

# Pastor's Report

For the 2024 Smith Chapel Charge Conference

Malachi 3:1-4

*The messenger refines and purifies*

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight--indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like washers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD, as in the days of old and as in former years.

First and foremost, let's praise God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, for who is and who was, and who is to come (Rev. 1:4). No matter what season we find ourselves in—good or bad—we shall worship the Lord because He is worthy and holy.

I am writing this report in Yangon, Myanmar, which is about 8,500 miles away from Smith Chapel—that's two oceans away. I feel as though the Lord has used this land as His messenger to purify me and His church. As the prophet Malachi said, "*He will send His messenger to prepare the way before Him, and the Lord whom we seek will suddenly come to His temple*" (Malachi 3:1). In this unfamiliar place, God unexpectedly encouraged me to be better prepared for His coming back.

Myanmar struggles with political turmoil and spiritual darkness; yet, because of the tender mercy of our God, I witnessed the dawn from on high breaking upon this land through many chosen people of God (cf. Luke 1:76-79). I won't forget the house church in Bago, where around thirty people (all were converts from Buddhism, except one) gathered to listen and learn from Christians from a foreign land. This gathering took place on a weekday, so many closed their businesses to attend this meeting. They had to endure the Myanmar heat in a small room without an air conditioner, sitting on a floor the whole time, but there was joy and passion to learn! Everyone brought their Bibles, highlighting the scripture we referred to and avidly taking notes. Indeed, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6).

Pastor Moses, from the central part of Myanmar, was another messenger of God. He took a flight just to meet our team for a couple of hours. He was a Buddhist monk from the age of 7 to 21 and converted to Christianity through a tract handed to him by a local Christian. He started a church in his hometown in 2016 with three members (the pastor, his wife, and another woman), and it has grown into a 75-member church. Most church members come from Buddhist backgrounds, having joined through word-of-mouth evangelism from other members. When I asked how I should pray for him, he said, “Pray that my church members and I can reach the unreached people and make disciples who make disciples!”

I hope you can understand why I am so encouraged and inspired by this land. This blessing came suddenly and unexpectedly. I believe these tremendous blessings are meant to prepare the way for His coming and purify His church—Smith Chapel, which refers to you and me.

Now, let’s turn our focus to Smith Chapel. Looking back over this year, it’s clear that the Lord has blessed us immensely, especially by sending new people and families our way. Although some members have deactivated their membership for personal reasons, our overall membership has grown, and many exciting things have occurred. Here are some highlights of our ministry this year:

**For Transformational Discipleship** (To Be More Enthusiastic Christians):

- The Young Adult group has been established.
- We held our first discipleship meeting, followed by a confirmation of faith.
- Friday Vespers for Revival started over the summer.
- Morning prayer meetings have become more active.
- One accountability group has remained consistent and fruitful.
- We completed a 44-day Bible Reading challenge (New Testament).

**For Multiplication** (Church Planting Churches; Disciples Making Disciples):

- We organized a National Bible Bee group over the summer, involving 17 families and 30 students.
- We shared the message of Jesus Christ at the 4th of July Hometown Celebration.
- We baptized two new converts.
- The Summer Praise Concert was a great turn out, even though we had to switch to plan B.
- We welcomed ten new members into our church.
- We served as hosts for the Great Falls Studio Art Tour at our church.
- Our worship service at Brightview has become more vibrant.
- Smith Chapel sent the Kang family on a mission trip to Myanmar—Hallelujah!

### **For Empowering Lay People:**

- The Worship Praise Team has been formed.
- The Church Choir has resumed after a pause during the summer.
- We have volunteers for the Next Generation Ministry.
- Our fellowship meals have been blessed with more helping hands, and our meals have become even more enjoyable.
- We supported three members in attending a Christian conference.
- There has been increased participation in worship services from the congregation.
- The Christmas Committee has been formed.
- Approximately 250 food cans were donated to the Link Against Hunger in Herndon.

Let's praise God for all His blessings to our church! Let's praise God for His help to fulfill our 2024 Vision, which states, **"We love God and love our neighbors undergirded by the gospel through transformational discipleship, multiplication, and empowering lay leadership."** Let's praise God for the upcoming year 2025, which will be the season of purification and sanctification of Smith Chapel, and again, that refers to you and me.

The prophet Malachi stated that the process of purification will continue "until" we offer our offerings to the Lord in righteousness. He also mentions that these offerings will be pleasing to the Lord, just as they were in the days of old and in former years. "As in the days of old" may refer to our ancestors of faith—like Paul, Peter, John Wesley, and many others in the cloud of witnesses—who dedicated themselves and their gifts to Jesus throughout their lives. "As in former years" may imply the pinnacle of our faith, both individually and nationally. This could refer to our first love for Jesus or to the time of the Great Awakening in our nation when people repented of their sins and lived enthusiastic, fearless lives as followers of Christ. We need such purification in our lives and in our nation. We must pray, yielding and asking, "Lord, do it again!"

As we embark on a new chapter in our ministry, here is what I want to bring to your mind: **"Know Jesus and Make Him Known!"** (Mark 3:13-15). This will be the focus of our ministry in 2025.

Seasons change, and our feelings go up and down; therefore, our ministry must always be grounded on the solid rock of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and His calling for each one of us. What's His calling? What's the purpose of His calling? We should always ask and come back to this question.

The answer lies in Mark 3:13-15, where we discover **the purpose of Jesus' calling: 1) to be with Him, and 2) that He might send us out to do God's ministry.** First, we need

to **stay with Jesus to know Him**. Knowing Jesus is our primary goal. “One thing is necessary!” Jesus states—and that is to sit at His feet and know Him (cf. Luke 10:42). My dear Smith Chapel members, let’s desire to know Jesus; let’s ask the Holy Spirit to rekindle our hearts to be hungry and thirsty to know Him and His Words, much like what I have witnessed in the house church in Bago, Myanmar.

Knowing Jesus should not be merely an intellectual endeavor. Instead, it should be our daily walk with Him. I pray that all our church members will deepen their personal relationship with Jesus this coming year and experience joy in that knowledge. Our ministry will continue to support you in this journey.

Second, we must go out to fulfill God’s ministry. When Jesus calls us to be His disciples, we must remember that he intends to send us forth to make Him known. Let’s pray, therefore, that we could revive the passion that I saw in pastor Moses, a convert from a Buddhist monk, to reach the unreached people and make disciples who make disciples.

My beloved Smith Chapel members, making Jesus known to the world around us is our unfinished task. God desires for all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (cf. 1 Timothy 2:4-5; John 14:6). In Great Falls alone, approximately 60% of the residents are non-believers. In Myanmar, that figure rises to 92%. According to data from the Joshua Project, while the gospel has reached an estimated 4.57 billion people, about 3.34 billion have still not heard it. Winning souls for Jesus Christ is the ultimate purpose of why He called us to be His body.

I pray that 2025 will be the year of purification, rejuvenating our walk with the Lord, and revitalizing our hearts for missions – **“Know Jesus and Make Him Known.”**

God, we will go, if You lead us, to hold Your people in our hearts. Amen.

*“I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” – Philippians 1:6*

*“Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!” – Psalm 90:16-17*

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Ho Kang