



Building Up a Godly Family

The church's theme for the new year is "Making Christ Known". One of the ways we make Christ known is the way we conduct ourselves as Christians. Remember, we are to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). With this in mind, as believers, we are to exhort and build each other up to walk worthily of the vocation we are called. Hence, this year, the theme of the Lively Stones will be "Building up the Godly Family".

Building Up vs. Tearing Down

As believers, we are to grow in grace. A children's song goes, "Read your bible, pray everyday if you want to grow". When we are growing, our spiritual health is good, we can testify of God's goodness by our conduct alone. When other brethren see us so, they are in turn spurred to grow too. That is building up in one way.

Contrary, when we are not spiritually well ourselves, our thinking and perception are not of God and we will manifest characteristics unbecoming as believers. This can sometimes result in strife, discouragement to the walk of others etc. This is tearing down.

The Godly Family

The godly family will span from our own family unit to the big family in church. Our family unit can be as small as just two persons, namely husband and wife to include children and grandparents etc.

(Continued on back page)

Making Christ Known

"And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child." (Luke 2:17)

We had just commemorated the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ last week! The first advent of our Lord Jesus Christ was most exciting. Angels declared His coming! The shepherds became the first carollers to broadcast His holy birth. The gospel writer Dr Luke told us in Luke 2:17 that the shepherds "made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child (Jesus Christ)". Matthew told us that wise men from the east travelled long distances to see the young child Jesus Christ. It must be an extremely exciting time for these carollers of the first Noel. Let us survey the Word of God and learn some lessons from this first Christmas.

"When they had seen"

God first made known to the shepherds concerning the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ through the angels. These shepherds were "abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night" (Luke 2:8), i.e. they were performing their routine duties when they received the good news. These shepherds were found labouring in fields. They were diligently in service. The good news came as a reward to them. What seemed to be another ordinary and routine tour of duty became an eternally blessed experience for them. As they listened to the declaration of the arrival of baby Jesus by the angels, their hearts were filled with saving faith and they believed every word spoken by the heavenly hosts. They acted upon this saving faith and went to look for the baby Jesus – "let us go" resulted in their becoming the first witnesses of the birth of Christ! Seeing is not believing, BUT believing

is seeing! They acted upon their saving faith and went to seek out Jesus. Their saving faith enabled them to see the miracle child. What an honour and privilege to be first witnesses of Christ. Lesson number one is: The first step to "Making Christ Known" is to know Christ first. Do you know Christ personally like the way the shepherds had known Him? If you do not know Christ personally, you cannot make him known. There is no reason for you to make Christ known. On the contrary, if you had known Christ and met with Him personally, you long to make Him known to every one that you come across. This is the power of the Gospel.

"And when they had seen it, they made known abroad"

Christian witnessing is a by-product of sound conversion. No one needs to coerce you to evangelise. Jesus told the apostles, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) The disciples

1. Know Christ first!

2. Be Witnesses for Christ!

3. Live a Christ-centred life!

became witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ, and were able to present the gospel to every one they met. Like the shepherds, they made known abroad the Lord Jesus Christ to the lost world. We are living in the last days. The tsunamis strike on Boxing Day last Lord's Day (26th December 2004) is another of a

(Continued on back page)

Making Christ Known

(Continued from front page)

series of natural catastrophe in recent months. Jesus told the disciples “*there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places*” (Matthew 24:7). “*All these are the beginning of sorrows.*” (Matthew 24:8) Do we need to wait for tragedy to strike before we repent from our sins and start to witness for the Lord? God forbid. Lesson number two is: Be witnesses for Christ! Making Christ known wherever we are.

“Concerning this child”

The shepherds had one common message for the lost world – “*this child*” – the Lord Jesus Christ! Yes, Christ should be the perpetual common theme in our daily conversation. We must live a Christ-centred life. When we realise how much God loves us by sending His only begotten Son to die for us, we will want to live a holy life for Him. We will create every possible opportunity to share the gospel message with those who are outside the kingdom of Christ. “Making Christ known” soon becomes our preoccupation. When the Church is touched by the saving grace of God, and receives saving faith to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church will have no time for infightings and schisms. The spirit of carnality in the Corinthian Churches very much exists

in our church today! There are those who would champion their dogma at the expense of church unity and Christian love. Christ came to offer us salvation and peace with God. We are to focus our life mission to spread the gospel message to the lost world rather than creating human empires to seek personal gains and recognition. Lesson number three is: Live a Christ-centred life and be witnesses for Christ.

As we begin this New Year 2005, let us unite our hearts to pray for the lost and seek them out. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ’s life mission is clearly stated thus, “*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*” (Luke 19:10) May the Lord give us grace in our hearts to be obedient to his infallible and inerrant words and help us to live to glorify Christ and Christ alone. Let the Sunday School staff and students work together to “Make Christ Known” – in line with the theme of the church in 2005. May the Lord find us actively serving Him and making Him known throughout the New Year. Amen.

*Yours in Christ,
Elder Sherman Ong
General Superintendent
Romans 15:13*

(Continued from Front page)

With the individual family units combined, we will have the big family unit. Thus it is important to first build up strongly our own small family unit so that we can be better and stronger instruments to work on the bigger church family.

God willing, with the above two points in mind, there will be articles focusing on the different ages, (the toddlers to the seniors), and the different stages and roles in life (singles, married, parents, grandparents, children, husband and wife). You can also read of the testimonies of our brethren and be encouraged. Let us all learn how we can play a role to nurture the young and to encourage and exhort our peers and seniors in this earthly pilgrimage.

Although we try to include as much scope in the articles, the areas we focus on are not exhaustive. But it is the prayer of the editorial team that we can all benefit from the testimonies and the biblical knowledge of our fellow brethren. In addition, we can spur each other to read and study the bible more so as to glean much into God’s Word ourselves.

Let us remember that each day we are living *Coram Deo*, before the face of God. So may we all strive and encourage one another to walk well in the Lord and work towards building up the godly family.

*Julia Koh
Editorial*

Announcement

- **TODAY is Promotional Sunday.**
All SS teachers, please take note of students promoted up to your class.
- **Staff Dedication to be held TODAY at 10:45 am Worship Service.** All Sunday School staff and teachers please be present.
- **1st Exco Meeting on 16 January 05.**
- **The Editorial Team wishes everyone a very Blessed New Year.**
- **2005 Elected Sunday School Executive Committee:**
 - ◇ General Superintendent - Eld Ong Eng Lam
 - ◇ Assistant General Superintendent - Dn Lim Ching Wah
 - ◇ Secretary - Mrs Jennifer Goh
 - ◇ Treasurer - Mr Winston Chiam
 - ◇ Registrar - Mr Vincent Goh
 - ◇ Department Superintendent (Adults) - Mr John Ching
 - ◇ Department Superintendent (Seniors) - Mr Joel Seah
 - ◇ Department Superintendent (Young Teens) - Pr Mark Chen
 - ◇ Department Superintendent (Juniors) - Mr Timothy Soh
 - ◇ Department Superintendent (Primary) - Mrs Phoebe Wong

**Editorial Team:
Mrs Julia Koh, Mrs Selina Lee**

Corrigendum: The editorial apologises for the error in issue 12/2004. Under Sunday School Exco 2005, Mr Wilson Chiam should read “Winston Chiam”.