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Karen Oliver Woman of Prayer <i>Karen Oliver is an American Christian who serves at our church. You may have seen her in last year's Christmas performance, in the English worship services, and in many classrooms with young kids. She is a faithful servant loved by many children as one of their favorite teachers, and by Chinese co-workers. Besides serving in the</i>	Jie Huang	7
談談關懷探訪 探訪為牧會不能缺少的一個環節。凡牧過會的神僕，必有同感。探訪事工可概分為四類：一．聯絡探訪：這一類探訪在北美華人教會甚流行，因為華僑新移民日漸增多，其中不少是信徒；即使是非信徒，也因身處異國環境陌生，.....	關懷組	12
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本月金句

希伯來書 10:25

你們不可停止聚會，好象那些停止慣了的人，倒要彼此勉勵，既知道那日子臨近，就更當如此。

六月團契活動日程

日期	主題	預查帶領	地點	領唱	點心
Friday, June 06, 2008	查經 - 希伯來書	錢傳劬	Chapel	何惠玲	鄭光宏/刘红艳/王厚宏
Saturday, June 14 2008	郊游	李曉	暫定	楊艷艷	
Friday, June 21, 2008	家庭聚會	组长	家庭		
Friday, June 27, 2008	查經 - 希伯來書	錢傳劬	Chapel	活泉	錢傳劬/吳博彥/白雪峰

六月灵修辅导:

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新約書信每卷特征之一乃是神學与生活兩大闡釋皆有均勻的討論;再者,這特征常是先神學,后生活;神學是信仰的基礎,生活是信仰的實踐;前者是根是蕾,后者是花是果。既然基督的卓越是那麼清楚,那麼信徒的生活亦應超越以前。

(10:1至9)「律法既是將來美事的影兒,不是本物的真象,總不能借著每年常獻一樣的祭物,叫那近前來的人得以完全。若不然,獻祭的事豈不早已止往了麼;因為禮拜的人,良心既被潔淨,就不再覺得有罪了。但這些祭物是叫人每年想起罪來,因為公牛和山羊的血,斷不能除罪,所以基督到世上來的時候,就說,「神阿,祭物和禮物是你不願意的,你曾給我預備了身體;燔祭和贖罪祭是你不喜歡的;那時我說,神阿,我來了為要照你的旨意行;我的事在經卷上已經記載了。」以上說,祭物和禮物,燔祭和贖罪祭,是你不願意的,也是你不喜歡的,(這都是按著律法的);后又說,我來了為要照你的旨意行;可見他是除去在先的,為要立定在後的。」

10:1節指出基督之死乃必須的另一根由是因舊約不能使人得完全之故。他先指出律法(代表整個舊約獻祭制度)的不完全(10:1至4),再論基督之來臨旨在完全之(10:5至9)。在首節內,作者指出律法的「是」、「不是」及「不能」。律法是「將來美物的影兒」,「將來美物」即新約,律法只是「影兒」,它不是「本物的真象」。作者以之對比舊約與新約;「影兒」指接近神的舊法門;「真象」是近神前的新途徑。再者,律法亦「不能」每年借大祭司在贖罪日使崇拜者得以「完全」,因為若祭物能叫人完全,人之良心被潔淨,不再覺有罪,那就不用再獻贖罪祭了(10:2),可是祭物之目的只在叫人想起罪(故就需要獻祭),決不能除罪(10:3, 4)。

正因舊約的獻祭永不能除去罪,反叫人常「想起」罪,「所以」基督降世為了完成神的旨意,那是「除去」在先的,立定在後的。作者引用詩40:6至8解釋(此段詩篇強調順命的重要),神不是否定祭物與禮物的重要,因那些亦是神命定摩西去行的,只是神著重順服勝于獻祭,此點基督卻能使神完全喜悅。作者將所引用的舊約經文分二次敘說(10:5至7為首次;10:9是第二次),首段強調神并不以舊約的禮儀祭祀為對人最終的要求,暗意讀者不應以舊約的祭儀為永不更易的要求;次段強調神的彌賽亞仆人所作一切才完全合神的旨意,讀者不用懼怕相信他。

(10:10至18)我們憑這旨意,靠耶穌基督只一次獻上他的身體,就得以成聖。凡祭司天天站著事奉神,屢次獻上一樣的祭物;這祭物永不能除罪。但基督獻了一次永遠的贖罪祭,就在神的右邊坐下了;從此等候他仇敵成了他的腳凳。因為他一次獻祭,便叫那得以成聖的人永遠完全。聖靈也對我們作見證;因為他既已說過,「主說,那些日子以後,我與他們所立的約乃是這樣;我要將我的律法寫在他們心上,又要放在他們的里面。」以後就說,「我不再記念他們的罪愆,和他們的過犯。」這些罪過

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既已赦免，就不用再為罪獻祭了。

「成圣」既得以「永遠完全」，兩者全是敬虔舊約信徒一生最大的盼望。前者(成圣)表示完全的圣洁，后者(完全)表示完全的蒙神悅納，兩者意義極近，共指潔淨無匹，神完全歡納這等人進到他的面前，這是指信徒地位上成圣的問題，亦即俗稱「得救」，非生活方面。此舉全靠基督完全順服神的旨意，將自己獻上為贖罪祭之故(10:10)，所以基督之代死是必須的，否則人永遠不能成圣及得以完全。

10:11-18整段只是10:10的詮釋。作者在五方面宣告：

- (1)舊約之祭司「天天」站著供奉，基督只一次獻上就能生效，因工作完結成功之故。
- (2)舊約之祭物不能永遠「除」罪。
- (3)舊約預告，基督將要把他的仇敵作腳凳(參詩110:1意「得勝為王」)，如今基督救贖偉工已成，現只等候將來復回成為全地的王，令全地呼他為主。
- (4)基督使得以成圣的人永遠完全，救恩是白白的，一次獻給賜予，永不收回(10:14)。
- (5)舊約預言，神要將新律法寫在人心中，又赦免他們的罪愆與過犯，如今基督把己獻上正是預言完成的前奏(10:15-17)。

10:18亦可說是全段的總結。既然新約已成立，基督已獻上自己為贖罪祭，罪得赦免的泉源從今為人開啓，人就不需再為罪獻祭了。此言對當時讀者如當頭棒喝，喚醒他們從今不用回復舊約的形式，冀求獲得成圣與完全，如今只需安穩在神的應許中，盡量汲取赦罪的恩典便是了。無可否認地，10:18不只是本段的總言，亦是全書神學部分的總結。

(10:19至22a)「弟兄們，我們既因耶穌的血，得以坦然進入至聖所，是借著他給我們開了一條又新又活的路從幔子經過，這幔子就是他的身體；又有一位大祭司治理神的家；並我們心中天良的虧欠已經洒去，身體用清水洗淨了……」

作者基于上文的神學論證，基督已為世人成就一切，就當以此互相勸勉，彼此建立，在基督再臨之間生活充滿愛心，行為大有善果，表現彰顯信心。

作者直呼讀者為「弟兄們」，在此處意「猶太人」。若此處是指信徒，下文(10:23)的「帶信心到神面前」的勸勉似乎多余。作者撰寫本書之主要目的是要將猶太教徒讀者從猶太教的背景下「拯救」出來，引領他們進入基督教全備的救恩里。在上文，作者已力證基督如何超越猶太教。他的辯證會產生二種果效，一是讀者更進一步，得以完全成圣(參10:14)，一是懼怕進入神的安息(參4:11)，仍留在羅馬政權核准之猶太教的「保護區內」。這段經文是為那些應該更進一步接受神借著基督為他們預備了完全救贖之恩的同胞而寫。

作者呼吁讀者當存充足的信心，坦然無懼進入聖所，他勸告的基礎有四個根據：

- 1)因耶穌的血(10:19, 20)——人能到神的面前非因自己有什麼好處或行了多少善工，而全因耶穌的血。「血」代表他的死，是他甘心將自己獻上而作的贖罪祭。因此，他為世人「開了」一條又新又活的路，使人經過那分開聖所與至聖所中間的幔子(幔子喻基督的身體)，這樣人就能毫無阻隔及不用懼怕的坦然進入「至聖所內」(表神的面前)。「新」及「活」兩字暗指基督的代死及復活，並指出基督為人開辟進到神面前的路是前所未有的。
- 2)因有大祭司治理神的家(10:21)——作者要讀者知道，他們不但有更美的祭物，他們並有更「偉大」

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的祭司。這位大祭司是「治理」神家的，舊約的大祭司則服侍神家的，所以新舊大祭司的身分與權力截然不同，而基督不只是偉大的祭司，他也是神的兒子，他有資格與權柄遠超舊約的大祭司。

3). 因心中天良虧欠已洒去(10:22a)——「心中天良」即「良心」。良心的虧欠已潔淨，到神面前的阻礙已除掉，此點建立另一能坦然接近神的原因。再者這處強調里面的赦免與潔淨。

4). 因身體用清水洗淨了(10:22b)——表示這是另一見神的基礎，是因身體被清水洗淨了，「清水洗淨」是屬靈的潔淨，如經過水的潔淨一般。作者以猶太人之潔淨禮說明「心中天良」與「身體」同得潔淨，表示整體生命已蒙潔淨，罪孽蒙赦免，與上句「良心蒙洒淨」構成「里」「外」(代表完全生命)均蒙神潔淨，得享神的救贖。

(10:22b至25)「就當存著誠心，和充足的信心來到神面前；也要堅守我們所承認的指望，不至搖動；因為那應許我們的是信實的；又要彼此相顧，激發愛心，勉勵行善。你們不可停止聚會，好像那些停止慣了的人，倒要彼此勸勉；既知道那日子臨近，就更當如此。」

保羅在林前13章強調「信」「望」「愛」的重要，如今作者亦強調相同的主题，這是希伯來書實踐部分的三大核心。簡單說來，來10至11章之重點在「信」，來12章在「望」，來13章在「愛」。作者在本段內，言簡意賅地指出此三大重點，然後在下文(11至13章)才詳細闡釋之：

1). 當存充足的信心(10:22b)——既因上文的四大要點，所以作者勸勉讀者當存真誠無偽及充足的信心到神面前，因為整體生命經已潔淨，天路亦已開啓，沒有阻礙，無庸懼怕，只管進入至圣所便成了。

2). 當堅守所承認的指望(10:23)——「堅守」的對象為「承認的指望」。「承認」指「公認」的事，即共同的信仰，此共信之道關及一個「有福的指望」，是上文所論，基督是新大祭司，故此不可放棄這可持守的盼望。「不至搖動」，在新約只此出現，此舉若單靠自身努力則永不奏效，但問題不是靠己之力為之，而在乎那給應許而又必執行應許的神。事實上，只因神的信實，人才有真實的盼望。希伯來書的讀者中甚多仍堅守猶太教的禮儀、教訓及自己教派的盼望，作者于此奉勸他們不要持本物的影兒，而要本物；不要堅守舊約條文，而要新約赦罪之恩。

3). 當彼此激發愛心(10:24, 25)——「相顧」的原文帶「小心看顧，愛護」之意，但此舉豈單方面進行，而是「彼此」性的，旨在「激發」愛心，因愛心是不易自發的，當信徒互相激發愛心後便能行善，而激發的方法在於「聚會」。作者勸告他們非但不要停止，反要彼此勸勉，免得更多人受影響。再者，因「那日子」(在猶太人思想中，此日是神為選民向外邦人復仇之日，亦即審判日；在新約此字常指主再來之時)臨近，實行彼此相顧相愛的機會不多，故當益更努力行之。

總結此段(10:19至25)強調基督耶穌已完成舊約赦罪的應許，從今赦罪恩門大開，到神面前的是康庄大道。

警誡：反叛的結局(10:26-31)

A. 第一原因：加重的刑罰(10:26-29)

「因為我們得知真道以後，若故意犯罪，贖罪的祭就再沒有了；惟有戰懼等候審判和那燒滅眾敵人的烈火。人干犯摩西的律法，憑兩三個見證人，尚且不得憐恤而死；何況人踐踏神的兒子，將那使他成圣之約的血當作平常，又褻慢施恩的聖靈，你們想，他要受的刑罰該怎樣加重呢。」

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在希伯來書的五段警告經文中，本段是最嚴厲的。作者在上文(10:23至25)早已勸勉讀者信心不要搖動及不可停止聚會，今順机警誡讀者不可明知故犯，使贖罪的祭再沒有了，因為既已知道「真道」(指上文論基督成為贖罪祭)，若仍故意犯罪，就沒有任何的獻祭可將罪贖去(10:26)；這樣，余下只有單方的收場，那是一個「等候」；作者以四個詞匯描繪這等候：(1)戰懼的；(2)確定的；(3)關乎審判的；(4)燒滅犯罪者的烈火。所以作者最大的顧慮就是讀者中甚多會清楚接觸福音，在救恩邊緣徘徊，在上文所論這般龐大的證據下，若他們仍「故意」拒絕基督，那便只有審判與烈火等候他們了。此等人的行為如「踐踏」(強勁字匯喻「棄絕」)神的兒子，使他在十架靠流血而成立的聖血約(新約)為「平常」和「褻慢」那施恩的聖靈，這樣罪行所招惹的刑罰必異常嚴厲(10:29)。

B. 第二原因: 主必報應(10:30, 31)

「因為我們知道誰說，『伸冤在我，我必報應』。又說，『主要審判他的百姓。』落在永生神的手里真是可怕的。」

第二原因乃是反叛者的罪，神必報應。作者以二節舊約經文輔佐他的警誡:申32:35, 36。前者(申32:35)的歷史背景述及因以色列人反叛神，所以摩西嚴重地警告他們，審判與報應是他們的後果。第二節經文(申32:36)強調反叛者不能逃脫神的審判。這二節舊約經文的運用對當時讀者(尤是不信的)果實凌厲絕倫，因為經文述及神要審判他的百姓，他們以為自己是神的選民，神不會審罰他們，如今他們听作者之警惕後，該再三慎思之。接著作者補充一句結論: 落在永生神的審判中是極其「可怕」的，這兩段經文(10:26至29及10:30, 31)分別指出審判的嚴厲(首段)及審判官的公正(次段)，可見作者的論据有理兼有力。

總括來說，本段警誡的對象是反叛信仰之徒，他們按嚴格分析不是信徒，原因有十：

- (1)他們所犯的罪叫贖罪的祭沒有果效，以致他們不能得救(10:26)。
- (2)他們故意犯罪，所以不可能指信徒，否則就不是「一次得救永遠得救」的了。
- (3)他們的結果是審判及烈火。
- (4)他們的罪相等舊約反叛神及拜偶像的罪，因此罪沒有贖罪祭為犯者預備(參民 15:30)。
- (5)他們的罪稱為「踐踏神的兒子」(10:29)。
- (6)他們的罪視基督的血為平常(10:29)，換言之，他們視基督的死是等閑的，與他人無分別。
- (7)他們的罪如褻瀆聖靈(10:29; 參太12:31, 32)。
- (8)他們的罪所受的刑罰尤勝褻瀆聖靈(10:29)。因在新約時代神給人更大更強的亮光及證據顯明他的真實，若犯罪者在此等背景下定受「加倍」的審判。
- (9)他們的罪涉及反叛三一真神(踐踏神的兒子等于踐踏神)，將基督的血作不潔；褻慢聖靈是完全的反叛，這三方面的「罪形」正是不信者的特征。
- (10)反叛者必不能逃脫神的報應及審判(10:30)。

信心生活的挑戰(10:32-39)

1. 追念往日(10:32-34)

「你們要追念往日，蒙了光照以後，所忍受大爭戰的各樣苦難；一面被毀謗、遭患難，成了戲景，叫眾



人觀看；一面陪伴那些受這樣苦難的人。因為你們體恤了那些被捆鎖的人，並且你們的家業被人搶去，也甘心忍受，知道自己有更美長存的家業。」

作者勸勉讀者要「追念」往日追求認識基督教的經歷，隨即在八方面描述他們的背景：

(1)蒙了光照。

(2)忍受象大「爭戰」似的苦難；雖然他們仍未完全與基督教認同，但因他們多與信徒來往，以致他們亦同受毀謗，因反對者不能分辨他們的屬靈情況（是信或未信），故讀者中多有吃苦頭的，所以作者勸告他們，既然他們所受的與信徒頗同，便不該回轉猶太教。

(3)被「毀謗」，當時凡接近基督者則多受親友、社區及政府之毀謗、反對與排斥

(4)遭「患難」，包括各樣之痛苦，（如逼害，酷刑）。

(5)「成了戲景」這字在新約只此出現，意「公開的侮辱」。

(6)與別人同受苦難：指有些信徒所遭遇的亦臨到他們身上。

(7)家業被搶去：另一經歷，這些讀者特有的乃是因他們體恤被捆鎖的人，以致自己家產也被人奪去，「被捆鎖的人」是那些確信基督的人，他們在當時常為主被囚禁，現在這等讀者因「體恤」他們之故而致自己的產業也被奪去。

(8)甘心領受一切：這些讀者雖然為了靠近基督教會而犧牲甚多，可是他們卻「甘心」，因為他們知道地上的產業永不能換取天上那更美長存的家業。

2. 等候賞賜 (10:35-39)

「所以你們不可丟棄勇敢的心；存這樣的心必得大賞賜。你們必須忍耐，使你們行完了神的旨意，就可以得著所應許的。—因為還有一點點時候，那要來的就來，並不遲延。只是義人必因信得生；他若退后，我心里就不喜歡他。—我們卻不是退后入沉淪的那等人，乃是有信心以致靈魂得救的人。」

「所以」連接上文，故本段是一個小結，因為讀者既已那樣接近「得救」，又經歷不少苦難（如10:34），作者勸勉他們不要「丟棄」這個「自信」，靠之他們必得大賞賜，即得著所應許的（10:35）。

「賞賜」與「應許」在此處意指同一件事，亦即救恩。若要得賞賜、應許，他們需有二方面的表現，一是必須忍耐，忍耐是指不丟棄（參10:35）、不離棄（參6:6）、不隨流失去（參2:1）；一是行完神的旨意，得著神的救贖，享受神的應許。

接著（10:37, 38）作者以二段舊約經文（賽26:20；哈2:3, 4）組合一句勸勉的話。首句強調主的應許必急速應驗，神的話必不落空（如基督的再來）；末句強調信心的重要，因為神不悅納沒有信心而轉回原路的人。作者引用哈巴谷之名言支持他現在勸告的論據。作者深信讀者不是退后而沉淪的人。「沉淪」一詞指出丟棄信心；退去轉回舊路（猶太教）的嚴重性，但作者具有極大的自信，在讀者中必有人擁有信心以致靈魂得救（參帖前5:9）。

Karen Oliver – Woman of Prayer

Jie Huang

Karen Oliver is an American Christian who serves at our church. You may have seen her in last year's Christmas performance, in the English worship services, and in many classrooms with young kids. She is a faithful servant loved by many children as one of their favorite teachers, and by Chinese co-workers. Besides serving in the Chinese church, she is also on staff with the International Friendships Inc. (IFI), a campus ministry whose mission is to befriend, serve, and share the gospel with international students and scholars and their families. Recently we had the chance to interview Karen and hear her testimony and her understanding and experience in prayer.

Jie: First I want to thank you for your faithful service in our Chinese church. You are one of my son's favorite teachers. We really appreciate you. May I begin to ask how you become a Christian?

Karen: I was born into a church-going family. But it was a pretty liberal church then. They didn't preach salvation. I did not know what the gospel was. I had the sense that church was for making people better, but basically it didn't work. I saw things preached and agreed to on Sundays that pretty much got tossed out by Monday night. That was the way many people lived. (The church has changed a lot since then.) I went to our church's college. My knowledge of Christian colleges now tells me that that college was not a Christian college.



I threw God out of the window on my freshman year, basically walked away from God and all His rules. I indulged into my own idea of fun all through college, got married after college. The marriage fell apart after 10 years. I launched into life as a single mom and got a full-time job. I began to yearn for something – peace. I thought I would get peace by getting a good job. I got that but no peace. I thought I would get peace by getting a big house in a nice neighborhood. I got that and no peace. I had two good daughters, but they didn't bring any peace, either. Gradually as I watched Christian co-workers, and saw how they responded to life, I began to suspect what I wanted I could get only from God. For a long time I just wasn't interested in getting close to God. I didn't want to submit to Him, until He brought about a series of events.

Within 5 days, I did a total turnover. On Father's Day Sunday at my parents' church, I heard a sermon about Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. The title of the sermon was, "Are you thirsty?" I decided I was! On the following Wednesday, a coworker asked me about what I thought about the Bible. I said it has a lot of stories, poetry, myths, and good advice. He just looked at me and said, "The Bible is true." Nobody ever told me that before. On Friday night I went to the dollar theatre, where I saw "Chariots of Fire" about two runners in the 1924 Olympic game. One was a self-made man, proud but fearful; and the other was a son of Scottish missionaries to China. The self-made man was never able to enjoy his victories. The Scottish man thoroughly enjoyed running. He said, "God made me fast, and when I run, I feel God's presence." He just enjoyed everything, and I loved to see that.

When I left the theatre, I had the sense that I had a decision to make. I realized that if I continued to live my life under my own rule, I would be like the man in the movie who never was able to enjoy his own victories. But the Scottish man lived under the rule of God, and he was free and happy. So when I got to a red light on the way home, and I said to God, "You can have control of my life." I was flooded with peace! It happened in an instant, and I was so surprised. I hadn't known peace was part of the bargain, not at all. It kind of baffled me.

I realized the next day, not only that I had peace, but I was responding to things differently. In situations where I had made sinful responses, I was not making those responses. I knew I was changed. I started attending my coworker's church and joined an intensive two-year Bible study started by a group of women in the church. When I first read II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" I knew that I had become a new person when I gave God control of my life. I had been 40 years old at that time.

Jie: So what happened after that? How did you get involved with IFI? How did you get into Christian ministry?

Karen: Actually IFI was started by the church I was attending, Covenant Baptist Church. Many years before, the pastor and several people in the church learned that many international students came to Columbus and never made an American friend and were never invited to an American home. They left after 5 or 6 years, feeling angry at Americans. Most of these people come from countries that are very hospitable. They don't understand this at all, it is very offensive to them. So that was one reason for starting IFI--to give international students a very different experience in the US. A second reason was, American churches spent horrendous amounts of money preparing American missionaries to go abroad, getting them over there, getting them oriented to the culture and the language. And it is usually two and half to three years before a missionary from the US can start to be productive abroad--probably \$150,000 to \$250,000 later! But internationals are coming to us. They learn to speak English; they are willing to fit into the culture. They are in our backyards practically! Doesn't it

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make sense to offer Christ to them?

The people at Covenant Baptist started by offering internationals friendship. If the internationals got interested in the kind of lives they were living, the Christians would introduce them to their best friend, Jesus Christ. Mabel Bahler and Phil Saksa helped start IFI. They would often come to Covenant Baptist Church to talk about IFI, and I was just fascinated. When I was a little kid, I always said that I would be a missionary. Being a missionary is really nifty. So when they talked about being a missionary right in your own home town, it made a lot of sense to me.

When I thought I could start serving on Fridays, I started in Mabel's group as a helper. And I did that for a year and half or so. Then one night Phil and Mabel cornered me and said, "It's time you started your own Bible study group." By that time, I had spent a summer teaching English in China. So I started what we called a basic English Bible study, geared toward visiting scholars and spouses. That's how I got started.

Jie: How do you start and run a Bible study group?

Karen: If you have been in a Bible study group, just ask the Lord to give you two couples who may be interested in learning the Bible. One way is to use the recorded New Testament to start a Bible listening group, and allow group members to ask questions afterwards.

Jie: I recently discovered a Bible commentary called "Thru the Bible." Have you heard of this before?

Karen: Yes, it's by J. Vernon McGee. He is one of my favorite radio Bible teachers. One of the things I used for years is the Serendipity Bible. (Serendipity means finding a treasure quite by chance.) It is a Bible designed for small-group Bible study. They will have an opening, a couple of ice-breaking questions that relate to what they are going to study, digging into the material, and review and closing. They even suggest how much time you might spend on each section. I've used it for years and years, it is very helpful.

Jie: You really shared the vision of starting with friendship and give them the best thing. How long have you been with IFI?

Karen: I started with Mabel's group in 1990. I came on staff at the beginning of 2001. I took early retirement from Ross Labs because my parents were getting elderly, and my siblings and I did not want to see them go to a retirement home, for they had a large lovely house in the town where we grew up. We agreed that when they needed help, I would leave my job and go live with them. So I did that. I lived with them for 6 years until they both passed away. They each lived for almost 89 years.

Jie: They were very blessed to have children like you taking care of them.

Karen: I was blessed to be able to do that. It was hard. I left a middle-management position in a large company to be a daughter again in my parents' house. They were still my mom and dad, and they reminded of that very regularly. I think during that time, God really revealed a lot of sin in my heart. With the pressure to be squeezed in that living situation, I began to see how sinful I was. But I joined Bible Study Fellowship (BSF) during that time. That helped keep me sane. When my mom and dad passed away, I just prayed to God, "What do you want me to do?" I had three things I could have done happily. One of them was coming back to Columbus and joining the staff at IFI.

Jie: Sounds like you really started to grow as a Christian at age 40?

Karen: I felt like I had years to make up for. I had thrown away years and years of my life. God grew me pretty fast. IFI's vision statement mentions people becoming oaks of righteousness, which is a phrase from Isaiah. Oak trees don't grow that fast; they grow slowly.

Jie: So you began to share the gospel through IFI, but how did you decide to attend a Chinese church?

Karen: Well, when I was still living with my mom and dad, I was coming to Columbus every weekend to run Friday night Bible study group. When I could, I attended the church in Columbus. By the time God brought me back to Columbus full time, I sensed the little church I attended was too American, and too far from campus. I wanted to attend a church that I could invite Chinese friends to, where they would feel welcome. So I started looking at campus area churches. My IFI Bible study group and I attended the Christmas musical program that the Chinese Church did in year 2000. I was quite impressed. I mean for a church to put together a full orchestra and a chorus, was something I had never experienced except, perhaps, in Grace Brethren Church's Living Christmas Tree. I was also impressed with the earnestness of the people, and

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when I learned that they were doing short-term mission trips to China and Taiwan, I was fascinated. The church has a missionary heart, which was very appealing to me.

As I was praying and visiting various churches, one of things concerned me was how many churches had abandoned traditional church music and have a praise band instead. When I came to CCCC, I attended the Mandarin service, and I loved the choir. And I thought, “Good, this church has traditional music.” But when I got to the English congregation, and they had a praise band! Ironically, I have become a leader of one of the worship teams in the English congregation, so I can choose more traditional music if I want to. Sometimes I do, and sometimes I don’t.

Jie: Once you came to the Chinese church, what has helped you to stay?

Karen: I sense this is where God wants me, and there are plenty of opportunities to serve. I helped with vacation Bible school, have taught children’s and adult Sunday school. I sang one year in the Christmas music program, I serve on the missions committee, the ECMC, and I am a prayer coordinator for the English congregation. I’ve also taught in our fellowship group.

Jie: Do you sometimes feel lonely, or you feel you fit right in?

Karen: Well, I guess I don’t think about that. A Caucasian guy in the English congregation and I used to laugh about being the only Caucasians who came to CCCC who weren’t married to Asians. But I feel like God sent me here. I didn’t feel like I made the decision to go here; God just led me step by step until it seemed pretty clear that He wanted me here. I think IFI helped me get over feeling strange when I am in a room full of people speaking Mandarin. I wish I spoke it. Also, I love Reverend Oo and his wife and appreciate them dearly. They are like spiritual parents to me.

Jie: Why do you feel such a burden for the Chinese people?

Karen: I think that God laid that on my heart. When I was a little girl, I dreamed that somebody dug a really deep hole in my backyard, and Chinese people were climbing out of that hole! I think that God put a special place in my heart for the Chinese people. I have a good friend who used to work for IFI. She doesn’t have a burden for Chinese people, but she loves African people.

Jie: I know you are a woman of prayer. What is prayer to you?

Karen: Well, it is simply bringing things to God and waiting for his response.

Jie: Why do you think prayer is so important for Christians?

Karen: I think it is pretty much the backbone of our relationship with the Lord. You can’t have a good relationship with somebody without talking to that person! If you are in love with somebody, you get excited when the phone rings. The chance to be with him is precious, too. That’s what prayer is, the chance to be with our Lord, to enjoy His presence.

Jie: Some Christians do not really believe in prayer. They are not sure if God hears them. What would you say to them?

Karen: There are many assurances in scripture that if we cry out to God, He will hear us. If we are in Christ, we are part of His family. To me, it is inconceivable that my heavenly Father would pay zero attention to anything I have to say to Him, just like my earthly father never ignored me. (He didn’t always say yes, but at least he heard me and responded!) Our earthly relationships very much color our relationship with God. My favorite teacher says that problems in our relationship with our earthly father are like dirty spots on a pair of glasses. It is almost impossible to see your Heavenly Father clearly until your problems with your earthly dad have been forgiven and cleansed.

Prayer to me is consistently bringing things to God. It takes humility to bring stuff to God. So often we have a clear idea of what we want to do. We think, why ask? I know what to do. Yeah, you know what you want to do, but do you know what God wants you to do? For people who say, “God never talks to me,” I just have to two questions: 1) have you given Him enough time to answer; have you waited and listened? Have you said, “I am not going to do anything until You tell me what You want me to do”? After my mom and dad died, I said to God, “I am not going to do anything different until You tell me what You want me to do.” And it was two months before He told me. And it was just one sentence.

Jie: What was that sentence?

Karen: God’s answer came when I learned that my Chinese friends had a car accident in Pennsylvania. The young daughter was killed, and the wife was brain-damaged. The wife was in my Bible study group. After that phone call, I just started

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weeping and crying out to God. When I was spent from crying, I heard God say, “Go back to Columbus, sell your house, move to the university area, and work for IFI.” The silent voice within just came. Within four months, I did it all--sold my parents’ house and my house in Clintonville and bought another house in the University Village area.

Jie: What do you think was the connection between the accident and God’s guidance?

Karen: I was really deeply in prayer, deeply crying out to God. And that was the moment He needed. I found that to be so common, when I am interceding for somebody else, God sometimes speaks to me. I’ve also experienced tremendous grace and ability to do things that I know I can’t do, when someone else is praying for me.

Jie: What is the second tough part of praying for you?

Karen: The second part is giving God enough time to answer. Asking takes humility. Waiting for God to answer takes faith and patience. A lot of people cut that short and don’t experience God’s wonder. They will say, “Well, He hasn’t said anything to me, I guess He is not going to.” I have things that I have been praying for 26 years and I still haven’t got the answer. Just because He hasn’t given me what I asked for, that doesn’t mean he never will. He probably has an awful lot of work to do right here in me before giving me what I ask for. I think persistence in prayer is hard, though.

Jie: What things are not happening, we start doubting God.

Karen: Another thing that discourages us is that we forgot the complexity of the answer we ask for. Almost of all of our prayers involve people, and people are so complex. And we ask why God hasn’t answered this request of mine, and people are involved. Perhaps the other people aren’t ready for God’s answer, or maybe the one who is asking isn’t ready. Because everybody has choices, we can trust God or not trust God. But the hardest thing about prayer is having the humility to ask.

Jie: How do you think we can overcome that difficulty and really start trust in God?

Karen: I think you start it by talking to God about your prayer life, and confess that, “Lord, I hardly bring anything to You. I don’t do it because I think it’s boring or I really don’t think You are paying any attention to me even though your Word says You are. Please forgive me for thinking Your Word has lied to me.” That’s where you start. You start by praying about your prayer life. And just be honest, and confess. But don’t stop there. Ask Him to change your attitude, your prayer life. Ask Him to bring somebody into your life who will help you develop a better prayer life, or direct you to some part of the scripture that will help. God is so eager for us to spend time with Him.

Jie: Many people just don’t see God. What makes you so confident to say that God is eager for us to spend time with Him?

Karen: Colossians 1:18 says, “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.” So I was created for God, I was created to have relationship with God. Talk is very big part of our relationship with God. It is like falling in love. Even people who are deaf fall in love! And their fingers fly with delight as they communicate their love! If we really believe He created us for relationship, we know He wants us talking to Him and listening to Him.

Jie: Some Christians never ask God to intervene or ask God for any help. Their prayer life largely consists of praises and thanksgiving to God. What do you think of that?

Karen: I suspect that is a very safe prayer life. If you never ask for anything, you never get disappointed! Thanking God for things is good. In fact, a mark of a mature Christian is to be overflowing with thanksgiving. But it is only part of a relationship. What would your marriage be like if the only thing you ever said to your husband is, “Thank you, thank you for bringing home a paycheck, thank you for this house, thank you for my car.” I think that is great, but if that is all you ever said to your husband, I think he would wonder, “What’s wrong with this woman?” God cares about every single aspect of our life. There is nothing about our life that God isn’t intensely interested in. In one of the Psalms it says, “His thoughts toward me are more than all the grains of the sand on all the shores of all the seas.” Human cells are so complex. It is He who is guiding every single interaction in every human cell in my body. Who decided that my left ear isn’t five inches long while my right ear is three inches long? Who decided my eyes are placed evenly in my skull? I certainly didn’t, I don’t have that wisdom. But His thoughts toward me accomplish that. He holds me together. I am convinced that if God forgot me for one millionth of a second, I’d just exploded to a billion pieces. He holds me together. Now doesn’t He care about where I live, what I eat, who I talk to, and how I deal with others? He certainly does! There is nothing that I do, nothing that I think, that He doesn’t care.

Jie: Do you believe that God has a plan for each individual?

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Karen: Absolutely. He has a plan for every moment of every day of our lives. Do I ask God everyday, every moment what He wants? No, I don't. I still need more humility.

Jie: How often do you pray? What kind of matters do you often bring to God?

Karen: I pray about all kinds of stuff. (I wish I prayed about what I eat! When I do, I think He will change my diet.) I pray for the salvation of all my family. I'm committed to do that every day, I rarely miss that. I pray for mission organizations, churches, Pastor Nick. I pray for relations within my family, the neighbors. I pray for our world, I pray for China a lot this last week [after the earthquakes]. Do I pray as much as God wants me to? Absolutely not. I usually start my morning about an hour of prayer and reading. Prayers at night usually are short, because I'm tired.

One thing that fuels my prayer is something my spiritual mom told me. She said, if you discuss a bad situation and walk away without praying about it, you have just prayed a prayer to the wrong kingdom. You have glorified Satan by saying how bad something is. I do a fair amount of praying with other people. It is stimulating to pray with others.

Jie: How do you pray, does posture matter, like kneeling down...?

Karen: I think for some people it does, and I am one of those people. I probably do my most effective prayer when I am on my hands and knees. But in the winter, I am on my hands and knees in bed, when the floor is cold. I am convinced at least for me, God made some connection in my knees that leads to my heart and my brain to keep me focused.

Jie: Do you say your prayers aloud, or do you pray silently?

Karen: I find that I pray more focused and effectively when I say my prayers aloud. When I speak, I have to make sense of what I am thinking. I think Jesus just kept a running prayer with God. He was always in prayer, always, always. He said "I can only do what I see the Father do. I only say what I hear the Father say." That was in His brain all the time. A book that helped me awful lot was Bill Hybels' book, "Too Busy Not to Pray." That's what I used for the basis of a course on prayer I taught in Sunday school five years ago. That is a very helpful book..

Jie: Do you believe in miracles? Did you have any personal experience?

Karen: Yes, I do. I had a couple of healings that I asked for. I had a growth in the back of my right hand a couple of years ago that I thought might possibly be pre-cancerous. (My folks in their later years had a lot of pre-cancerous things removed from their skin. They spent a lot of time outside before it was understood how dangerous it was.) So I just started praying about this, I put my fingers on it and said, "God, would you please heal this?" In two weeks, it was gone.

Jie: Do you believe in spiritual healing power?

Karen: God gives some people the power to pray healing on other people. But it is Jesus, the Holy Spirit who does the healing. I am always a little bit hesitant to ascribe glory to another human being because they have healing powers. It is Christ who has the power. I have heard many stories of what happens as people listen to the audio Bible. Listeners have been healed from cancer, blindness... Nothing is impossible for God. But I am skeptical.

Jie: What kind of ministry do you think the Chinese church should be more involved with?

Karen: I don't think it is my place to say what our church should be more involved with. But the prayer ministry that is developing in the Mandarin congregation is very positive. I personally would like to see more help for young parents, more guidance in raising children, spiritual and practical. I don't say that at all in saying that our current children's program is lacking in any way. I think our children's program is phenomenal. But I think a lot of parents are constantly second-guessing themselves, did I do it right?

I would also like to see more involvement with missions, here and abroad.

Jie: What are some of the needs of IFI?

Karen: We always need volunteers, English conversation, host families for the new students, people who just want to be friends, who open their home and heart to new students. IFI volunteers have to go through two hours training. That's why I am starting to recruit volunteers now so that they can be trained before the new students come.

Jie: Well, Karen, thank you for your time and your testimony. I am sure many of us will benefit from your experience in walking with God.

談談關懷探訪

關懷組

探訪為牧會不能缺少的一個環節。凡牧過會的神僕，必有同感。探訪事工可概分為四類：

一. 聯絡探訪：這一類探訪在北美華人教會甚流行，因為華僑新移民日漸增多，其中不少是信徒；即使是非信徒，也因身處異

關懷組
關懷組

國環境陌生，喜與自己同聲同氣者相聚首，所以他們也常到教會來參加崇拜，教會趁機與之聯絡，引他們歸信基督，並加入教會。

二. 福音性探訪：選擇容易入手對象，進行友誼來往、然後個人談道、福音性研經等。對象有的是信徒家中未信者，進行此類探訪，必須殷勤毋怠，如能在生活小節上盡量幫對方一忙，與他結為朋友然後引領他接受救恩，就必較容易。又在教會或團契舉行大佈道前夕，進行此類探訪，邀請參加聚會，會後跟進栽培探訪。此外有組成福音探訪隊，在教會附近選定一個地區，進行逐家探訪。如果取得當局准許證，進入醫院、監獄、工廠等範圍作親善、友誼、談道式探訪。目的是為傳福音。

三. 教會事務性探訪：組織並帶領教會領袖或信徒，前往福音機構、基督教出版社、文字中心、社會福利機構等作觀摩探訪。又在教會舉行培靈會、奮興會、訓練班期間作巡迴式探訪。

四. 關懷探訪：與會眾信徒們作出緊密聯繫，分區分組經常進行此類探訪，是一項十分重要的行動。信徒以愛相繫在基督裏連成一個身軀。尤其當信徒有疾病時作慰問探訪。意外受傷或遇家庭重大變故時，除慰問外，還要設法扶助對方，盡一切所能幫助他渡過難關為止，信徒之間以愛心互相關懷，用和平彼此聯絡；並要竭力保守聖靈所賜合而為一的心志。

筆者蒙神恩領，從香港到北美，先後牧會三十多年，深深覺得從以上所列舉探訪種類中之關懷探訪為牧會最具重要性之探訪工作，故藉此篇幅與主內同道分享，俾能拋磚引玉，互相切磋砥勵，使牧會事工更趨完善。

一. 進行關懷探訪事工必須先注重工作之重點，工作重點可概括為六項：

1. 縮短教會與家庭之間距離。
2. 堅立信徒對神、對人、對教會之正確態度。培養信徒在生活之上愛心與信心。
3. 鼓勵會眾對教會之決策、方針及會務之推動等，能深入瞭解與實際支持。
4. 傳達教會內眾肢體關懷與愛顧，進一步瞭解信徒近況以在教會中切實代禱。
5. 言談間以榜樣，以事例去鼓勵被探對象，樂意遵行主道；使信仰與生活打成一片，用生活見證傳揚基督。
6. 提供聖經話語(通稱金句)，使遭遇各種不同境況者獲致最有效用之助力。例如：
 - a. 對灰心失望者，引用以賽亞書第四十章 二十八至三十一節；詩篇第二十三篇；
 - b. 對心靈煩燥不安者，引用詩篇第一百零三篇二至十三節；
 - c. 對思念親眷、有鄉愁者，詩篇第一百零七篇；
 - d. 對徬徨歧途者，羅馬書第十二章；
 - e. 對患病及受痛苦纏磨者、詩篇第九十一篇；
 - f. 環境走下坡者，提摩太後書第三章；雅各書第一章一至四節；
 - g. 心靈疲乏軟弱者，馬太福音第十一章二十三至三十節，羅馬書第八章三十一至三十九節，詩篇第一百二十一篇；
 - h. 經商失敗者，馬太福音第六章二十四節；
 - i. 悲哀難過者，約翰福音第十四章；
 - j. 遭受困擾阻礙者，詩篇第四十六篇二十七節；

談談關懷探訪

關懷組

以上所舉十項，不過引為例證罷了，其實聖經金句十分寶貝，適合各人不同需要。你若能細心查考，必能得著更多。

二. 對探訪帶來阻力之事項務必除掉

1. 只談家務、世務、社務，絕口不談靈務者，切戒
2. 切勿任憑對方扯開話題，如談論政局、選舉、民運與及物價高漲、時勢危急、戰事一觸即發等使人憂慮不安，增加疑懼恐慌之話題，要避而不談。一旦對方談上了；也要機警地轉入正題談論。
3. 探訪員過分打扮，穿戴華麗衣飾。及被探者預備多量食物招待探訪員等；將會成為探訪事工很大阻力。
4. 探訪員須具備嚴格自律精神、在參與工作前能接受訓練最為理想。以下四項務須戒絕：
 - a. 戒自高自義：如重富輕貧、心高氣傲、憤世嫉俗、經常出示多款銜頭名片自我炫耀。
 - b. 戒言不及義：言行不一致者不適宜加入探訪，那些徒托空言終日誇誇其詞者，不受歡迎，探訪員要緊記：不傳自己，只傳基督。
 - c. 單獨演講：談話時要經常留意對方反應，方能察知其需要與難處。如果一隊有數位探訪員，最好事前約好，指定一位代表發言，其餘默默代禱。
 - d. 戒苛刻難堪：凡言語有影射作用及毀謗嫌疑、挖苦追問等，均須避免不說為妙，否則下次探訪必吃閉門羹。

三. 對探訪帶來之助力必須培養，下列四項被稱為成功探訪員之基本條件：

1. 整潔儀表：探訪員穿戴華麗固不適宜，但骯髒難看衣履也當更換。務求整潔樸實，儀表脫俗，不古老，亦不新潮，必為大眾所歡迎
2. 機警言談：多關心對方近況，多留意對方需要，言談間常帶著安慰、鼓勵和同情口吻，態度與表情均能愉快明朗；並常引動對方啓齒表達心聲。
3. 堅定信心：一位信仰與信心均堅固強勁之探訪員，對被探者深具影響力、神是信實的，藉聖靈大能感動，必收奇效。
4. 良好開端：諺云“好的開始，是成功的一半。”探訪事工，必須謹慎去作，探訪員面帶著微笑，語氣溫和有禮貌，以最友誼姿態，愉快精神參與其事。必蒙神祝福使用。

四. 探訪隊之組成

信徒雖然可以受聖靈感動和引領，獨自進行各類探訪工作，同樣收效。不過，勿忘記教會是一整體。如果由教會組設探訪部門，定下全年探訪計畫，按期實施推動完成。是否達成目標？按時召開會議磋商，以求檢討改進，對事工進行將百利而無一害。消極方面，可免除不必要之引誘試探，免除突發之危及個人聲譽事件。積極方面，保持隊工制度及精神，探訪工作將越做越起勁。

以下七項為探訪隊必須注意的：

1. 每半年應舉行一次探訪訓練，徵召新血加以訓練。
2. 每週定妥週末下午或週日其中一晚，在教會齊集，分配工作、同心禱告；然後分發資料、表格等分隊出發。
3. 每次探訪時間，在被探者家中逗留以半小時為限。
4. 探訪部負責供應探訪表格、聚會傳單、教會刊物、小冊子等。填報表格時，於出發前填妥已知部份，探訪後藉回憶立刻填入其餘部份。各隊員簽名以示鄭重。
6. 勿把探訪搜獲消息作為閒談資料。
7. 臨別前，簡短誠懇禱告，為這家求平安。致謝後欣然向主人家道別。方可離去。





為金齡團契代禱，求主賜給同工們有合一的異向，知道以怎樣的方式能更有效地帶領老年們來認識我們的神。

為吳博彥，王振賀願意出來擔當下一年度佳美團契主席和副主席感謝神，求主祝福他們樂于服侍人和事奉神的心，愿主賜下智慧和能力，引導并幫助他們，帶領佳美團契更上一層樓。

為下一年度佳美團契所有同工及小組長代禱，求神幫助同工們在關懷和邀請上能夠更加地殷勤，愿意在聖經的真理上扎根，賜給同工們有一顆關愛人及樂于服侍人的心，愿意走出去關懷那些有需要的肢体，使佳美團契每位弟兄姐妹在信，望，愛上都有長進。

繼續為曾經來到團契的慕道朋友和很久沒有來的主內弟兄姐妹代禱，愿圣靈的感動与引導，使他們生發渴慕認識基督耶穌的心，而愿意回到我們當中。

為五月布道會上決志的弟兄姐妹以及在復活節和感恩節接受水洗的弟兄姐妹代禱，求主保守他們

新生命的成長，堅固他們的信心，常常參加團契的活動并能融入團契及教會的事奉。

為佳美月刊代禱，求神繼續感動契友們使用及開墾此園地，將此刊物成為契友間心靈交流、共鳴及互通資訊的管道，為契友們所喜愛、珍惜。

為我們的孩子們禱告，求神保守他們身，心，靈都能健康地成長，憐憫我們做父母的軟弱，賜下智慧，耐心和愛心，知道怎樣教養我們的下一代，使他們從小就有敬畏主的心，一生都能行在神所喜悅的道路上。

為已進入大學或研究所的青年們代禱，特別為今年將要上大學的高中生禱告，愿主保守他們的學業以及每天的腳步，使他們在所進入的學校有合宜的團契扶持，能繼續在主里成長、事奉神。

為身体軟弱的肢体代禱：張其水，孫曉春，馬德剛，陳亮的父親，李曉的母親，荔萍的母親，求主賜下醫治的恩典，醫治好他們身体上的不适。

為德剛/瑞鑫的儿子牧野的身体代禱，愿上帝的恩典和憐憫與他們一家同在，賜智慧和能力給醫生及父母，使其儿子得醫治、得扶持。

繼續為正在找工作的馬桂珍，谷勁竹，田學珍，王厚宏代禱，愿主賜他們智慧并有很好的關係網絡資源，盡快的找到合适的工作。

繼續為蔣波全家，劉省明全家綠卡申請代禱，讓他們在這件事上能經歷到神的同在和帶領，使他們盡快地拿到綠卡。

為黃洁/吳方斌一家順利搬遷代禱。感謝神，黃洁/吳方斌在Columbus的房子已有買主，求神保守六月底順利closing，同時在New Jersey為他們預備适合于他們的房子，使他們一家能夠早日的安定下來，在主里專心地事奉神。

繼續為張愛文在Worthington的房子出售禱告，愿神能盡早賜下買主。

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