



Empowered
to empower

Colossians 2:6-7

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

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

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Empowered to Empower

Watson Rajaratnam, Regional Director, SIM East Asia

When Jesus commanded His disciples to “make disciples” He was not referring to merely drawing fans or members or converts to the church. Just as He himself had His twelve disciples to follow Him, He wanted his disciples to transform those who turn to God from darkness to be transformed into true followers who would submit to His teachings and His ways. SIM’s purpose and mission statement reiterates the same thought: *“Convinced that no one should live and die without hearing God’s good news, we believe that He has called us to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in communities where He is least known.”* Just as children do not automatically become adults, need to be nurtured, new believers do not automatically become spiritually empowered but need to go through a process of spiritual parenting which we call disciple making. According to Rev Edmund Chan, *“Disciple making is all about a certain kind of person who is radically committed to a certain kind of purpose and who through a certain kind of process reproduces a certain kind of product.”* The most powerful God-given manual for this great task is His Word which we use to empower disciples scripturally so that they can be rooted in God and in their faith.

SIM East Asia’s theme for 2023 is *“Empowered to Empower”* and the key biblical text is

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness” (Colossians 2:6-7).



SIM East Asia sends missionaries to different parts of the world to preach the Gospel, make disciples and to empower disciples spiritually so that they can become rooted in Christ and grow in His character. The main task of our missionaries is to help believers in the mission fields to become Christ’s witnesses and disciples who other unbelievers can see and turn to Christ. The current SIMNow issue which is the first for 2023, carries a Bible Study on the theme *Empowered to Empower spiritually* and other real stories from our members which explain how God has been empowering them to empower spiritually those whom they are serving. May the Lord of harvest continue to empower us spiritually so that we can continue with the ministry of empowering others for His Mission!

Yours in His Mission,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Watson Rajaratnam". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Empowered to Empower Spiritually

*Reverend Dr Ivan Liew, Chairman,
SIM Singapore Council*

Feeling powerful or powerless

I used to think that being empowered was the same as being strengthened but much that has happened in my life since I thought about writing this article has changed my understanding of it.

In the past month, as I lay humbled and broken before the Lord, I saw Col 2:6-7 in a different light and gained fresh insights into the meaning of spiritual power.

Most of us often don't feel strong and empowered. Even if we have done our best to live right as we walk with the Lord, we will at some point hit the wall, or are overwhelmed by circumstances beyond our control. We become disappointed that our efforts bear no fruits, or worse, let that disappointment infect our souls. When we don't feel God's power, how can we empower others?

Jesus Himself empowers us

Scripture is clear that spiritual power does not depend on our feelings of strength. Our empowerment flows from our relationship with Christ when we are rooted and built up in Him. Most of us are likely very experienced disciples and have probably spent years building our faith foundations. We may have degrees to our names and accolades on our walls. These were well earned, yet all our efforts, regardless of how we feel about our achievements, do nothing to empower us spiritually. Only Jesus himself empowers us when we open ourselves to Him and surrender our achievements, fears, and failures. That's what being "rooted and built up in him" (v.7) is all about.



Colossians 2:6-7 (ESV)
***Therefore, as you received
Christ Jesus the Lord,
so walk in him, rooted
and built up in him and
established in the faith,
just as you were taught,
abounding in thanksgiving.***

Brokenness begets empowerment

When we first received Jesus as Lord, we came in repentance and confession of our need for Him. Our theology was incomplete, but we knew how lost we were without his saving intervention. Col 2:6 tells us that "in the same way" we need to continually "walk in him." Therefore, we need to continually walk in that brokenness and repentance before him, for a lifetime of ministry. It is through that brokenness that the Father's power pulses through our veins and empowers our spirit. From that place of dependance on Jesus, may our Lord empower us to empower others.

Empowerment and its Process

Joseph Ma, Central Asia

It was in college that I came to accept the Lord Jesus as my personal Saviour. In 2005, God showed me His vision for a least reached people group of a certain faith. Just before we got married, my wife too, received the same vision. But soon after we got married, we went for two years to witness the Lord Jesus to a people group in Central Asia.

Pain of Empowerment

After studying theology, a Christian organization linked us to SIM which sent us to the place that God had earlier shown us in the vision. Though our SIM colleagues helped us to quickly settle down our neighbours were devout believers of another faith. When they came to know that we believed in Jesus, their attitude towards us changed. They alleged that we ate cat meat which, according to their faith, was purportedly unclean. They complained to the landlord and vehemently demanded that our family be evicted. The landlord initiated a dialogue and concluded that their allegation was baseless. We shed tears of gratitude as we knew that God was empowering us for His work.



Plan of Empowerment

One late rainy night, upon returning from work, the head of the hostile neighbours family knocked on the main gate of the outer courtyard as he had forgotten his keys. Despite his incessant knocking, no one came to open it. I happened to hear it after a while and rushed to open the gate for him. After that, their attitude towards us changed. They gave us food during their festivals. We reciprocated with our Chinese food. Their daughters started visiting us. They also played games with our children during the day. Our children learnt the native language from them as a result. Their family also consulted us on major decisions including the marriage of their two daughters and the engagement of their son. Seven years have passed. God has been knocking on the door of this family's heart through us, but they tell us they cannot turn their backs on their God.

Progress in Empowerment

One day, our neighbour's elder brother made a request for a Bible. In exchange, he gave me his holy book and requested that we read it. We are expecting God to open his "hard heart".

*I would not be
able to love
him if not for
the love of God
which empowers
me to empower
my family to
reciprocate
hostility with
kindness*

Empowered to Serve Amidst Challenges

Marthen and Mieske, Philippines

When I entered ministry, I discovered several problems having to do with workers on the field. I questioned myself, “How about me? If it’s like this, how can I empower others while I still need to be empowered myself?”

Call to be empowered

It all started while I was attending a prayer meeting. The speaker at the end gave an altar call asking people to respond if they wanted to serve the Lord. I didn’t know why, but I raised my hand and came forward to be prayed over. That was my first encounter with God personally. Since then, God’s Word became alive to me and I began participating actively in various ministries.

Commitment to be empowered

God brought me to join an evangelistic foundation that was reaching an unreached people group in rural areas. As I was still quite young and inexperienced, it taught me to live by faith. I committed myself to focus more on Bible study, intercession, prayer and fasting, and experiencing miracles of healing. I could feel that God was very close to me. That was only the beginning. God led me through further spiritual formation at the seminary for several years. Then I joined the Asian Cross-Cultural Training Institute for several months where I finally saw how God had been empowering me for future ministry.

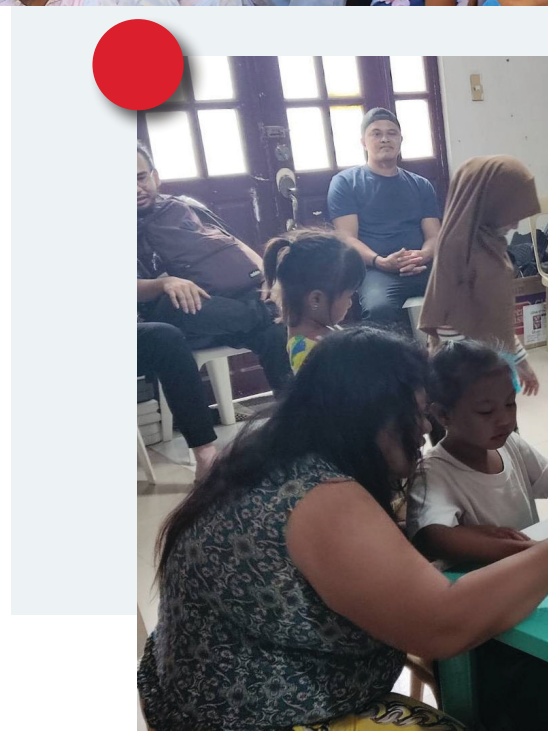


Storm

Cost to be empowered

Empowerment does not take place automatically. While still in seminary, one of my supporters dropped out. Though initially discouraged, I still held on to God’s promise, “He who called you is faithful. He will also fulfill it.” (1Thess 5:24). There were many who discouraged me. One said, “You should know your limits. Realise that if you can’t afford it and you don’t have any resources, don’t dream too big. Just accept it.” But God’s promises have helped me to keep going.

I believe that God has a beautiful plan for my future. He is such a faithful God who equips us spiritually so that we can serve Him faithfully. I’ve seen the proof of how God sent us as a couple first to serve in Japan for 4 years



and then in Southern Philippines from 2006 until the present. We can testify to how blessed we are. He has always provided all our needs and enabled us to serve among both believers and local communities. To God be the Glory!

Empowered to Serve Lovingly

Eunice, Philippines



I was blessed that I grew up in a Christian family. As a child I always enjoyed going to church and listening carefully to the lessons in Sunday School. When my mother led home Bible studies, I would go with her and while she focused on the adults, I would gather the children and taught them the Sunday School lessons I had learnt.

Empowerment begins with God

Thus, indirectly God was already empowering me though I was not aware of it. I trusted Jesus as my Savior when I was 13. After I graduated from college, my prayer was that God would lead me to a job in His ministry where I could use my gift and passion to teach children. In answer to my prayer when God brought me to the mission field, I taught in two different communities of another faith, built relationships with families and shared the gospel with them.

God's love was also demonstrated while teaching in a Daycare centre, interacting with the families, sharing groceries with them throughout the pandemic as well as during special seasons like Christmas and Ramadan.



Daycare

Empowerment continues with us

One of the parents at the Daycare a couple of years ago was Aimee. She was a returning believer from another faith (when she married a person from another faith) and graduated as a teacher. She is now one of the leaders in our community savings group. Recently, Aimee attended a meeting where we evaluated the ministries. I shared a devotion about leadership and said that we all have to take whatever responsibility of leadership that God entrusted to us seriously, not only in our secular job but also in our own lives and families. Aimee came to me crying and thanked me for sharing that message. She was touched and realized that she had a responsibility to God who gave her life and a family. She asked me to pray that she would be a good mother to her son. She also expressed interest in helping in our Daycare and by using her gifts in teaching. I know God is working. Please pray that Aimee will come to faith in Isa Al Masih – Jesus.

I thank God for His blessing on my family and I'm thankful for the support of my husband, Jimmy, who has encouraged me to use the gifts and passions that God has given me to serve the people and community.

SIM East Asia Regional Council Meeting 2022

Watson Rajaratnam, Regional Director, SIM East Asia

The 31st SIM East Asia Regional Council Meeting was held in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 16 to 18 November 2022. Rev Dr Caleb Chian, Chairman, SIM East Asia Regional Council, opened the meeting with prayer, welcome and introduction.

SIM Global Director for Regional Development Chris Crowder, basing his keynote address on Revelations 21 and 22, spoke on the topic “Empowered to Empower”. He explained that mission is all about being empowered by God with the purpose of empowering churches, communities, and individuals.

Dr David Yap, Deputy Chairman of SIM East Asia Council who led the devotion on the second day morning, focused on the Scripture texts Hebrews 3:14; 12:1-3 and spoke on “Being Faithful to the End”. Regional Director Watson Rajaratnam, while presenting details of the



region’s 12 key ministry focus areas, explained that SIM East Asia is existing to serve churches and send missionaries. One of the highlights of the second day were the presentations by the Directors of Chinese, Indonesian, Indian Diaspora Ministries, and International Students’ Ministry.

Michael Leong, Acting Director for SIM Malaysia, led the devotion on the third day and spoke on the topic “For God’s

sake” from Psalm 44. SIM Global Director of Operations and Point Person for Business Ministries joined the meetings and interacted with the delegates too. This year’s Regional Council meeting was the first one to be held physically after two years of meetings through zoom. Praise God for another blessed time of reflection, praise, prayer, fellowship, and encouragement. Glory be to God!

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