

The church's sub-theme for May to August is "remove old self and build up new self" ◦

Colossians 3:9-10 says, "..... seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."

The scriptures clearly tell us that our process of transformation has started after our conversion to the Lord by His grace. We put off, in our Lord, all our old nature as well as all those old behaviours and lives as if we put off our clothes. Then let our new lives undergo a changing process that all who died, buried and raised with Christ have experienced. This change refers to the experience of "removing and renewing".

Many people do not understand the meaning of "put off old self, put on the new self". Rev. David Kwok has illustrated this by giving a very vivid example. His major study in the university was "Maritime Operations", which was a 4-year course with a half-year internship. In the first two months of his internship on a merchant vessel, he had to work with other seamen on the deck to perform duties such as removing rusty stains, touch-up painting, cleaning cabins and decks. His life in these days was tough as he had to work exactly 8 hours every day. There was a strong rank consciousness in this industry. All seamen working on the decks should put on blue working clothes while those working in the cabins in white ones. During these two months, he had to work with the blue-collar seamen during day time and, after work, he had dinners with the white-collar captain, vice captains and pilots. Therefore, he had to change and adjust his roles every day.

In the first month, they unloaded coals in 37 cabins at Kaohsiung so as to make the ship ready to load goods in Japan. Therefore, they had to spend one whole week to clear the cabins for next consignment by sweeping and cleaning the cabins as well as unloading all coal residues. The space they had to clean was about 30 cubic meters. All the workers had to be fully geared when working there until lunch time. Then he had to climb up from the cabins to the deck and ran to his room for changing before he had lunch in white uniform with the captains. When he looked at himself in the mirror in his room, he was surprised – his whole face was dirty except his two eyes. He had only 10 minutes to wash up. Every day he had to change quickly twice.



Have we behaved like this – to change our clothes repeatedly? Do we put on our old self when we "work" in the world and put on the new self when we go to church for worships or other spiritual activities?

In the example illustrated above, the word "clothes" means our identity. We have a new identity at the moment we believe in Jesus Christ because we have a new relationship with God. We have "arisen" with Christ; we are children of God; we are the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven; we are the representatives of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. With all these prestigious identities, our behaviours should be commensurate with our new identities. We should live out the new self every time and everywhere.

I hope that today all of us have put on new self, with Christ living in our hearts and renewing our minds. Once we have decided to put on our new self, we will never put on our old self again. We live out the new self and the pattern of Christ so as to glorify His name in our daily lives.