

SIM *now*

Issue 2 of 3 - 2023

For Christians Only

Empowered to *Empower Scripturally*

2 Tim 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.



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E-copy of magazine
can be found on
website and FB

Official publication of SIM (Serving In Mission),
an interdenominational Evangelical Protestant mission.
SIM includes Africa Evangelical Fellowship, Andes
Evangelical Mission, International Christian Fellowship,
Sudan Interior Mission and Middle East Christian Outreach.

The East Asia edition of SIMNow is printed by
SIM East Asia,
116 Lavender Street, Pek Chuan Building,
#04-09, Singapore 338730. Tel: +(65) 6298 3611
ISSN 0711-6683-11981, MCI (P) 050/03/2023.

Permission to reprint any material must be obtained from the
SIM East Asia Editor at eastasia.info@sim.org.

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EDITORIAL



Empowered to empower scripturally

Dr Ng Khee Yang – Deputy Regional Director, SIMEA

“Empowered to Empower Scripturally”

I once heard a confession made by a Bible school lecturer that for many years, he had merely used the Bible to prepare his teaching materials for his academic purposes. He did not have a personal relationship with God. How can he empower his students scripturally if he himself is not nourished by the Scriptures? While I am saddened to hear his confession, I am thankful to God for his courage to confess and his determination to work on his daily intake of God’s Word with a new attitude.

A close relationship with God and help from the Holy Spirit to rightly discern and apply God’s reliable Word to our lives will help us to be empowered by His Word so that we can empower others. Apostle Paul says “**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so**

that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).”

Here Paul explains that God’s Word thoroughly equips us for His service. So, it is very important for us to know God’s Word well, love it and use it to equip the individuals whom God has entrusted into our hands. We can empower each one to:

1. **HEAR God’s Word (Rom 10:17)**

We need to hear God’s Word (e.g., audio Bible, sermons in church), and share it with others so that they can get to hear God’s Word too.

2. **READ God’s Word (Rev 1:3)**

We must develop a daily Bible reading plan and encourage others to do the same.

3. **STUDY God’s Word (Acts 17:11)**

We can set up/join a small group Bible Study to examine various portions of the Bible, so that we can grow in our knowledge of the Word and apply it in our lives.

4. **MEMORISE** key verses in the Bible (Ps 119:9,11)

We must memorize new verses and review old verses regularly.

5. **MEDITATE** on some words in a Bible verse (Ps 1:2,3)

We must set aside quiet moments to reflect on some verses and respond to what God has impressed upon us.

The current SIM Now issue focuses on how our members have been discipling and empowering many in the mission fields. May our Lord continue to empower them and each one of us through His Word so that we can empower many others for His service!



Empowered to empower scripturally

Rev Dr Kelvin Chen,
Associate Minister Prinsep Street Presbyterian Church

*To be equipped to
“make disciples of all nations”
we ourselves must soak in the
Scriptures*

Apostle Paul affirmed with clear finality the conviction that “all Scripture is breathed out by God” (ESV), or “God-breathed” (NIV). The Greek word used is *opneustos* – a word derived from the words *theo* (meaning “God”) and *pneustos* (meaning “breath”). Scripture being God’s word, is our yardstick and plumbline to discern God’s truth for life in a subjective, post modernistic world that is increasingly loosened from its moorings to objective truth.

Paul says Scripture is profitable or useful for “teaching and reproof”, as well as for “correction and training in righteousness.” “Teaching and reproof” have to do with sound doctrine. Thus, all Scripture ought to be read and studied, not just our favourite “quotable” Bible verses. With sound doctrine taught– there may be times when reproof (or rebuke) of false or erroneous doctrine is needed. The teaching of sound doctrine is indeed a shepherding and leadership role in our churches, and in mission.

“Correction” and “training in righteousness” have to do with conduct. Thus, in addition to the teaching of sound doctrine, disciples of the Lord Jesus must also be teachable in their conduct – to be willing to be trained in virtue, so that they may live lives of integrity for God’s glory. Paul concludes by saying that Scripture’s main purpose is “that the man of God may be completely equipped for every good work” (v17).

Though we are called “to make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19), we cannot make disciples unless we ourselves are disciples. To be equipped to “make disciples of all nations” we ourselves must soak in the Scriptures. We must subject ourselves to the teaching and reproof, as well as the correction and training in righteousness of God’s Word, so that our doctrine and our lives would be empowered by God’s Spirit to reach out to a world where millions are living and dying without having even met a Christian.

Reflection questions:

1. Do we hunger and thirst for God’s Word?
2. Are there any parts of Scripture that we find difficulty in believing and obeying?
3. How does our conviction that all Scripture are God breathed make a difference in our lives?
4. In what way does being prayerful, and reading and studying of the Bible help a person to develop a consistent world view?
5. Suggest how this affects one’s view of the sanctity of life for the unborn, terminally ill, the elderly, marriage, family, work ethics and mission.

May God’s Word guide our churches, seminaries, and mission organizations, till Jesus comes again!



Empowered to love and care

Naima, South Asia

I was very bad-tempered before I became a Christian. I harboured a lot of anger in my heart because I thought my parents showered love only on my siblings and gave me the least attention. I always felt I was treated unfairly which, of course, led to a series of eruptions that heightened tension in my relationship with my family. When I realized that my temper was raging out of control, I desired to change for the better but just didn't know how.

When I was in high school, I started going to church. One Sunday, a friend shared the verse in 2 Corinthians 5:17 about Jesus' transforming power. I wanted a changed life and so I prayed to Jesus to change my life. Later when I found a mini Bible I was impacted by Jesus' teachings, and I was determined to apply them. Over time, God changed my life through the Scriptures and took away my anger.

One day, a friend showed us pictures of Western doctors who had used their own resources to organize free medical care in Central Asia. While taking care of their patients' medical needs, the doctors seized every opportunity to tell them that "Jesus loved them." It made quite an impression on me that the Western doctors learnt the local language in order to share the gospel. I was so inspired by this that I resolved to do the same.

I always wanted to be a doctor so that I could earn big money. But soon I realized that medical



It was as if I had a spiritual awakening

profession was one of God's powerful means of reaching many unreached places in the world. That day, I realigned my thinking, and asked God to reveal His plan for my life and grant me a new vision. God eventually led me to do medicine. After six years of medical training, God equipped me further for another seven years by teaching me both to care for the patients' physical condition as well as for their spiritual health. My colleagues showed me how to pray and teach them the Scripture so that they can place their trust in God. I really felt empowered to empower others.

In 2017, I spent six weeks in a hospital in South Asia to observe what God was doing there. Through different people God encouraged me to return to the same country again, and strangely, as I set foot in the house that was prepared for me, I felt like I had come home. It was as if I had a spiritual awakening. Before long, I started to serve in a hospital there.



Empowered to empower theologically

Rev. Eugene Chuang, South Africa

Durban Bible College was established in 1957 by T.E.A.M and SIM joined the ministry in the 1990s. Most of the pastors of ECSA (Evangelical Church in South Africa) and EBC (Evangelical Bible Church) are trained by DBC. In 2014, I began to teach at Durban Bible College as an adjunct lecturer. I first sat with students in SIM missionary Mark Hugo's class for at least two terms to familiarize myself with the college and enhance my knowledge of its practices and policies. I was inspired by the huge need of theological training for pastors in South Africa.

In mid-2021, when the principal and a T.E.A.M. missionary couple announced that they would be retiring at the end of 2021, I was invited to serve as the vice-principal of DBC. I turned down the invitation with the excuse that I was not a native English speaker. But the Principal asked me to pray about it before making a decision.

After a few days, during my usual morning devotion, God conversed with me, "Eugene, did you not teach students to have faith in the Lord? Are you setting an example?" I replied, "Lord, you know I have no confidence in the English language even after all these years of teaching. I have no administrative experience in running a Bible College, and I am afraid that I will be unable to perform well at all." God responded clearly and promptly, "Aren't you like Moses, refusing the task in the first place?" I was shocked and ashamed at the same time, but I continued to lament, "I have no capability; I can't do it." God spoke once more, "Eugene, you say you cannot because you're focusing on what you can't, not on what I can do." I finally became enlightened and surrendered to God's counsel, trembling in awe of God speaking to me.

In July 2021, I began the role of vice-principal. In January 2022, I was delighted to welcome the new principal. God continues to teach the entire faculty and staff to walk by faith. In fact, He has brought us out of our comfort zone as we purchased a new property by faith and applied for accreditation of the college. Admittedly, there will be challenges along the way, but I am confident that God will continue to empower me to empower others in their walk with Him.

Empowered through perseverance

Benjamin & Ernxin, South Asia

My family of four moved from Singapore to Thailand more than a year ago. God has set in both my wife's and my hearts for mission in Thailand since we were in college. However, our greatest fear in settling in Thailand has been the language barrier. Though there are similarities between Thai and Chinese languages in the pronunciation of some characters, we still find learning Thai onerous.

Prior to settling in Thailand, we learned the Thai language via online with a Thai language teacher. She had been praying relentlessly for us and we thank God for her. Once during prayer, she thanked God for putting Thailand in our hearts to pass the love of God to the Thai people. Instantaneously, we felt our hearts lifted and united with the Thai people. That experience gave us the impetus to persevere. It was because of her, our fundamentals for the Thai language were firmly established. Amazingly, our children who are 6 and 4 years old respectively, are now conversationally fluent in Thai.



We believe that as we surrender ourselves to God's will, our posture skews the learning curve of the scriptures and He empowers us to know Him better. In the same manner, He empowers us to learn the Thai language despite our challenges and frustrations. Whenever we get discouraged by our poor grasp of the Thai vocabulary, our church friends rally together and encourage us.

Over time, God has been teaching us not to rely on our own strength but on His. Whenever we participate in a Thai worship service and find it difficult to understand the sermons and hymns, we are aware that the Holy Spirit is at work uniting our hearts and spirit with our brothers and

sisters from other countries in our worship of God. We persevere in collective worship despite our lack of understanding. As time goes by, we slowly begin to grasp the content of the sermons and hymns and we realised that we can do so only because of the Holy Spirit guiding us step by step.

Deep calls unto deep. We know that the Holy Spirit guides us not just in our daily affairs and in our interactions within the community; His guidance in our language learning has granted us spiritual breakthroughs. These spiritual breakthroughs shaped the distinctive experience of our first year in the mission field. To God be the glory.

The Holy Spirit was at work uniting our hearts and spirit with our brothers and sisters from other countries in our worship of God.

Serving the marginalized through scriptures

L.T.H, South Asia

God took 50 years to prepare and equip me for His service. Why did He take 50 years?

In retrospect, I was well positioned to serve Him only for the past three years. The time spent with Him was the most precious moments. It was only when I learned to walk in humility that I could mimic His posture to love those whom He loved and do what He loved.

After praying for a year, God unveiled His calling for me to reach out to a marginalised group. During a worship service, I heard His still small voice directing, 'Go, don't carry anything!' That sparked a journey into the unknown. Convicted, I asked God to give me an opportunity to witness the Gospel even if it meant taking ten years of labour to lead one person to salvation.

We started to serve at the start of the pandemic though church activities were suspended. Unknowingly, through His invisible hands, He had already prepared the hearts of the marginalised people. As we reached out to two tribes in the city and at the border, we exerted human efforts to try to understand their background and culture so that we could find an angle to present the



It was only when I learned to walk in humility that I could mimic His posture to love those whom He loved and do what He loved.

Gospel. Ironically, it only took a simple sharing by a leap of faith for one entire family to accept Christ. I was blown away. As I quietened myself, I realised that power lies in His Word. What is required of us is faithfulness and He will make everything beautiful in His time.

Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37:5

Relying on the promises of God in Psalm 37:5, I testified to one after

another within the group that which God had put in my heart through dreams and visions. I started a Bible study group comprising five people which grew to fourteen groups within three years. Six months later, it multiplied to 19 groups and then 37 groups. Even though most of the natives were illiterate, God worked in His amazing way to penetrate their hearts through His Word.

Serving the marginalised group has ushered in multiple challenges. However, God has constantly been in control whilst He has been directing our steps. He never stops working as He continues to reveal His love for the people. The reason why we love is because He first loves us.

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