or trade that he may be fully dedicated to the work of the Lord.

While Paul instructed Timothy about the ministry, he wrote: “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth

The desire for the work certainly includes willingness and readiness to bear all the burden of the work. It is “a good work” that he desires. A good work is never possible without strenuous and painful labour. As John Calvin noted in his commentary on 1 Timothy 3:1 - “Those things which are excellent, are also arduous and difficult.” He then continued,

He who is truly called by God into the ministry is not one who desires a life of ease and comfort, but one who longs to do an excellent work for the Lord even at the expense of personal comfort and pleasure.

himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Timothy 2:3-4). Here, Paul makes reference to the soldier to illustrate two truths about a Christian minister’s life. Firstly, like a soldier, he should endure hardships. Secondly, the minister, like a soldier, is not to be encumbered with the affairs of this life. The commentator, Albert Barnes, observes: “This is always a condition in becoming a soldier. He gives up his own business during the time for which he is enlisted, and devotes himself to the service of his country. The farmer leaves his plough, and the mechanic his shop, and the merchant his store, and the student his books, and the lawyer his files, and the doctor his clinic; and neither of them expect to pursue these things while engaged in the service of their country. It would be wholly impracticable to carry on the plans of a campaign, if each one of these classes should undertake to pursue his profession. So with the ministers of the gospel. It is equally improper for them to ‘entangle’ themselves with the secular business, with plans of speculation and gain, and with any purpose of worldly aggrandizement. The

minister of the gospel accomplishes the design of his appointment only when he can say in sincerity, that he is not entangled with the affairs of this life.”

This sort of absolute surrender and dedication to the Lord’s call to do His work is also seen in the lives of the apostles of Jesus Christ. When Jesus called Peter and Andrew, who were fishermen, to be “fishers of men”, “they straightway left their nets, and followed him” (Matthew 4:18-22; cf. Mark 1:16-20). Likewise, when Jesus called Levi, who was a tax collector, to follow Him, “he left all, rose up, and followed him” (Luke 5:27-28; cf. Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:14). Once, Peter confessed to the Lord how resolved and dedicated the apostles were to His cause, saying, “Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee” (Mark 10:28-31; cf. Luke 18:28-30).

If your answers to the following questions are “yes”, then there are three more critical areas to check for determining the call, which will be discussed in the following article of this issue.

- *Do you sense an inward call of God through His Word?*
- *Do you yearn to be in the service of the Lord?*
- *Is your desire (or burden) so great that you are prepared to leave your profession to be wholly dedicated to the work of the Lord?*
- *Is your heart ready to toil arduously to offer an excellent service to the Lord?*
- *Do you see yourself as never leaving the ministry for worldly gain but persevering in it?*

ANY PROOF OF GOD'S CALL INTO THE MINISTRY?

PRABHUDAS KOSHY

When God calls a man into the ministry, there will be some clear evidence of it. As much as there is an inner conviction through the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word, there will be some external or public evidence of that call. Some theologians have referred to this evidence as the 'external call'.

John Calvin, the great reformed theologian, wrote: "If one is to be considered a true minister of the church, it is necessary that he considers the 'objective or external' of the church and the secret inner call 'conscious only to the minister himself'" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2:326).

The external evidence of God's call into the ministry that is discussed here is primarily about those who are called to be pastors and preachers of the Word in the church. It is certain that God would call some men to other areas of the ministry to aid the work of the church. Even for such, much of the evidence is applicable.

Spiritual qualities

Consider Titus 1:6-8 where the Scriptures outline the spiritual qualifications required of those who come to the offices of the church: "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but

a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate" (cf. 1 Timothy 3:1-7).

Certainly, no man can claim to have a life that measures up perfectly to the above standards. But if one is called to the pastoral ministry, we can be sure that the Lord has been cultivating in him those spiritual qualifications. Those who do not manifest these spiritual qualities cannot match up to the divine requirements of the office of a pastor.

Herein the church has a standard by which its leaders are identified and ordained. The life of a man who is truly called will characterise a commitment to these spiritual virtues.

Those who enter the ministry without these spiritual qualities are not offering spiritual leadership, but merely engaging in some religious activities with hypocrisy. So Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:2, "But (we) have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Everyone who aspires to teach others must make sure that he himself is led by the Word of God. This is why Paul wrote to Titus: "In all things shewing thyself a

pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 2:7-8). If one is not committed to pattern one's life after the Word of God, then he should not be in the ministry. The Word of God must not be looked upon as merely a textbook to be fervently taught, but as God's statutes to be obeyed for the transformation of lives.

Spiritual abilities

When God calls a man into the ministry, He will also equip him with the necessary spiritual gifts (abilities). In Ephesians 4:11 and 12, we read that Christ gave "some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ". Pastor-teachers are Christ's gifts to the church. The Lord gives gifts to those whom He has chosen to be pastors so that they may in turn edify and equip the church.

Firstly, he must possess the ability to preach and teach the Word of God. This is not about the eloquence or oratory skill that one possesses. A man might have been a good orator or debater in his school or college, but that is not a proof that he is gifted to be a pastor. A good pastor is expected to have more than speaking ability. He must be a dedicated student of God's Word and be committed to expound it faithfully and clearly to God's people that they might be spiritually edified. As Paul said to Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Through careful study of the Word, he must be "apt to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2). He must be "able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9).

Secondly, coupled with the ability to teach, one should possess the pastoral ability. In Ephesians 4:11, Paul combines two roles in the title "pastor-teacher" ("some, pastors and teachers"). The word "pastor" in Greek, *poimēn*, means "shepherd". Shepherding goes hand in hand with teaching. In Acts 20:28, Paul commanded the elders of the Ephesian church to "feed the church of God" (cf. 1 Peter 5:2). This feeding of the flock constitutes teaching God's Word faithfully and also caring for their spiritual and physical needs. Those who are called to the pastoral ministry must possess the desire and ability to minister to the needs of the people. A deep concern for the flock's well-being and a Spirit-guided compassion to attend to their spiritual health is paramount in the life of those who are called to the ministry (cf. Hebrews 13:17). They will express the profound sentiments which Paul expressed in 2 Corinthians 12:15: "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." In short, the pastoral ability requires not just instructional ability but also the ability to care for others.

Thirdly, together with the instructional and pastoral abilities, one should also possess the administrative ability to oversee the affairs of the church. Those who are called to the pastoral ministry of the church ought to rule their congregations well (cf. 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7). He must be one who is capable of managing various ministries, his co-labourers and

complex issues that would often arise in his pastorate. Charles Spurgeon commented about this spiritual ability in his *Lectures to My Students*: "I should not complete this point if I did not add, that mere ability to edify, and aptness to teach is not enough, there must be other talents to complete the pastoral character. Sound judgement and solid experience must instruct you; gentle manners and loving affections must sway you; firmness and courage must be manifest and tenderness and sympathy must not be lacking. Gifts administrative in ruling well will be as requisite as gifts instructive in teaching well" (p. 28).

Those who claim to have received God's call into the pastoral ministry must check whether they have the above spiritual abilities.

Substantiation by other godly men

The Scriptures record how Timothy's calling was recognised by the church and other leaders before he was set apart for the ministry. "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him" (Acts 16:1-3). Timothy's good testimony among the brethren prompted Paul to choose him for the missionary team. This finally led to the laying of hands of the presbytery, which was yet another confirmation of his call. The local churches, leaders and Paul could see the grace of God in Timothy that moved him to service, and they finally recognized him as worthy to be a godly leader.

Charles Bridges wrote these words with regard to the counsel of friends and experienced ministers: "[They] . . . might be useful in assuring the mind, whether or not the desire for the work be the impulse of feeling rather than a principle, and the capacity be self-deceiving presumption" (*Christian Ministry*, 100-101).

Likewise, Charles Spurgeon had this advice for his students: "Churches are not all wise, neither do they all judge in the power of the Holy Ghost, but many of them judge after the flesh; yet I had sooner accept the opinion of a company of the Lord's people than my own upon so personal a subject as my own gifts and graces. At any rate, whether you value the verdict of the church or no, one thing is certain, that none of you can be pastors without the loving consent of the flock; and therefore this will be to you a practical indicator if not a correct one."

The man who is truly called into the ministry will have the church's and his experienced leaders' good report and confirmation.

It is imperative that one makes a self-examination of his calling into the ministry. So consider the following questions, if you think you sense God's inner call.

- ***Is your life devoted to the godly virtues required of a leader?***
- ***Do you have the appropriate spiritual gifts?***
- ***Do you have the recognition of your church and experienced leaders?***

MY TESTIMONY OF GOD'S CALLING

REGGOR B. GALARPE

Rev Reggor Galarpe is the Pastor of Gethsemane B-P Church, Cebu, the Philippines. He also lectures in the Gethsemane Bible Institute (GBI), Cebu. He is married to Carol, and they have two young girls, Ruth and Naomi.



Church, where I was baptized by Pastor Koshy and became a member of the church. As a Bible college student, Pastor would see to it that I was involved in various ministries of the church. I praise God for all the opportunities to serve: from ushering to teaching in different fellowship groups, and eventually, in the preaching

of God's Word. It helped me a lot to understand and appreciate the work in the ministry.

In 2001, another opportunity to serve came along when Gethsemane Filipino Fellowship was started. During this time, I began to have a serious burden to reach out to people, especially my fellow countrymen working in Singapore, to share with them the Gospel and lead them to the saving knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Through this ministry came the burden to bring the Gospel to my own country through a Bible-Presbyterian witness.

After the completion of my studies in 2003, I came back to Cebu with the zeal to start a mission church. With much prayer and encouragement from Pastor and the mother church, I was commissioned to be Gethsemane B-P Church's missionary to the Philippines. Thus, by God's grace, the

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry" (1 Timothy 1:12).

I praise and thank the Lord for His high calling upon me into the ministry. It was in the year 2000 when I was about to complete my one-year rehabilitation programme in a Christian drug rehabilitation centre here in Cebu, the Philippines, that I was praying for the Lord's leading for me to study God's Word at the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) in Singapore. It was upon the encouragement of the ministry leaders that I should study to be trained and equipped for the ministry. It was also during this time that I first met Pastor Koshy who came for a visit after a mission trip to Leyte.

I went to study in FEBC in July 2000, attending Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian

mission church in Cebu was inaugurated in July 2004. Praise God for leading me to start and oversee the work! Since then, I have been serving the Lord together with my wife (now with our 2 daughters as well) in the mission church, reaching out to people, leading them to Christ and nurturing them in the Christian faith by teaching and preaching to them the whole counsel of God.

In November 2007, by the grace and mercies of God, I was ordained a pastor (together with Rev Ephrem Chiracho Ouchula of Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church of Ethiopia) during the 2nd Missionary Conference that was held here in Cebu City, in the presence of more than 200 like-minded brethren representing 11 countries, including our beloved principal of FEBC and founder of the Bible-Presbyterian movement in Singapore and Asia, the late Rev Dr Timothy Tow.

Pressing on in the work of the Lord in the ministry of the Gospel, I praise and thank the Lord for opening another avenue for us to serve Him through the establishment of the Gethsemane Bible Institute that was formally inaugurated on July 17, 2011. As far as I can remember, it was during the early days of the mission work here in Cebu, the Philippines, that Pastor Koshy hinted that with a good number of trained people in our midst, it would be good if we could

start a ministry of teaching God's Word with the emphasis on equipping our people for the ministry of the Gospel. Upon hearing Pastor, I was excited in my heart but was somewhat "reserved" in my reply when he asked, "How?" Nevertheless, we have been praying for the Lord's leading and guidance on this particular burden.

In November 2010, we started the Monday Night Class where we had the opportunity to conduct a systematic study of God's Word. This is in addition to the existing Home Bible Study conducted in different homes, the study of God's Word in various

fellowship groups and the Sunday school. Praise God for these opportunities to teach God's Word!

In His good time, the Gethsemane Bible Institute began its very first semester in June 2011. I thank the Lord for the privilege to teach, co-labouring with my fellow missionaries and

preachers who are also graduates of the Far Eastern Bible College.

As the Apostle Paul had written in 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also", it is a privilege and a joy to be part of the ministry of teaching at the Gethsemane Bible Institute.

All glory to our Lord!

Pressing on in the work of the Lord in the ministry of the Gospel, I praise and thank the Lord for opening another avenue for us to serve Him through the establishment of the Gethsemane Bible Institute.

THE LORD'S APPOINTMENT FOR ME

KELVIN LIM

Bro Kelvin Lim leads the children's ministry of Gethsemane B-P Church, Singapore. He has completed his theological training in FEBC, and graduated with a BTh degree. He is married to Jasmine, and they have two young boys, Joash and Jorim.



study full-time in the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) in order to equip myself to rightly divide the Word of truth. Nonetheless, this desire was not fulfilled until two years later. The reason was simple: the Lord knew that my heart was not ready; it would not surrender wholly to Him.

The Lord called me in 2002 during one of my devotions. He spoke to me through Romans 10:14: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" "How shall they hear without a preacher?" These words of the Lord kept ringing in my ears!

At that time, I was working as a project staff in The Helping Hand (THH), a Christian drug rehabilitation centre. I was also pursuing a Diploma in Substance Abuse Counselling with the intention of becoming a certified counsellor. One privilege of working in THH was the opportunity to conduct Bible study with the residents (people who have committed themselves to the programme). With this privilege came the awareness of my lack of biblical knowledge. Thus, there was a desire to

Though this was the case, the Lord was very gracious and patient with me. He showed me that He is in control of all things. He used a Bible-Presbyterian pastor to confirm my calling, and caused my heart to yield to Him. Finally, I entered FEBC for full-time theological training in July 2004 with this prayer: "Not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). I wanted to be a certified counsellor, but now His herald instead!

The objective of studying theology was to equip myself thoroughly so that the Lord may use me for His glory, particularly to minister to those caught in drug abuse and related vices as this had been a burden in my heart. How can they believe in Jesus of

Though a man deviseth his way, it is the Lord who directeth his steps.

whom they have not heard, and how can they hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ unless someone preaches to them!

Though a man deviseth his way, it is the Lord who directeth his steps (cf. Proverbs 16:9). During the course of my studies in FEBC, the Lord redirected my steps towards the children's ministry. It was not that my burden towards those who are addicted to drugs had vanished, but that the Lord had opened a new door before me. While He did not lead me to serve in a Christian ministry to minister to the drug addicts, He did open the door of Gethsemane Children's Ministry to me.

In His goodness and wisdom, the Lord had already started preparing me for the ministry among the children by blessing my wife and me with two sons. As I strived to fulfil my duty as a father, the Lord also nurtured within me a paternal concern for the spiritual upbringing of my children and those in the church.

Moreover, Pastor Koshy had been praying to the Lord that He would raise up a man in Gethsemane to lead the children's ministry. In 2006, Pastor told me about his burden and encouraged me to prayerfully consider serving full-time in the children's ministry. From then onwards, I began to see the Lord's hand leading me towards that direction.

I am grateful for the opportunities to serve the Lord. I am only a servant, and it is the Lord who appoints me to serve Him in the areas of His choice.

In March 2007, Pastor and the Session appointed me to co-labour with Pastor in the leadership of Gethsemane Children's Ministry. I was also entrusted with the responsibility to teach Shorter Catechism to the children in the upper primary. The opportunities to work closely with the committee members of Gethsemane Children's Ministry and to interact closely with the children further affirmed the Lord's leading to this area of service.

Currently, my ministry to the children consists of writing the Junior Worshippers' Devotion for the church weekly and the assigning of teachers to teach in various departments of the children's ministry. God willing, the children's website would be revamped soon. As I work together with my co-labourers in the church to maintain this website, it is my prayer that it will provide spiritually-edifying materials for the children. By the grace of God, I also serve in other ministries of Gethsemane: teaching the Bible in The Gethsemane Care Ministry every Wednesday, rendering my help to the Gethsemane Chinese Service by serving as a worship chairman and also preaching occasionally whenever I am called to the pulpit.

I am grateful for the opportunities to serve the Lord. I am only a servant, and it is the Lord who appoints me to serve Him in the areas of His choice. The Lord has guided me hitherto. Please pray that the Lord will grant me grace, wisdom and strength to minister faithfully and effectively in Gethsemane Children's Ministry and other ministries of the church.

NOTHING IS TOO HARD FOR THE LORD!

ELIEZER ORTEGA

Bro Eliezer Ortega leads The Gethsemane Care Ministry, Cebu. He oversees the physical and spiritual recovery of former drug addicts who have turned to the Lord. He also lectures in GBI. He is married to Arlaine, and they have three teenage children: Ellyn, Rezeile and Joshua.



the Lord had called me to serve.

Serving the Lord among the drug addicts was a remote possibility because there was not any such ministry at Gethsemane B-P Church, Cebu, nor was there a plan to set up one here. As I was in the final year of my studies, I continued

to pray for God's leading and guidance as to what ministry He would lead me to. I was a little apprehensive because the Lord had not shown me any area of service, much less a ministry to the drug addicts in Cebu. Plenty of resources are needed to start such a ministry in Cebu. There was even a time that I felt that maybe the Lord had not called me to serve among the drug addicts. Nevertheless, I prayed and committed my desire to the Lord. "For with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37). The words of the Lord to Jeremiah also helped me to cling on to the desire God had placed in me: "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" (Jeremiah 32:27).

God has His ways and in His perfect time when I was in my final semester, He impressed upon the hearts of Pastor Reggor, Pastor Koshy and Rev Paul Cheng to set up a ministry among the drug addicts in Cebu. It was an answer to my prayer and a

It is now almost a decade since I last entered the gates of a Christian drug rehabilitation centre for my drug addiction problem. I had no idea then that I would be serving in a ministry among the drug addicts.

After Christ had saved me from the bondage of drug addiction and sin, I felt God's call to study His Word, and I counted this as God's equipping me for His ministry but as to what ministry, I still did not know at that time. While I was studying at Far Eastern Bible College, I had the opportunity to minister to the ex-drug addicts in The Gethsemane Care Ministry in Singapore. This I did with great joy and my heart was greatly encouraged. Though I was also serving in other ministries of Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church, it was in The Gethsemane Care Ministry that I felt that

confirmation of His calling for me to serve among the drug addicts. The leaders of the Gethsemane B-P Church, Singapore, informed me of the church's plan to set up such a ministry in Cebu, and I willingly made known to them my desire to serve in this ministry. Thus, they sent me to serve in The Gethsemane Care Ministry, Cebu. I thank the Lord that my family is also very supportive of me, though this would mean that I would be spending more time in the ministry than with them.

By the grace of God, The Gethsemane Care Ministry, Cebu, has been set up. Through the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, it has opened its door to help people having problems with drug addiction. It is my constant prayer that the Lord may bring

people to this ministry and that it will be a blessing to them and their families.

The Lord's hand is not shortened in giving us opportunities to serve Him. Just recently, the Gethsemane Bible Institute has been set up to train faithful men to serve in the ministry. The Lord has also opened the door for me to serve Him in the teaching ministry here. In this, He has given me great joy and much gladness in my heart. May the Lord find us faithful in discharging our duties and responsibilities in serving Him.

Please uphold me in your prayer as I serve the Lord in these ministries.

All glory and honour be unto Him alone!



(Continued from page 18)

the Lord opened the door to a teaching ministry in the Bible College of East Africa (BCEA) in Nairobi, Kenya. "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). This was the honest cry of my heart in response to this calling.

The Lord was gracious to give me the burden to serve Him in this faraway land for three and a half years. Though away from home and kindred, the Lord was preparing me for the teaching ministry in my own land, as Gethsemane Bible Institute (GBI) formally opened on July 17, 2011. What a great joy to be teaching the Word of God to my own people now and even my very own wife who has enrolled to study part-time at GBI!

The systematic study of the Bible is necessary for the servants of Christ to be thoroughly equipped to serve Him (2 Timothy 3:16-17) in propagating the Gospel of truth (Mark 16:15) and "to earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

The Gethsemane Bible Institute (GBI) stands for the 100% Verbal Plenary Inspiration and the 100% Verbal Plenary Preservation of the Word of God. Upon this stand, we commit to God the theological training of faithful men "... who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2).

For the glory and honour of Christ.

MY TESTIMONY

RICHARD M. TIU

Bro Richard Tiu is a lecturer in Gethsemane Bible Institute, Cebu. He oversees the academic affairs of the Institute. He also preaches regularly in various mission churches of Gethsemane in the Philippines. He is married to Grace, and they have a teenage son, Angelo.



Philippines. When I went in for the interview, the words of Matthew 11:28 painted on the premises really caught my attention. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” It struck me as an invitation that I could not refuse. So I joined the one-year

rehabilitation programme on the 1st of February 2000. Little did I know that I was invited to experience God’s salvation that would thenceforth transform my entire life.

As I heard and read the Gospel, I soon came to realize my need for God’s mercy. His Word convicted me of all my sins and I wept and repented of them. By God’s grace, I came to know the Lord Jesus Christ and received Him as my Lord and personal Saviour. It was the start of a very blessed and meaningful life with Him. My life was restored physically, mentally and spiritually. I was reconciled once again with my family and most importantly, to my God.

Jesus said, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were

Before I became a Christian, I had been living off drugs for sixteen years of my life. When working, lying and stealing could no longer support this vice, I eventually had to resort to pushing drugs. Once, I ended up in jail after being arrested. Anyone on drugs for such a long period of time would most likely have given up all hope of rehabilitation. I myself had thought that one day I would die as a drug addict. I did try to quit a number of times, yet all ended up in bitter frustration. God knows I wanted to change but I just did not know how. One day, in my misery I just cried my heart out to God. “In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears” (Psalm 18:6).

The Lord heard my cry as I was led to a Christian drug rehabilitation ministry called the House of Hope in the

Once upon a time in my life, I was considered as “living dead”. But by the grace of God, He quickened me and gave me life. Thanks be to God!

dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (John 11:25-26). Once upon a time in my life, I was considered as “living dead”. But by the grace of God, He quickened me and gave me life. Thanks be to God!

While I was undergoing my drug rehabilitation programme, the Lord placed a burden in my heart to do something meaningful with my life. Though I did not know what it was then, nevertheless, I found myself saying, “Why not, Lord? This life would have long been destroyed had it not been for your grace and mercy.” At that point, I was not really sure how I could fulfil what the Lord wanted me to do.

Then towards the end of my programme, the Lord answered me from a sermon in John 15:16, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” Right there and then, the Word of God convicted me that it was not my choice after all. God was calling me to serve Him full-time in the ministry.

Right there and then, the Word of God convicted me that it was not my choice after all. God was calling me to serve Him full-time in the ministry.

Then, fear gripped my heart. How can a wreck like me bear fruit for the Lord? Again, the Lord answered in Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean

not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” So I thought to myself, “Surely, He who chose me will not send me unequipped to labour for Him.” And true enough, this was affirmed after the Lord opened the door for me to go to Singapore and study at the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) in 2001. Then followed four years of intense theological training – a period of much learning from the Word and growing in the faith.

Upon graduation in May 2005, I found myself serving the Lord at the House of Hope as a staff. But I found no peace particularly because the House of Hope no longer stood for the doctrine of the perfect preservation of the Scriptures. The change of leadership at the mother ministry in Singapore (The Helping Hand) had adversely affected the ministry’s doctrine and practice. And so I decided it was time to go.

The months that followed were a time of much wrestling with God in earnest prayer: “My Lord and my Master, guide me in the direction that I should take. I will do anything; I will go anywhere; as long as it is your will for me.” As I waited upon the Lord for His answer, I quietly helped out in small ways in the ministry of our church, the Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Mission Church in Cebu, the Philippines.

Towards the end of 2005, I was invited to join the 1st Gethsemane B-P Church’s Missionary Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. During that conference,

(Continued on page 16)

TESTIMONY OF CALLING

EDSEL LOCOT

Bro Edsel Locot, a graduate of Far Eastern Bible College, now serves the Lord as the missionary-in-charge of Gethsemane B-P Mission Church, Bohol, the Philippines.



church, and the pastor gladly welcomed me. Praise the Lord for His grace and mercy!

The pastor was amazed as he could not believe that I could have that kind of thirst and hunger to know more of God and His Word. Even I myself was amazed that such a desire came into my heart so quickly.

I praise and thank the Lord Jesus Christ for saving me from all my sins and punishment in hell. I want to thank Him also for giving me the privilege and the opportunity to serve Him full-time in the ministry. I first felt the burden to serve full-time in the ministry way back in the year 1998 after my conversion. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and personal Saviour on June 18, 1998. I was 20 years old at that time. Thank God for the pastor from the Church of the Nazarene whom He used to preach and share the Gospel with me.

After my conversion (a few hours after I accepted Jesus as my Lord and personal Saviour), with all sincerity to obey the Lord, I decided to stay with the pastor in the church parsonage so that I could be away from my friends who were still hooked on drug and other vices. I also thought that staying in the parsonage would give me more time to read the Word of God, and to be nurtured in the teachings and doctrines of the church. I knocked at the door of the

I believed that it was the work of the Holy Spirit. I stayed in the church parsonage for four months only (June 18 – October 18, 1998) and on October 19, 1998, I went to Cebu to study God’s Word at Visayan Nazarene Bible College. Since the very first day of my stay in the church parsonage until my last day, I kept on reading the Word of God with great joy and enthusiasm, and by the grace of God I gained more knowledge of the Bible. I came to understand and see very clearly that the teachings, doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church are not biblical, and must be rejected and corrected.

Being with the pastor in the church parsonage most of the time had been a great opportunity for me to be exposed to the ministry. I accompanied the pastor

I believe that it was the Holy Spirit who touched my heart and gave me the hunger and thirst for God.

every time for home visitation, Bible study and evangelism. The pastor also assigned duties to me in the church such as cleaning the surroundings of the church and preparing the worship place every Sunday. I did all my duties wholeheartedly and with great joy. With all these experiences, the Lord put a burden in my heart to serve Him in the ministry so that I can proclaim the Gospel of Christ to my loved ones, friends and neighbours.

With a great desire to serve God in the ministry, I committed myself to be trained theologically. That was why I decided

to enrol in Visayan Nazarene Bible College on October 19, 1998. I told myself that after I have finished my studies, I would go back to my hometown and serve the Lord full-time. So with great joy and excitement, I studied the Word of God and was exposed to various ministries. But in November 1999 during the second half of my 3rd semester, I fell again into my old sins. My old friends visited me in the Bible College and tempted me to take drugs. Instead of resisting the devil through prayer, pleading for God's help, I yielded to the temptation and got hooked on drugs once again. So I was using drugs secretly inside the Bible College, and worst of all, five Bible College students got hooked on drugs because of me. But according to His grace and mercy, God exposed my sins. My foolishness was made known to the principal and he decided to put me in a drug rehabilitation centre.

Indeed, the Lord is so good,
gracious and merciful unto me...
the Lord gradually restored
and revived my spirit and I
was made whole again. Indeed,
God is forgiving and loving to a
repentant sinner.

Thank God that they put me in a Christian drug rehabilitation centre called the House of Hope where the Word of God was taught every day. The moment I went in, I kept on asking God to give back to me His gift of salvation that I had lost. (In the Church of the Nazarene, we were taught that salvation can be lost.) But the director of the drug ministry, who is a graduate of Far Eastern

Bible College, Singapore, kept on preaching about eternal security. Upon hearing the doctrine of eternal security, I was so blessed and encouraged to know that according to the Scriptures my

salvation was not lost after all. I realized that I did not need to ask God to return to me His gift of salvation but all I needed to do was to repent and ask Him to restore the joy of His salvation (cf. Psalm 51:12). Indeed, the Lord is so good, gracious and merciful unto me. While I was undergoing my one-year programme, the Lord gradually restored and revived my spirit and I was made whole again. Indeed, God is forgiving and loving to a repentant sinner.

Six months into my programme, the director asked me if I was willing to continue my theological training at Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) in Singapore. Immediately, I answered yes because I knew that this offer was from the Lord. Surely, the Lord knew my desire to serve Him. By God's grace, in July 2001, I went to Singapore and studied God's Word in FEBC together

with Pastor Reggor Galarpe and Bros Kent Limosnero, Richard Tiu and Rio Espejon. Thank God for sustaining me and providing for all my needs during my studies and stay in Singapore. For three years, I studied God's Word in FEBC, and I thank God for my lecturers who had faithfully taught me.

With God's help, I was able to finish my studies and graduate with a Diploma in Theology. Indeed, the theological training I received at FEBC prepared me to serve the Lord full-time in the ministry. In May 2004, I graduated and came back to the Philippines for good, where I served in the House of Hope. Here, I became a full-time staff and was assigned to preach and teach the Word of God to the recovering drug addicts. I was also given the task of handling the preschool ministry. I enjoyed the time teaching the little ones Bible stories and memory verses.

Sometime in 2005, I went to my hometown for a holiday together with some staff of House of Hope. During our holiday, I observed that the Church of the Nazarene where I stayed after my conversion had closed down. The people there told me that it had been three years already. Upon hearing that, my heart broke and I immediately started to pray in my heart that the Lord would send another pastor to take care of the flock. During our holiday, we did not plan to stay in a hotel because I decided to stay in

I pitied the believers who were scattered like sheep without a shepherd, so I prayed again that the Lord would send a preacher to that church...we prayed that God willing, Gethsemane would start a mission church and I would be a missionary there.

the church. I went to the sister who kept the keys to the parsonage, and I was glad that she allowed us to stay in the church parsonage.

After our holiday, as we went back to Cebu, my heart was so heavy because I felt sad as to why no preacher was sent to that church for three years. I pitied the believers who were scattered like sheep without a shepherd, so I prayed again that the Lord would send a preacher to that church. I immediately shared with Pastor Reggor my burden.

Months later, Pastor Koshy together with Deacon Daniel Lim went to Cebu to visit the mission church. It was then that Pastor Reggor shared with Pastor Koshy the condition of the church in Bohol. Without hesitation, Pastor Koshy decided that on the next day, we would go to my hometown to see the place. By God's grace, for the first

time, Pastor Koshy, Pastor Reggor and Deacon Daniel Lim visited Bohol. That very day, we prayed that God willing, Gethsemane would start a mission church and I would be the missionary there.

In December 2005, Gethsemane

Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore, held its First Missionary Conference in Malaysia. I thank God that Pastor Koshy and the Session of Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore, invited me to the conference. During the Missionary

Conference, Pastor Koshy and the Session of Gethsemane called me for a meeting to discuss my burden to start a church in my hometown under Gethsemane. I thank God that they shared my burden and decided to support me.

In July 2006, I went to my hometown to start the mission church. We rented a small bungalow house where we could have our worship service and other fellowship activities. In our first worship service in Bohol, almost half of the members of Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church, Cebu, led by Pastor Reggor came to join us, to assist and encourage me in the work of the Lord. Three weeks after our first worship service was the inauguration of the Church and this time, Pastor Koshy, Elder Mah and some members of Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore, came. By God's grace and mercy, the mission church in Bohol is now five years old. Thank God for His guidance and for sustaining the missionary and the members of the church.

Truly, I am grateful and thankful to the Lord for saving me from all my sins and from the consequent punishment in hell. He even

gives me the opportunity and privilege to serve Him full-time in the ministry. Once, I was just a hearer of God's Word but now according to His grace and mercy He enabled me and called me to become a preacher of God's Word. Please continue to pray that the Lord will continue to use me in proclaiming the Gospel in my province so that many more will be saved to serve the Lord one day.

Once, I was just a hearer of God's Word but now according to His grace and mercy He enabled me and called me to become a preacher of God's Word.

May the Lord grant me wisdom and help as I fulfil my duties and responsibilities as a missionary and a preacher. I also thank God for the opportunity to teach in Gethsemane Bible Institute that was inaugurated on July 17, 2011. It is my prayer that many brethren from the Philippines will be trained in this institution, and one day preach the Gospel in different places in this country.

All glory and honour be to God!

"Sanctity in ministers is a loud call to sinners to repent, and when allied with holy cheerfulness it becomes wondrously attractive."

Charles H. Spurgeon

BIBLE TRIVIA - EXODUS 1

Sarah Yong

READ THE PASSAGE FROM YOUR BIBLE. EACH SHADED BOX CONTAINS THREE DESCRIPTIONS OF PEOPLE MENTIONED IN EXODUS 1. GIVE THE ANSWER FOR EACH CATEGORY BY FILLING IN THE REMAINING LETTERS IN THE BOXES. USE THE NUMBERED LETTERS TO REVEAL THE SPECIAL MESSAGE BELOW.

- KNEW NOT JOSEPH
- TOLD SHIPHRAH AND PUAH TO KILL NEWBORN BOYS
- COMMANDED THAT MALE BABIES BE CAST INTO THE RIVER

K _ _ _ _
17 11 10 3

- TWO WOMEN
- INSTRUCTED TO KILL MALE BABIES AFTER DELIVERY
- THEY FEARED GOD AND HE DEALT WELL WITH THEM

H _ _ _ _ _
1 16 5 7

- WERE FRUITFUL, AND INCREASED ABUNDANTLY AND MULTIPLIED
- FORCED TO DO MANUAL LABOUR
- WAXED VERY MIGHTY AND MULTIPLIED

C _ _ _ _ _
13 8 15 6 2

- AFFLICTED THE ISRAELITES
- MADE THEM WORK WITH RIGOUR
- MADE THEIR LIVES BITTER WITH HARD BONDAGE

E _ _ _ _ _
9 12 14 4

SPECIAL MESSAGE!

1 2 3 4 4 3 5 6 4 3 7 3 8 9 10 11 3 12 13 14 12
 _ _ _ _ _ ; 12 13 14 12
 15 3 14 8 3 12 13 12 13 3 2 10 8 5
K
 16 14 2 17 3 12 13 6 11 13 6 4 16 14 9 4

The two women in Exodus chapter 1 feared God and chose to obey Him. It pleases the Lord when we fear the Lord, obey His Word and walk in His way. Do you know where to find the above verse in the Bible?

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