

The
Dying
Testimony
of



Benedict Tay

THE HISTORIC JOURNEY—MY PAST

“Behold, I was shapen [brought forth] in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps 51:5).

Of truth, I was born an awful sinner, a rebel of the true, living God, on 31 October 1961—what a day—the day God raised a man named Martin Luther and caused him to pin 95 theses on the door of the Roman Catholic Church, refuting its leaven—insulting heresies in the 16th Century Reformation, proclaiming and openly declaring by the Word of God that “The just shall live by faith” (Rom 1:17; Hab 2:4). Mrs Ronny Khoo of Tabernacle B-P Church once commented that she saw no reason why I should not become a Christian, especially in the Reformed Protestant faith.

I was born to non-Christian parents. My father had two wives. Being the youngest, I had two elder brothers and an elder sister, Jenny. Out of spite and jealousy, my father’s first wife often abused my mom and my sister.

My mom had always led a hard life since she was born in Tanjung Pinang, Indonesia. She did not even know who her parents were. She was sold to a neighbour as a child-slave, suffering under the hands of a vicious, rod-bashing mistress. My dad was a sailor from China. The Lord in His good pleasure led him to deliver her from slavery, and together they left for Johore, thereafter to settle in Singapore. Out of gratitude, my mom married him. They

went through thick and thin during the Japanese Occupation.

When the war was over, Dad resumed his sailing and went home to China several times. He then summed up enough courage to inform my mom that he already had a wife in China, and she intended to come to Singapore. Being a timid and submissive person, my mom had no objections. But no woman would like to have her husband shared with someone else. While my mom was accommodating, my dad's bitter first wife was not. She abused my mom until my dad could tolerate no more, and decided to drive her away. In deep hatred, she left with my second brother (who was born to her). From then onwards, whenever she saw my mom, she would beat her up in public. I was too young to defend her, and I could only look on helplessly.

In 1970, my dad passed away unsaved. I was only nine then. In order to bring us up, my mom resorted to washing clothes for neighbours, gluing (pasting) paper bags and ice cream wrappers, just to make ends meet.

In 1977, my eldest brother (who was adopted) got married. Then in 1980, Jenny also got married and moved out.

When I went to national service in 1979, I was informed by my eldest brother that, due to some difficulties on his part, he could no longer allow me to stay with him. So I decided to make my administrative

work in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) a life-long career (or escapade), so that I could stay overseas or in camp always, without worrying about “a roof” over my head. Never did I know that it was going to be the SAF which would be paying all my medical bills amounting to over S\$100,000 a year in days to come. All thanks to the Providence of God!

In 1989, my mom decided to come to Bukit Batok to stay with me in my room, for in 1985 my brother-in-law in his kindness had taken me in. She enjoyed much peace with us until the storm came again—which was the beginning of the Lord’s divine salvation of my mom and me (Rom 8:28).

In July 1991, my mom was diagnosed to be suffering from tuberculosis. (The Lord had earlier healed her in 1978 when she contracted severe cholera, a condition so fatal that she almost died.) As a result, she needed to go daily to the specialist clinic at Jurong East for blood test and injection. My loving, longsuffering Christian sister, took the burden upon herself to bring mom for treatment, and again I could only sit and do nothing. Whenever my mom coughed in the night, my heart pained. She had always loved her children equally (including my second brother who was also patient and kind in nature, though unsaved in the Lord), but we always took her for granted. It was not until December 1991 that my mom was completely healed.

As for me, 1991 was also a challenging year. I had earlier injured myself in an overseas training exercise in March, which required me to rest for a month to fully recover. Then in December, I injured myself again during the physical fitness test (IPPT), requiring one month to recover. After this, immediately, I was stricken with chickenpox, but the climax was yet to come. In mid-February 1992, after recovering from chickenpox, I was diagnosed to be suffering from leukaemia, which was in my case incurable.

The ordeal continued. In March and April, my mom started having dizzy spells and would vomit a lot, but all her children took it lightly, thinking that she could be suffering from indigestion. But those symptoms were actually the signs of another major sickness. In May my mom had a stroke which paralysed the left side of her body, causing her to be bedridden permanently until December, when the Lord took her home.

Through all these trials and tribulations, the Lord granted me new insight into LIFE. By His mercy He transformed me from a plastic, outward Christian (since 1975), to a Rock-set, born-again believer. In His Divine grace He changed me from a staunch lover of men's praise to a self-awaring sinner, ever dependent of His grace.

I once thought, "I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing" (Rev 3:17), but the Lord opened my sin-sick eyes to see that, deep inside, I was

actually wretched, miserable, blind and naked (Rev 3:17). He made me to understand that those whom He loves, He rebukes and chastens, so as to cause us to repent and turn to Him (Rev 3:19-20). Through His infallible Word, the Bible, through His ministers, and through His children, whom He had immaculately placed in my path, He turned this prodigal son back to Himself (Luke 15:10-24). In His Divine pleasure, He had also answered a prayer made by me in 1986. Soon after I was born again, my mom received the Lord, and was baptised in October 1992.

In Vanity Fair—The World

By nature, God made me a “sociable” person, as seen in the eyes of the world. While bestowed with much talents of God, I did not use them to glorify Him. In 1975, when I was in Secondary Two, I was superficially “converted” by a few of my Christian classmates. Due to lack of proper follow-up, no difference was made. I went on with my life, enjoying life (or death?) to the fullest. I continued to do the things I took pride in—anything to do with the stage, from public speaking, acting, singing, dancing and even cheerleading. I aspired to be a crowd puller, to enjoy every success and praise and recognition that came my way. Even up to late 1991, I had made quite an impact in certain nightspots. My audience liked me because I was able to sing in many languages, with suave showmanship. I attempted songs that no other performer dared, to prove my worth. I wanted everybody’s attention

to be focused on me and me alone, as “I am the star, the centre of attraction, see and hear me tonight!” How immoral and definitely godless was my lifestyle then. I would do anything to get what I wanted. (Now, as I recall, if St Paul addressed himself as the chief of sinners, I wonder what would appropriately describe me, probably the chief of sinners to the power of infinity!)

Amidst the vainglory, false glamour and publicity that I was enjoying, something deep inside was strangely wrong. I felt tremendously EMPTY even when I was doing well both at work and at play. I could stand in the presence of thousands applauding me in acceptance, but I felt EMPTY and HELPLESSLY LONELY (Isa 55:2).

Secular friends come easy. I would pick up the tab, and we would eat, drink and be merry. I longed for true friendship in the world, and yet I found none. Because of my temperamental and tantrum-throwing ways, no one could tolerate me. And yet I remained unrepentant and refused to change, even when my conscience kept pricking me.

Though successful in the world, I still found no PEACE. Though fit as a fiddle physically, that hospitals, doctors, and nurses never crossed my mind, there was still no peace. I was so helpless, so lonely!

Until one day, 14 February 1992, I came face to face with my God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and everything began to change. God has made us in His image, and has

placed in us a God-shaped vacuum that only He, and He alone, could fill. Only communion with Him could eradicate that emptiness.

*“O Lord, Thou hast made us for Thyself,
and our souls are restless till they find rest
in Thee.”*

St Augustine

THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY—ON THE DAMASCUS ROAD AND BEYOND

According to the pleasure of His mighty counsel and good will, the Lord saved me. In the saving of a soul, the Lord works in mysterious ways. My salvation was no exception.

The Awakening

The Spirit of the Lord personally began to work in my heart. On the morning of 13 February 1992, my medical colleagues collected samples of my blood for a blood test. Towards the end of the day, the medical officer (normally he was the most ‘idolised’ of all officers in the SAF because he had authority to bestow MCs!) phoned me and told me to see him first thing in the morning, as something very serious might have happened to me.

That night, I felt strangely peaceful. The Lord had planted a term in my mind and wanted me to go in strength and in peace (Ps 71:16).

The next day was St Valentine’s Day. Doctor Selva, the medical officer, looked very grave as he bade me into the consultation room. Upon examining me, he dared not confirm his findings and looked even more grave. He even requested another medical officer who had earlier seen me for chickenpox to re-examine me.

Finally, the truth was out. Both of them suspected leukaemia, the cancer of the blood. When informed, my

answer to them was strange, just an “Oh?!” and asked nothing further. In me there were no signs of shock or unbelief, just peace returning to me for the first time. I knew this peace was due to the fact that the Lord had planted the term “leukaemia” in my mind. So even when my medical colleagues asked the doctor of my response, they simply did not know what to think.

Doctor Selva was the student of one Professor Y O Tan, a renowned and experienced oncologist at the National University Hospital (NUH). He decided to refer me to him. By God’s arrangement I was given immediate referral (normally not possible in so short a time) to see Professor Tan on Saturday 16 February 1992.

As I waited at the corridor of the medical centre for the referral documents. I was thinking, “Good! At last I am going to leave this mad, mad world, and be home with the Lord.” It was in the later months that I realised that the Lord through my illness, had a higher purpose for me (John 11:4). But a sudden sadness also gripped me, “How am I going to tell my mom? Will she be able to take the blow?” She had suffered tremendously all her life for her children, how could I ever break this news to her? As I pondered, I wept.

The encounter with Professor Tan was an unforgettable experience. Frankness like his is rare today, he told me I would die in 3 to 5 years’ time (but later upon examination, due to genetic setbacks, this life span would

be reduced even more). He also informed me that I would have to be admitted into hospital for a series of tests and observation.

The Spiritual Growth

I decided to attend Church, seriously seeking the Lord, on Sunday 17 February 1992. I chose to attend services at Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church as one of my colleagues of old, brother Bernard Pan, attended that Church. I had actually visited him once in 1988 out of mere curiosity. But he was away helping in a sister Church. So leaving me with not much of an impression, I returned to the pomp (or is it worthlessness?) and splendour (or is it vanity?) of the world. This time in 1992, I had come in humble adoration to seek God in Christ, the only Way, Truth and Life (John 14:6). I owe all these again to God's grace. Since I would have to be warded the very next day, the Lord bestowed sufficient strength and peace to prepare me for the unknown.

In Prinsep Street, the Lord blessed me with convicting, powerful messages from the Word of God, given by Pastors Joe Mok, Peter Poon and Chris Chia. They became my first teachers in the faith.

I started attending the "Discovery Class" led by Pastor Chris and found that I was only a hell-bound, sin-stricken, judgment-awaiting, self-righteous, wretched creature in the presence of God. It was Christ, our only Mediator and

God (1 Tim 2:5) who loved me and gave Himself for me (Gal 2:20). It was His Blood shed on the cruel cross for me and His finished work of redemption in perfect obedience to God the Father that reconciled us awful sinners to the all perfect and just God. His Blood not only cleanses us of all sins, His perfect righteousness was also clothed upon us as if we had never sinned. How wonderful! How marvellous! What more, He is ever at God's right hand interceding, pleading for us, and awaiting to bring us to glory. Such is the Love of God! What Blessed Truth!

Together with me in this class was a loving couple, brother Alan and sister Mary (both baptised in November 1992). Like me, they came seeking for the truth, after being disappointed with Catholicism, Buddhism and Atheism. I thank God that Alan's questions about the faith were often sharp and relentless, but the Lord granted Pastor Chris straightforward answers taken from the Bible to convict and convince us, so we were often "cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37). Since then they have been serving the Lord with gladness in various ministries. Praise God! May He continue to keep and bless them.

Upon completing the Discovery class, the group decided to begin a weekly Bible-Study class. It was through this class that we continued to see the truth and goodness of the Lord, and we grew gradually in spirituality.

I continued seeking the Lord by attending the 10-week catechism course which prepared me to publicly confess the Lord in Baptism. By God's grace, I was baptised on 2 August 1992.

The Encouragement Ministry

One month before my baptism, my heart was heavily burdened. I had received so much goodness from the Lord and yet I was unable to serve Him in return. The Holy Spirit, my Comforter, had prompted me as a patient to understand another patient better. I was not certain whether the calling was sure, neither was I confident to go forth.

So on 4 July 1992, by the hand of God working through brother Tyng Yong of Life B-P Church Chinese Service and also brother Gideon who attends Life Bible Class (LBC) and Life B-P Church English Service, I was brought to attend my first LBC meeting on that day. I have found great usefulness in encouraging others in Life B-P Church, especially when this Church not only has a large congregation, but also many daughter churches. One of the churches, Calvary Pandan BPC even has an evening Worship Service, the Sunset Gospel Hour. Thus Life Church gave me ample opportunities for my intended ministry.

About 18 B-P brethren attended my baptism at Prinsep Street. I was honestly very moved. After 3 weeks of

praying, the Lord confirmed my ministry by leading me to Deacon Joanne Low of Prinsep Street to embark on visitation programmes, both to hospitalised church brethren and those elderly members who were unable to attend church. I discovered great joy and satisfaction in this ministry. Praise God! He has shown us that when we bring joy and warmth to others, our own problems become so insignificant. The question is, are we willing to do all things as unto a faithful Creator, and are we willing to be used by Him for His glorification?

By September 1992, the Lord allowed me to do my ministry both in Life and Prinsep, both in encouragement and counselling, all empowered of God. Left alone, without Christ, we could do nothing (John 15:5). When I shifted my worship to Life in the morning services, I would occasionally attend the Prinsep evening service, as the Prinsep brethren had been constantly on my mind. Praying for one another, wherever we are, produces unexpected results. All thanks to God!

I thank the Lord that He has raised up our beloved Pastor, Rev Timothy Tow, who through the empowering of the Lord, strengthens and grounds us in the faith (which was once for all delivered to the saints) in simple, plain truth. May God continue to help His separatist churches to guard this faith jealously, even unto death. And let us all as His unprofitable servants, continue to go forth, in the joy of the Lord, to do His bidding. May God help us!

My ministry did not end even when I was taking care of my mom during her illness, and during the times when I was warded. Nothing was lost. The Lord in His sweet counsel often transformed the ward into a mission field for me and my visiting brethren. My bed was transformed into a counselling centre for burdened souls. The love of God indeed binds us together. All praise be unto Him!

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

(John 8:32)

MEETING THE AFFLICTED WITNESSES OF GOD

Our God is Almighty, the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb 13:8). What you are about to read is a record of His faithfulness (Lam 3:22-26) in protecting and providing for His own afflicted children.

Sister Betty Lim (Ang Mo Kio Brethren Church)

By the Lord's arrangement, I visited her on my baptismal day (how memorable!). How blessed! Through word of mouth among the brethren who attended the Fundamental Christian Ministry at National University of Singapore, we came to know of her struggle. This sister was someone who had been serving the Lord with gladness in Sunday School since the mid-60s, and had been a great encouragement to all. In March 1992 she was diagnosed to be having stomach cancer. The doctors had to remove her whole stomach in order to prolong her life. As the operation was not successful, this sister had to go through many follow-up operations to mend the leak.

Even when she was bed-ridden at NUH, she never failed to encourage us to look to God. While we always took eating and drinking so much for granted, it was so difficult for Betty to even crave for a glass of water. I guess we ought to be more thankful. I was really touched by her faith, and also by the way God was working through her, how she could bring her large family together

in love. All, except one of her elder brothers, were converted then.

The close bond was also evident among the church brethren who visited her. Week after week a faithful group would come with a pastor to share messages of God and to partake of the Lord's Supper with her. Many a time, the Lord granted me, together with a few B-P brethren, the opportunity to be present with her. Indeed, what a privilege it was to be gathered in the name of the Lord (Matt 18:20), rejoicing ever in His presence! Judging from the amount of get-well cards pasted on the wall and also the floral baskets, mutual love planted by God was prominent.

Homegoing for Betty came 7 months later, on Sunday 20 December 1992. She was 44 then. Before that she was already in a coma. Her family members contacted sister Bee Bee of Tabernacle B-P Church and said that Betty, while she was conscious, had requested us to sing her hymns before she went. So I went with a group of NUS students comprising of Elaine, Tyng Yong, Gideon, Jia Yen, Bee Bee and nurse Ser Yee (an LBCian) to visit her. As I whispered words of peace into her ears, a tear rolled down her cheek, while she was gasping for breath. We sang Fanny Crosby's "Saved by Grace." The whole isolation room was filled with weeping. She went home to be with the Lord two hours later.

Countless brethren attended her vigil service. Seats were all filled, leaving many standing in gratitude. A lady went up to speak in remembrance of her, how in one year during Chinese New Year, when this sister was in grief and pain after losing both her parents in an accident and was not able to celebrate, Betty went forth to visit her, despite the fact that many shunned in superstition, Christians included. She remembered distinctly how Betty brought her favourite almond cookies and chicken curry, and only requested that this backslidden sister would return to Christ, to church with her children. After giving her testimony, she broke down uncontrollably.

Betty's testimony was ever so bright that her only unsaved brother was converted during the funeral. Betty's mother, also converted by her years earlier, was thankful to God that her daughter suffered no more.

The Lord's timing was perfect. Betty was buried only one lot away from my mom, who had been laid to rest five days earlier.

Sister Lim Sing Choo
(Calvary Pandan B-P Church, Chinese Service)

When I first met sister Lim in 1992, she was the assistant manager of Scripture Union Bookshop in Bukit Merah. She impressed me as someone ever filled with joy. One day in 1993 while I was waiting to see Doctor Freddy, the person in charge of my case, sister Lim came

and greeted me with her usual cheerfulness and warmth. To my astonishment she was also a leukaemia patient for the past 12 years, and she was the professor's longest surviving patient. I could not imagine the amount of suffering and pain she must have gone through, but I know the Lord had His purpose and plan for her. I thank God for the joy and strength that He had bestowed upon her. Comparing her sufferings with mine, mine was really nothing at all.

She was subsequently warded in September 1993 because her sickness had reached the point of no return. During those days while she was still sober, she continued to confess Christ and even encouraged the mother of a dying leukaemia patient, strengthening her in the Lord. In gladness she continued to encourage until she was no longer able to do so. Through the conduct of her two children, one aged 16, the other 12, I was able to see that they were indeed brought up in the fear and knowledge of the Lord.

Sister Lim also had a big, close-knit family in the Lord. Her own brothers and sisters were praying, interceding, for her. All praise to a God of love, who gave us so much to love!

Sister Lim passed over to glory in October 1993. The Lord had spared her of her sufferings. Huge crowds turned up for her vigil service. Though all of us would certainly miss her, God be praised! In Christ we will meet again,

one glorious day. Oh! What a Blessed Hope in the Risen Saviour!

Sister Lily Low
(Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church)

Visiting sister Low was the Lord's first assignment for me in the hospital ministry. Before that we never met. When informed by Deacon Jansen, I picked up sufficient courage to visit her at Toa Payoh Hospital, where she was warded for lung infection. Deep inside, I had no confidence at all. So I prayed and went forth.

Her first words struck me the deepest. She kept repeating the same words whenever we conversed, "Have Faith in God—God Never Fails." These words came from a 76-year old sister, who had been attending Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church since she was three years old.

Deacon Jansen and I visited her at home a few times after her discharge. A week after our last visit to her, she departed to be with the Lord.

Brother Goh Kah Heng

Of all the brethren I had visited in NUH, brother Kah Heng was the least familiar; but the impact he left on my life was among the greatest.

We had originally wanted to visit this leukaemia patient (in his mid-20s) in November 1993 at his home with the Christian nurses of Ward 57, but due to personal

commitments, were unable to do so. One day, staff nurse Ong, another sister-in-Christ working in Clinic F, informed me that Kah Heng was already warded in Ward 57, waiting for time.

As the visit to Kah Heng was also a first time for me, I resolved by God's grace to encourage him. But instead of encouraging him, I became much strengthened by him. Although his condition was already critical, he was bleeding profusely inside and one eye was already blinded by the bleeding, he kept turning us to God. His trust in the Lord had also caused other patients to believe. When I visited him the last time by his death bed, he was so peaceful and serene. The Lord knows how to comfort His children.

*“What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
leaning on the everlasting arms.”*

**BROTHER HENDRO (Life B-P Church)
AND BROTHER HERMAN LEONG
(Kam Yan Cantonese Methodist Church)**

By the Lord's leading, members of the hospital ministry comprising Ada, Chia Liang, Bei Fang of Life, Chong Kiat, Tan Chyi, Elaine, Jia Yen, and many others of Calvary Pandan came to know of this person named Hendro. He was an Indonesian young man who was involved in a fatal accident in Tanjung Pinang. He was travelling on a motorcycle as a pillion rider on the way to Tanjung Uban when the motorcycle crashed onto a pickup. His Malay friend, who was the rider, died on the spot. Hendro, then unconverted, was seriously injured in the right leg. Hendro's mom, a believer, sought help to send her son to Singapore for better treatment. The Lord heard her prayers. She came to Singapore, and Hendro was hospitalised at NUH.

When in Singapore, Hendro faced the dilemma to keep his leg or to have it amputated. Finally, in order to save his life, he decided on the latter. His right leg was amputated from knee cap down. As for the kind of suffering and pain that Hendro had gone through, again only the Lord knows.

Through visiting him and sharing the gospel with him, he became a very good friend of ours. Being an Indonesian, his hospital bills were extremely exorbitant, but by the providence of God, again working out His purpose through Hendro, all the bills were paid in full

after much praying. His artificial leg was donated by one who loved the Lord.

Gradually both Hendro and his father came to know of the goodness of the Lord. They were baptised together on one joyful Lord's day at Life B-P Church.

Hendro is presently pursuing his studies at Chin Lien Bible Seminary. The hand of the Lord was clearly seen in the approval of his student pass. The authorities allowed him to stay for four full years without the need for renewal of documents. Thus he is able to concentrate on his studies. Do continue to pray for him.

Sister Jia Yen, being a caring and warm sister, would go round the ward, speaking to other patients while paying visits to Hendro. Through her, we came to know of one Chinese brother by the name of Herman. As a result of an unsuccessful operation, he was paralysed from waist down, and was bed-ridden. The doctors had wanted to use this operation to cure his spine problem, but it turned out that it made his condition worse. He confessed to Jia Yen on one occasion that he had lost all desires to live, because he did not want to be a burden to anyone. Jia Yen, upon hearing this, pointed him to me and told Herman that I was a leukaemia patient, and yet the Lord gave me so much grace to go on with life, to rejoice and to strengthen myself in Him. At once, he abandoned the idea of dying and decided to trust God and live on.

It was not difficult to see that the Lord placed the right people at the right place, at the right time. Herman in the later months had to be re-admitted for urinary tract infection and thereafter, for pneumonia. The Lord continued to be very gracious. He healed him of both infections and he was discharged. Herman originally had four front-teeth to support his denture, but in treating him for pneumonia, the doctors removed all four to help him breathe. As a result, he could no longer use his denture, and could no longer eat solid food. He informed me one day through the phone, that he was praying to God for someone to help him make a pair of denture at home (as he could not lie down on the dentist chair to do so). The very next day, another brother, who was a dentist, came knocking at his door, and offered to make him a complete set, all in the convenience of his own room.

Once I was particularly moved by Herman. He sat himself on a wheel chair and wheeled all the way from the fourth level to Ward 57 (where I was) to bid me farewell, because he was going to be discharged. How could I not pray to God that He would be merciful to Herman, and to Grace, his longsuffering wife? Truly, the love of Christ constrains us all.

Many hearts remained hardened and hostile to the gospel though they knew they were in their last days here on earth. Even unto death they simply refused to believe that Christ could save, and He could save to the uttermost.

Initially, when the hospital ministry brethren encountered such people, they felt discouraged. But as the Lord turned our attention to Him, hearts were once again strengthened to move on regardless of the result.

Thank God! He often led us to ponder, “Are we setting our minds on heavenly things, which are eternal and unseen, or on earthly things which are temporal and decaying?” “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt 16:26). Many, do not wish to know.

In the giving of my personal testimony to the medical students in July 1994, I challenged them to ponder over all these questions.

“One day, should the Lord take away our outward health, riches, comfort and joy, do we still have anything like the deep, rich, full and divine peace (purchased by the Blood of Christ and his finished work on the cross) to bring us through trials and tribulations unto death?”

“Is our trust based on personal merit or on the Good Shepherd of our souls?” “Are we still able to rejoice like Paul (Phil 4:4) and give glory to God when tribulations come?”

We need to look at Job and Joseph. The Lord had not left Himself without witnesses (Acts 14:17). Wait upon the Lord and see His salvation.

THE TREATMENT—WALKING WITH THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

Being a leukaemia patient is really challenging. The doctors normally chose not to alarm me. So many a time, I did not know what to anticipate. I could only trust God to do the rest because He doeth all things well. Learning to be patient was the Lord's first lesson for me.

My first bizarre experience with the doctors was a procedure which they called "Bone Marrow Biopsy"—the drilling of a device into my hip-bone to extract a marrow specimen to determine the state of my sickness. All these were done using local anaesthesia. While I was lying on my back, I was totally aware of the situation. The 15-minute routine was a simple but painful one. He had seen me through seven procedures so far. Whenever pain abounds, His grace abounds even more (Jas 4:6).

Next comes the interferon treatment. For the first time in my life, I was taught how to give injections to myself, on the thigh or abdomen. Much praying was needed to effectively administer the injection. (This skill was also useful when the doctors prescribed another agent in early 1994, which could only be injected.) The interferon, administered over a period of six months, did me more harm than good, causing my blood count, especially platelets (the clogging agent), to plunge to dangerous levels. This effect was irreversible. I could eventually bleed to death, should my body mechanism, especially the

immune system fail. And yet the Lord kept me well till the very last day.

With the confirmation of a second strain of cancer in me in December 1993, called “Non Hoskin’s Lymphoma,” I experienced my first operation in January 1994 in a lymph node biopsy. I would have bled to death if the Lord had not provided me with enough platelets from brethren of Life B-P Church. I was peaceful before and after the operation, even when I knew that the surgeon himself was not confident whether I would live.

Chemotherapy was administered to me to treat my lymphoma in January 1994. The doctors were obviously taking a very high risk because the treatment not only would eradicate all bad cells, but the good cells as well. As a result of chemotherapy (given between 3 to 4 weeks’ interval), my body lost its immunity against all viruses. Death was near preceding each of the following complications:

- a. First Dose (Jan). I was down with chills and high fever. Breathing became difficult and I began losing all my hair.
- b. Second Dose (Feb-Mar). Contracted pneumonia, with over 40 degrees in body temperature. As the fever refused to go, I was finally placed on “Dangerously Ill List (DIL).” Everybody, including the doctors and I, thought that I was not going to make it. But the Lord prevented me

from going into Intensive Care Unit (ICU). He delivered and eventually healed me. I was then discharged, only to be re-admitted a week later, because of a third infection.

- c. Third Dose (Mar). Down with severe oral infection, requiring five different antibiotics given non-stop, coupled with blood transfusions. When I was about to give up after 48 hours without proper sleep or rest, the Lord presented sister Wendy's written testimony to me. This beloved sister had to be warded to keep her premature baby from coming too soon. I read of the agonies of Wendy, the struggles of Hock Chin the husband, and the sudden and miraculous arrival of John their son. I broke down, cried uncontrollably, and praised God for his mercy and goodness over us all, and felt much better.
- d. Fourth Dose (Mar-Apr). Infected with yeast in my blood in April. Again the Lord healed me of the near-fatal infection, because the viruses were detected early.
- e. Fifth Dose (Apr). Down with viral infection again. The chills and high fever come and go. This time, a very tired houseman made a mistake while taking blood samples for examination, causing my left arm to swell to almost two times

its size. Subsequently, the swelling subsided and I was healed again.

- f. Sixth Dose (May). While Dr Freddy anticipated some infection, I contracted none. The Lord promised that He would not afflict us more than we could bear (Nah 1:12).

With much gladness I was finally discharged, after almost spending five full months in NUH. But the ordeal was not over. I would have to undergo 25 sessions (meaning 25 working days) of radiotherapy (another first for me) at Singapore General Hospital (SGH). Shuttling between NUH and SGH would be very strenuous if not for the mercy of the Lord.

After radiotherapy, my condition got worse. Apart from grievous sore throats and loss of taste, my blood count hit rock-bottom. My throat began to feel drier, requiring water more frequently. With the level of my white blood cells plunging to below 1,000 units, I was made even more vulnerable to infections. But all this while my trust was in the Lord, because He continues to cheer and to guide. His sovereign grace was ever sufficient for me, made perfect in weakness (2 Cor 12:9).

In the Lord's good pleasure, he had sent many Christian doctors, nurses, and even medical students to encourage me. Some came to pray for me before my operation, and some came to keep me company, to pass time in the Word. Some doctors who were already

transferred to another ward would come by just to strengthen me. How marvellous indeed it was to be one in the Household of Faith. I had often longed to attend church, to hear the Lord's Word and fellowship with the saints, during the five months of hospitalisation. The Lord made me realise that I had taken church worship and fellowship for granted. How I ought to have treasured those moments! (Phil 4:11).

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.”

(Philippians 3:10)

THE FIGHT WITH PAIN AND SELF ON THE ROCKY ROAD

During the initial stages of the encouragement ministry, in the flesh I was filled with pride when I saw results coming—when hearts were warmed, families encouraged. But as time went by, the Lord showed me it was through Him that all things were possible. Gradually I learnt to return God the glory due to Him. The Lord blessed me with peace irreplaceable and joy unspeakable, when I learnt to do all things as unto the Lord (Gal 6:6-7).

In Christ, as a patient, I do not require sympathy. This is because the Lord had first strengthened and comforted me. This divine peace no man can give (John 14:27).

Sometimes, people forget that I am also human. I still need love, support and understanding as much as others do. In any case, I was grateful that my cheerful countenance given of God had encouraged and warmed many hearts.

But one thing no one would ever know. During the countless times when I felt so weak and painful, all alone by myself, how tempted I was to cease living, and how I had lost the will to continue living. Herman had such thoughts, so did brother Lin Kiat, another cancer patient who attends Telok Ayer Methodist Church. Nobody except the Lord was able to feel for us in compassion. In those times when reasoning was blinded by suffering, He

kept reminding us that our bodies were no longer ours (1 Cor 6:19-20).

The week beginning 13 November 1994 was another trying period for me while attending Sunset Gospel Hour. I felt a sharp pain on my right thigh, causing me to limp into the sanctuary. God was gracious. He took the pain away during the service, so I was able to enjoy the message.

The next day, the lymph nodes around the neck region began to swell, causing so much pain that I was not able to sleep that night.

Two weeks later, the virus spread to the armpits and groin region. The nagging pain persisted. Despite the fever that came on and off since September 1994, I refused to inform my doctor, because I wanted to stay home to finish this testimony of God's faithfulness and of my brethren's loving kindness. He had allowed me to accomplish it in peace, despite much slothfulness on my part.

On 30 November 1994, I began to bleed profusely in the mouth and while urinating. Should the pain become more intense, I would be requesting Doctor Freddy to prescribe me with morphine to curb it. The drop in my blood count has stopped me from attending Church. I only have the Spirit of God to comfort me. All this while I know that whatever He has promised, He is able to deliver. Praise Him! Even during those days under

chemotherapy, when my breath was so short that I had to just lie down and do nothing, God carried me through with His peace and comfort.

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

(Hebrews 12:2)

PARTING WORDS ON THE GLORIOUS ROAD TO CHRIST

Beloved brethren, I remain a sinner and a rebel saved by God's Sovereign Grace (Eph 2:8-9).

By the time this testimony reaches you, I would have already entered into the Lord's presence (2 Cor 5:7-8). I know you must be wondering why I do not want a vigil service. It is to spare you and me of the agonies and sorrows of departure. I must apologise that I cannot bear to see you grieving for me. So I have decided to go home alone. Your kindness and concern in love for me have moved me deeply, and there is no way I can repay you, especially all my blood donors—I have caused you much pain, and the Lord has moved you to love me in such a way.

Watch and pray, my beloved brethren, that the Lord of all Truth will protect you from this wicked and perverse generation. Continue to show forth to the world, your salt, your light! Personally, everyone of you in Christ has given my life an all-new meaning. The friendship that I had always craved for, I have found in the fellowship of the saints.

Our Heavenly Father is no respecter of persons. Though unworthy as I am, He has graciously saved me from my shameful past, from death unto life eternal in His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Col 1:13-14).

Continue to serve Him with gladness. The Lord will honour you. Our God never fails. Set your minds on things above and eternal, and PEACE shall abide in you (John 14:27; 16:24).

Now, if you are struggling and think that no one cares, you only need to cry out to Jesus (Heb 4:16). He was with me when I was running scared, when no one in this world seemed to identify with my pain (some indeed inflicted more pain and hurt); in moments of helplessness and loneliness, He was truly my Comforter. His Word, the Bible, gives true assurance and provides great comfort. Of a truth, the Lord has already healed me in spirit. I have no confidence in my corruptible body. I look forward to the resurrection morning. In Christ, we are already rich and full, needing absolutely nothing!

Trust the loving God, who has come in the flesh to give Himself for you, to redeem you (Gal 5:2). Beloved, delight yourself in the Lord and He will grant you the desires of your heart! (Ps 37:4).

Do not fear, only believe. Be prepared to have your faith tested. Chastisement and discipline must begin with the Household of Faith (1 Pet 4:12). Afflictions, trials and tribulations mould our character and prepare us for Heaven (Rom 5:1-11). They teach us to cling on to God, and not take things for granted. Afflictions are meant always for the benefit of God's children, who should in turn give God the glory (Rom 8:28).

But what are all these afflictions compared to the pain and agony that the Lord took upon Himself on the Cross in our place? As God, He has delivered us from so great a death and reconciled us to Himself, and as Man, He sympathises and understands our every infirmity. This ever interceding High Priest of our souls is ever so merciful, so compassionate, so kind. If we would come to Him with a humble and contrite heart, He would receive us. If He is not ashamed to call us brethren (Heb 2:11-12), we should not be ashamed to call Him Lord! Furthermore, when the Lord comes again, all pain and suffering will flee away (2 Cor 4:17; Rom 8:18).

Keep looking up, my beloved brethren, in Christ our Blessed Lord and Saviour, we will surely meet again. One Day!

“If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.”

(Job 14:14-15)

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