

# The <sup>2001</sup> *Multi-Premium* Vine



Grace to you and peace from God our Father. This month, Buddhists celebrate the Vesak Day to commemorate the enlightenment of Buddha. Richard Lim, senior SPH Editor, wrote an article in the Sunday Times, May 6, entitled "Eastern Wisdom, Western Front". He noted that "Buddhism may be all but dead in India, but it is certainly very much embraced in the West, with hundreds of centers, monasteries and retreats all over." He quoted Albert Einstein as saying, "The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. If there is any religion that could cope with modern scientific needs, it would be Buddhism." It appears that Christianity is losing ground and waning. Does Buddhism pose a serious



challenge to Christianity? In some sense yes, but in reality no. Let me explain:

1. Traditionally many Chinese shy away from Christianity saying that it is a foreign religion with Western roots. Buddhism is interesting. It is an equally foreign religion with roots among the Indo-Aryan races. So the widespread acceptance of Buddhism among Chinese in Singapore and elsewhere essentially demolished the flimsy reason for rejecting Christianity as foreign religion.
2. Buddhism has no systematic cosmology - what I mean is that, one is hard-pressed to find any coherent account of the origin of the universe. So far I only came across in the Agunna Sutra, a Buddhist text, a very brief and skimpy account of the beginning of the universe. Most Buddhist cosmologies of heavens are speculative. Their idea of hell is also no less incoherent and ill defined. In fact the Chinese

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inside



*For the glory of God!*

has so influenced the Buddhist concept of hell as reflected in the Yu Lan Pen that it is a "rojak" of Taoist / Buddhist/ Confucianist concepts.

3. Buddhism has no clear explanation for the origin of life and the world's amazingly intricate designs. The Bible in contrast begins with that.
4. Buddhism does not really have a handle on reality – as Richard Lim noted, seeing everything including self as an illusion. Escapism is perhaps an apt descriptor. Christianity on the other hand comes to grip with the reality of sin and emphasize repentance and renewal of mind and life.
5. The major tenets and teachings of Buddhism have not really improved human civilization or culture. Look at India, China, Japan, Burma and Thailand the bastion of Buddhism. Their populace still languishes either in poverty or spiritual lossness. The fact that Mother Theresa has to come in to render solace and alms the destitute and sick in Calcutta speaks volumes. It is no secret that many Thais are now disenchanting with their Buddhist Sangha after numerous scandals.
6. The major premise of Buddhism – the belief in reincarnation has never been proven under scrutiny. Many so-called phenomenal cases fell apart under close investigations – example the Spanish boy sensation who was purportedly the reincarnation of a Tibetan lama. Investigations revealed that his parents although Spanish and were staunch Buddhist even before his birth, so guess what?
7. The Buddhist's emphasis on self-effort towards enlightenment and denial of the Almighty Creator God can only spell disaster for humankind. Religion after religion, philosophy after philosophy and political systems has failed to bring Utopia, paradise or enlightenment to humankind. The basic reason.. man is by nature sinful and unclean. We need Divine Intervention... "For God so loved the world that He gave His Only Son..." John 3:16a
8. Buddhism, as Richard Lim wrote, regards despair as the beginning of wisdom. For Christians, the reverent fear of the LORD of hope is the beginning of wisdom...the fear of the LORD is the controlling principle of wisdom....not recognizing or acknowledging our Creator will indeed bring doom to humankind.

Finally, the Gospel is not about what we can or should do to achieve immortality. Neither is it a philosophy of man. It is God's revelation of what He has DONE for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Hallelujah, What a Saviour!!! Richard Lim's article failed to sway me an iota as to the efficacy of the Gospel. It is indeed Good News for modern man and throughout eternity. Amen.



*Pastor Martin Lee*

# Be ye still not afraid!

“E-commerce activity is still healthy,” reads the headline in Streetsmart this 10<sup>th</sup> of May, and the report goes on to say that “E-COMMERCE has grown, despite the current economic slowdown and the bursting of the dot-com bubble.” Optimists will say that the phenomenon of dot-coma patients dying or recuperating under intensive care in sickbays worldwide is only a phase that will pass sooner or later. How much sooner or later, no one dares hazard a guess. I am neither excited nor depressed by all the conflicting positive reports and negative forewarnings traded in the media, but from fatigue I cannot escape. Yet, I still maintain no fear because I have my own optimism albeit in a different way. Before letting you into this optimism, let’s have a quick look at a sampling of events in recent times.

#### Net stocks keep on rising (July 1998)

Internet stocks continued climbing today, with Amazon.com ...leading the way.

With Internet stocks soaring, Yahoo cofounder Jerry Yang today became the latest Net executive to gain entry into the billionaire club, joining ... Amazon.com chief executive Jeff Bezos.

#### Amazon shares rose 0.375 to 122.75. (July 1999)

#### Stocks Fall Sharply Again (1999)

Technology stocks knock the wind out of US stock markets. Yahoo, Amazon, and America Online were hit particularly hard.

The reports on the left were culled from news archives. The story of Amazon.com is an example that tells the obvious about the unpredictable gyrations of human fortunes. To all of us, perhaps, who do not dabble in the stock market, we may just read the news with a shrug of our shoulders, or just scan it with a cannot-be-bothered frame of mind. It is the same frame of mind that you can easily cope with when you read of riots in our geographical neighbourhoods or unrest in the Middle East – you may have a sense of bewilderment; nay, a bit of concern, but not too much of it simply because you are not actually there to experience the immediate and direct impact. The reality is that our lives and well being are intertwined with what happen even at the opposite face of the globe, because the world has shrunk tremendously with the all-pervasive Technology that has only recently made people heady with an Internet gold rush. It is this same Technology that whips up hurricanes as it moves trillions of dollars across the world on a daily basis. It has been reported that in the past year alone, Mr Bill Gates’ worth dropped by a value as much as £26 billion; i.e., in just a year! I dream of how pleasant it would be if the sum had been better appropriated to feed the millions dying of hunger around the world before it

disappeared into nowhere. Sadly indeed, gigantic sums have been appearing from and disappearing to nowhere regularly. You may have \$1 million or \$100 billion today being prepared for a rainy day, but zilch tomorrow. A fool and his money are soon parted. What happened to Amazon.com after 1999? Like every human instrument of wealth, it has been a common story of hitting record heights and plunging to record depths – meaning that values swell and vaporise overnight without purpose. According to a Newsweek (Apr 16, 2001) report, the Amazon's stock price had been down from a fat three figures to several bucks short of the price of a brand of CD. Whether it is a rags-to-riches or riches-to-rags tale in the New Economy, the characteristic unpredictability is always there. This is why wise people never bank their lives on worldly indulgences that offer no real comfort of security. (*See Prov. 14:24 and James 5:2*)

Closer home, PCCW (the high-flying Hongkong telco that beat SingTel only last year in the bidding war for HK Telecom), crashed from a value of US\$70 billion to US\$12 billion as at early March. On hindsight, it might have been a blessing to us that SingTel did not succeed in acquiring HK Telecom, a deal that would cost some US\$30 billion. As providence would have it, it was SingTel's turn to sing and dance as it basked in the media sunshine with her acquisition of Australia's C&W Optus Ltd at a price premium of 20%. Yet, according to the Straits Times, 96 million SingTel shares were sold down to a 10-month low upon news of the deal. The fact is that there was both joy and fear among people – a glaring testimony that nobody can really gainsay what direction we are heading in our craving for more of the New Economy cake.

I hope for the best in everything, but the best is not for the asking. The best hopes and the worst fears take their turns to peer out of the horizon, as though playing a game of hide-and-seek with people who are eagle-eyed for grabbing opportunities. If the reduction of the minimum tender price for 3G mobile licences by an amount of \$500 000 within a short period does not startle enough in affirming the reality of precipitous turns of events in the stale New Economy, then the looming prospect of a recession in the U.S. must send shivers down the spines of those who remember the Great Depression which descended first on the U.S. and then the rest of the world bringing unemployment to millions and sinking Singapore's trade with the West to abysmal depths. Reminiscing the Depression, a teenager let flow his poignant thoughts about hope and despair:

**"We thought it was the magic carpet...  
the click of the rails...romance."**

**"The end of the rainbow was always  
somewhere else and it kept us moving."**

**"Most of all I remember the loneliness.  
More than once I cried. I felt so sad,  
so utterly alone."**

In the current demise or near-demise of e-portals, advertising dollars are all fizzling out and cannot be counted on for revival of life or just to maintain a measure of buoyancy when once (not so long ago) their flow was thought of as interminable and even youngsters prematurely planning their moves were awestruck by the great promises of anything to do with the Net and Technology. Don't say now that many now are not being caught in a net where they can neither stay comfortable nor escape.

Man is not in charge of his destiny, which is in the hands of nature. To quote Franklin Roosevelt (U.S President during the Depression years), "To some generations, much is given. Of other generations, much is expected." The questions I would like to ask: "Who gives?" and "Who expects?"

Does man give to the world the harvest of what he sows by his arrogant assumption of power to change the face of nature (say, with the questionable aspects of his work on genomics)? Does man set his own expectations for fulfilment or frustration? I am now not thinking of how recent history told us about financial institutions and nations plunged into misery by greed and follies or by the immeasurable power of the IT monster.

Man is not only driven to dizzying heights of pleasure or depths of depression by the moods of bulls and bears; he is also the smartest creature on Earth being taken hostage by humble cows and lowly animals with cloven hooves.

(Forget about flu-struck birds and carcinogenic salmon.)



As man witnesses the incineration of pigs, sheep and cows in hundreds of thousands, he may sigh, "Oh poor pigs, pitiful sheep, wretched cows." Wonder aloud, though, whether man himself is becoming an endangered species. First it was Mad Cow scourge, then the HFMD epidemic, what next?

I doubt all tragedies have anything to do with luck as a British farm owner would like to think: "Every way we turn, everything we do - it's all bad luck."



Nevertheless, the suffering farmer and his country folks can be excused for their notion of hard luck when, apart from ailing animals, they had also had more than enough of a worst flood in 50 years last autumn. Altogether, the financial loss from plunging farming income (down 70%), a hefty price tag in billions of pounds just for cows gone insane, sharp drops in tourist revenues, etc. is inestimable.

Are we in Southeast Asia immune from the reverberations of happenings in Europe? Sadly, viruses, human disasters and Acts of God are known to travel freely at speeds allowed by modern technology without the checks of passports or visas. Albeit the

lunatic cows are not known to have made their home in Asia, "the UN Food & Agriculture Organisation has declared that all nations should consider themselves at risk, though many seem unprepared." (Commentary in 'TODAY' - 28<sup>th</sup> March)

As man reaps the benefits of high-speed travel facilitated by technology, will there be a payback time? We may try to contain physical contagions by physical means, but spiritual contagions have to be contained by spiritual means. Turning to the Bible for advice to resolve our predicaments without prayerful recourse to the Holy Spirit as our Counsellor is half effort with half gain. I have shared my piece (February Vine) revealing how the vehemence of an unnecessary debate in a faraway place on Bible translations can reach our shores at the speed of electrical signals just with a few clicks of the computer mouse. Dr Bloomquist has also helpfully shared his significant insight on the issue in March Vine. Before you decide that you have had enough of the Bible translations issue, tell me whether you feel like grinning at or lamenting the ingenuity or absurdity of a new translation of the Bible in Cockney slang coming out in London. If you do not know what Cockney is, you may be forgiven to think of the translation as cocktales after reading the following samples from it quoted in March 12 Newsweek or the Internet:

- "God said to Noah ... I want you to build a big nanny, made from really good wood." (So Noah built a bloomin' massive nanny.)
- "Jacob gave a beautiful decorated weasel to Joseph as a present."
- "Guv, please give us some Uncle Fred ..."
- Jesus making a Jim Skinner for five thousand geezers with just five loaves of Uncle Ned and two Lillian Gish
- David and that massive geezer Goliath

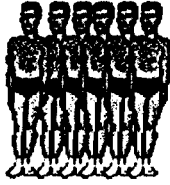
The Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, wrote the foreword to the book.

"Cockney" or "Cocktales", my feeling is that the translation is a testimony of how the Holy Bible is subject to cavalier treatment by some people. If you have played the game of "passing the message from beginning of a line to the end of it", you know how bit by bit distortions take place along the message's 'conveyor belt' until it becomes completely out of shape. Rather than "[putting] energy and passion back into the stories" and getting people to "[read] the Bible who would not normally do so ...", according to the Archbishop, I fear that bit by bit, like in the "passing the message" game, youngsters grow up to become adults who in turn lead on the generation after to take fancy in the so-called "bible" as a beautiful read with all the holy facts twisted.



Human enterprise knows no limits. If the Cockney translation of the Bible is an example of "spiritual" inventiveness, then the race among scientists around the world to

come out with the first human clone, even if in the name of scientific gain, does not lose out in competition as a creative enterprise of a high order with the potential of usurping God's Adam-and-Eve model of propagating the human race. Does this suggest that man has the potential of doing things better than God? If so, then God must have created man to rise above Him in wisdom to take over His throne. Instead, I would say that it is man who, by his foolishness, risks finding himself being confronted by his own Frankenstein monster beyond his wildest imagination. Already, according to a BBC report early this month, an accident in human cloning has occurred. Up to 30 babies with modified genetic make-up have been born as an unintended result of an experimental reproductive programme in New Jersey using 'reprogenetic' methods. With such an accident taking place when cloning know-how is just budding, the potential of much more serious unintended outcomes of experimental germ line modifications astounds the mind.



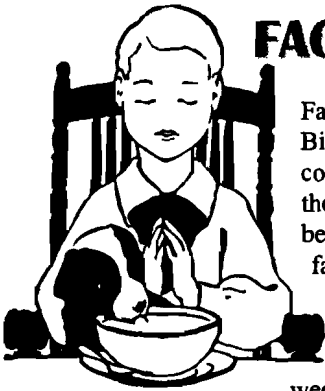
I am quite perturbed, not just by the natural or man-made face to disasters around the world, but also by the face of man's spiritual degeneracy. Instead of harnessing resources to bring satisfaction to himself, he finds himself buried by the very genie (technology) that grants him his desire for more and more and more ... the more the merrier, as he loses his mind to the amazing phenomenon of 'good things' piling up around his feet and rising up to his hip, body, chin, nose, ... with nary a care for God's warning.

The world is a muddled place – physically, socially and spiritually. Do not go about predicting how life will be tomorrow. Whether earth-shattering occurrences, gradual but nerve-wrecking build-up of tensions or just mundane letdowns (school posting, children's academic performance, office politics, personality conflicts, etc.), events have come and gone. History gives us a lesson on the wisdom of not placing too much faith in human roller-coaster prognostications that always bear man's trademark self-serving, face-saving and skin-preserving caveat of 'barring unforeseen circumstances'. Given the never-ending occurrences of unforeseen circumstances providing wonderful explanations for the changeability of human forecasts, a different recommendation against conventional human wisdom is called for. This is that you breath a prayer to the Holy Spirit – the Spirit of truth (not the mere spirit of man) who will teach you all things for wisdom and understanding.

Be ye still not afraid in spite of the depressing state of the world. My optimism does not follow the conventional hope for material goodness in the world. My confidence is in God who will take care of His faithful children even if the world around them comes to a boil because of human foolishness. While man may not be able to trust himself and define his destiny, he can exercise his free will to drown in paranoia (over deadly cell phones, genetically modified corn, World War III, etc.), or simply to trust and obey God's Word. To survive the turmoil in the world, there is no other way, but to trust and obey. Jesus said: "Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" (Luke 12:7 - NIV).

*John Lee*

# FACTS ON FASTING



Fasting is one of the most misunderstood subjects in the Bible. We don't fast to earn something; we fast to make a connection with our supernatural God. We are cleaning out the "pipe" that connects us to the anointing of God. It becomes corroded through the normal course of living in a fallen world, and the best way to cleanse our spiritual system is through prayer and fasting.

\* How long is long enough? Begin with one day a week. Try to make it a water-only fast if possible, unless you have some physical problem. You may supplement it with fruit and vegetable juices. Begin after dinner in the evening and fast until dinner the next day.

\* Why does it feel so bad? Nearly everyone experiences certain unpleasant side effects when beginning a fast. You may get a headache, feel slightly nauseated, or dizzy at first. This is because there are accumulated poisons stored in your body that are purged when you finally rest your intestines and stomach. Once you press through the three-day barrier, you will begin to feel good.

\* Should I tell others? Fasting is not a badge of honor. It is an intimate time with God that doesn't need to be shared.

\* What if I break my fast in a moment of weakness? Weakness is a natural part of the fasting discipline. It's a way to understand your desires for the things of this world. Don't kick yourself if you break the fast. You still accomplished much and God is pleased with your heart's desire for more of Him.

\* Is there ONE way to fast? There are many different kinds of fasts:

A. The complete fast is a total fast in which you eat and drink nothing. The maximum time for this is three days and nights. (Ezra 8:21; 10:6; Ester 4:16).

B. The normal fast, which Jesus observed in the wilderness, involves total abstention from food, but regular intake of water. You could substitute an herbal tea or add a little lemon or honey to your water.

C. The Daniel fast or partial fast is when you eat "no pleasant meat" but instead eat vegetables and drink water. This is practical for people who have diabetes, hypoglycemia, or anemia. D. The group fast or corporate fast is the kind that turned God's wrath away from the wicked city of Nineveh. Certain types of food are eliminated for several weeks by a group of people.



\* What should I avoid? Acidic juices (orange, grapefruit) because they can overwhelm your system. Dilute juices, eliminate meats and desserts. You may want to eat only fruits, nuts, and vegetables.

\* What's going on with my body? You may feel weak at times. Don't abuse your body. Rest more, cut back on your schedule. A fast gives you a chance to tell your body who is boss. Every craving does not have to be honored.

\* How do I start? Start small and move toward longer fasts slowly. The discipline of fasting is a flexible discipline that is focused on intimacy with God. Don't begin with a 21- or 40-day fast. It is just as scriptural to go on a one-day fast.

\* What do I do besides not eating? Give time to Bible reading and prayer. The time spent preparing and eating meals can be spent in intentional prayer time. Expect mental attacks from Satan, in the form of depression that manifests itself in a sense of heaviness.

\* How do I end the fast? Treat your body kindly and with respect. Don't go out and get the biggest steak you can find. Gradually re-enter fruits, salads, yogurt - in small portions.

*Maresh Chavda is founder and senior pastor of All Nations Church in Charlotte, N.C.*

## NONG HAN (THAILAND) MISSION TRIP ON 31 MAY - 4 JUNE 2001

### OBJECTIVES:

1. JCC has committed to assist the local church to purchase a plot of land to build their church building and bury their dead. The team is to study the development of the project.
2. To be involved in ministries at the mission field through words of encouragement from the Word and prayer.
3. To continue the strengthening of relationship between JCC and the local church.
4. To be exposed to cross-cultural missions.

**FAMILY OUTING**

1 May, 2001 **JCC Family Outing at Labrador Park.** We started out at 8.30am and stopped over for a Macdonald's breakfast before we join the rest at Labrador Park. We reached the park by 9.20am and found our brothers and sisters, already singing praises in a cool shaded area of the park. The weather was fine and dry although when we first started out the sky looked threatening. The

number of people there was surely lesser than when we held our last outing at Botanic Gardens. We can attribute this to the many who have children whose examinations start the very next day. It would seem that the fathers turned up but the mothers remained home with the children.

We were occupied with three interesting team-building games, which took us all the way up to lunchtime. Although we did not bring any lunch because we had intended to rush home (my daughter too has her examinations the next day), God provided us with food through our brothers and sisters.

Anyway, we did not stay to the end but we would like to thank the organising committee for the good time and all the effort taken to organise it. Words can't express the fun we had, so we will let the pictures tell the story.

*Martin Cheah*



@

Labrador Park



THE END NOOP



# A Vision of the Lost

by William Booth

In one of my recent journeys, as I gazed from the coach window, I was led into a train of thought concerning the condition of the multitudes around me. They were living carelessly in the most open and shameless rebellion against God, without a thought for their eternal welfare. As I looked out of the window, I seemed to see them all... millions of people all around me given up to their drink and their pleasure, their dancing and their music, their business and their anxieties, their politics and their troubles. Ignorant-willfully ignorant in many cases and in other instances knowing all about the truth and not caring at all. While my mind was thus engaged, I had a vision.

I saw a dark and stormy ocean. Over it the black clouds hung heavily; through them every now and then vivid lightning flashed and loud thunder rolled, while the winds moaned, and the waves rose and foamed, towered and broke, only to rise and foam, tower and break again.

In that ocean I thought I saw myriad of poor human beings plunging and floating, shouting and shrieking, cursing and struggling and drowning, and as they cursed and screamed they rose and shrieked again, and then some sank to rise no more.

And I saw out of this dark angry ocean, a mighty rock that rose up with its summit towering high above the black



clouds that overhung the stormy sea. And all around the base of this great rock I saw a vast platform. Onto this platform, I saw with delight a number of the poor struggling, drowning wretches continually climbing out of the angry ocean. And I saw that a few of those who were already safe on the platform were helping the poor creatures still in the angry waters to reach the place of safety. On looking more closely I found a number of those who had been rescued, industriously working and scheming by ladders, ropes, boats and other means more effective, to deliver the poor strugglers out of the sea. Here and there were some who actually jumped into the water, regardless of the consequences in their passion to "rescue the perishing." And I hardly know which gladdened me the most- the sight of the poor drowning people climbing onto the rocks reaching a place of safety, or the devotion and self-sacrifice of those whose whole being was wrapped up in the effort for their deliverance.

As I looked on, I saw that the occupants of that platform were quite a mixed company. That is, they were divided into different "sets" or classes, and they occupied themselves with different pleasures and employments. But only a very few of them seemed to make it their business to get the people out of the sea.

But what puzzled me most was the fact that though all of them had been rescued at one time or another from the ocean, nearly everyone seemed to have forgotten all about it. Anyway, it seemed the memory of its darkness and danger no longer troubled them at all. And what seemed equally strange and perplexing to me was that these people did not even seem to have any care about the poor perishing ones who were struggling and drowning right before their very eyes... many of whom were their own husbands and wives, brothers and sisters and even their own children.

Now this astonishing unconcern could not have been the result of ignorance or lack of knowledge, because they lived right there in full sight of it all and even talked about it sometimes. Many even went regularly to hear lectures and sermons in which the awful state of these poor drowning creatures was described.

I have always said that the occupants of this platform were engaged in different pursuits and pastimes. Some of them were absorbed day and night in trading and business in order to make gain, storing up their savings in boxes, safes and the like.

Many spent their time in amusing themselves with growing flowers on the side of the rock, others in painting pieces of cloth or in playing music, or in dressing themselves up in different styles and walking about to be admired. Some occupied themselves chiefly in eating and drinking, others were taken up with arguing about the poor drowning creatures that had already been rescued.

But the thing to me that seemed the most amazing was that those on the platform to whom He called, who heard His voice and felt that they ought to obey it, who confessed to love Him much, were in full sympathy with Him in the task He had undertaken, who worshipped Him, were so taken up with their trades and professions, their money saving and pleasures, their families and circles, their religions and arguments about it, and their preparation for going to the mainland, that they did not listen to the cry that came to them from this Wonderful Being who had Himself gone down into the sea. Anyway, if they heard it they did not heed it. They did not care. And so the multitude went on right before them struggling and shrieking and drowning in the darkness.

And then I saw something that seemed to me even more strange than anything that had gone on before in this strange vision. I saw that some of these people on the platform whom this Wonderful Being had called to, wanting them to come and help Him in His difficult task of saving these perishing creatures, were always praying and crying out to Him to come to them!

Some wanted Him to come and stay with them, and spend His time and strength in making them happier. Others wanted Him to come and take away various doubts and misgivings they had concerning the truth of some letters He had written them. Some wanted Him to come and make them feel more secure on the rock- so secure that they would be quite sure that they should never slip off again into the ocean. Numbers of

others wanted Him to make them feel quite certain that they would really get off the rock and onto the mainland someday: because as a matter of fact, it was well known that some had walked so carelessly as to lose their footing, and had fallen back again into the stormy waters.

So these people used to meet and get up as high on the rock as they could, and looking towards the mainland (where they thought the Great Being was) they would cry out, "Come to us! Come and help us!" And all the while He was down (by His Spirit) among the poor struggling, drowning creatures in the angry deep, with His arms around them trying to drag them out, and looking up- oh! so longingly but all in vain- to those on the rock, crying to them with His voice all hoarse from calling, "Come to Me! Come, and help Me!

And then I understood it all. It was plain enough. The sea was the ocean of life- the sea of real, actual human existence. That lightning was the gleaming of piercing truth coming from Jehovah's Throne. That thunder was the distant echoing of the wrath of God. Those multitudes of people shrieking, struggling and agonizing in the stormy sea, was the thousands and thousands of poor harlots and harlot-makers, of drunkards and drunkard makers, of thieves, liars, blasphemers and ungodly people of every kindred, tongue and nation.

Oh what a black sea it was! And oh, what multitudes of rich and poor, ignorant and educated were there. They were all so unlike in their outward

circumstances and conditions, yet all alike in one thing- all sinners before God- all held by, and holding onto, some iniquity, fascinated by some idol, the slaves of some devilish lust, and ruled by the foul fiend from the bottomless pit!

"All alike in one thing?" No, all alike in two things- not only the same in their wickedness but, unless rescued, the same in their sinking, sinking... down, down, down... to the same terrible doom. That great sheltering rock represented Calvary, the place where Jesus had died for them. And the people on it were those who had been rescued. The way they used their energies, gifts and time represented the occupations and amusements of those who professed to be saved from sin and hell- followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The handful of fierce, determined ones, who were risking their own lives in saving the perishing were true soldiers of the cross of Jesus. That Mighty Being who was calling to them from the midst of the angry waters was the Son of God, "the same yesterday, today and forever" who is still struggling and interceding to save the dying multitudes about us from this terrible doom of damnation, and whose voice can be heard above the music, machinery, and noise of life, calling on the rescued to come and help Him save the world.

My friends in Christ, you are rescued from the waters, you are on the rock, He is in the dark sea calling on you to come to Him and help Him. Will you go? Look for yourselves. The surging sea of life, crowded with perishing multitudes rolls up to the very spot on which you stand. Leaving the vision, I now come to speak of the fact- a fact that is as real as the

Bible, as real as the Christ who hung upon the cross, as real as the judgment day will be, and as real as the heaven and hell that will follow it.

Look! Don't be deceived by appearances- men and things are not what they seem. All who are not on the rock are in the sea! Look at them from the standpoint of the great White Throne, and what a sight you have! Jesus Christ, the Son of God is, through His Spirit, in the midst of this dying multitude, struggling to save them. And He is calling on you to jump into the sea- to go right away to His side and help Him in the holy strife. Will you jump? That is, will you go to His feet and place yourself absolutely at His disposal?

A young Christian once came to me, and told me that for some time she had been giving the Lord her profession and prayers and money, but now she wanted to give Him her life. She wanted to go right into the fight. In other words, she wanted to go to His assistance in the sea. As when a man from the shore, seeing another struggling in the water, takes off those outer garments that would hinder his efforts and leaps to the rescue, so will you who still linger on the bank, thinking and singing and praying about the poor perishing souls, lay aside your shame, your pride, your cares about other people's opinions, your love of ease and all the selfish loves that have kept you back for so long, and rush to the rescue of this multitude of dying men and women,

Does the surging sea look dark and dangerous? Unquestionably it is so. There is no doubt that the leap for you,

as for everyone who takes it, means difficulty and scorn and suffering. For you it may mean more than this. It may mean death. He who beckons you from the sea however, knows what it will mean - and knowing, He still calls to you and bids to you to come.

You must do it! You cannot hold back. You have enjoyed yourself in Christianity long enough. You have had pleasant feelings, pleasant songs, pleasant meetings, pleasant prospects. There has been much of human happiness, much clapping of hands and shouting of praises- very much of heaven on earth.

Now then, go to God and tell Him you are prepared as much as necessary to turn your back upon it all, and that you are willing to spend the rest of your days struggling in the midst of these perishing multitudes, whatever it may cost you.

You must do it. With the light that is now broken in upon your mind and the call that is now sounding in your ears, and the beckoning hands that are now before your eyes, you have no alternative. To go down among the perishing crowds is your duty. Your happiness from now on will consist in sharing their misery, your ease in sharing their pain, your crown in helping them to bear their cross, and your heaven in going into the very jaws of hell to rescue them.

Now what will you do?

**extracted from the Internet by  
Eva & Philip Fong**

# FROM THAILAND TO SINGAPORE

*Rev. Terry & Sally Kee,*

*77/267 Soi Phumjitt, Rama 4 Road, Phra Khanong, Bangkok 10110, Thailand*

*May 2001*

Dear praying friends,

***"To know the will of God is the greatest knowledge. To do the will of God is the greatest achievement." - Dr. George W. Truett.***

Terry was elected Chairperson of the Lutheran Mission in Thailand during their Annual Meeting on 19 April 2001 for a term of 2 years. The pursuit to know God's will for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand, for the Lutheran Mission in Thailand and for us occupy much of his attention since.

Much time is spent in prayer and in consultation with the Bishop as well as other members of the Church Council (both local members and the missionaries). Please pray for us that we may know God's will and do it.

New responsibilities come with his new appointment. Pray for Terry's ability in managing his time well and that, in addition to his various duties, God will take what little he has and multiply it for His glory.

During the General Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand as well as the Joint Board Meeting for the Lutheran Mission to Thailand, several critical issues were raised and discussed. Please pray that the Lord will grant wisdom to the Executive Council of the Church, members of the Joint Boards and the Field Committee of the Lutheran Mission to Thailand as we work through those issues.

As for Sally, she needs prayer for her travel to Madagascar from 9 to 19 May 2001 for LWF Project screening meeting. Besides studying, evaluating and presenting of projects to the representatives of the Project Committee, she is expected to share Bible Devotions during the meeting. The recent hot weather left her with allergic rashes on her skin. Prayer for the Lord's healing or grace to endure would be much appreciated.

We rejoice with our god-daughter, Phui, who scored a rare 4-point aggregate in her Primary School Leaving Examinations. Her average percentage grade of 90% grant her entrance into Ave Maria High School which was voted to be the best school for the whole of South Isaan Region.

Pray for our god-daughter in Singapore, Winnie, who will be doing her "A" level examination this year.

Continue to pray for our ministries in Nong Khai. A recent effort to bring the people from this Province to worship at our preaching place in Nong Han (95 Km from their home) saw more than twenty people turning up for the trip. The preparation for the Evangelistic English Camp is progressing well. It has generated great interest here in Udon Thani and the Director of Education plans to come as observer at the camp. It has also generated great interest among members in Singapore. Many indicated their interest to serve as volunteers. As we need only 12-15 volunteers and selections are needed.

We call upon interested persons to fulfill the criteria set below to write to Terry by 15 July 2001:

1. Able to attend a training session in Bangkok on the 26 November 2001.
2. Travel to Udon together on the 27 November 2001.
3. Serve as Group leader and facilitator from 28 November to 1 December 2001.
4. Be prepared to share his/her faith testimony to the participant of the camp.
5. Be responsible for his/her own airfare and accommodation in Bangkok.

May God bless you and us as we seek to please him with our lives and service.

Yours in Christ's love

Terry & Sally Kee

If you have the interest and determination to improve service in your organization or your life, these four steps will help:

1. Your **INTENTION** must be clear. What do you want to do? You've got to know where you want to go or you are never going to get there.
2. Your **DIRECTION** must be known. Where are you now, relative to where you want to be? If you can't see or admit to the reality of the moment, you can't set a clear direction forward.
3. Your **ARTICULATION** should be appealing. Language is an act of pure creation. The language we choose can persuade, arouse and inspire. It can motivate, challenge and command. Articulate your vision with impeccable care, every word does make a difference.
4. Your **ACTIONS** must be deliberate and persistent, guided by the three steps above.



# Community Outreach - A Shared Vision

It's very encouraging indeed - JCC successfully launched another community outreach mission to the people living in Taman Jurong, bringing gifts and friendship on Easter Sunday. This time round, we had prayed for Blocks 116, 117 and 118 to be included as these three blocks house not only foreign workers but local poor families who need the grace of God just as the folks living in the better blocks.

Personally, we believe introducing a recreational activity like American Line Dancing as a community physical exercise project gives JCC the opportunity to befriend non-JCC participants living in the Taman Jurong vicinity. AM Line Dance together with other social activities should be viewed as useful tools for reaching out to the neighbourhood. The AM Line Dance activity should not be viewed as a dancing lesson per se. Similarly, we should not hold a limited view of tuition, cooking, angling and other non-worship activities conducted by JCC. All these are excellent means to draw people into contact with our church and for them to know us better and for us to be their friends regardless of their social status and race. We must prepare the groundwork, ploughing the soil of the heart in readiness to sow the Word. We should show them in practical ways that Christians are also people who have an interest for the community's leisure pursuits and other needs, and dispose of the perceived idea that we are only concerned with shoving the gospel down their throat.

There will be children who may need help in their schoolwork, moral support or a place to study if their home environment is not conducive. Apart from help in these areas, we can mentor them to become useful educated Christian citizens in later years, encouraging them to fill the ranks of the BB and GB for their personal growth and to help take them off the streets and bad influences. The poor and uneducated aged folks may need help to read and write letters. The aged sick may be in need of friends. We see potential to

bring cheers, food and assistance to the old, lonely and infirm. There is so much opportunity to reach out to these folks, whatever their social status in society. Our actions and love is the only Bible they "read" for the time being.

Our aim is to be friends and help. We must march forward in boldness and faith, trusting and letting our God do the rest. He alone will decide the day, time and circumstances for us to present His Word of life. Amen

We need to see and listen with our spiritual eyes, ears and hearts and be led by the Holy Spirit. There should be no "secret service" Christians. People will be won for God by our open action, love and compassion for them. (See Matthew 9:35 - 38)

We see new friends. We see new faces in Care Groups and worshippers in JCC. We see our youths involved in useful community projects which could enrich their own lives - helping young lives nearby, befriending and helping the poor and aged folks, etc. Indeed, the harvest is plentiful!

Our dear brothers in Christ, what do you see? All these may sound like JCC moving towards being a community centre. If it is the community we wish to reach out to, then we will have to move around the community. But then JCC was a community centre more than 30 years ago when God planted this church in the Jurong wilderness. It has grown to what it is to day. Churches grow within their respective communities. Why not ours too? Let us do our part. The tools for outreach are here. The folks are here. We should use the tools to reach out to the folks and draw them to us.

A journey of a thousand miles starts with the first important single step forward - A shared Vision.

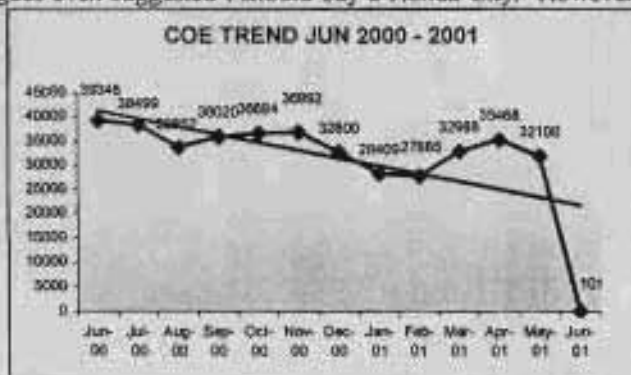
Can two walk together, unless they agreed? (Amos 3:3)

Warmest regards,  
*Philip & Eva*

# COE Missing the boat!

The June 2001 Certificate Of Entitlement (COE) plunged to a record low of \$101. Industry sources say that those who bought their cars then had struck a windfall while others who were still considering had missed the boat. What has this to do with me? Unfortunately, I am in the latter category.

Sometime earlier this year, I had a thought of buying a new car because my current car had started to give me some problems. When I started to see the many new cars in our parking lot, the urge grew stronger. Then Bro. Leong Kok Hwa also bought a new car and suggested that it was time I too should make my bid. The prices of cars were falling and one of my colleagues even suggested I should buy a Honda City. However the greatest mystery was when a long lost brother, Bernard (brother of Andrew) called long distance from Johor. We had lost contact for many years since he left Singapore. Before that, he was a member of our care group and also of JCC.



While we were on the line, he suddenly mentioned that he had a dream. In the dream, he saw me introducing him to my new car. He even said that his dreams had a tendency of coming true. After the call, I laughingly told my wife that God was trying to tell me something. Of course I did not take any action but instead continued to monitor the car price situation.

Bernard



Andrew

study the situation and finally do not take any action because our calculations say it is not the right time.

My hope is that God will give me a second chance and keep the COE low so that I can plunge in and buy a new car. Of course I am not saying that I must have a new car. No it is a luxury and not a necessity. It is a blessing from God if I even have a car.

# Farewell



**Rebecca Thomas** has completed her course at Singapore Bible College, with a Masters in Music, and will be returning to India soon.

*The English Choir will miss her most because she had been working with them for the past year or so.*

*When she leaves, there will be a vacuum in the choir, as they will lack a conductor cum pianist.*

*May God provide us with a replacement.*



**Ronnie Lim** has been posted to Shanghai by his company. He will be there for at least the next 3 years. Due to his departure, a vacancy has arisen in the English Council. This is a mighty big boot to fill but if God has called you, He will empower you to fill the post.

*We wish Ronnie, Nancy and family a safe journey and may God protect and watch over them while they are away from us. May He also bless this family with a vision for the lost in Shanghai and grant them wisdom to start a great ministry there.*

*Hey, I hear his new car is for sale. Any takers?*

The dentist picked up the office phone and nodded sympathetically as one of his patients described a problem he was having. "Hm. yes. Well, come in tomorrow morning and I'll have a look. Today? No, I'm sorry, but I have eighteen cavities to fill today. See you tomorrow at nine." Dutifully noting the appointment on his calendar, he then picked up his golf bag and left the office whistling.