

## **First Aid Kits for Pain and Joy in Ministry**

© Sheung En  
Member of Book Gifting Team

What will undermine the aspiration of seminary graduates to serve? This year, the Book Gifting Team plans to produce three videos to support novice ministers who are full of enthusiasm, enabling them to make more effective use of resources in the Book Gifting pastoral package as well as extending their learning and practice in complex church situations. We are grateful that when we invited Pastor He to present the book "The Call to Joy and Pain"<sup>1</sup> to the graduates, he agreed to do so instantly. Pastor He is a senior teacher of seminary in China and he is also a pastor who cares deeply about the graduates.

Pastor He shared that he once had a graduate who talked to him on the phone after a year of service and sighed, *"It's hard to say, I'm so bruised!"* During his teaching days, he witnessed the struggles and frustrations of graduates entering the field, and over the years he has had a desire, *"I wish to recommend a book for seminary graduates to equip them to enter the field, and 'The Call to Joy and Pain' is the book I have been looking for."*

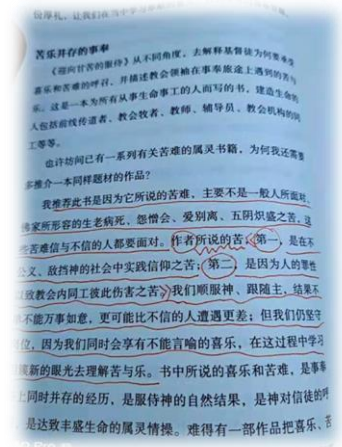
### **Cultivation of Internal Strength**

As soon as the fledgling graduates enter the field, they are confronted with the tension of interpersonal relationships. If the graduates and the church leaders do things differently, communications may stall, and if such situation drags on, a sense of alienation and rejection will emerge. Or maybe the elders and believers expect too much from the graduates and want them to be proficient in all aspects: preaching, visitation, worship, dealing with people from all walks of life, etc., or else they are considered unqualified, the graduates will feel frustrated, hurt, and exhausted. These negative feelings seriously affect the ministry and life of the graduates. In his book presentation video, Pastor He encourages graduates to strengthen their inner self and safeguard their hearts perpetually by prayer and the Holy Word. Based on Colossians 1:24-25, the book leads readers into truth through 30 days of meditation, combining spiritual contemplation, theological reflection and pastoral applications. Pastor He candidly shared that he too had experienced these hardships but

was miraculously and virtually healed while reading this book. The circumstances have not changed, but the heart has been released and recharged.

## Renewal of Perspectives

When graduates are equipped during theology education, they are always full of vision and enthusiasm, they want to shine for the Lord. Pastor He admired young evangelists who served with such vigor initially, yet he found that the gap between reality and ideal became most draining for graduates later on. He believes that there is a need to renew the graduates' view of ministry: To be a minister is a calling that involves both pain and joy, it is not serving with a halo above one's head. This is the inspiration that the author, Pastor Fernando, gave to Pastor He in his book. The book mentions teachings such as "pain and joy are both integral to our faith" and "suffering is not a big problem, the loss of joy in the Lord is." This is to prepare graduates early for what they will encounter in the future, and even if they will still feel toasted and bruised, hopefully they will not be shattered.

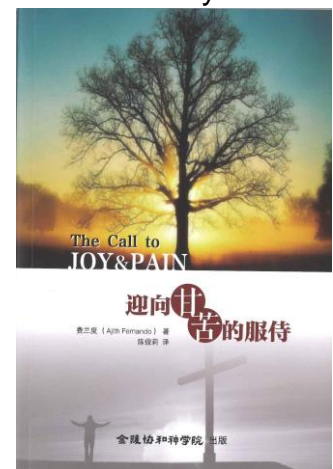


Graduates note down insightful content in the book to help themselves adjust their perspectives on ministry.

## Predecessors as Role Model

Loneliness is a common problem among graduates. If a graduate serves in a church in a big city, although there are more resources, interpersonal relationships are complicated, and those who are not good at socializing are easily ridiculed; if a graduate serves in a remote church, he or she may feel isolated because of lack of team support. Pastor He understands that loneliness can cause ministers to fall into confusion and lose their direction and motivation to serve. He encourages the graduates that they are not alone and they have to read the books of their predecessors who have walked through the same path. Pastor He shared that Pastor Fernando served in Asian cultural background is similar to that in China, and his reflections and practices are worthy of emulation.

At the end of the video, Pastor He encourages the graduates, "... *What you see as a trial now will be a benefit to you later. Thank the Lord that you have such a good book full of wisdom to accompany you upon your graduation. May God bless and use this book as a mentor and friend in your future ministry ...*" Upon completion of theology study, the graduates are equipped and will begin their ministry, a journey of pain and joy, the companionship of predecessors and teachers made available to them through the Book Gifting pastoral package will be their first aid kit on this journey.



Please remember that the book video of "The Call to Joy and Pain" is in production!

-----  
Note <sup>1</sup> Ajith Fernando, "The Call to Joy and Pain", in simplified Chinese (Nanjing: Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, 2019).  
-----

**Please support the 2022  
“China Seminary Graduates Book Gifting Project”**

This year, the Book Giving Team will arrange over 70,000 copies of pastoral resources to 4,000 graduates and produce three book presentation videos. In the first stage, the pastoral packages have been delivered to nearly 1,900 graduates.

We need your prayers and support for the book gifting in the next stage. Please remember that we still owe USD 192,308 in funding. Thank you!



The graduates carry with them the valuable experience of their ancestors and predecessors to embark on the journey of ministry which will be mingled with joy and pain.

~~~~~  
~The above is part of the content of PFC issue353, if you would like to read the full newsletter,  
please contact us at [pfc@ccl.org.hk](mailto:pfc@ccl.org.hk), thank you!~

All rights reserved. Neither this publication nor any part of it may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the prior permission of Christian Communications Limited. Publication is published every month by Christian Communications Limited.