

BETHANY INTERNATIONAL CHURCH
MELBOURNE

DECEMBER EDITION

*I have fought the good fight, I
have finished the race, I have
kept the faith*

2 TIMOTHY 4:7

FINISH THE RACE LIFE



for my house
will be called
a house of
prayer for all
nations



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Christmas and Holy Spirit

*Sebab itu Tuhan sendirilah yang akan memberikan kepadamu suatu pertanda:
Sesungguhnya, seorang perempuan muda mengandung
dan akan melahirkan seorang anak laki-laki,
dan ia akan menamakan Dia Imanuel*

(Yesaya 7:14)

Kitab nabi Yesaya banyak berbicara mengenai Allah yang melakukan hal-hal yang baru. Kita seringkali hanya menganggap hal ini sebagai Allah mengerjakan hal-hal yang belum pernah dilakukan sebelumnya. Padahal yang dimaksudkan nabi Yesaya adalah sesuatu yang jauh lebih dahsyat daripada sekedar melakukan hal yang belum pernah dilakukan.

“Berapa lama lagi engkau mundur maju, hai anak perempuan yang tidak taat? Sebab TUHAN menciptakan sesuatu yang baru di negeri; perempuan merangkul laki-laki.”

Yeremia 31:22

Kata ‘perempuan merangkul laki-laki’ di dalam ayat ini berbicara mengenai sesuatu yang ajaib. Kata merangkul juga dapat diterjemahkan dari bahasa Ibrani sebagai ‘mengelilingi sepenuhnya’, ‘membenamkan’ atau ‘menaungi’. Hal ini berbicara mengenai penciptaan tubuh Yesus di dalam kandungan Maria. Sama seperti di dalam **Lukas 1:35**

“Jawab malaikat itu kepadanya: “Roh Kudus akan turun atasmu dan kuasa Allah Yang Mahatinggi akan menaungi engkau; sebab itu anak yang akan kau lahirkan akan disebut kudus, Anak Allah.”

Kata ‘menaungi’ ini juga dipakai. Sama seperti Roh Kudus menaungi Maria sehingga membuat ia mampu “menaungi” bayi Yesus di dalam kandungannya. Dalam pengertian ini kita dapat melihat bahwa tubuh jasmani Yesus lah ciptaan baru yang pertama jadi.

Setelah Allah selesai dengan penciptaan langit, bumi dan segala isinya dan manusia maka Allah beristirahat dan tidak melakukan tindakan penciptaan apapun lagi. Semua yang terjadi merupakan bagian dari ciptaan-Nya yang “lama” yang telah tercemar oleh dosa. Meskipun demikian ada beberapa paralel menarik yang dapat kita perhatikan:

- a. Sama seperti di dalam **Kejadian 1**, Roh Allah turut terlibat di dalam penciptaan dunia “... *Roh Allah melayang-layang di atas permukaan air*” demikian pula Roh Allah terlibat di dalam penciptaan yang baru.
- b. Sama seperti Allah menghembuskan Roh-Nya kepada boneka tanah liat dan menjadikannya makhluk yang hidup, demikian juga di dalam ciptaan yang baru, Roh Allah menghidupkan kembali roh manusia dan menjadikannya ciptaan yang baru di dalam Yesus Kristus.

Dalam suasana natal ini, kita merenungkan doktrin inkarnasi Kristus ke dalam dunia ini sebagai penganan nubuatan nabi Perjanjian Lama.

TUJUAN INKARNASI KRISTUS KE DALAM DUNIA

1. ***Menyatakan Bapa ‘Di Dalam Daging’***
Yesus berkata bahwa barangsiapa telah melihat Aku, ia telah melihat Bapa. “dan barangsiapa melihat Aku, ia melihat Dia, yang telah mengutus Aku.
Yohanes 12:45

Tanpa Inkarnasi Kristus gagasan tentang Allah hanya tetap berada di dalam alam subjektif manusia karena masing-masing orang yang meskipun telah mengalami perjumpaan yang otentik dengan Allah, melihat-Nya di dalam aspek yang berbeda-beda.

Hanya Yesus-lah yang menyatukan semua sisi kemuliaan Allah di dalam “bungkusan” yang dapat dilihat oleh manusia. Setelah Yesus, manusia tidak memiliki alasan untuk berspekulasi mengenai sifat dan karakter Allah, tetapi manusia memiliki titik referensi yang pasti, barangsiapa yang telah melihat Yesus ia telah melihat Bapa.

2. ***Menggenapi Rencana Penebusan Allah***

*Karena itu ketika Ia masuk ke dunia, Ia berkata:
"Korban dan persembahan tidak Engkau kehendaki –
tetapi Engkau telah menyediakan tubuh bagiku."*

Ibrani 10:5

Semua bentuk korban darah binatang mulai dari domba pertama yang dipersembahkan di taman Eden sampai pada waktu munculnya Tuhan Yesus yang diperkenalkan oleh Yohanes Pembaptis sebagai Anak Domba Allah yang mengangkut dosa dunia, semuanya itu digenapi di atas kayu salib pada saat Yesus mencurahkan darah-Nya untuk menebus dosa kita.

Bukanlah suatu kebetulan bahwa satu generasi setelah kematian Tuhan Yesus di atas kayu salib, Bait Allah dan altar korban di Yerusalem dihancurkan oleh tentara Romawi dan belum dapat didirikan kembali sampai pada hari ini untuk menunjukkan fakta bahwa mulai saat itu Allah tidak berkenan lagi kepada korban darah binatang karena sudah ada korban yang sempurna sekali untuk selamanya.

3. ***Keteladanan-Nya Di Dalam Dunia***

*"Firman itu telah menjadi manusia, dan diam diantara kita,
dan kita telah melihat kemuliaan-Nya, yaitu kemuliaan yang diberikan
kepada-Nya sebagai Anak Tunggal Bapa, penuh kasih karunia dan
kebenaran."*

Yohanes 1:14

Di dalam Perjanjian Lama tidak ada satu orangpun yang dapat menjalani firman Tuhan dengan sempurna, tidak ada diantara para imam, para nabi, bahkan Raja Daud sekalipun tidak dapat mengklaim ketaatan yang sempurna. Yesus adalah benih sorgawi yaitu Sang Firman yang dinaungi oleh Roh Kudus sehingga menjadi Daging (manusia).

Hanya Dialah yang dapat mengklaim ketaatan yang sempurna karena Dialah Sang Empunya firman tersebut. Sama seperti sang pengirim suratlah yang berhak memberikan interpretasi yang sempurna terhadap isi surat, bukan si tukang pos.

Tukang pos tidak berhak untuk memberikan interpretasi, apalagi mengubah isi surat itu, tetapi sang pengirim/sumber surat berhak melakukannya. Inilah yang diklaim oleh Tuhan Yesus ketika Ia menyebutkan bahwa diri-Nya lah tuan penguasa sabat.

Bagi kita orang Kristen hanya di dalam Kristuslah kita dapat mengklaim ketaatan yang sempurna kepada Firman Tuhan karena Ia telah menggenapkan Hukum Taurat bagi kita. Tugas kita sekarang adalah taat kepada-Nya.

Kita melihat betapa pentingnya peranan Roh Kudus di dalam Natal. Dialah yang menghadirkan tubuh Yesus di atas dunia 2.000 tahun yang lalu untuk menggenapi rencana penebusan Allah. Ia juga lah yang pada saat ini yang dengan iman membawa kehadiran Roh Kristus ke dalam roh kita. Sebagai orang Kristen kita harus selalu menjunjung peranan Roh Kudus di dalam kehidupan kita. (AL)



01 JAN

Read

Ecclesiastes

9:4-12

Bible in a Year

Genesis 1-3;

Matthew 1

*Whatever your
hand finds to
do, do it with
all your might.*

Ecclesiastes

9:10

By Poh Fang Chia

New Year, New Priorities

I've always wanted to learn how to play the cello. But I've never found the time to enroll in a class. Or, perhaps more accurately, I haven't made the time for it. I had thought that in heaven I could probably master that instrument. In the meantime, I wanted to focus on using my time in the particular ways God has called me to serve Him now.

Life is short, and we often feel the pressure to make the most of our time on Earth before it slips away. But what does that really mean?

As King Solomon contemplated the meaning of life, he offered two recommendations. First, we're to live in the most meaningful way we can, which includes fully enjoying the good things God allows us to experience in life, such as food and drink (Ecclesiastes 9:7), clothing and perfume (v. 8 nlt), marriage (v. 9), and all of God's good gifts—which might include learning how to play the cello!

His second recommendation was diligent work (v. 10). Life is full of opportunities, and there is always more work to be done. We're to take advantage of the opportunities God gives us, seeking His wisdom on how to prioritize work and play in a way that uses our gifting to serve Him.

Life is a wonderful gift from the Lord. We honor Him when we take pleasure both in His daily blessings and in meaningful service.

Father, thank You for this life You've given me. Help me to live this new year for You, enjoying Your blessings and fulfilling Your purposes.

「*We can both enjoy God's blessings and be a blessing to others.*」

It's Good to Ask

My father has always had a directional sense I've envied. He's just instinctively known where north, south, east, and west are. It's like he was born with that sense. And he's always been right. Until the night he wasn't.

That was the night my father got lost. He and my mother attended an event in an unfamiliar town and left after dark. He was convinced he knew the way back to the highway, but he didn't. He got turned around, then confused, and ultimately frustrated. My mother reassured him, "I know it's hard, but ask your phone for directions. It's okay."

For the first time in his life that I'm aware of, my seventy-six-year-old father asked for directions. From his phone.

The psalmist was a man with a wealth of life experience. But the psalms reveal moments when it appears David felt lost spiritually and emotionally. Psalm 143 contains one of those times. The great king's heart was dismayed (v. 4). He was in trouble (v. 11). So he paused and prayed, "Show me the way I should go" (v. 8). And far from counting on a phone, the psalmist cried out to the Lord, "for to you I entrust my life" (v. 8).

If the "man after [God's] own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14) felt lost from time to time, it's a given we too will need to turn to God for His direction.

What has caused you to feel turned around, possibly confused, maybe even frustrated these days? Why might you be resisting asking God and others for help?

02 JAN

Read

Psalm 143:4-11

Bible in a Year

Genesis 4-6;

Matthew 2

Show me the way I should go.

Psalm 143:8

By John Blase

Asking God for direction is more than okay—it's best.

03

JAN

Read

Genesis
3:1-10

Bible in a Year

Genesis 7-9;
Matthew 3

*They hid from
the Lord God*

*among the
trees of the
garden.*

Genesis 3:8

By Kirsten Holmberg

Eyes Tightly Shut

He knew he shouldn't have done it. I could clearly see he knew it was wrong: it was written all over his face! As I sat down to discuss his wrongdoing with him, my nephew quickly squeezed his eyes shut. There he sat, thinking—with three-year-old logic—that if he couldn't see me, then I must not be able to see him. And if he was invisible to me, then he could avoid the conversation (and consequences) he anticipated.

I'm so glad I could see him in that moment. While I couldn't condone his actions, and we needed to talk about it, I really didn't want anything to come between us. I wanted him to look fully into my face and see how much I love him and was eager to forgive him! In that moment, I caught a glimmer of how God might have felt when Adam and Eve broke His trust in the garden of Eden. Realizing their guilt, they tried to hide from God (Genesis 3:10), who could "see" them as plainly as I could see my nephew.

When we realize we've done something wrong, we often want to avoid the consequences. We run from it, conceal it, or close our eyes to the truth. While God will hold us accountable to His righteous standard, He sees us (and seeks us!) because He loves us and offers forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Father, thank You for seeing me and loving me even when I do wrong.

「*God views us through eyes of love.*」

Walking in the Light

04
JAN

Darkness descended on our forest village when the moon disappeared. Lightning slashed the skies, followed by a rainstorm and crackling thunder. Awake and afraid, as a child I imagined all kinds of grisly monsters about to pounce on me! By daybreak, however, the sounds vanished, the sun rose, and calm returned as birds jubilated in the sunshine. The contrast between the frightening darkness of the night and the joy of the daylight was remarkably sharp.

The author of Hebrews recalls the time when the Israelites had an experience at Mount Sinai so dark and stormy they hid in fear (Exodus 20:18–19). For them, God’s presence, even in His loving gift of the law, felt dark and terrifying. This was because, as sinful people, the Israelites couldn’t live up to God’s standards. Their sin caused them to walk in darkness and fear (Hebrews 12:18–21).

But God is light; in Him there’s no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). In Hebrews 12, Mount Sinai represents God’s holiness and our old life of disobedience, while the beauty of Mount Zion represents God’s grace and believers’ new life in Jesus, “the mediator of a new covenant” (vv. 22–24).

Whoever follows Jesus will “never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). Through Him, we can let go of the darkness of our old life and celebrate the joy of walking in the light and beauty of His kingdom.

If you’re a believer in Jesus, how has your life changed since He came into it? What are some ways you’d like to grow in your faith?

Read

Hebrews
12:18-24

Bible in a Year

Genesis 10-12;
Matthew 4

*In him was
life, and that
life was the
light of all
mankind*
John 1:4

By Lawrence Darmani

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for bringing me out of darkness into Your marvelous light. Help me to avoid the darkness to continue walking in the light toward eternity.

05 JAN

Transformed & Transforming

Read

2 Chronicles
33:9-17

Bible in a Year

Genesis 13-15;
Matthew 5:1-26

*Then he restored
the altar of the
Lord. . . and told*

*Judah to serve
the Lord, the
God of Israel.*

2 Chronicles
33:16

By Ruth O'Reilly-Smith

Tani and Modupe grew up in Nigeria and went to the UK to study in the 1970s. Having been personally transformed by God's grace, they never imagined that they would be used to transform one of the most deprived and segregated communities in England—Anfield in Liverpool. As Drs. Tani and Modupe Omideyi faithfully sought God and served their community, God restored hope to many. They lead a vibrant church and continue to run numerous community projects that have led to the transformation of countless lives.

Manasseh changed his community, first for evil and then for good. Crowned king of Judah at the age of twelve, he led his people astray and they did great evil for many years (2 Chronicles 33:1–9). They paid no attention to God's warnings and so He allowed Manasseh to be taken prisoner to Babylon (vv. 10–11).

In his distress, the king humbly cried out to God who heard his plea and restored him to his kingdom (vv. 12–13). The now-reformed king rebuilt the city walls and got rid of the foreign gods (vv. 14–15). "He restored the altar of the Lord and . . . told Judah to serve the Lord, the God of Israel" (v. 16). As the people observed the radical transformation of Manasseh, so too were they transformed (v. 17).

As we seek God, may He transform us and so impact our communities through us.

*Heavenly Father, transform our lives that we may be used by
You to bring transformation to others.*

“Your transformation by God brings transformation to others.”

The Greater Glory

06
JAN

Caesar Augustus is remembered as the first and greatest of the Roman emperors. By political skill and military power he eliminated his enemies, expanded the empire, and lifted Rome from the clutter of rundown neighborhoods into a city of marble statues and temples. Adoring Roman citizens referred to Augustus as the divine father and savior of the human race. As his forty-year reign came to an end, his official last words were, “I found Rome a city of clay but left it a city of marble.” According to his wife, however, his last words were actually, “Have I played the part well? Then applaud as I exit.”

What Augustus didn’t know is that he’d been given a supporting role in a bigger story. In the shadow of his reign, the son of a carpenter was born to reveal something far greater than any Roman military victory, temple, stadium, or palace (Luke 2:1). But who could have understood the glory Jesus prayed for on the night His countrymen demanded His crucifixion by Roman executioners? (John 17:4–5). Who could have foreseen the hidden wonder of a sacrifice that would be forever applauded in heaven and earth?

It’s quite a story. Our God found us chasing foolish dreams and fighting among ourselves. He left us singing together about an old rugged cross.

Father in heaven, please help us to see through and beyond the passing glory of everything but Your love.

Read

John 17:1-5,
20-24

Bible in a Year

Genesis 16 - 17
Matthew 5:27-48

In those

days Caesar

Augustus

issued a

decree that a

census should

be taken of the

entire Roman

world.

Luke 2:1

By Mart DeHaan

The glory we need is the glory of the cross.

07
JAN

An Ordinary Man

William Carey was a sickly boy, born to a humble family near Northampton, England. His future didn't look too bright. But God had plans for him. Against all odds, he moved to India, where he brought incredible social reforms and translated the Bible into several Indian languages. He loved God and people, and accomplished many things for God.

Read

1 Samuel 16:1-7

Bible in a Year

Genesis 18 - 19;

Matthew 6:1-18

People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

1 Samuel 16:7

David, son of Jesse, was an ordinary young man, the youngest in his family. He was seemingly an insignificant shepherd on the hills of Bethlehem (1 Samuel 16:11–12). Yet God saw David's heart and had a plan for him. King Saul had been rejected by God for disobedience. While the prophet Samuel mourned Saul's choices, God called Samuel to anoint a different king, one of Jesse's sons.

When Samuel saw the handsome, tall Eliab, he naturally thought, "surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord" (v. 6). However, God's strategy to select a king was much different than Samuel's. In fact, God said no to each of Jesse's sons, except the youngest one. Selecting David as king was definitely not a strategic move from God's part, or so it seemed at first glance. What would a young shepherd have to offer his community, let alone his country?

How comforting to know that the Lord knows our hearts and has His plans for us.

Dear Lord, thank You that You care more about my heart's attitude toward You than my outward beauty, possessions, or achievements.

By Estera Piroasca Escobar

Pray for Nation

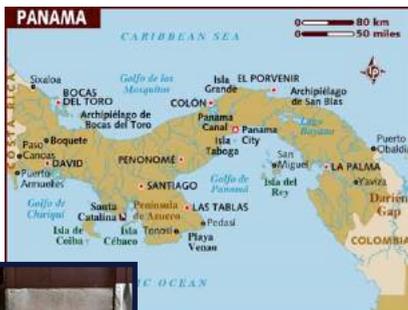
PANAMA



Capital: *Panama City*

Population: *4.1 million people.*

Religion: *Roman Catholic*



1. Let us pray so that Panama will fulfil God's calling to become connecting bridge for the Lord and other nations, especially those in Latin America. This nation is not used for the works of the devil such as drugs dealer.
2. The light of the Lord will shine the darkness and change faith life of Panamanians. This nation will be set free from spiritual pollutions that happen through new age teaching, divination and drugs.
3. Holy Spirit will keep empowering the churches in this country; spiritual awakening will happen to all God's children in this country. Faith restoration and God's wills be done on earth as it is in heaven.
4. Let Panamanians fear the name of the Lord and all the kings of the earth revere His glory. (Psalm 102:15)



MAIN SERVICE

8.30 am & 11 am
(Indonesian with English
translation)

SUNDAY SCHOOL

9 am (English)

180

(TEENS)

8.45 am (English)

NEXT GENERATION

(YOUTH)

11 am (English)

PRAYER TOWER

Point Cook | Monday | 7:15 PM
BIC Melbourne | Tuesday | 6:30 PM
Mount Waverly | Wednesday | 7:15 PM
BIC Melbourne | Friday | 12:00 PM
BIC Melbourne (Fasting Prayer) | Saturday | 10:00 AM

COOL

Friday, 7:00 PM

LADIES FELLOWSHIP

Women of Impact Community

Tuesday 10:30 AM, at BIC

EVENTS

New Years Eve Thanksgiving Night

Monday, 31 December, 7-9 PM



+61396999077



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