

Beautiful Memories of a Pastor Whose Life Shone

<http://sg.christianpost.com/dbase/culture/1334//1.htm>



(Photo: Glow Consulting via The Christian Post)

For this, he would devote all of his retirement years in a country on the opposite side of the globe.

And he would pour himself utterly into his task, actively caring for those he served and making himself available to any of them 24/7.

That all-consuming passion of Mr John Bordi Willis (1904-2004) was being a pastor.

The story of the American and how he helped build Bartley Christian Church, not least by impacting the lives of its earliest members, is recorded in *An American We Are Grateful For* (Singapore Christian Foundation, 2009).

Based on the testimonies of over 70 people, most of them not Willis' family members, the 246-page biography is perhaps as multifaceted an account of the life of an individual as one could find.

The sheer number of direct sources witnesses to the fact that the never-married Willis spent much of his time with those he served.

Non-members of Bartley Christian Church and its sister RiverLife Church need not feel alienated from the telling of Willis' story.

Like the Gospels, the book is rooted in its specific geography and times. And yet, the unusual commitment and warmth of the life it captures shines through that particularity.

In a world often marked by a self-centred desire to exceed and dominate others, the story of Willis, a man who set aside his comfort so that he might comfort many others, defies all humanistic explanation.

Non-Christians who read the biography will be struck by how Willis was able to remain faithful to his Lord for all of 38 years right up to the year he was due to celebrate his centenary.

Nothing seemed to have the power to deprive him of his joy of serving Christ. No difficulty could hinder him from rendering that service. Indeed, a sickness that he would carry into his deathbed only meant that his 'mission field' had shifted to the nurses at the hospital!

News Clipping

Media: The Christian Post

Date: 23 September 2010, 4.44am HKT

Section: Home/Culture/Books

Christians, particularly pastors, are certain to be impressed by the way Willis deeply loved and cared for each church member. Some he practically loved back into the fold. In every case, churchgoers remember a gentle shepherd who was always present for them in their time of need.

American is a handbook for pastors in a different sense. Like an effective mentor, it models Christian living. It challenges them to persevere in their calling and to realise that Christ is able to do in their lives what He had done in Willis' life.

Willis was an unexceptional preacher. Yet his life spoke volumes of the power of Christ to turn an ordinary man into His servant, disciple and reflection of His glory in a Singapore context.

And thanks to *American*, Pastor John Willis will continue to inspire many others for generations to come.

The Christian Post