

# The <sup>2002</sup>Vine

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Greetings to all the saints in Christ Jesus. The new year 2002 brings with it dramatic changes to JCC. With the setting up of the Catalytic Group, the Cell-based direction for the church is gathering momentum and once all the rough patches have been ironed out, the pastor will share his vision and direction with the church. Due to his busy schedule, the Pastor's Word will not be a regular feature of The Vine. In fact, The Vine may not continue as a monthly publication but as a quarterly.

The church is in a transition and sometimes changes are inevitable. The world around us is in chaos after September 11 and if we do not cling to The Rock of our Salvation, we too may go the way of the world. Are you worried about money? Well you should be!! I know that some of our brothers and sisters have lost their jobs. I continue to pray with them for God's provision.

## **PASTOR MICHAEL IS REASSIGNED**

After years of running away from the missionary call that he first received when he ventured into fulltime ministry, Pastor Michael has finally decided to accept the challenge of the life of a missionary over a comfortable life of a pastor. It is even more a challenge now because he is married and about to be a father. However after struggling with the call, Michael is confident that God had shown him a clear sign of his calling when Bro. Rodney Ratnam by some miracle was given a place in an old folks home.

Michael gave his last sermon as pastor on 30th Dec and is now concentrating full time on Nias Missions.

We wish him God's blessing in his future ministry.

I am now into my 20th year with my company and I wonder how I managed to stay so long. Sometimes I feel very insecure because I am not a graduate, neither am I young but I believe that God has preserved me by positioning me in a place where I would be considered of value-add to my company. Yes neither by might, nor by power but by God's grace and mercy I stand. So if He can do that for me, then He can do it for you too. And if He can do it for individuals, He can do it for His church. So should we be unduly worried about money?

I face a Goliath of a deficit for the 2002 budget. I pray for the faith of David to face down this deficit. I look at those of us who live in big houses and drive fancy cars and I was told that maybe we have over-extended ourselves and cannot tithe to the Lord. Then I remember, "**My house**, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house." (Haggai 1:9) May this not be so!

I met up with Pastor Michael who will be going over to Nias from 22 to 29 January. He and his team will be there to start construction work to build a S\$60,000 orphanage building to house about 100 children. To date I think he has raised only about S\$5,000 but that doesn't seem to stop him. He may be considered foolhardy but my what great faith. Keep him in your prayers.

The church may have to spend about \$20,000 to repair the faulty wiring, which has resulted in frequent power trips. Can you imagine showing people around and saying, "Hey, look new wiring!"

I don't know whether I am writing an editorial or a treasurer's report but I hope it has been informative and give you some ideas what to pray for.

*The Editor.*

# Hannah - A woman of prayer

by Tan Swee Leong

The Book of I Samuel opens with the story of Hannah, no further reference is made in the Bible to this woman of the Bible.

I Samuel introduces "a certain man", Elkanah and his family from an obscure place called Ramathain in Israel. Hannah is one of the two wives of Elkanah, she was barren whilst Elkanah's other wife, Peninnah had children. Peninnah is referred to as Hannah's rival and she persistently taunted Hannah over her childlessness. Elkanah tries to console Hannah but it appears of little avail.

Hannah is a testimony of the faith of a mother who like Sarai and Rachel were barren, and who had suffered the taunt of the more fertile rival wives. Barrenness during those days was viewed as a mark of the Lord's disfavour - as unworthy of any part in the fulfilment of the promise, "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Just as Abraham loved Sarai, Jacob Rachel, Elkanah loved Hannah but is unable to alleviate her sorrows.

Hannah in her predicament pours her heart to the Lord at the shrine at Shiloh. Her annual visit to Shiloh is a sad reminder of her infertility. Her husband's intended words of comfort, "Don't I mean more to you than ten

sons?" may have caused her more distress and drove her to seek the Lord. She vows to the Lord that if the Lord gives her a son she will dedicate the Son to serve the Lord as a Nazarite. Hannah desires for a son is not so much for relief from childlessness or for the



the Lord.

Hannah's prayer at Shiloh, was noticed by Eli the Chief Priest. Eli thinks she was drunk. It is conceivable that during the time due to the sad spiritual condition, Eli had to deal with drunks coming into the temple. Hannah response to Eli of her deep anguish gains a blessing from Eli who said, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." (1 Sam 1:17), though Eli did not enquire what Hannah was asking the Lord for. Based on what Eli had said, Hannah demonstrated great faith, her faith in the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.

maternal joy of raising a child. Her desire is more for a son to serve the Lord and who can be a leader for Israel after the example of a Nazarite like Samson. In her petition we can see Hannah as a godly woman seeking to bless



Her burden removed, she went home, did eat and was sad no more.

Hannah's desire for a Son is granted at the next annual feast at Shiloh. Hannah names her son Samuel, meaning "heard of the Lord", reflecting how the Lord has "heard" her petitions, as a memorial of the circumstance of his birth and that God is prayer-hearing God. After Samuel was born Hannah did not go to the annual feast. She informed her husband that she will bring the child when he is weaned probably around the age of three. Samuel is brought to Shiloh for his dedication of service. Hannah sacrifices a bull and offering of flour and wine. She reminds Eli of his prayer and blessing for the Lord to grant her the desire of her heart.

Hannah sings her triumph song. The song is recorded not when she discovers her pregnancy or at Samuel's birth but at his dedication reflecting her heart's desire and her praise of God for granting her the desire of her heart and her fulfilment of the vow made to God.

The song opens with rapturous praise of God, "My heart rejoices in the Lord, in the Lord my horn is lifted high." The emotions in the song is similar to that of Elizabeth and of Virgin Mary in their own song and praise to God.

The song speaks of the Lord as the deliverer and relating to her own situations, she celebrates the blessing from barrenness to fertility, of how the

Lord reverses the fortunes of the weak and the strong, the hungry and the satisfied, the poor and the rich. The song reflects Hannah's joy in the Lord based on God's nature (1 Sam 2:2-3), His providential government,(1 Sam 2:4-8) and His grace to His saints(1 Sam 2:9)The song concludes with a reference to a King, though Israel at this time do not have a king. Hannah at that time may not be fully aware of the impact Samuel will make in the history of Israel as prophet, priest and judge. Hannah is a powerful initiator who does not live under a monarchy, yet is a key player in the story of Israel turning to kingship. She provides in her son Samuel a kingmaker.

Hannah in fulfilment of her vow leaves Samuel at Shiloh with Eli, she visits the shrine annually, bringing a new robe of Samuel. God blesses Hannah and she becomes a mother of a family of three sons and two daughters.

What are the lessons we can learn from this song? It teaches us about answer to prayer, deliverance from trial, of fulfilment of hopes and of thanksgiving to God. In each of our walk we have learn how to be thankful to God for all that he has richly bless us with.

Hannah is held in high esteem as a woman of prayer and a God honouring woman. Her willingness to honour and glorify God allowed her to be used greatly by God.



# LOOKING BACK OVER THE YEARS

by  
Ang Joo See

I remember it was the morning of 2nd January 2000 when my lady boss asked me to her room. What she told me was a real shock to me. She said that I would be transferred to another department because she was cutting headcount, but she would let me choose the department I wish to be transferred to if there was a vacancy. This news left me shocked and saddened because I had been with this department for nearly 25 years and it never occurred to me that one day I would be transferred against my will. I was very depressed and angry with God. I asked Him why He allowed this to happen to me.

I went to two departments for interview and from information that I gathered from friends who told me that the staff in these departments were in fact trying to get out, I did not accept their offers. I became desperate because I knew that if I did not choose soon, my boss might just ask me to leave.

I remember sharing with sister Lissa and Dorothy Ow at the prayer meeting and asked them to pray for me for God's guidance. It was at this point of time that the hymn, "Shepherd Of My Soul" became very meaningful to me. I told God, "I give You full control of my life, wherever You may lead I will follow." Previously, whenever I sang this hymn, I was quite cynical because I always felt that I didn't mean what I sang. I was not willing to go where God leads me. But now I just had to surrender and let Him lead.

One month after I said that prayer, God placed me in my present department. I just want to thank and praise Him for His everlasting mercies and love even though I was rebellious. I really enjoy working in this new department where the people are friendly and my new boss appreciates my work.

Looking back over the past years, I realise how blessed I was because all my other ex-colleagues who were transferred out after me did not have a choice in where they were posted.

All glory and honour be to God. I remember what Corrie Ten Boon wrote, **"Nothing happens to a child of God by chance."**

# Spiritual Attack

Sunday 20 January. Bro. Leong Kok Hwa shared about how he felt a spiritual attack while leading a nurturing session with a brother who before conversion, was heavily involved in the Chinese religion. Maybe as a joke, he wondered why I was spared from the spiritual attack and concluded that it was because I was a stronger Christian. Even as he was saying that, I was shaking my head in disagreement. I think he jumped to the wrong conclusion.

Most writers believe that the devil only attacks those who are actively working for the Lord and actually ignore those who are sleeping for the Lord. I tend to agree with them. In this particular instance, Bro. Leong was the one leading the study and he was the contact person between us. Without him, the nurture session would not have come about. Of course, on the other hand, the devil must have known that I didn't really bother about my old car so he chose to attack Bro. Leong's car instead.

Another reason as I think about this matter could be that the devil only attacks the one who is leading the ministry, knowing that once the leadership is down, the rest of the members will fall away. This was clearly shown to me when the English Council had a meeting with the members and

sometime during the meeting, Bro. Wong Mui received a call to inform him that his mother had been injured. I think this must have caused him some anxiety and also help to end the meeting much earlier.

Furthermore, as JCC moves into 2002 with some new initiatives for growth, the devil seems to be attacking the leadership in the hope that if the leadership fails, the whole initiative will fail as well. Pray for the leaders and the members of JCC that God will not allow the devil to shake us up and cause confusion in our midst.

Even Bro. Anthony Loh, in one of his letters, shared that his wife's prolonged illness actually drove him to despair. He almost gave up on praying. Yet on that very Sunday, he preached about not giving up because God has His perfect timing.

All these incidents seem to give weight to my theory that the devil attacks those in leadership positions leaving those who are not actively involved alone.

Please continue to pray for your Pastor and leaders that God will indeed protect them from all attacks.

*Martin Cheak*

# Teach a child...

The idea of forming a Tuition Program was first mooted in the beginning of 2001. After much prayer, it was launched in August, when some 30 members went door-to-door distributing leaflets. The first class was started on 26th August 2001. A total of 26 students (from 16 families) enrolled, ranging from Primary 1 to 6.

There were two teams:

### *The Tutor Team*

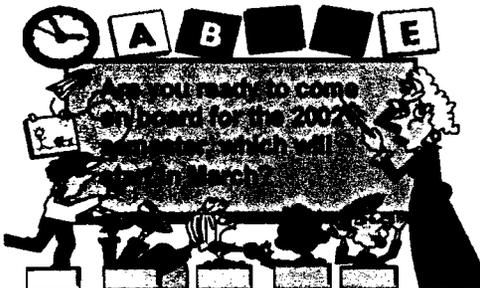
This team comprises of the teachers and their back-up support.

### *The Touch Team*

The activities organised by this team were aimed at reaching out to the parents of the students. Mainly cooking demonstrations were given.

We received general feedback from the students that they were able to handle their final examinations. Also, the Touch Team was able to share the gospel to at least 2 families. In addition, some students joined the KIDS Camp.

All this effort cost the church only \$2.79. In these hard times, where can we find a ministry, which can work within such a small budget? Praise God for such wonderful volunteers.



## While I Was Budgetting....

I am working on the Budget for 2002 right now and I notice that the pledging has gone down. There could be many reasons for this:

1. People who do not believe in pledging but still give in the offering;
2. People who have lost their jobs;
3. People who have retired;
4. People who have left for other churches or overseas;
5. People who have got themselves into debt (eg. new house/car) and are now unable to tithe;
6. People who are uncertain of the future;
7. People who rather give to other causes;
8. People who feel that JCC is not deserving of their tithes or want to have a say in the running of JCC through the withholding of their tithes;
9. People who have forgotten to put in their pledge cards.

I hope you are not one of them. However, if you are, then in my opinion, only those with reasons 1 to 4 have valid reasons not to pledge.

Do we give because the leader / pastor has charisma? Usually, these charismatic leaders / pastors are the ones who ask for money anyway, sometimes with health and wealth promises. Maybe that's why their churches are so rich because every other sermon is a challenge for the people to give.

Why do we give? There are many reasons but I think it is mainly out of a loving gratitude for what God has given to you.

Now I am wondering whether to budget a surplus or deficit budget? Based on the pledges received, it has to be a deficit budget. But I have to let God be God and provide for our needs. Pray that I have the courage to give you a surplus budget.

*Martin Cheah*

# Last Days of 2001



Kids Church Presentation



English Choir Presentation



Thai Good News Presentation



Mongolian SBC Student's Presentation

In the last few days running up to the end of the year 2001, there were many activities in JCC. These are the highlights of some of the few which I had the opportunity to attend:

### Befrienders/Tuition Get-Together on 22nd Dec

Only a few guests turned up for the event. A documentary film about the birth of Jesus was shown and questions were asked on the Christmas story. Hi-tea was served and games were played.

### Jurong East Christmas Party on 22nd Dec

Immediately after the Befrienders event, I rushed over to the JE Christmas party at Parc Vista (Ivan Hunt's home) for a time of caroling, feasting and watching an evangelistic video CD. Halfway through this party, I had to send my wife and daughter to join the Carolers on their rounds.

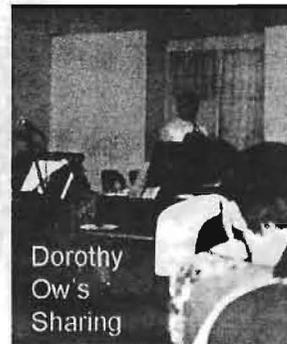
### Christmas Eve Candle Light Service on 24th Dec

It was an exciting night with lots of singing from the Kids, Choir, TGNC and the Mongolian SBC students. Even a moving testimony from Dorothy Ow, who told me later that she was not nervous, thank God she was not stressed.

### Christmas Day Service & Lunch on 25th Dec

A happy occasion with baptism of 3 adults and 3 infants. This was followed by a Mediterranean style buffet lunch from Bro Yew Moi's catering service.

There must have been many other happenings but I wasn't there to enjoy with you the fellowship of the LORD.



Dorothy Ow's Sharing

Martin Chzah



Christmas Day Baptism Service



Kelvin David Jenny Petrina Gabriel Nathanael

Bits & Pieces of My Mind  
(a few random thoughts as I look forward to  
a good Year 2002)



**Marriage “to have and to throw”?**

Some time ago, I read that divorces are increasing for older married couples. Later came the report about a tycoon’s wife being granted a divorce after 51 years of marriage. Must be the mother of all marital flops! I dare not assume that at the other end of the age spectrum, divorces are decreasing. This is because of another startling fact that also came to my knowledge: A young couple (under 30 years of age) were already exchanging legal letters for divorce within six months of marriage.

I shudder at the thought of us living in an age of divorce when the sacred vow of “*for better or worse, in sickness or in health, until death us do part*” is becoming meaningless as more and more couples (young or old) treat marriage as disposable stuffs much like paper cups and plates that provide the convenience of “*to have and to throw*”.

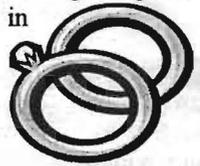
In the example of the 51-year-old marriage broken down, the reason tendered in court was that the man was a serial womanizer with two mistresses. So, as accepted by the court, the man was primarily at fault for the failing of the marriage after such long years.

In the example of the young couple, both man and wife are considered quite affluent – the man being a capable businessman while the wife earns a handsome income working in a bank. The divorce was a hardheaded decision by the wife against the advice of her parents. As alleged by the man when he pleaded at his in-laws’ house for reconciliation, the whole trouble started over a mundane comment by him about his wife’s dress sense. This was not the case of a man who had gone extramarital, for his earnest pleading with his in-laws and declaration of his love for his wife showed his sincerity, and the extra mile he went to indulge his wife with the lavish furnishing of their matrimonial home was in evidence.

I know the young wealthy couple, but do not know the senior-citizen duo. However, whatever I ‘know’ of their reasons for the breakdowns of their marriages based on decent sources of information, there are always a lot more beneath the surface that I do not know. Nevertheless, I feel safe in my belief that it always takes two hands to clap and two mouths to quarrel. Apportioning blame does not answer any question. And the most important questions to ponder are:

- Why do marriages break down?
- Can a marriage under threat (no matter how great) be saved?

There is never any perfect marriage, no matter how perfect a wedding ceremony is made to be with the sweetest music, the most scented flowers, elegant suits and gowns, luxurious limo, exquisite reception and a most memorable honeymoon the couple would guarantee to themselves never to forget for a lifetime. The sooner a young couple contemplating marriage understands the harsh reality of two individuals trying to click with each other once they live together daily and discover for themselves the easy similarities of their characters and the difficult differences of their habits well-formed from decades of disparate natures, the simpler it is for them to hold their marriage together through thick and thin with enough of give and take (a higher dose of tolerance) to make a win-win relationship in building a new life as a newly created being called a "united couple" instead of the original "separate individuals". A failure to appreciate this point is a common cause of marriages that go wrong because of broken gilded expectations.



### **Prayers work wonders**

Unfortunately, a marriage does come under threat (minute or gigantic) when one least expects it. When this happens, it still can be saved. How? I shall cite one real example of a relationship which had become a trying affair for several years before it took a turn for the better by fervent prayers and God's grace.

This was the case of a professional Christian couple whose relationship broke apart suddenly and dramatically upon the discovery by one of them that the other was having an extramarital affair with another married person. In a common manner of speaking, "all hell broke loose" at an instant. To add to the complication, both sets of in-laws joined in to encourage their own child to go for divorce. One set of in-laws even got physical with their child-in-law and the latter got busy with one instance of property damage after another, and it is not difficult to imagine the mess when an ordinary action for divorce gave birth to police action and magistrate's action. Things seemed to be spinning out of control. How do you expect such a warring couple with extreme angst against each other to make peace?



The events developed pathetically despite counseling by a court-appointed Christian councilor. Even their Church pastor felt helpless. It was marvelous that despite the couple's obdurate positions that were obviously irreconcilable, the councilor saw hope. So she recommended the couple for follow-up by her senior who was very experienced

in the job. Yet, the whole counseling broke down and it seemed certain that the couple would go for the kill in court.

Meanwhile, although things appeared intractable and both sides were as unyielding as ever, there was still a caring presence. God did not give up and the Holy Spirit was at work. God had given at least one of the warring parties the presence of mind to pray fervently and seek Him for the best solution. Miraculously, a consensus was reached to give counseling another go, and so a third Counsellor (a colleague of the second) stepped into the tussle for good sense to prevail. The Christian counselor must have prayed too and there were also prayers by other supportive persons. Remarkably, one party began to see the futility of the fight and the hardness of heart began to melt. Hope smelt sweet and the other party began to give in bit by bit to a reconciliation of their differences. What happened next?

Today, the warring couple is completely at peace with each other and with their in-laws. In fact, they are more caring and accepting of each other than during their pre-warfare days. I have no doubt at all that the rescue of the marriage was made possible only with prayers. Praise our Almighty God!

The above true story carries an important message: Prayer changes things. I am telling this story to add to what Bro. Anthony Loh shared on a recent Sunday about the Church's Prayer Movement, when he mentioned about two choices we have, which I paraphrase: To work according to our experiences and hope for the best or to have the assurance of achieving the best by the work of God's hand with our prayers.

Joseph Liang also testified how the power of prayers brought about a very positive but unexpected immigration surprise he had.

Did you attend the watchnight service end of Year 2001? The full-house attendance in Rooms 1 & 2 was a heartening sight. If you were there, you would also have been encouraged by the testimonies of many and their thanksgiving to God, including what Bro. Young Kwang shared about his marvel at the smooth sailing and relaxing K.I.D.S. camp 2001 he had ever experienced organized at Sentosa, making redundant prior worries. Thanks be to God for his grace in answering prayers!

### **Happy farewell to Pastor Michael**

Pastor Michael left us end of 2001 to concentrate on his Nias work. This was something for satisfaction. Right from the beginning when he joined JCC as a staff, he was already talking about his vision for missionary work. The work with Nias was started by him and we should be glad to have played an important part in supporting his vision and encouraging him in various ways to move his work forward. Now, the seed that was sown in Nias



has begun to germinate and by the will of God, it is time for him to put more focus on developing his vision further in the real field. This is an example of someone whom the Church nurtured who had borne fruit in his Christian service development and was ready to move on to dedicate himself to the field that has a great potential for good harvest. In fact, I would feel it very positive if, with prayers, God grants us the ability to draw in more members to the Church, allow them to develop their serve or spiritual growth and to release them where they would go by God's will to further their contributions to His Kingdom. Wherever they are, we are one with them and they are one with us in the Lord's service. In our prayers, therefore, we ought not forget to remember those who are our brothers and sisters in Christ serving in nearby or distant places.

### **Esteeming the youths**

It was a pleasure to note how our youth leaders and leaders-to-be lent their energetic support not only to the K.I.D.S. camp, but also the GB camp and the combined youth/BB/GB camp. Our Sis. Selia Chong wrote and circulated a very spontaneous and spirited message which I reproduce below:

*Hi to all!!!*

*Dun you guys think that the camp which had just ended is such a great success??? Praise the Lord!!!*

*Come to think of it, we spent months trying to plan this camp. Though each and everyone of us knows that what our job is and we did it, however, dun you think that everything is so smooth running that ...*

*I dunno how to put my feelings in words but I do feel that based on what we the com members had done is impossible to come out with such a wonderful camp. I strongly feel that throughout the camp God is doing all the job. Do you guys share my statements?? ☺*

*Besides that, I really learnt a lot of the camp. I never realized that we the youth can actually get so close with the BBs and the GBs. I'm really happy that God has given me this chance to learn.*

*Frankly speaking, in the initial stage, I really dread the meetings, the planning but now I'm actually looking forward to work in the next camp. It really excites me to see so many promising and talented youths working together for the Lord ☺ Really hope that all of us can work together next time.*

*Fellow brother and sis-in-Christ, please feel free to share your thoughts and let us share the happiness and blessings God has given us with the people around us.*

*Waiting for you ...*

*God bless you ...*

**Selia**

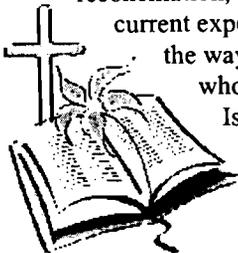
After reading the email, I could only shout “Hurray to the youths! You have done a great job in the year 2001. Keep it up for the year 2002 and beyond.” I suppose that Bro. Young Kwang, in sharing about the smooth sailing K.I.D.S camp would be glad also to share the joys of the youths who can say to him with some pride: “Hey, Uncle Young Kwang, the smooth sailing was not restricted to the K.I.D.S, O.K? What a great blessing we too enjoyed!”

Indeed, the youths are our important leaders of tomorrow. There is a Chinese saying 长江后浪推前浪，世上新人换旧人 (*cháng jiāng hòu làng tuī qián làng, shìshàng xīn rén huàn jiù rén*) which alludes to the flowing of time and tide, both equally inevitable. Inasmuch as in a long river one wave follows another, so it is an inescapable reality in life that the turn must come for the young to take the place of the old. I hope that reading this, the youths will be impressed that this is their significant moment in their life as well as in the life of the Church for them to seize on the blessings they have from God to further their spiritual endeavours – to rise up to their calling as the leaders of tomorrow in God’s service. It behoves the Church as a body to esteem the youths’ potential and help them along to be ever blessed to be a blessing.

### More about how prayers change things

At the Christmas candlelight service, the worship hall was so well filled that there were not enough candles to go round. It was a very successful candlelight service with our Thai and Mongolian guests making their contributions and also our own Sis. Dorothy Ow sharing a moving testimony and thanksgiving to God. The unpreparedness of the Church to provide sufficient candles was itself a testimony of how God had worked the success of the candlelight worship service for His own glory in response to His workers’ prayers while the workers themselves had little inkling about the possible turnout based on their experience with this type of occasion. This speaks about the primacy of prayers over human experience in deciding outcomes. Do we therefore not sit up and pray more? Do we therefore not rush to sign up for the Prayer Movement?

Prayer changes things – big or small, in every situation when healing, restoration, reconciliation, deliverance, salvation or victory is needed. It is not only in our current experience that we observe the validity of this statement, but also all the way back in Bible history. Read about Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1-6) who was so ill that he was at the point of death when the prophet Isaiah told him,



*“This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.”*

Hezekiah began to pray to the LORD and as he did so he was like a wretched soul (for the Bible records that he wept bitterly):

*"Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes."*

The LORD responded even before Isaiah had left the middle court. HE told Isaiah:

*"Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the LORD. I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.'"*

What a powerful outcome wrought by prayer. In Matthew 21:22, Christ said, *"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."*

### Support the Council for Year 2002

I understand that the Council is working on some new initiatives. I see signs of progress. It is a fact the initiatives will work best with prayers, not with moaning and groaning. Whether you see a cup as half full or half empty will also indicate whether you see the positive things happening the Church or only the negative things. I encourage you to see both – let the positive spur you forward and let the negative put you on your toes. As we begin this new year, let us work together, each according to his best measure of effort, with a good balance of satisfaction and humility. Let us pray for more achievements in this year. Are you with the Prayer Movement yet? If not, what are you waiting for?

### Ahem ...

Ahem ... before I conclude, let me share with you one blessing. This month is the 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of John and Peggy. In all these years, we have been learning much about each other and we know that we will continue to learn more of each other for the next twenty years and beyond. We were once two distinct characters, but for twenty years we have been one united in holy matrimony with Peggy's qualities (which I do not possess) complementing mine (which she does not possess) and vice versa. Among other things, she has been very quietly supportive of my Christian service and I certainly appreciate that. May God continue to bless us and our children.

*John Lee*



盲人福音事工

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14 December 2001

Dear Praying Friends,

Since the economic downturn, we have heard in the news that we may not see a recovery so soon. The leaders in our country have advised that people should expect pay cuts or retrenchments and be opened to taking lower pay jobs. All these news can cause much anxiety to people.

Here in GMB we have been praying for our financial supporters, that the Lord will bless and reward each one of them. We also prayed that the Lord will continue to provide for our needs. It is so much better to cast all our cares and anxieties upon the Lord than to carry the burden ourselves.

This morning I felt a prompting in my heart, and it is as though the Lord is assuring me that He has heard our prayers and will continue to supply all our needs. I was reminded of a visit from an administrator of a Brethren church three nights ago. He told me that in spite of the economic downturn his church has decided to increase their financial support to us by one hundred dollars next year. He mentioned that it is just a small amount. But I do not consider it small. We are always touched by the love and commitment of our financial supporters, and not by amounts.

Romans 12:1-2 and the account of the boy's five small loaves and two fish also flashed into my mind this morning as He reminded me of the administrator's visit. I believe the Lord is telling us not to focus our mind on the economic downturn, but to remember that just as He multiplied the boy's 'small gift' of the five loaves and two fish to meet the needs of a multitude, He is able to multiply our limited resources too.

When you receive this letter, I will be in Kuala Lumpur with my daughter, Jia Hui, and some of my relatives, visiting the blind people from 15<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> December. And after our Christmas outreach programme on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, I will travel to Hong Kong with my daughter, my sister, and our chairman and his daughter from 24<sup>th</sup> through 27<sup>th</sup> December. Please keep our Christmas outreach and our trips in prayers.

We wish you a very blessed Christmas, and may you have renewed faith, joy and peace to step into the new year. Let us present ourselves afresh as living sacrifices to the Lord.

Yours in our Father's service,

Mrs Cheong Cheng Choo

A letter of encouragement from the physically blind to those of us who are spiritually blind. "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1)