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Christian Missionary Jackie Pullinger's 50 Years of Helping Hong Kong Addicts Beat Drugs - and Find God

Christian missionary Jackie Pullinger has been helping Hongkongers kick their addictions through prayer since 1966. "It's gone quickly," she says, and she feels lucky to have realized her dream.

Some of her story is told in 'Chasing the Dragon', 'Law of Love' and other documentaries, but simply put, it began - it always does - with one person being caught up in the joy and surprise of being loved by Jesus! That was me, Jackie, in 1966.

Through a dream, a picture-like vision, and a message in another language, I responded to the Lord's insistent 'GO' and took a journey by ship - an adventure - sailing to wherever. Having landed in Hong Kong, then came the question:

NOW WHAT?

All I wanted to do - and still want - was to find those who were longing to know God's love, whether they were aware of their longing or not. And so I walked the streets full of hungry, old beggars and the homeless.

Overwhelmed by the multitudes and needs, I asked God to show

me which bit was mine.

MY BIT - THE WALLED CITY

This is a famous place, known as 'Darkness'. This was a lawless relic of a 19th century Sino-British agreement and was officially off-limits to police. However, corruption was rampant, young girls were sold to brothels, triad gangs ruled, and there were over 40 opium and heroin dens. One outside toilet for up to 100 000 people in 6 acres, where they piled the dead addicts at one time.

'It would be worth my whole life if you would use me to save just one,' I told the Lord after walking over the legs of men lying in the narrow streets, straddling the open sewers. I soon found that nobody was listening to my preaching, but they were watching my life, so I began to practise what I call, 'ordinary gospel': sharing rice with a hungry old lady, taking a gangster to hospital after a fight, queueing overnight to register a young girl for school, paying someone's rent, going to court with a gangster who claimed to be framed...

THE YOUTH CLUB

I started a Youth Club in a tiny room in Walled City to give a place

for ping pong and darts. I ran outside camps and weekly excursions, since most young people never saw the light of day and had had no opportunity to play at school, even if they could attend. No free education then and the HK \$4 monthly fee too much for many. Lots of young teenagers had also joined gangs, which led to fighting, living off prostitution and drugs. I prayed, 'Dear Lord, please give me something of your Spirit that will help me to make You real.'

One boy came to Jesus, then one more, then one more. I thought that was what evangelists did, look for one more and send the others to 'church'. That did not work - the church was afraid of gangsters, their clothes, and their haircuts!

ADDICTS

When one addict came into the Youth Club and began praising God in tongues, he came off opium physically in 30 minutes! No withdrawal pains.

'Good. All I have to do, is walk into drug dens, pray for the power of the Holy Spirit, and they'll be set free.' That did not work. It turned out that the gangster/addict who had quit drugs was simultaneously living in an opium den! Not a good place to start a new life! So, I invited him into my home.

THE DOOR KNOCKING STARTED...

One after another, more men arrived at my door. 'If Ah Seun got off drugs through believing in Jesus - then I'll believe in Jesus. And I'll live in your house, too.' They did and they did. Full house!

WORD OF MOUTH

That's how our 'houses' started in the seventies and have continued in the same way, with the same wonderful miracle of painless



Jackie Pullinger

withdrawal from drugs as we pray in the Spirit.

We did not advertise but by word of mouth, one man in prison told another, 'You can go to Jackie's (Poon's place) and start a new life.' Hardly a street sleeper who had not heard, 'There is a place you can go to.'

THE HOUSES GREW

More and more overseas helpers joined the adventure. Former addicts got jobs and helped in their spare time, some working full-time with us.

We started homes for teenagers, English-speaking addicts, then women and girls. Over the years, we've borrowed or rented over 287 places to house the poor, recovering addicts, and those with life-threatening problems. Some of these were given on a temporary basis by the Hong Kong Government and several in outlying areas.

HANG FOOK CAMP

In 1985, the Hong Kong Government offered us Hang Fook Camp in urban Kowloon, a disused tin hut area (THA) where many people of all kinds, including the poor and elderly, gathered to worship and eat with us.

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KOM 'N BIETJIE DIEPER DIE TUIN IN...

In Matthéüs 26, Markus 14:32-42, Lukas 22:39-46 en Johannes 18:1 word die gebeure van Jesus se worstelling in Getsémane vir ons voorgehou. Hy neem drie dissipels saam met Hom en sê: *“My siel is diep bedroef tot die dood toe; bly hier en waak saam met My”* (Matt. 26:38).

Hy gaan egter Self 'n bietjie verder die tuin in en val op Sy aangesig voor God neer en ons hoor Hom bid: *“My Vader, as dit moontlik is, laat hierdie beker by My verbygaan; nogtans nie soos Ek wil nie, maar soos U wil”* (Matt. 26:39). Hy was in die diepste worsteling om die sondeskuld van die ganse mensdom op Hom te neem: **Hy móés** die lydensbeker opneem en drink, voordat Hy op die Kruis sou sterf. Die prys wat Hy vir ons betaal het: Sy eie bloed.

Hierdie is die laaste gebeure van die Lydensweek. Op die vooraand van die kruisiging het Hy die pasga met Sy dissipels gevier. Hy het hulle voete gewas en die Nagmaal ingestel. Judas het uitgestap om Hom te gaan verraaï, en dit was nag...

Dan stap hulle na die Olyfberg, deur die Kidronvallei, na die Tuin van Getsémane, en Hy bid. **Dan gaan Hy nog dieper die Tuin in.**

Wat gebeur dieper die Tuin in?

- Hy kniel neer om te bid;
- 'n Engel uit die hemel het aan Hom verskyn en Hom versterk;
- Hy kom in 'n sware stryd;
- Hy bid met groter inspanning;
- Sy sweet het geword soos bloeddruppels wat op die grond val;
- Hy word ontsteld, bedroef en benoud;
- Hy sê vir Sy dissipels: *“My siel is diep bedroef tot die dood toe; bly hier en waak saam met My.”*
- *“En Hy het 'n bietjie verder gegaan en op Sy aangesig geval en gebid en gesê: My Vader, as dit moontlik is, laat hierdie beker by My verbygaan; nogtans nie soos Ek wil nie, maar soos U wil.”* Hy het hierdie gebed 'n paar keer herhaal.

Dan kom Hy terug en vind Sy dissipels aan die slaap en Hy vra vir Petrus of hulle nie eers een uur saam met Hom kon waak nie? Hy roep hulle op: *“Waak en bid, dat julle nie in versoeking kom nie. Die gees is wel gewillig, maar die vlees is swak”* (vs. 41).

Dan gaan Hy vir 'n tweede maal 'n bietjie dieper in die tuin en bid: *“My Vader, as hierdie beker nie by My kan verbygaan sonder dat Ek dit drink nie, laat U wil geskied”* (vs. 42).

In Klaagl. 1:12 lees ons: *“Raak dit julle nie, julle almal wat met die pad verbygaan? Aanskou en kyk of daar 'n smart is soos my smart wat my aangedoen is, waarmee die HERE my bedroef het op die dag van Sy toornloed.”* Jeremia was bekend as die “wenende profeet.” Hier ween hy oor die verval van sy volk Israel. Oor Jerusalem. Hy was 'n tipe van Jesus Christus.

Luister hoe ween Jesus: *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, jy wat die profete doodmaak en die wat na jou gestuur is, stenig, hoe dikwels wou Ek jou kinders bymekaarmaak, soos 'n hen haar kuikens onder die vlerke, en julle wou nie”* (Luk 13:34).

Kan jy Sy smart beleef soos in Klaagliedere? Hier kom nog 'n dimensie van Sy smart na vore wat 'n hoogtepunt bereik in Getsémane: *“kyk of daar 'n smart is soos my smart wat my aangedoen is.”* Hy ween oor Sy volk en Hy ween oor die toestand van die mensdom in die geheel, en Hy ween oor die toestand van Sy volk wat voortduur tot vandag toe! En nou moet Hy die beker drink om almal se sonde op Hom te neem.

Tot en met Sy kruisiging en tot vandag toe roep Hy elkeen van Sy dissipels op om ook in Sy voet-

spore te volg, sodat ons in die krag van God kan doen wat Hy gedoen het op aarde.

Begeer jy om Sy dissipel te wees? Dit beteken jy begeer om vir Hom te werk of om een of ander betekenisvolle diens vir Hom te doen. Neem dan kennis van Sy woorde: *“'n Leerling is nie bo die meester nie en 'n dienskneg ook nie bo sy heer nie. Dit is vir die leerling genoeg dat hy soos sy meester word en die dienskneg soos sy heer. As hulle die heer van die huis Beëlsebul genoem het, hoeveel te meer Sy huisgenote!”* (Matt. 10:24-25).

Hy sê vir Sy dissipels: *“Die beker wat Ek drink, sál julle ook drink.”* En wanneer Hy vir elkeen wat vir Hom wil lewe sê: *“Volg My!”* Dan bedoel Hy: **“VOLG MY!”** Deur al die dale en beproewinge en smarte en ellendes, pyn en droefheid soos Hy deur Getsémane gegaan het.

Bevind jy jou ook in jou Tuin van Getsémane? Volg Jesus na! Gaan bietjie dieper die tuin in en deel in Sy smart! Ween eers oor jouself, en ween oor die kinders van die Here en ween oor die sondaarmense! Tree vir hulle in, want die Here kom! Maranata! Is ons gereed vir Sy koms?
©Dr JJ Venter


Light in the Darkness

This Christmas, Isaiah 9:2 takes on special significance against the background of the war in Ukraine: *“The people living in darkness have seen a great light.”*

Ukrainians have been plunged into darkness by Russian missile attacks. Their engineers are performing wonders to restore the light. Daily reports from missionaries from across the nation reveal strengthened resolve not to succumb to darkness and despair despite power shortages. And many are 'seeing the light'.

YWAM worker James just came back from the Kharkiv region. He said he could not fight off the tears as he listened to the villagers' stories. These were not only sad and heartbreaking, but also encouraging and heartwarming. As they delivered aid packages, cut wood, and fixed windows and roofs, they encountered villagers standing in the snow and cold wind, joyfully receiving the message about Jesus. Over 400 people responded to the light of the Gospel on that particular trip.

Prophecy News Watch - Joel News - info@joelnewsorg



Waiting and Growing

“Until God's time finally came - how God tested his patience!” (Psalm 105:19 TLB)

God's timing is always perfect for His people: *“The Lord will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right”* (Psalm 84:11 NLT).

The Bible tells us, *“Until the time came to fulfil his dreams, the Lord tested Joseph's character”* (Psalm 105:19 NLT). God's plan was for Joseph to live in a palace, but for years he lived in a prison, charged with crimes he never committed. But it was there he met a butler who had the ear of Pharaoh, and through this connection Joseph was promoted to the number-two spot in Egypt.

When we walk with God, our opportunities are regulated by His plan, not by others' actions. **And preparation always comes before promotion.**

When Elijah called down fire from

Heaven on Mount Carmel, everybody admired and applauded him. But then he spent years living through a famine, and the only friend he had was an impoverished widow. Together they had to trust God for every meal. That's when Elijah learned important lessons about humility, Divine guidance and trusting God in times of need; things that don't necessarily make sense to our human minds at first.

When God is going to build something worthwhile, He takes time to lay a strong foundation. *“Jesus grew... in favour with God and man”* (Luke 2:52 NIV).

So what now? If you're in a season of waiting, embrace it, because God's doing important work within you. Allow yourself time to grow and let Him build a firm foundation under you that will sustain and strengthen you in the years ahead!

- Selected

PEGA JESU MO MOKORONG WA GAGO WA 2023

(Kry Jesus Aan Boord in 2023)



DITEMANA

“Ka lengwe la malatsi ao a palama mokoro le barutwa ba gagwe, a ba raya a re: ‘A re tsheleng kwa moseja ga letsha.’ Mme ba bolola. Ya re ba ntse ba tsamaya, a thulamela. Ga fologela matsubutsubu a phefo mo letsheng, metsi a ba gasegela, mme ba nna mo kotsing. Ke fa ba tla, ba mo tsosa ba re: ‘Moruti, Moruti, re a nyelela!’ A tsoga, a kgalemela phefo le dinteelo tsa metsi; tsa khutla, ga ba ga nna tidimalo. A ba raya a re: ‘Tumelo ya lona e kae?’ Mme ba boifa, ba gakgamala, ba raana ba re: ‘Kana yo ke mang, fa le tsona diphefo le metsi a di laola, mme di mo utlwa?’” (Luka 8:22-25).

“E rile go tshwara letlatlana, barutwa ba gagwe ba fologela kwa letsheng, ba ya ba palama mokoro, ba tshela letsha go ya kwa Kaperenaume. Mme ga nna lefifi, Jesu a ise a be a tle go bone. Jaanong letsha la huduiwa ke go foka ga phefo e kgolo. Ya re ba tsweletse pele e ka nna dimaele tse tharo gongwe tse nne, ba bona Jesu a tsamaya mo godimo ga letsha, a atamela mokoro; mme ba boifa. Foo a ba raya a re: ‘Ke nna, se boifeng!’ Ke fa ba rata gore a palame mokoro, mme mokoro wa akofa wa fitlha kwa lefatsheng le ba yang go lone” (Johane 6:16-21).

“Paulo, se boife! O tshwanetse go ema fa pele ga Kaisara; mme itse gore Modimo o tla pholosa botlhe ka ntlha ya gago ba ba etang nao mo mokorong” (Ditiro 27:24).

DIKAKANYO

Ka boikhutso re ne re palame mekoro e e batlileng go tshwana le tse Jesu le barutwa ba gagwe le Paulo ba ne ba di palame. Nako e nngwe le e nngwe re ne re palame re le 30 mo mekorong. Ke ne ka akanya gore mo tlase mo mokorong go robetse Jesu. Fa o pegile Jesu mo mokorong ga o a tshwanela go tshaba sepe. Mo ditemaneng tse di fa godimo re bala ka ga barutwa ba ga Jesu ba ba palameng mokoro mme gabedi re bone gore go botlhokwa thata gore fa o tsamaya ka mokoro o tlhomamisa gore Jesu o palama le wena. Rona rotlhe re ka dirisa mokoro go nna setshwantsho sa bophelo jwa rona. Re tsamaya rotlhe ka mekoro ka mo bophelong. Batho ba bangwe ba akanya gore ba ka tsamaya mo letsheng la bophelo re se na Jesu ka mo mekorong ya rona. Mo bophelong go na le matsubutsubu a phefo, metsi a mathata a gasegela ka mo difatlhegong tsa rona, re tsena mo dikotsing mme Satane le medemone ya gagwe e re tsenya mo mathateng.

Ke akanya gape gore Satane o bone fa Jesu a robala ka mo mokorong mme a akanya gore ke nako ya gore a mmolaye mmogo le barutwa ba gagwe. Ka 2023 fa o tsamaya loeto ka mokoro wa gago kampo o dira tiro e kgolo kampo porojeke e kgolo o se le bale go pega Jesu ka mo mokorong wa gago. Mo porojekeng kampo mo tirong go ka fologela matsubutsubu a phefo, metsi a ka go gasegela, mme wa nna mo

kotsing le wena. Fa o na le Jesu ka mo tirong kampo mo porojekeng ya gago o siame le fa a ka robala. Fa o le morutwana wa mo sekolong mme o le mo ditlhatlho-bong kampo o na le tiro e kgolo o tlhoka go kopa Jesu gore a palame mokoro wa gago. A le wena o mo kotsing kampo o boifa tse o di bonang le tse o di akanyang? Barutwa ba ga Jesu ba ne ba akanya gore ba a nwela mme gape ba akanya gore ba bona le sepoko se tsamaya mo metsing. Fa o akanya gore o na le maatla a go kgona letsha la bophelo fa le go hudua le fa diphefo tse di kgolo tsa bophelo di go fokela, o ka leka go tsamaya o le nosi kampo le ditsala tsa gago. Kampo, o ka akanya jaaka barutwa mme o re: “Ke fa ba rata gore a palame mokoro, mme mokoro wa akofa wa fitlha kwa lefatsheng le ba yang go lone.”

O ka kopa Jesu go palama mokoro wa gago. Mokoro o Jesu a o palameng ga o nwele. Nnete ke gore phefo e teng le mathata a teng, matsu-butsubu a teng. Fela fa o pegile Jesu o ka se nwele. Fa o ka nwela o amogela bophelo jo bo sa khutleng. Nako e nngwe le rona re pega Jesu mme fa a robala mo mokorong wa rona re tle re boife mme tumelo ya rona e nne nnye. Akanya fela gore o ka feta jang mo mathateng a bophelo fa Jesu a le teng mo mokorong wa gago. O ka bua jaaka barutwa o re: “Kana yo ke mang, fa le tsona diphefo le metsi a di laola, mme di mo utlwa?” Akanya fela fa o itse gore Jesu o robetse teng ka mo mokorong wa gago fa o le mo kotsing mme... “A tsoga, a kgalemela phefo le dinteelo tsa metsi; tsa khutla, ga ba ga nna tidimalo.”

Lenyalo la gago le le mo diphefong, dithuto di le mo phefong, kwa tirong o le mo phefong mme wa kopa Jesu go palama mokoro wa gago. Jesu a kgalemela phefo le dinteelo tsa metsi; tsa khutla, ga ba ga nna tidimalo.” Wena o ka re fela jaaka barutwa o re: “Kana yo ke mang, fa le tsona diphefo le mathata a di laola, mme di mo utlwa?” O ka bala gape ka ga Paulo mo a neng a palame mokoro le masole ba mo isa kwa Roma. Ba bangwe ba ne ba batla go fologa mo mokorong go leka go ipoloka mme moengele a raya Paulo a re: “Paulo, se boife! O tshwanetse go ema fa pele ga Kaisara; mme itse gore Modimo o tla pholosa botlhe ka ntlha ya gago ba ba etang nao mo mokorong.” Fa o na le Jesu ka mo mokorong wa gago wa bophelo le balosika ba gago le bana ba gago ba tloga ba pholoswa fela jaaka ba ba neng ba palame le Paulo. Se leke ngwaga wa 2023 o le nosi. Palamisa batho ba ba ka go thusang mo mokorong wa gago mme bogolo, kopa Jesu a palame le Ene.



Johan Zerwick
Sêlê ke 083 458 3837

THAPELO

Morena re kopa o re itshwarele ka re lekile go tsamaya kwa ntle ga Jesu mo mokorong wa rona wa bophelo. Re kopa o re thuse mo diphefong tsa bophelo tsa 2023. Ke kopa o palame ka mo mokorong wa me wa bophelo mme o didimatse diphefo le mathata a me.

Ke go leboga ka o le teng nako yotlhe gore re se boife sepe. Ke leboga ka o le teng gore re kgone gotlhe ka Wena, Jesu yo o re fang maatla a go kgona tsotlhe mo bophelong. Thusa le batho botlhe ba ba sa itseng Jesu gore ba mo kope le bone go palama mekoro ya bone. AMEN.

(Afrikaans: Lees Lukas 8:22-25 / Johannes 6:16-21, Handeling 27:24. Nooi Jesus om in jou lewensbootjie te klim en jou storms stil te maak!)

“Daar is niks in die hemel of op die aarde wat vir my meer beteken as U nie. Al is ek afgetakel na liggaam en gees, God is my sterkte; aan Hom behoort ek vir altyd. Dié wat ver van U af is, gaan verlore, U vernietig dié wat aan U ontrou is. Maar wat my aangaan, dit is vir my goed om naby God te wees. Ek het die Here my God gekies as my toevlug! Ek sal van al U werke bly vertel”
(Ps. 73:25-28 NV).

Leef ons in die laaste dae?

Sluit by ons aan vir 'n interkerklike Bybelstudie waar ons Bybelse profesieë in oënskou neem.



- Aanbieder: Dr. Japie Venter
- Tyd: Elke Dinsdagaand om 19:00
- Koste: Gratis
- Begindatum: 7 Februarie 2023
- Plek: AGS Baillie Park, Wynnestr. 20, Potch
- Kontakpersoon: H Venter 074 254 2319



Dr. JJ Venter

Skakel spoedig om u plek te bespreek!

Christian Missionary Jackie Pullinger's 50 Years of Helping Hong Kong Addicts Beat Drugs - and Find God

Continued from p. 1

We began training all of them to heal the sick and share their food with the hungry. It became famous as a place for Christmas feasts, miracles, and sodden, baking-hot meetings!

PILLAR POINT

I had worked with the first boatloads of those who'd fled Vietnam and helped in several camps before, so knew the challenges, and loved the people. This resulted in us opening a special house for Vietnamese-speaking addicts.

After visiting Hang Fook Camp in 1994, U.N.H.C.R. officials invited St. Stephen's Society to manage and run a Vietnamese Refugee Camp for them. It was the last remaining camp - only a few thousand people were left. We saw many drug-free and resettled before the refugee crisis was over and the U.N. withdrew from HK.

"The alien living with you must be treated as your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you yourselves were aliens" (Lev. 19:34).

MULTI-PURPOSE REHABILITATION HOMES

In 1997, the Hong Kong Government made a plot of land available to us where we have built homes and premises to care for those with multiple addictions, and apartments for those serving and living with them. We have a few rooms for the elderly, too.

The mixture of men and women, families, children, teenagers and the very old, is truly sweet and mutually beneficial. They help one another. Worship is central, training for work is offered and all up-keep, cleaning and cooking are shared by the residents, who deeply love one another.

CLASSROOMS

We have housed a growing number of young boys and girls with multiple problems. In our eyes they are 'Gogetters'. By law, they must be at school until the age of 15, so we have developed classrooms for them to make learning exciting and prepare them for life.

NEAR AND FAR

In 1987 some of us went to Macau, found the poor and the addicted and started similar 'houses'. After that, several other countries, too. The teams we sent included those who'd been on drugs, partnering with others who'd learned and trained with us.

WHAT'S GOING ON NOW?

We've continued, just as I began, praying for our daily bread and sharing it with the hungry, too. Apart from our homes and 'houses', we have also grown many local fellowships. Former residents, their families, and many other Hong Kongers meet regularly. They worship, eat, and work out ways to deal with life's problems, to see society begin to change. They love and serve one another. This is known as the Kingdom of God.

INITIATIVES

From time to time, new ventures such as GOKIDS, parenting courses, Arts in the Community, BARA and homework clubs have grown in response to the needs observed in our own people. We've then offered them to the public at large. We ran local and international conferences on serving the poor, healing, etc., in order to equip many.

We shared what we'd learned. We gave what we'd received. These initiatives and projects were short-term or long-term.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Why Stephen? He was chosen, in the very early Church, to be a table server. He was chosen because he was full of the Spirit. He ended up doing miracles and preaching an amazing sermon, which had him killed, one of the first people to die for Jesus.

We believe that the minimum qualification for working in the kitchen is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We believe that all jobs in the community are equally important and expect all to serve quietly and humbly.

We do not assign leadership to those with platform personalities or obvious giftings, but watch to see who looks like Jesus and gets on with the job whilst developing character and performing miracles from time to time.

OUR PEOPLE AND THE FUTURE

Clearly, Jackie has been central to much of what has grown and emerged. However, there are now many, many in different areas of

Hong Kong who do not know her personally, though possibly, they know her name.

More importantly, they do know the Name of Jesus and the many people who look after them in their own districts and fellowships. For this reason, we have not highlighted or pictured the growing number of those who lead and train in our homes or outreach locations. They are increasing and multiplying all the time!

Chasing the Dragon - Theatre production:
<https://www.ststephenssociety.com/ctd/v/chasing-the-dragon-2016>

Video interviews:
David Stroud:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABzoi5aPeeY>
J. John:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUOpHMNk-S0>
Nicky Gumbel:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFQ1SHZXulk>

A LOVE THAT LIFTS YOU UP

A friend relayed something so beautiful to me that I just have to share it. Elmien lives in Oudts-hoorn, in the Southern Cape. Adjoining her property is a Juvenile prison.

On Tuesday, 22 November, the youth chapter of a Christian Organization as well as a member of The Gideons, a well-known, worldwide organization that spreads copies of the Bible, attended a special event at this facility. Each of the young women received a Bible and a gift of toiletries. They were treated to

cake and chocolate, but, best of all, two inspirational messages. "It's never too late to start making good choices" was the deeply encouraging theme of the day. And then the Gospel was presented by The Gideons' representative. As we all know so well, the Lord says, "So is My Word that goes out from My mouth: it will not return to Me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent."

The very next day, when Elmien returned home after work, she

parked right at the prison wall that separates the properties. And then she heard singing from behind the wall. She stood there, rooted, listening as the lovely song of Josh Groban floated straight to her heart:

*When I am down,
oh my soul so weary,
When troubles come and my
heart burdened be
Then, I am still
and wait here in the silence
Until You come
and sit a while with me.
You raise me up,
so I can stand on mountains*

*You raise me up,
to walk on stormy seas
I am strong,
when I am on Your shoulders
You raise me up
to more than I can be."*

You may not be incarcerated in prison, but oh, how many heart-aches can trouble our lives and inhibit our spiritual growth. Beloved, run straight into your Father's arms and sob out your grief. Then, wash your face and take hold of His hand. Go nowhere unless He goes before you.

- Helen du Plessis, 083 332 0895

Al Sou Die Vyeboom Nie Bot Nie

Al sou die vyeboom nie bot nie, Here, en daar geen druiwe aan die wingerde wees nie.

Al sou die olyf-oes misluk, en die lande geen oes lewer nie...
En al sou die verlang tot diep in my oë gaan lê, en die bang en onsekerheid bietjies-bietjies in my hart wegkruip.
Al sou die pad kilometers vol grond en gate voor my voete uitloop, en my hart se probeer moeg raak.
Al sou my oë sukkel om die son raak te sien, die son wat U elke dag op my pad kom neersit.
Al sou my kop aanhou probeer om my hart te verstaan, en my bid partydae moeg voor U kom kniel...
Nogtans sal ek in U bly glo! Sal ek glo dat U hart goed is, en liefde is.
Nogtans sal ek elke môre stil luister of ek U Stem hoor.
Want dit is U wat vir my die krag gee om elke oggend op te staan en my stukkies pad voluit te stap.
Dit is U wat my hart se huil stilmaak en die stukkies verlang gaan wegbêre, daar waar dit hoort.
Dit is U wat die verlede se onthou toevou in U hande, en dit eenkant neersit, daar waar dit my nie meer kan raaksien nie.
Dit is U wat langs my kniel en my optel, as die pad vir my te lank word.
Daarom sal ek glimlag oor U.
Daarom sal ek elke oggend U vrede diep in my hart gaan wegbêre.
Daarom sal ek my kop oplig en die lewe stil in die oë kyk...
Want U, Here, loop saam met my!
Elke dag!!
Altyd!!
En dit is vir my genoeg.



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WAT MAAK JY BYMEKAAR?

Wanneer jou lewe op daardie punt kom dat jy moet trek, word daar orals kartondose bymeekaargemaak. Verskeie items word dan bymeekaargesit en in houer gepak. Sodra die houer volgepak is, skryf jy daarop wat daarin is en as jy weer begin uitpak, weet jy waar om te begin.

Dit is dieselfde wanneer jou ouers doodgaan en jy moet hulle kamers of huise gaan ontruim. Steve Hofmeyr se liedjie "Pampoep" vat dit vir my so mooi in sy woorde vas:

"Sing, sing jou woorde teen my vas
Bring jou hele lewe in 'n tas..."

Dwarsdeur ons lewe maak ons bymekaar. Ons koop dit wat vir ons mooi is en saak maak en bly ook miskien in 'n paar verskillende huise. Almal se smaak verskil en sodra jy ouer word, gaan jy op pensioen. Dit is dán wanneer ons lewe in 'n tas gepak word. Soveel aardse dinge wat

ons bymeekaar gemaak het wat eintlik vir ons niks meer beteken nie. Baie keer is al wat mense oor het as hulle sterf 'n bed, yskassie, klein bedkassie en 'n paar kledingstukke in 'n kas. Wanneer alles klaar opgepak is, is al wat oorbly, klere in 'n tas...

Hoeveel van God maak jy in jou lewe bymeekaar? Is jôu huis vol van God, of vol van sonde? Wat pak jy elke dag in jou lewenstas?

Ons is elke dag op 'n lewensreis. Elke dag maak ons bymeekaar. Daarom is dit baie belangrik dat jy jou reis saam met God neem. Die rede: wanneer jy eendag te sterwe kom en jou kinders of familie jou kas uitpak, jou tas gepak is na die ewige lewe saam met God in Sy koninkryk.

"Maak vir julle skatte in die hemel bymeekaar, waar mot en roes dit nie verniel nie en waar diewe nie inbreek en dit steel nie. Waar jou skat is, daar sal jou hart ook wees" (Matt. 6:20-21).

- Oorgeneem

**Maak my weer 'n kind, o Heer
Gee aan my die vrede weer
Gee aan my die onskuld wat
soveel waarheid kan bevat.
Neem my hand en lei my voort
op die weë van die Woord.
Dra my as ek struikel, Heer
laat my net U wil begeer.
Here, maak my weer 'n kind
dat ek ware vreugd' kan vind!**

**Hendrik van Graan
Susana van Graan**
OPTOMETRISTS / OOGKUNDIGES
PETER MOKABALAAN 3 (VAN RIEBEECKSTRAAT 3)
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May The Lord Bless You and Keep You...

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you
The Lord lift up His Countenance upon you and give you peace.
May you reach the purpose for which you were created
May you have courage above that of your peers
May you have more passion for the things of God
 than others think is necessary
May you dream more than others think is practical
May you expect more than others think is possible
May you choose wisely without Earthly bias.
You have people to influence that you have not yet met
You have lives to change that are waiting for your arrival
You are strategically placed wherever God takes you
 by His grand design
Just so that you can become everything He made you to be.
That place is the place you can grow best
That place is the place where you can be most fruitful
The place where the future is changed because of your presence.
May you see vistas that others don't even know exist
May you see God in every petal of every flower, in every blade of grass
For each of them are designed by His Hand.
May you bless your children and may they become giants in the faith
 under the mighty Hand of God.
You won't fail
You were made by God to be here for such a time as this!

Tears...

My phone rang this morning and the friend who called, shared devastating news. His son has cancer. I listened as his emotions ranged from anger to despair, to resignation, and then finally, in the end, he arrived at a place of peace.

His resolve was that his son would fight cancer and he would be there for his son every step of the way. He cried, I cried, and our tears mixed over the phone. **Jesus met us both at that moment.**

When I hung up the phone, I thought to myself, *"I am so grateful that Jesus made tears."* Tears allow us to release difficult emotions so that they don't remain stuck in our souls. Tears drain our anger and give form to our grief. Tears also create a space in our hearts for joy and hope. I am so grateful that Jesus made tears!

When was the last time you

cried? When was the last time you shed a tear for yourself, or someone you love, or to release an emotional burden to Jesus?

I want to remind you and encourage you with the shortest verse in the whole Bible!

"Jesus wept" (John 11:35, NIV).

This verse is a miraculous gift to me today and I hope and pray it is for you as well! The God of the Universe cried over His lost people. If Jesus can cry, I can too! Jesus released his emotions and I believe, He is inviting to do the same!

Tears are a language that God understands. I would love to share two more beautiful truths about tears:

1) **Tears are not permanent.** Psalm 30:5b says, *"weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning"* (NIV). Even though you may be struggling in this dark night of the soul, one day, the tears will cease and joy



will return!

2) **Tears are precious to God.** Psalm 56:8a says, *"You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle"* (ESV). Every tear you have ever shed is so precious that God collects them as a remembrance of His love for you! Tears are not wasted or overlooked, they are held by the God who loves you and knows the source of your tears.

Take a moment. Soak in the love of God. Are you praying for a prodigal son or daughter? It's all-right to weep over them. God knows A LOT about wayward children. Are you, or someone you love, battling a disease? It's all-right to cry with and for them, holding on to the fact that God can heal! Whatever you are facing, you can be honest and emotional before God! God hears your prayer. God sees your tears. God draws near and right now, He is here!

-A Miracle Every Day, Jesus.net

I WILL BE YOUR GREAT REWARD

“Listen to My words,’ Jesus said. ‘Anyone who leaves his home behind and chooses me over children, parents, family, and possessions, all for the sake of the gospel, it will come back to him a hundred times as much in this lifetime - homes, family, mothers, brothers, sisters, children, possessions along with persecutions. And in the age to come, he will inherit eternal life”
(Mark 10:29-30, The Passion Translation).

Many have chosen the path of righteousness, only to discover that there is no room on this path for self-promotion and self-praise. It takes **courage** to follow Me, to leave behind all that hinders our relationship, to follow Me and find that I am enough. Come, follow Me, and you will be

made into My likeness.

You are an heir of the Kingdom. All My promises to you will come to pass. Glory, ever-increasing glory, will surround you, as you walk in Kingdom reality. **To follow Me is not merely leaving everything; it is gaining everything.** Set your gaze on Me. Come into My sacred chamber, where every sacrifice becomes sweeter than honey and every loss invites more of Me. Move forward without fear, and I will be your great reward! It is more than a choice; it is courage that must fill your heart as you look upon the horizon with faith. Never fear what is to come, for I am the One Who was, Who is, and Who is to come!
- I Hear His Whisper written by Brian Simmons and Gretchen Rodriguez



Oud-word met Grasie

Ek hanteer ouderdom anders. Baie ouerwonderende mense voel hulle lewe is betekenisloos - sonder doel? Hulle wakker-word in die oggend, word begroet met 'n gevoel van nutteloosheid.

Ek koppel die lewe beslis aan seisoene, presies net soos dit in die natuur is. Ja, ek is verby die lentetyd van my lewe, die tyd van groei en antwoorde soek. Ook die somertyd met al sy drange en stormagtigheid is vir my verby. Die herfstyd was vir my goed, ek kon reflekteer op my verlede en rustig baie belangrike koersaanpassings maak.

En nou, nou is ek aan die begin van die winter van my lewe. Volgeprop van al my kennis en ervaring op vele terreine kan ek nou rustig oor alles nadink, en dit versigtig met ander deel. Ek sê "versigtig", want ek waak daarteen om nie beterweterig te wees, en te wil inmeng met ander se sake nie. Jy kan tog nie vrugte verwag van 'n jong wingerdloot nie? Los hulle om self hulle ranke uit te stoot, en lei hulle liggies deur jou voorbeeld, sodat hulle gesond kan groei en hulself kan vestig.

Grasie - ek wil met grasie oud word. Ja, stylvol, en vol deernis en begrip. Ek gebruik my stem en woorde deesdae al meer om mense op te bou en te motiveer. Ek bemoedig en ek troos. Ek vertel my stories en laat ander mense lekker lag. Die doel van ouer word, is om tyd aan God se

voete deur te bring en Hom voltyds te loof. Ek sê somer met my wakker-word al: "Dankie, Here". As ek my lekker uitrek, sê ek dankie vir my gesondheid.

My eerste koppie koffie drink ek dankbaar dat ek koffie het, en ook dat ek dit kan proe. Met ons kompleks se tuin wat so 'n lushof is, sê ek dankie vir die skoonheid van die natuur. Ek gooi kossies vir die voëltjies in hulle bak wat aan die boom hang, en verluister my aan hulle geluide. Hoe vrolik sing hulle tog nie?

Ek asem die vars oggendlug in, en sê dankie vir gesonde longe, as ek lekker diep in my kampstoel gaan sit. Ek geniet die son wat liggies my vel verwarm, en prys die Here vir Sy aanraking. Die wind wat deur my hare speel, is Sy vingers. Dit laat my glimlag...

Verwelkom die winter in jou lewe, want die tyd vir uiterlike groei en besigwees, is verby. Nou bly net wortelgroei oor, en dit vind ongesiens plaas. Net jy en God weet daarvan. Die stilte is 'n seën, want dit skep die geleentheid vir gesprekke met God. **Leef intens bewus van Sy Teenwoordigheid.** Toets elke gedagte wat jy koester by Hom. Bid gedurig, somer met oop oë, en dank Hom vir elke klein gawe aan jou.

Doelloos en nutteloos? Nee, eerder afgesonder en uitverkore, want dan word elke dag wat ons leef, een tree nader aan God ons Vader!
- Phillip Kotze, Facebook

Pray for Discernment

“They are mature enough to know the difference between good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14 NCV).

In the 1940s, Switzerland manufactured 80 percent of the world's watches. Then in the 1960s, when an inventor presented his idea for a new type of watch to the leaders of a Swiss company, they rejected it.

All the other Swiss companies he approached did the same. They lived by the philosophy, “If it ain't broke, don't fix it!” But the inventor believed in his design, and took it to a company in Japan.

The name of the company was Seiko, the design of the watch was digital, and guess what? Sales of digital watches soon outstripped the traditional analogue ones. One discernment-driven decision changed the face of a whole industry!

God-given discernment is even more powerful! Let us note two things about it:

(1) It is shaped by Scripture. *“People who live on milk are like babies who don't really know what is right. Solid food is for mature people who have been trained to know right from wrong”* (Hebrews 5:13-14 CEV). Spending time in God's Word, reading it, studying it, reflecting on it, and asking questions about it will help us develop our level of discernment.

(2) It is sharpened by use. The more we use discernment, the more competent we become. Like a muscle, the more we flex and stretch it, the stronger it grows.

The Bible also refers to “discerning of spirits”, or attitudes and motivations (see 1 Corinthians 12:10). What an advantage to have! Let's pray for the gift of discernment and use it at every opportunity.

So what now? Today, pray: “Father, help me to exercise my spirit of discernment.”

Christ's Message for the Seven Churches

Jesus Christ commissioned the apostle John to write letters to seven churches in Asia Minor about their spiritual condition.

Each letter identified the church's strengths and weaknesses and gave instructions for finding its spiritual footing. These messages reveal that the ancient Church contended with many of the challenges God's people face today. By studying Christ's letters to the seven churches of Revelation, we can gain a greater perspective of Church history and faithful Christian living.

UNDERSTANDING THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF REVELATION

When Christ gave these messages to the apostle John, he was in exile on the island of Patmos. Rome had banished John to keep him from contributing to the growth of Christianity in the Empire. But even the most powerful nation in the world could not prevent John from spreading Christ's revelation of *"the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this"* (Revelation 1:19).

The *"things which you have seen"* are the revelations of Christ Himself to John in Revelation 1. The *"things which are"* constitute the seven messages of Christ to seven churches in Asia Minor - churches in the cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. We find these messages in Revelation 2-3. The *"things which will take place after this"* make up the rest of the book: Revelation 4-22.

INTERPRETING THE SEVEN LETTERS THROUGH THREE LAYERS OF MEANING

1. Primary association

The first step in Bible study is to determine what the passage of Scripture meant to its original audience: who wrote it, when, why, and to whom. Scholars refer to this as the grammatical-historical method - determining what the Bible meant in its original context. We could also call it discovering the primary meaning.

Jesus Christ addressed His letters to historical churches in seven cities: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. We begin our study of the seven letters by understanding their historical context - discerning their geographical, social, and political challenges as well as their spiritual strengths and weaknesses.

2. Personal application

This step begins by asking, "What does the passage mean to me?" We could refer to this as discovering the personal meaning of the text. We could apply those two steps - primary interpretation and personal application - and be well equipped for the task of *"rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15).

Christ's letters are *"profitable"* for Christians of every era (2 Timothy 3:16). Because there is *"nothing new under the sun"* (Ecclesiastes 1:9), the problems that beset the seven churches of Revelation also reflect the challenges we face today. No one's opinion about the Church is more important than that of the Head of the Church (Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:18), so every word Jesus gave to the seven churches speaks to Christians today. Christ Jesus' goal is not merely to criticize but to correct, beginning with individual believers.

3. Prophetic anticipation

All passages have a primary interpretation and a personal application; some also have a prophetic application. That means their general relevance reaches beyond the primary (past) and the personal (present) perspectives, and extends into the future.

Many scholars agree that Christ's message to the seven churches prophetically revealed seven distinct ages of church history. So Christ's letters to the seven first-century churches in Asia Minor require all three kinds of understanding: primary, personal, and prophetic.

RECOGNIZING THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION AS PERIODS OF CHURCH HISTORY

When we place Christ's letters in the context of history, the Ephesian church prophetically correlates to the Apostolic Church, the Laodicean church represents the Church in the World of the End, and the other churches depict intervening periods of history.

Ephesus: the First-century Apostolic Church

It is not unusual to be excited about new things and to grow indifferent toward them over time. As we observe in the church at Ephesus, it can even happen in our relationship with Jesus. The excitement of meeting and following Him can become routine.

Christ warned the Ephesian church: *If you do not "repent and do the first works, I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place"* (Revelation 2:5). In other words, He



would remove the church's influence and power. Drifting away from the Lord always exacts a toll. Looking back at history, we can see that by the end of the Apostolic Age, the Early Church lost much of its momentum, and the Ephesian church dissolved in the second century.

When we find ourselves drifting from the Lord, the solution is to remember our initial enthusiasm, repent of our apathy, and recover our original passion for the Lord.

Smyrna: the Persecuted Church of the Second and Third Centuries

In Revelation 2:10, Christ said, *"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days."*

There has been no end to the speculation about this reference to *"ten days."* Some think it refers to ten years of persecution for the church in Smyrna. Others believe it refers to Roman persecution in the second and third centuries. Historians tell us the Church endured ten waves of persecution under ten Roman emperors ending with the reign of Diocletian.

CHRIST'S MESSAGE - BE FEARLESS: Christians in developed countries today think little about being persecuted for their faith. But for many churches in the world, persecution is as much a daily reality as it was for the ancient church in Smyrna.

Christ's brief letter to Smyrna contains a powerful principle for Christians of every age: the opposite of fear is faith - faith in God, faith in what He has said, faith in who He is, and faith in what He has promised us: *"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life"* (Revelation 2:10).

Whatever we believe about the meaning of *"ten days,"* as Chris-

tians, we have confidence that *"our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"* (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Pergamos: the Worldly Church after its Integration with the Roman Empire

One of Satan's favourite tactics is to weaken the Church through compromise. He used *"the doctrine of Balaam"* and *"the doctrine of the Nicolaitans"* to dilute the teachings of the Pergamos church. In the fourth century, he successfully Christianized the Roman Empire and Romanized the Christian Church. The unholy alliance between the Church and Rome undermined Christianity for centuries. Satan has not given up on that strategy; he still works to corrupt the Church and Christian families through compromise.

In today's society, compromise often goes by the buzzword of *"tolerance."* Everyone and everything is tolerable except for the absolute truth claims of Christianity. Churches and believers find themselves pressured to conform to worldly values. The solution is to *"hold fast to [Christ's] Name"* (Revelation 2:13), testify to His Gospel, and stop compromising His Truth.

Thyatira: the Church of the Middle Ages

The church in Thyatira was steadfast, generous with others, and loving. Its members worked long and hard for the Lord. But because of the church's devotion, Satan placed a target on its back. Knowing the believers in Thyatira wouldn't fall for an obvious ploy, Satan used an immoral individual to infiltrate their camp. Before long, sexual immorality and spiritual impurity consumed the church (Revelation 2:20).

THYATIRA'S "SECRET" PROBLEM: The Church of the Middle Ages succumbed to the same

Continued on p. 9

Christ's Message for the Seven Churches

Continued from p. 8

temptation. Ray Stedman offers this description: "It was a time when the Church became corrupt by combining pagan rites and Christian teaching. Many pagan practices and heathen rituals were introduced into the churches, baptized with Christian terminology, related in some way to elements of the Bible, and thus accepted as being true: Images began to be worshipped in churches... The control of political powers by religious authorities was widely sought."

Satan is alive and well and will do anything to keep Christians from remaining faithful to the end. Today's Christians and churches feel pressure to be relevant and all-inclusive regarding spiritual and moral boundaries. We would do well to regard Christ's warnings and promises to the church in Thyatira as watchwords for this present day.

Sardis: the Church of the Protestant Reformation

Sardis means "escaping ones" or "those who come out." In the prophetic view of the Church, Sardis represents the Age of Reformation (A.D. 1517-1750). During that time, many sincere Christians came out of the Roman Church, searching for sound biblical doctrine and practice. Leaders like Luther, Knox, Wycliffe, and Zwingli were influential.

CHRIST'S CALL TO REPENTANCE: Like the Church of the Middle Ages, the church in Sardis maintained spiritual practices and, on the surface, appeared to be vibrant. However, it died spiritually. Sardis calls to mind Jesus' description of the Pharisees: "like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). Only a few faithful followers of Jesus Christ escaped the spiritual decay that gripped the church in Sardis.

Complacency is the villain of this precautionary tale. The church in Sardis and the Church of the Middle Ages largely died off, because they rested on past accomplishments and tolerated sin. We can avoid a similar fate by following the apostle Paul's instruction: "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Philadelphia: the Church of the Modern Missionary Movement

In many places, church life has become complicated and multi-

faceted. But for the church in Philadelphia, one of only two that received Christ's unfettered praise, life was simple and principled.

Situated at the gateway of a large, populous region, Philadelphia's church reached far beyond its geographical boundaries with the Gospel. Although this church wasn't particularly influential or powerful, its members remained faithful to the Lord and His Word while leveraging the ministry opportunities afforded by their location. Philadelphia's church embodied Paul's admonition in Galatians 6:9: "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."

CHRIST, KEYS, AND OPEN DOORS: From a prophetic perspective, the Philadelphia church represents the universal Church from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the Rapture, overlapping with the period characterized by the church of Laodicea. It provides an exemplary model for modern congregations and individual members.

Laodicea: the Apostate Church at the End of this Age

Of all the places in Scripture where God uses harsh language to address His people, Christ's stern words to the church in Laodicea are unparalleled. This letter is the only one of the seven that says nothing positive about the church it addresses. Christ accuses the church of compromise, pridefulness, and ungodliness.

The Laodicean church is more like today's Church than we'd care to admit. John Stott wrote: "Perhaps none of the seven letters is more appropriate to parallel the twentieth-century church than this one. It describes vividly the respectable, sentimental, nominal, skin-deep religiosity which is so widespread among us today. Our Christianity is flabby and anemic. We appear to have taken a lukewarm bath of religion." Instead of pointing people to Christ, the Laodicean church and, by extension, much of the modern Church, is characterized by self-absorption and ineffectiveness.

Only repentance can restore an apostate. First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

THE PRESCRIPTION FOR LAODICEA'S SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS: acknowledging Christ's message to the Church of today. In 1851,



William Holman Hunt painted what has become one of the most famous religious paintings in the world. Titled "The Light of the World," it depicts a long-neglected cottage overgrown with vines, the front door closed and shut tight with no visible handle. Standing at the door, arrayed in kingly robes with a crown on His head and a lantern in one hand, is Christ Jesus. With His other hand, Christ is knocking on the door.

When someone accused Holman of neglecting to paint a handle on the outside of the door, he replied that it was not a mistake. The door has no exterior handle because those within the Church must open the door to Christ. He will not force His way into our lives.

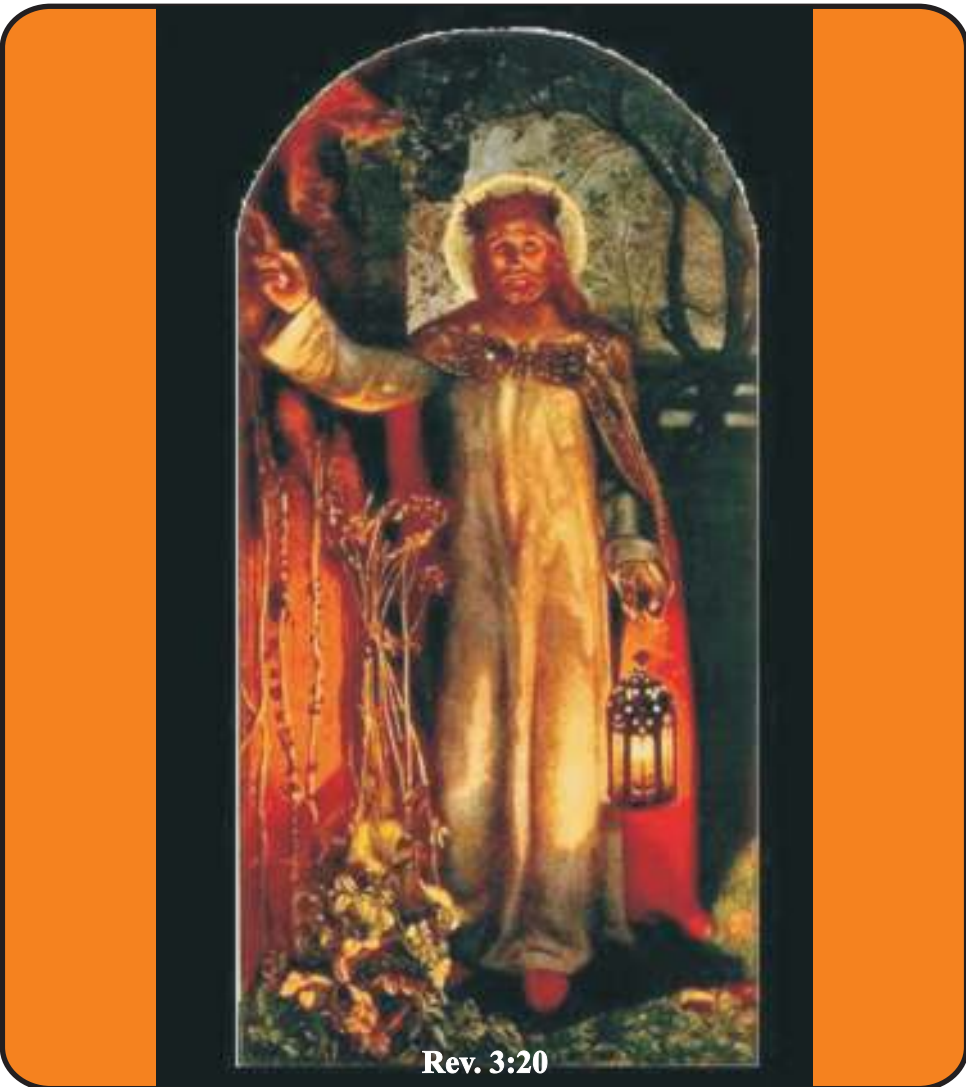
Each letter to the seven churches of Revelation carries an application for God's people today. And the future of our local churches depends on us, the indi-

dual members.

Let me ask this: Are you propelling your church toward Christ or compromise? Are your doors opened or closed to Him? I am determined that Hunt's painting will never reflect any church I am a part of - may it never portray yours! No matter where you are in your walk with the Lord, as long as you are on this earth, there is time to recover your love for Him, repent of any sinfulness, and revive lifeless congregations.

Christ's invitation to the seven churches of Revelation still stands: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).
- Dr David Jeremiah

<https://davidjeremiah.blog/christ-s-message-for-the-seven-churches-of-revelation-and-today/>



Rev. 3:20

DIE HERE LÊ 'N SKIETLOOD AAN

(AMOS 7:1-7)

Amos tree op as profeet teen Noord-Israel in 864-862 v.C. Hy kom wel uit die suide, nl. Juda (Tekoa). Hy is dus 'n besoekende predikant in die Noordryk.

Die plaaslike predikant (profeet) daar was Amasia. Beide Amos en Amasia ontleed die godsdiens-tige situasie in Israel, maar kom tot twee verskillende gevolgtrekkings. Amasia sê dit gaan baie goed. Amos wys 'n nie-so-goeie geloofslewe uit.

Amasia jaag Amos weg: *“Maak dat jy wegkom, siener, ...in Bet-El mag jy nie meer as profeet optree nie, want dit is die... staats-tempel.”*

En Amos antwoord met 'n skerp boodskap: *“Israel verkoop die*

onskuldige mense vir geld... hulle trap swakkes se koppe plat in die grond...” God se oordeel gaan kom oor die Noord-ryk (Israel).

Die Kerk en samelewing, ons mense van vandag, word op allerlei maniere getoets. Daar is vandag dinge beskikbaar wat so vyftig of wat jaar gelede nie eers aan gedink is nie. Pornografie, casino's, 'n oop, maar ook meer permissiewe, liberale en vry-sinnige samelewing.

Die Here het ons binne 'n verbondshuis laat opgroei. Ons is deur Katkisasie en Belydenis van Geloof. God het ons as 'n loodregte muur opgebou om tot Sy eer te lewe. Nou verskyn die Here met 'n skietlood (waterpas) in Sy hand op die muur van die Kerk (ons!) om te kom kyk of ons muur nog

loodreg is. Dis nie Amasia, die staatspredikant, of Amos, die besoe-kende prediker, wat die oordeel oor Israel anlê nie. Dis God Self! Die Here vra van hulle, en ons, om... *“Die reg... te voorskyn te laat kom, te laat aanrol soos die watergolwe”* (Amos 5:24). God vra die hart, die lewe van Israel. Hy vra dit van jou en my.

God se skietlood lê aan ons mure. Ons huise, ons kerke. Dan nie volgens wat ons maar dink is goed en reg nie, maar wat God in Sy Woord vra.

Israel sou uiteindelik in ballingskap weggevoer word in 721 v.C. 'n Mens kan sê dat die Here vir nog omtrent 140 jaar eindelose geduld met Israel gehad het (862 v.C. tot 722 v.C.). Die Here het

eindelose geduld met ons tot nou toe. Hoe lank het die Here nie al Sy trou, liefde, genade aan ons bewys nie? Dat ons 'n volgende keer in ons geloof aan die Nag-maalstafel versterk kan word, is weer 'n bewys van Sy genade. Maar aan elkeen van ons se lewe kom hang die Here ook 'n skietlood (maatband) om te kyk of dit is soos wat Hy van ons vra.

Die Here Jesus Christus het Sy lewe vir ons gegee om ons te red. Kom ons gaan soek genade, vergifnis, nuwe lewe by Hom vandag, en volgende week, en volgende Sondag, en al die dae daarna... totdat Hy weer kom!

AMEN.

Ds. Koos Mouton
082 925 3959

God's Faithfulness

WHEN someone says, “Let me tell you about my mother-in-law,” we expect some kind of negative statement or humorous anecdote. The mother-in-law caricature has been a standard centrepiece of ridicule or comedy.

In the book of Ruth, however, a different story is told. Ruth loved her mother-in-law, Naomi. Recently widowed, she begged to stay with Naomi wherever she went. In heart-felt words Ruth said, *“Your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God”* (1:16). Naomi agreed and Ruth travelled with her to Bethlehem.

Not much is said about Naomi except that she loved and cared for Ruth. Obviously, Naomi's life

was a powerful witness to the reality of God. Ruth was drawn to her and to the God she worshipped. In the succeeding months and years, God led this young Moabite widow to a man named Boaz, whom she eventually married. As a result, she became the great-grandmother of David and a descendant in the line of the Messiah. What a profound impact was made by Naomi's life!

The book of Ruth is also the story of God's grace in the midst of difficult circumstances. Ruth's story occurred during the time of the judges - a time marked by disobedience, idolatry, and violence. Even in times of crisis and deepest despair, there are those who follow God and through whom God works. No matter how discouraging or antagonistic the world may seem, there are always

people who follow God and He will use anyone who is open to Him to achieve His purpose. Ruth was a Moabitess and Boaz was a descendant of Rahab, a former prostitute from Jericho. Nevertheless, their off-spring continued the family line through which the Messiah came into our world. Read the book of Ruth and be encouraged. **God is at work in the world and He wants to use you!** God could use you as He used Naomi, to bring family and friends to Him.

Ruth's life was guided by faithfulness toward God and showed itself in loyalty toward the people she knew. To be loyal and loving in relationships, we must imitate God's faithfulness in our relationships with others.

- *Life Application Bible*, 1988, Tyndale House Publishers.

The key to keeping the balance between confidence and humility is to avoid self-confidence and to practise humble God-confidence, ensuring that your confidence comes not from your own abilities or successes, but from trusting in the Lord.
- Nicky Gumbel

Jer. 20:11

★★★**B&B** *Vit die Hand*

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