

I rather light a candle
than complain about
the darkness

Birthday Reflections 2007



Having existed for more than 2 decades brings with it bittersweet memories. The joys and struggles that together give a unique experience of growing up. As I now enjoy the privilege of hindsight, a number of things have become clearer to me. One of which is the world we live in. It doesn't take much to realize that living in this world brings with it much pain, suffering, hardship, toil and weariness. And it is on this very note and context that I would like to begin my reflections. Not because I have pessimistic tendencies but rather, I would like to be as candid and honest as possible with life – Life as we know it.

When I am confronted with the troubles and problems within and without, I find myself naturally resorting to grumbling and complaining. Why me? Why this? Why now? I feel quite helpless and overwhelmed by the upsetting, discouraging challenges that envelope me. And in the end, it's easy to either withdraw into my little 'comfort zone' (wherever/whatever that might be) or conform to the pressurizing environment. Laziness, complacency, selfishness and ignorance are powerful influencers of my response. Shifting or more technically termed, 'projecting' the blame (pointing fingers) becomes a very real tendency. It's also really easy to be inappropriately judgmental and critical of others who appear to be making the situation worse.

What ought to be our response to the world around. Can we begin to imagine the need of the people around us? What can we do? What does it matter – does it really make any difference at all? What does this mean in terms of reaching the world for Christ?

As Christians, people belonging to Christ, we should be source of light to this world. As God's Spirit continue His good work in transforming and conforming us to the Son, may our lifestyles shine distinctly. As light, we ought to point people to the truth – sharing the gospel which brings hope to a dark world.

So here's the challenge. God can work through us as we each light our candles and illuminate the world around. Where there's a need, we should seek to fulfill it. Where there's an opportunity, we should make the most out of it. Where there's discord, we should be peace-makers.

A clear understanding of suffering, injustice and pain should equip us to minister to the world with insight. People need to come to grips with their own sinfulness and need for salvation. May Christ's love compel us to step out of our comfort zone, depending on His Spirit to reach the world for Him. Instead of self-serving, we should be self-giving. It should be both our burden and desire to see people express saving faith in Jesus.

May our light shine before men so that they may know God's gospel, His wonderful good news telling us of a great salvation done through Christ Jesus. And all this to God's glory!

It is my hope and prayer that you will take time to examine your life in light of the gospel and consider how you can play a part in God's big picture, His gracious plan of salvation. Let us encourage one another to light our candle and burn with a passionate eternal flame to serve Him in the powerful ministry of His gospel.

May God:

Enable us by His strength

Empower us by His power through the Spirit

Envelope us with His grace and love

Blessings,

Aaron

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