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The Turning Point

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Dear friends,

The Turning Point Newsletter - March 2012

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

After all the celebrations and festivities for Christmas, the New Year and Lunar New Year, I thought there will be a lull in March before the next celebration on 8 April for Easter Sunday. I was wrong. A day after the end of the Lunar New Year celebrations on 6 February, I got an e-mail from the Secretariat of the National Council Against Drug Abuse (NCADA) informing me that Florence Ng, founder of The Turning Point, has been awarded the Star Award for her outstanding contributions towards the national effort in promoting the anti-drug cause and stamping out drug abuse. The Award honours individuals and organisations whose contributions serve as an inspiration to others. This is indeed wonderful news as we celebrate NCADA's recognition of Florence's love for the lost, her commitment and perseverance to help them in their road to recovery.

I first met Florence Ng in 1995 when she and co-founder, Khew Swee Ling, were struggling to hang on to this ministry for women drug addicts. They began God's work in a rented single storey old house in Meng Suan Road in 1990. There were only 3 residents then. As the residents were walk-in cases, admitted on a voluntary basis, it was a challenge to persuade the ladies to stay on the programme. It was a constant tussle to confine them when their craving for drugs got the better of them. Thus, there were times when there were no residents in the halfway house until the collaboration with Singapore Prisons Service to take in mandated clients. When The Turning Point took in the first batch of inmates from Changi Women Prison, the ministry began to take shape and the number of residents grew steadily.

As I got to know Florence more, I found out that even though she was equipped with a Masters in Civil Engineering, she chose to sacrifice a promising career as a civil engineer with the Public Utilities Board to heed God's call to champion the cause of women trapped in the throes of drug addiction. But what would a civil engineer know about helping drug addicts? However, it is **not our abilities but our availability** that God wants. It is not our talents but our hearts that God asks for. When Florence was willing to avail her life for God's use despite her inadequacies, He empowered and enabled her to carry out His work amongst these women. *"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."* (Matt. 19:26) In total, she has dedicated over 20 years of selfless & tireless service as God's instrument in the changed lives of 500 women drug addicts and penal offenders. She liaised with Prison Service, SANA,

SACA, churches and Christian organisations in order to help these women mend their shattered lives. Through the years, the families of the residents were also touched by her loving care. After she had stepped down from full-time work in The Turning Point in 2009, the Spirit of servanthood enabled Florence to continue extending her loving care to The Turning Point's ex-residents and the elderly in Katong Presbyterian Church who have been blessed by her love and kindness. We really thank God for this wonderful sister-in-Christ. So join me in rejoicing and celebrating with Florence as she receives the NCADA Star Award. It is a fitting accolade to a ministry pioneer whose love for God is manifested in her unwavering work with women drug addicts and penal offenders in Singapore.

Violet Lim, the Administrator at The Turning Point, is one of the first among the 500 women whose lives Florence has touched and transformed by the grace of God. This is her testimony:

Night life, drugs and drug rehabilitation centres - these were the 3 mainstay of my life from 1975 to 1995. Like most teenagers, longing to be accepted, yearning for an identity and spurred on by curiosity, I had my first taste of marijuana in 1975 when I was only 16. Ignorant of the harmful effects of drugs, I did not imagine that I would become hooked on them. By the time I realized I was addicted, it was too late. I had already moved on to heroin.

For 20 long and painful years, I was trapped in a situation which I did not know how to get out of. Although I had accepted Christ in 1980, my initial conversion had been marred by my past lifestyle. The bondage to drugs had hardened my heart and I did not believe in God's unconditional love. I simply felt that I had to be good to be accepted by Him. I attempted suicide at least twice between 1994 and 1995.

It was only in the middle of 1995 that my life took a drastic turn. I realised that I might die from drug overdose or I was going to spend the rest of my life behind bars. Desperate, I confessed my helplessness to my older sister who suggested that I either turned myself in at the drug rehabilitation centre or voluntarily walked into a halfway house for rehab. Having heard of The Turning Point(TP) from my friends, I decided to contact Florence Ng who took me in with open arms.

I walked into TP on 20th July 1995 and began my long road to kick drugs. The initial stage was tough. My decision to cut off all contact with my old friends was the biggest sacrifice I had to make. I also had to battle extreme loneliness and the fear of rejection. The routine and discipline required of me at TP compounded the problem but I sought after the Lord with all my heart. Many times, I wanted to give up. During those moments, an inner voice challenged me with these thoughts: "Are you serious about recovery? What is your purpose for coming to TP? Are you ready to face the world?" I thought, " Surely God has a purpose for preserving my life."

*I realized then that God, in His mercy, had protected and prevented me from ending my life when I attempted suicide. After 6 months, I extended my stay in TP. My decision to stay on became **the turning point** of my life. The healing of my wounds was gradual and each failure spurred me to trust God more. This increasing reliance on God hastened my recovery process. My life-transforming experience motivated me to help others who are trapped in similar situations.*

I have kept off drugs since 1995 and have now returned to serve TP as a Staff in April last year. Today, I am grateful for the manifold blessings in my life. The events in my life are opportunities for growth to build my character and strengthen my faith and I give all glory to God for delivering me from a life of sin and drug addiction. I am grateful to Sister Florence Ng for her love, commitment and self-sacrifice in the ministry of TP without which I would not be where I am today. To God be the glory.

Before I sign off this newsletter, I would like to invite friends, supporters and volunteers to join us at The Turning Point's Annual General Meeting(AGM) on Saturday, 12 May 2012, at 3 pm. Please come and support the AGM. Vote for our new Board members. Come and be counted, adding vibrancy and zest at our AGM this year. So don't forget. Mark the date down in your calendar and join us on 12 May.

Together in His Service,

Chuen Yann

Director, The Turning Point

A note to our donors: *All donors are required to provide their full names and tax reference numbers(NRIC/FIN/UEN) to The Turning Point in order to be given tax deduction for their donations. IRAS will no longer accept claims for tax deduction based on donation receipts we sent you. Our staff will submit information on your donations to IRAS through a special portal they have created for this purpose so please let us have your full name and the tax reference numbers for our submission.*

Current Staff Workers:

Director : Foo Chuen Yann, Trinity Christian Centre

Case Manager : Grace Wong Yin Wah, Faith Community Baptist Church

Administrator : Violet Lim Siew Kiak, Trinity Christian Centre

Senior Operations & Aftercare Executive : Khew Swee Ling, Glory Presbyterian Church

Programme & Aftercare Executive : Paulene Ng Meow Yee, Covenant Evangelical Free Church

Admin & Operations Assistant : Sharon Law Lay Choo

Night Duty Staff : Emily Chua Bee Choon, Lighthouse Evangelism Church

Night Duty Staff : Wong Youk Kheng, Faith Community Baptist Church