

2002

The

# Vine

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Greetings to all the saints in Christ Jesus. It is 12.00 am now as I ponder what to write to fill up this one page before the dateline or deadline? There are all kinds of articles by many contributors, long and short, in this issue. If you like reading them, may I request that you go up to the writers and give them an encouraging word. Indeed, some of them may be burning the midnight oil to churn out articles month after month, wondering if it has touched lives or changed anything.

I thank my team for their support but I must admit that my schedule is so tight that I can hardly spare time to edit their work. Therefore if there are any errors, please excuse us.

The Multi-Purpose Hall building project has managed to raised more than 50% of the required funding and thus the remainder of funds will be drawn down from the previous year's Building Fund balance. However, the Treasurer hopes that these funds channeled for the MPH building project is not drawn out from the usual Christmas offering. Our current surplus is very small considering all the activities and expenses, which we expect to spend at the yearend, for example all the camps, VWO (Voluntary Welfare Organisation) and staff bonus. Even as the Treasurer struggles to control the expenses, he requests the members to provide the income.

Let me end with this quotation: "Anything that dims my vision of Christ, or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult, is wrong for me, and I must, as a Christian, turn away from it." (J Wilbur Chapman) At times like this (12.25 am), I think I must drop one of my hats or face burn out.

*The Editor*

# REFLECTIONS ON DANIEL 1

Daniel was written in the context of Judah's deportation to Babylon, in the light of her calling as God's holy nation and a blessing to the nation (Gen 12:1-3). Even though Israel was created for God's redemptive purposes, Gentile nations have dominated a major part of her history until the time God established His Kingdom under Messiah. Daniel provided many lessons on how to live in a godless society.

In the opening verse of the book, we see how God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to lay siege to Jerusalem and rob her temple treasury. From the opening chapter of the book, we meet Daniel a young handsome man, from the royal family of Judah to at least a noble man. Daniel had an aptitude for learning and was well informed, quick to learn and was qualified to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's palace. Daniel went subject to an all out effort to reprogram and reshape their thinking, in a pagan humanistic environment. During this time Daniel received "knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning" of the Babylonians for three years and was able to "understand visions and dreams of all kinds." He was personally tested by Nebuchadnezzar, passed the test and entered into the King's service. Daniel had three outstanding friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Daniel and his friends were probably teenagers and were most likely separated from their parents.

Verse 8 of Chapter 1 tells us the "Daniel resolved not to defile himself

with the royal food and wine". While we are not told the reason, it would probably be that they were religiously unclean and violated the Old Testament food laws as well as being the product of pagan sacrificial use. This speaks of Daniel character; he was faithful to God even after this country was conquered and he lost everything including his freedom and was forced into exile in a foreign land. Daniel and his friends were given new names, which not only disassociated themselves from a godly heritage but actually aligned them with false religion and idolatry and pagan gods. Most people can be faithful when things go well; Daniel was faithful when almost everything went wrong.

Daniel teaches us about convictions and how he lived it out. Daniel "resolved in his heart" and the Bible tells us that he worked through the channels of authority. Daniel "asked the chief officer for permission not to defile himself this way." Daniel had the courage to speak to a high official on a matter of religion. Would we dare speak to higher secular authority on matter pertaining to our faith? Imagine how the king could have felt of some one rejected food fit for royalty, this could be seen as an insult and outright ingratitude. The chief officer rejected Daniels request, Daniel appealed to the guard. with an offer of a test. Daniel was tactful and did not give up when he failed at first. He displayed leadership as he acted as a spokesman for Hananiah and the others. Just like Martin Luther stood by his convictions and declared "Here I stand, I can do no

other” we need to trust that God is able to work through pagan and secular authorities. Convictions do not mean that we do not need to work with sensitivity, tact and respect.

Just as Nebuchadnezzar sought to pressure Daniel and his friends to compromise, the world around us persistently seek to lure us to its standards. We are called to be different as we belong to Christ. It is sometimes easy to excuse ourselves in our thought life and action because of the world we live in and allow the world to define our standards rather than with God Himself. Daniel decision to be obedient resulted in a long life of faithful service to God. Devotion to God is something that we always have to maintain and nourish. Like Daniel we need to develop a God-centred devotion. This practice of godliness requires disciplines that focus on God. Christian character and conduct require consistent God centred devotions, taking time and effort to know his word, walk with him and develop a close relationship with Him. This comes back to spirituality, developing our inner being and being sensitive to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit. Those who head the Spirituality talk can certainly related to the importance of having a good devotional life and developing a close walk with our heavenly Father.



## How We Came To Know GOD

(Testimonies from JE CG)

God works differently in the lives of different individuals. The following testimonies bear this out, as our Christian brothers and sisters in the JE Care Group tell us how they encountered God and accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Saviour.

### Lillian & Beng Chin

Lillian – As a youth, I was very much involved in the YFC (Youth For Christ) and I accepted the LORD at the Billy Graham Crusade in Singapore with full conviction to follow the Lord – NO TURNING BACK!

Beng Chin – I came down from Seremban, Malaysia, to do my studies in the Local U. I was very much alone with personal struggles. Eventually, through the interaction with Christian colleagues & students in the workplace, I found and accepted Jesus as my Personal Lord and Saviour.

### Tony & Susan

Tony Koh – It was through a science teacher who provided the answer to many of my life questions on who I am and how the human being came about that I was introduced to GOD and my Saviour, Jesus Christ. My faith was

further strengthened through my involvement with the BB in my youth.

Susan – It was through Jose Macdonn at a Successful Living Seminar organized by Campus Crusade that I was introduced by my brother to the Christian faith and to accepting the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ

### Roy & Juria

Roy – It was when I met a serious industrial accident that I decided to get baptized and accepted the sovereignty of the Lordship.

Juria – I came to know Christ through my circle of Christian Friends in school

### Jim & Michelle

Jim – It was in Malaysia (Telok Anson, now known as Telok Intan) where I accepted Christ after watching a magic show.

Michelle – Through my GB involvement in my youth, I found my faith in Christ and thereafter began faithfully serving the Lord in this ministry.

### Soon Eong & Ewe Ewe

Soon Eong – A caring sister shared CHRIST with me. I had thought that

Christians were weak and needed to hold on to their faith like some sort of crutches. However, through this caring sister, I accepted the Lord.

Ewe Ewe – My brother brought me to Christ through the Navigator Series.

### Our Very Own Senior Pastor, Rev. Martin Yee

My neighbour taught me to climb up the roof to put up a radio antenna and thereby I was able to receive various broadcast programmes. I soon got interested in FEBC Christian Radio Broadcasting. I wrote in for various series of books and got impressed, especially on how GOD worked in Moses' Life. Thereafter I found the Christian faith.



So readers and friends, we see how God works differently in each of us. Do share with us your encounter with GOD. I am sure

that there are more unique ways in which GOD reaches out to us. However God works differently in us, He is the same God, unconditional loving God who reaches out to us. At the foot of Calvary - ALL ARE EQUAL.

Tony Koh



# P.U.S.H

A man was sleeping at night in his cabin when suddenly his room filled with light, and God appeared. The Lord told the man he had work for him to do, and showed him a large rock in front of his cabin. The Lord explained that the man was to push against the rock with all his might. So, this the man did, day after day. For many years he toiled from sun up to sun down, his shoulders set squarely against the cold, massive surface of the unmoving rock, pushing with all of his might. Each night the man returned to his cabin sore and worn out, feeling that his whole day had been spent in vain. Since the man was showing discouragement, the Adversary (Satan) decided to enter the picture by placing thoughts into the weary mind: "You have been pushing against that rock for a long time, and it hasn't moved." Thus, he gave the man the impression that the task was impossible, and that he was a failure. These thoughts discouraged and disheartened the man. Satan said, "Why kill yourself over this? Just put in your time, giving just the minimum effort; and that will be good enough." That's what the weary man planned to do, but decided to make it a matter of prayer and to take his troubled thoughts to the Lord.

"Lord," he said, "I have labored long and hard in your service, putting all my strength to do that which you have asked. Yet, after all this time, I have not even budged that rock by half a millimeter? What is wrong? Why am I failing?" The Lord responded compassionately, "My child, when I asked you to serve Me and you accepted, I told you that your task was to push against the rock with all of your strength, which you have done. Never once did I mention to you that I expected you to move it. Your task was to push. Now you come to Me with your strength spent, thinking that you have failed. But, is that really so? Look at yourself. Your arms are strong and muscled, your back sinewy and brown; your hands are callused from constant pressure, your legs have become massive and hard. Through opposition you have grown much, and your abilities now surpass those you once had. True, you haven't moved the rock. But your calling was to be obedient and to push and to exercise your faith and trust in My wisdom. That you have done. Now, my child, I will move the rock."

At times, when we hear a word from God, we tend to use our own intellect to try to decipher what He wants, when actually what God wants is just a simple obedience and faith in Him? By all means, exercise the faith that moves mountains, but know that it is still God who moves mountains.

When everything seems to go wrong, just **P.U.S.H.**

When the job gets you down, just **P.U.S.H.**

When people don't react the way you think they should, just **P.U.S.H.**

When your money is "gone" and the bills are due, just **P.U.S.H.**

When people don't understand you, just **P.U.S.H.**

Pray  
Until  
Something  
Happens.

*(From an email message, original author unknown)*



COME TO ME, ALL YOU WHO ARE WEARY AND BURDENED,  
AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST. TAKE MY YOKE UPON YOU  
AND LEARN FROM ME, FOR I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE  
IN HEART, AND YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.  
FOR MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT.  
MATTHEW #: 23-30

After reading "**The Necessity of Prayer** by E.M. Bounds" I wish to share some pointers and provoking thoughts mentioned in this book.

## Chapter 1 *Prayer and Faith*

Whenever a study of the principles of *prayer* is made, lessons concerning *faith* must accompany it. *Faith* is the essential quality in the heart of any man who desires to communicate with God.

Prayer is actually *faith claiming* and taking hold of its natural immeasurable inheritance.

ONLY God can move mountains, but *faith and prayer* Move God.

**Questions for us all** : Is your faith growing or declining as the years go by ?

Answer : \_\_\_\_\_

The question our Lord asked in Luke 18:8 " When the son of man cometh" He asks "shall He find faith on the earth?"

We believe that He will and *it is our job today* to see to it that the lamp of faith is trimmed and burning *until He comes*.

Faith is the foundation of Christian Character and the security of the Soul.

Faith is kept alive by prayer. Faith lives in the present. It lives day by day and scatters all fears for tomorrow.

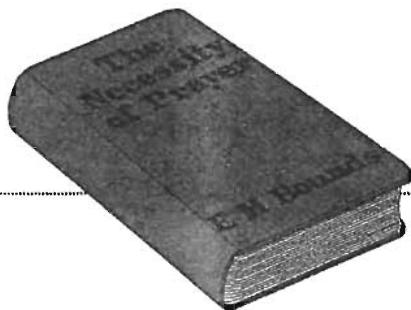
Faith brings great peace of mind and perfect peace of heart. Victory today is the assurance of victory tomorrow.

***We must trust God today and leave tomorrow entirely with Him. The present is ours, the future belongs to God.***

I hope the Chapter 1 on *Prayer and Faith* gives you the desire to look forward to my sharing on Chapter 2 *Prayer that gets results*. Alternatively if you can't wait to read it yourself can always go and grab one so that you will not get to miss the more important facts and thoughts mentioned in the book.

God Bless

**MICHELLE LEE**



# The Writing on the Wall

by Alan Soh

One morning I opened the door of my house and there to my horror were the handiwork of some loansharks splashed across the wall. I was greatly troubled because this put my wife and son in some danger. I knew it must have been some mistake because I am not indebted to anyone and anger burned in me.

Immediately, I called up my friends who had connections and they put the word out for me. As the days passed and there were no results, my anxious thoughts turned to wondering as I wondered why this had happened to me. Then the Spirit within me reminded me of an offence I had committed. In the coffee stall which I operated, I had purposely short changed a customer because he consistently gave me a \$50 bill for a 60 cents cup of coffee instead of changing his money with some other stall where he ordered substantially more. I repented and asked the Lord to bring back this customer that I may make amends. He did so and I apologised to my customer for what I had done.

Soon after that my friends located those mischief makers who had written on my wall. They had made a mistake. My friends suggested that they threatened them and ask them to make amends to me. Anger was still within me and I almost agreed with them but again the Spirit within told me to relent. I told my friends to let the matter rest.

Even as I reflect on my decision, I feel that I had made the right choice because those mischief makers would have noticed the cross on my door and maybe they would realize that Christians are more forgiving because I really had them at my mercy and I let them go. May God in His mercy grant grace to my enemies.

## GOD STILL ANSWER PRAYERS

Saturday, 12th October 2002. A few of us plus Pastor Yee drove down to Gleneagles Hospital to visit Mr Kong who was hospitalized for a heart bypass operation. We drove into the underground carpark and circled around until the last level and finally had to come back up without finding a lot. However just before we reach the Out gantry, Joo See reminded us to pray for a carpark lot. And lo and behold, the last lot before the gantry was empty. Indeed praise the Lord for answered prayers.

With newfound confidence, we visited Mr Kong and prayed over him for God's hand of providence and protection and again, Thanks be to God, Mr Kong's operation was a success. The last time I saw him, he looked very healthy. He is now resting at home.

*Martin Cheah*



## Safe and sound

*Computer classes teach kids at a Jurong kindergarten simple yet significant lessons of life, such as how to cross the road safely.* by **Radha Basu, October 16, 2002**

Six-year-olds Danielle Ong and Jessica Tee are experts on road safety these days.

"We should always try to use overhead bridges or underpasses while crossing the road," said the soft-spoken Danielle.

Danielle's classmate, Jessica, added: "And if that's not possible, we should wait for the green man to appear at traffic lights before we cross." She furiously clicked on a desktop mouse as she navigated a virtual road.



The children, both K2 pupils at **Jurong Christian Church Kindergarten**, have more than their mothers to thank for their confidence and keen knowledge. At their bi-weekly computer classes, they have a chance to put their safety lessons into practice in a virtual environment.

In their computer class, the kids have been learning not just about road safety, but about safety concepts at home, in the classroom and at the playground, in the form of short, engaging online games, devised by

education services provider Ednovation.

"The games are easy to play and fun, and we get to learn useful things -- we should not play with fire and that we must form a queue while we wait for the slide," pointed out Chee Yi Xing, 6.

## Learning life-skills

Mr Tan Meng Kwang, a vice-president at Ednovation who is in charge of online curriculum development, elaborated on the programme.

"Studies have shown that pre-schoolers like learning about things they are familiar with, such as the home and the school. We designed the curriculum in such a way that they learn not just IT skills but life-skills as well, such as how to remain safe."

The children clearly love the classes, and become very involved in the game.

At a recent game on fire safety, some nursery kids began crying when they clicked the incorrect icons and the house on the screen "burnt down."

IT teacher Ginny Lau said: "On such occasions, I have to reassure them that it's only a game, and if they practise long enough, they can get it right."

# MOONCA

# FESTIVAL

Saturday, 21st September 2002.



A good turnout of people for a church meeting on a Saturday night. Maybe it is because it has been a long time since we last had a "Pot Blessed" party in JCC. There was an over abundance of food of many varieties and the people had to go for seconds and even third helpings to finish all the food.



After the meal, the adults adjourned to rooms 4 and 5 for a talk on Christian Spirituality by Mr. **Chong Ser Choon**, a lecturer from Singapore Bible College. In part one of the seminar, Mr. Chong gave the goal of Christian Spirituality:

1. Intimacy with God
2. Christlikeness
3. Authentic Christian life

He also gave us a brief introduction to the book "Celebration of Discipline" by Richard Foster.



At the end of the seminar, the people proceeded down again to clear what's left of the food and enjoyed some mooncakes, lanterns and fellowship.



# Launched the Cell Groups

Sunday 29th September 2002.

Were you there when JCC launched the Cell Groups? Many years from now, if we look back to today, we may realise that it is a

watershed<sup>1</sup> day in JCC. This is the day we decided to cross the Jordan into the Promised Land as Pastor Yee described it.

The very day before this event (Saturday), I brought my wife for a medical checkup. The doctor gave his prognosis<sup>2</sup> that if not controlled, the pressure on her eyes may lead to blindness. This put her into a great depression and she could not sleep the whole night which meant I was awake most of the night too. In fact, most of the regular members of my care group were down with some kind of illness and were not able to make it to church that Sunday. In my struggle with God, I wondered if He was trying to tell me something. I do not have the answer at this moment. When I find out I will let you know.

Many of the shepherds, especially myself, feel very inadequate to take on such a heavy responsibility. However we feel that by the help of God, we can face the giants that are before us and prevail. We are not alone as many of the members are willing to move along with the JCC vision. We pray that God will grant us the grace to lead us all to higher ground.

I have some good news. Today (Monday), my wife went to SGH and the doctors confirmed that the pressure in her eyes are back to normal. Indeed God is good to us. Thank God.

I look forward to leading the Jurong West Cell Group although with much trepidation<sup>3</sup> but I know that I have the support of my elders-in-Christ and together we will bring up the younger Christians to a greater level of spirituality. May God guide us.

By now most, if not all, the cell groups have already met at least once. Soon we will all be ready to begin the lessons which we hope will bring us to the vision of JCC and that is to glorify God through a life of True Discipleship and Disciplemaking. If you are still on the fringe, do not tarry. Find a cell group to join. There are groups meeting on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. At least one of these days must be suitable for you.

*Martin Cheah*

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<sup>1</sup> **watershed** *n* turning point in events or attitudes

<sup>2</sup> **prognosis** *n* forecast as to the outcome of a disease

<sup>3</sup> **trepidation** *n* fear, nervous alarm

# Charlotte's Journal on 31 August 2002 (Saturday)

## @Work

I am so stressed.

So much work to clear.

Been staying late at work.

Been bringing work home.

Been humiliated by my boss – 2 days in a row by now.

Each day, the office is like a Pandora's Box – I do not know when and how I am going to be disgraced by her *again*.

What a minefield – mentally and emotionally.

It takes so much energy to scheme. I wonder why many bother to do so.

I may please my boss but I will hurt others along the way.

I do not think God will be glorified.

Is it true that I get treated like an idiot because I behave like one?

I mean, I don't even look like one to begin with ... (surely you will not disagree?)

Better serve God in seemingly foolish ways than to serve man.

I do not know if I am right, but I believe in Hebrews 11.

I urge you to read the whole chapter. Must read, ok?

## @Play (well, sort of)

We learnt this friend "fell out of love" in the last couple of weeks.

The fact is he never really started anything. May be that was the problem, or may be not?

He complained we have no time for him.

He was in dire need of an audience.

He visited his client and was near my office ... and

He could not care if I sounded harried over the phone. Oh no ...

He sapped nearly 3 hours of my precious Friday evening when

I could be wrapping up some unfinished work!

Our parting shot, he reminded me grace is "thanksgiving to Him for undeserved merit to us".

Ok ... he was worth my time then. ☺

(But I am lagging further behind in my office work, **HOW**?!)

## @Home

Tomorrow got Sunday School. !!

Sigh ... really no mood to prepare ...

At 11am, I figure I am going to put my friends and relatives to good use. *James 5:16* - "... *The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*"

So I SMS-ed to let them all know I am in dire need of wisdom and grace to prepare for Sunday School tomorrow. I also included sisters-in-Christ who may have been spiritually resting and ask them to pray for me.

I believe the Lord answers our prayers – regardless of our spiritual state.

I believe God hears the prayers of a child who wills to submit.

By 3pm, I am getting somewhere. Preparation time became a ministering time. Tomorrow's topic is about God knowing us and He cares for us. The time spent was interrupted time and again by my 2 attention-seeking sons. Nonetheless, it turned out good.

I went through some kids' devotional materials for engaging materials and found Psalm 139. God killed 2 birds with one stone.

Stone: Psalm 139

Bird 1: Sunday School preparation resources.

Bird 2: Me – the late bird to prepare for tomorrow Sunday School. The stone lifted my sinking spirits somewhat.

## Wine and Dine. Wait then Date

In the course of my work, I am blessed with the friendship of PR lady whose husband writes for the sports desk of a local publication. We have been sharing the Word of God and upon knowing that I have started writing for The Vine, she has been actively researching materials for me. Praise God for Shen.

I think counseling is a tough job. Especially when it comes to affairs of the heart, it can make the job doubly/triply/quadruply/infinitely hard.

Love is blind. The adage holds true to this age. The biblical context of love is found in 1 Corinthians 13.

I have many single friends in their twenties (of which I am not ☹️ Iproof!). They find the waiting game hard. Waiting for Mr/Miss Right is hard. Waiting for God to provide proved harder (as in my case).

I am also your classic example of being unequally yoked.

Anyway ... (wiping away my tears, literally) The following is an extract from a Philippines-based Christian publication.

## THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY DEFECTIVE DATING

It started innocently enough. Eric and Jenny were Christian kids who started going to the movies together, or playing a round of putt-putt golf. But the longer they dated, the more intimate they became – until finally, they began sleeping together.

After they broke up, the pain lasted for years. Their story is told in a book by Joshua Harris called I KISSED DATING GOODBYE. "Eric and Jenny probably had good intentions," Harris writes. "But they founded their relationship on our culture's defective attitudes and patterns for romance." These attitudes lead to what Joshua calls "The Seven Habits of Highly Defective Dating."

**FIRST**, he says, dating leads to intimacy but not necessarily to commitment. When something happens to break the couple up – such as one member departing for college, the other partner may be devastated. Harris says, "Dating encourages intimacy for the sake of intimacy – two people getting close . . . without any real intention of making a long-term commitment."

**SECOND** dating tends to skip the "friendship" stage of a relationship. Harris says, dating tends "to move a guy and a girl beyond friendship and towards romance too quickly."

**THIRD**, dating often mistakes physical passion for love. Passion can distort the young person's perspective and lead to some unwise choices.

**FOURTH**, dating isolates couples from other important relationships. Once they become involved, young couples think nothing of sacrificing other friendships, family time, and church activities.

**FIFTH**, dating distracts teens from their main responsibility: to prepare for the future. Maintaining a relationship takes a lot of time and energy – time that is often stolen from developing gifts, going on summer mission trips, or preparing for college.

**SIXTH**, dating can cause discontent with God's gift of singleness (1 Corinthians 7:1,7-9,28,32-37). Singleness is a season of our lives in which we have tremendous opportunities for growth, learning, and service. But if we spend all that time dating one person after another, we miss its blessings.

**SEVENTH**, dating creates an artificial environment for evaluating someone's character. As my friend Jim Dobson puts it, dating is designed to HIDE our flaws, not expose them. That's why young people ought to get to know each other "in the real-life settings of family and friends," says Harris.

These SEVEN HABITS expose dating, and they'll prepare themselves for the greatest

romantic adventure of all -- a happy and lasting marriage.

### SIGNING OFF

Oh, I am not exactly done with preparing the props for Sunday School tomorrow. ☺ Well, it was writing to you and for you. I would like to thank those of you who have told me you were encouraged by the past articles I wrote. Yes, they were meant to encourage and to a certain extent, share humour with you.

I am a gregarious person. Thanks to the Lord's joy that has sustained me in the harsh office environment.

Here's one to tickle your funny bone.

Little Leroy came into the kitchen where his mother was making dinner. His birthday was coming up and he thought this was a good time to tell his mother what he wanted. "Mom, I want a bike for my birthday."

Little Leroy was a bit of a troublemaker. He had gotten into trouble at school and at home. Leroy's mother asked him if he thought he deserved to get a bike for his birthday. Little Leroy, of course, thought he did. Leroy's mother, being a Christian woman, wanted Leroy to reflect on his behavior over the last year.

"Go to your room, Leroy, and think about how you have behaved this year. Then write a letter to God and tell him why you deserve a bike for your birthday." Little Leroy stomped up the steps to his room and sat down to write God a letter.

*Letter 1:*

*Dear God,*

*I have been a very good boy this year and I would like a bike for my birthday. I want a red one.*

*Your friend, Leroy*

Leroy knew that this wasn't true. He had not been a very good boy this year, so he tore up the letter and started over.

*Letter 2:*

*Dear God,*

*This is your friend Leroy. I have been a good boy this year and I would like a red bike for my birthday. Thank you.*

*Your friend, Leroy*

Leroy knew that this wasn't true either. So, he tore up the letter and started again.

*Letter 3:*

*Dear God,*

*I have been an "OK" boy this year. I still would really like a bike for my birthday.*

*Leroy*

Leroy knew he could not send this letter to God either. So, Leroy wrote a fourth letter.

*Letter 4:*

*God, I know I haven't been a good boy this year. I am very sorry. I will be a good boy if you just send me a bike for my birthday.*

*Please!*

*Thank you, Leroy*

Leroy knew, even if it was true, this letter was not going to get him a bike. By now Leroy was very upset. He went downstairs and told his mom that he wanted to go to Church. Leroy's mother thought her plan had worked, as Leroy looked very sad. "Just be home in time for dinner," Leroy's mother told him

Leroy walked down the street to the Church round the corner. Little Leroy went into the Church and up to the altar. He looked around to see if anyone was there. Leroy bent down and picked up a statue of the Virgin Mary. He slipped it under his shirt and ran out of the Church, down the street, into the house, and up to his room. He shut the door to his room and sat down with a piece of paper and a pen. Leroy began to write his letter to God.

*Letter 5:*

*God,*

*I'VE GOT YOUR MAMA.*

*IF YOU WANT TO SEE HER AGAIN, SEND THE BIKE.*

## *Dear Vine Reader,*

I am just hoping that after reading this, you will have a better understanding of your brother-in-Christ and the Vine ministry, and see your own status as a cog in a wheel among the wheels that keep the Church machinery running under our most eminent operator, Christ, the Lord.

I have never been a good listener with my ears. Even when I sat in front of a great evangelist like Billy Graham in the year 1978, the x% that I absorbed of what he spoke certainly paled in comparison to the (x + y)% my eyes could pick up from a piece of writing in a magazine. There are a few reasons known to some but not to others: I have rather short attention spans, being easily distracted even by a fly swooshing by, and I have a partial hearing loss that requires me to wear a hearing aid under certain circumstances. (See, how little do you even know your fellow brother in Christ after being with him for so many years!) Thankfully, while nobody is perfect without his/her own unique sets of strengths and shortcomings, God has a wonderful way to compensate the 'short' by the 'long', as I shall disclose as you read on.

I do not envy any sermon speaker; the more highly acclaimed the speaker is, the less am I envious of him/her. This has got to do with my experience in writing. Well, what connection has writing got to do with speaking; and what difference does it make to you whether you read a message or listen to a speech?

Suppose that you are in the shoes of any great pulpit speaker whose audience may only pick up a percentage of the message delivered. You know that at least the echoes (including your prior preparations and reflections on the message) bounce back from the four walls into your ears and you get 100% of them. It is not a nice feeling, because the exhortations targeted at your audience come back to yourself and you know that such exhortations, though uttered by your mouth, do not actually originate from your mind but from God's directions. They speak to yourself in no uncertain terms just as they are intended for the listeners in front to you. The message intended for your listeners is actually a blessing from God for your own meditation too – totally unexpected and usually not in sweet wrappings. That's why the message is apt in substance although you as the speaker may not fit the

listeners' notion of an exemplary child of God. (No stone throwing please, as stones are known to bounce from walls!) **This is exactly the same feeling I have whenever I write a message.** Being a sinner as everyone is, I wish that the reader would focus on the message instead of the messenger.

Though a less-than-saintly Christian who often finds myself discomfited by personal failings that are glaring when viewed through perfect lenses, I feel that God is using me and I am not totally in control myself. If anyone wants to count my faults and follies, I have to tell them, "Stop counting. There'll be no end." I am dependent on God's grace, and I do not wish to act as if I am of extraordinary sinless spiritual stock. For by the grace given me I say to myself: "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you." This is the advice I have got from Apostle Paul in Rom. 12:3.

I am a useless vessel without God. **The more I see myself awfully open to failings, the more I see the grace of God in its glorious beauty. But if I find myself grossly inadequate, it is still not right for me to simply give up, for God says to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (2 Cor. 12:9)**

I also remember what Rev. Edmund Lim said recently in his sermon to encourage us to serve. (Yeah, he would be happy to note that I heard him, by the sufficiency of God's grace, despite my hearing limitation!) By his account, if he had beaten a retreat out of a feeling of inadequacy in his initial ministry engagement in America, he would not have reaped the satisfaction of doing the useful ministry that he has been occupied with in the States for many years from that time. **His sermon message applies to me as much as it applies to you regardless of where you serve and how many hours you spend regularly in His service.** You believe in God, right? If so, then you understand that it is not your will alone, but your will fused with the will of God in a miraculous way that is impossible to explicate except that you are able to see its reality by your faith. (If you cannot explain predestination vs. election, you don't have to tear out your hair in despair. Banking on faith, the



Truth will be revealed to you!) Your own will impinges on the unfolding of God's will, just like the conviction of Caesar to order the census led to the fulfillment of God's will for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem. **Your dedication to serve at your level best (imperfections notwithstanding), willingness to make sacrifice but not emphasizing transient rewards, and your conviction that help from the Almighty is with you will see you through your obstacles in a short time.**

Some Christians have instead been mired in their self-laid obstacles because they despise their own abilities. They say, "Oh, I am nothing. Others can do better" in all modesty as they take refuge in a shell. On the other hand, there are the proud ones who always think, "Oh, count me in. I am indispensable; without me, cannot lah!" as they never fail to put their hands to the ploughs to till the ground even though they may not live to see the harvest. I leave it as an open question whether it is good to be proud or modest about one's abilities, or whether a person can be proud and modest at the same time. The important thing is not what the correct answer is, but the thought process the question generates that makes us understand ourselves better and help us see a clearer picture of the unique place each and every one of us has in the Church. Maybe the balance is to be either proudly modest or modestly proud.

Bro. Martin Cheah, writing the editorial of August Vine, recalled, "To think that in April, I thought The Vine was closing down but now ... God has changed the circumstances." His was an understatement of 'historical' frustrations and struggles through the long nights of the Vine ministry. But God has been in control all this while whether we are conscious of it or not. The Vine almost failed to come out in February, but after I uttered an eleventh hour exasperated suggestion to Bro. Martin about foregoing that issue, there was a sudden flash of inspiration that came and the February Vine was finally wrapped up. Bro. Martin and I, through our extensive working relationship in this ministry, know that either of us had mentally thought of quitting the ministry so many times that it is beyond count. The fact that we are still in the ministry is not by our choice, nor is it by our own strength. It is by the will of God and His gracious sustenance. The latest example of this is that after the August issue of The Vine came out, I told Bro. Martin that 'probably' (read: "I have decided") I would take a break for September. My good brother understood and was not anxious, but somehow, after reading Sis. Charlotte's

“Journey of 5 Passages” on the same day as I spoke to Bro. Martin, a rush of inspiration came. I sensed that God did not want me to stop writing yet. Two days later, a tinkle came from Sis. Michelle who rarely telephoned me, but this time she called to share a piece of her mind on The Vine. I felt a firming of my thinking cap, and hence you see that my pet mouse continued gnawing out the words and letters on my computer screen. My sense of God wanting me to continue writing was confirmed as God provided me with the inspiration – as often through the years – at the decisive moment! I hope that what I dug out of *Animal Farm* did make a light delicacy for your taste buds.

I don't know any human cause that for the umpteenth time I wanted to lay off but was stopped on my tracks by some invisible urging. And while I am poor in hearing with my ears, **I thank God for his compensation in the way he makes me excellent in ‘listening’ with my eyes and the wonderful writings of fellow contributors to the Vine have been feeding me with spiritual manna. (May I continue to be fed!)** At times, even bite-size farces like the FOOD FOR THOUGHT “*I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE*” by Bro. Tony Koh, August Vine) and the “*Winds of Change*” (by Bro. Beng Chin, Sept Vine) appeared as delectable meals delivered to me on dainty plates. I have no doubt that we have a good number of individuals in the church with such culinary expertise to cook up digestible chow, and I certainly welcome all chances to taste different dishes instead of boring myself with my own month in and month out. ☺

I shall continue to write as long as God grants me strength by His grace, and **I encourage fellow contributors to the Vine ministry to do the same without fear of any inadequacy.** It was also before the publication of Sept Vine that I received an email with this unsolicited comment: “Yes, it's important that people/readers are ministered by what we have to convey. It's good to share, and hope writers always have Phil 4:8 as the guiding basis to any piece of writing for believers.” I marvel at the timing of the email. It was like another piece of evidence that God, in appointing the email writer to tell me about being good to share, was setting my mind right that it was not time for me to contemplate a rest from writing?

I shall now respond to the email message thus, “Even if targeted readers do not read (or targeted listeners do not hear a pulpit sermon), nothing

is lost by the writing (or speaking) efforts because God uses such human willingness to submit to His leading as the channel of His blessings to the human owners of the efforts too! The accompanying message **P.U.S.H.** (from another email I received) speaks to us verily that oft times we find ourselves pushing and pushing a big rock of problems in the Church with seemingly no result to show, thinking that we have failed, yet in reality our perception makes plain how we let ourselves down by our failure to observe our “strong and muscled arms”, our “brown and sinewy backs”, etc. My own experience of pushing the pen has brought me callused fingers, and working the mouse has numbed them. Nevertheless, I feel that God has an important message:

**It is good to read the Bible, beneficial to pay attention to God’s Word elucidated by His servants, wonderful to pray for revelations; but God reveals much more about His will for us through our personal journeys of discovery as we labour as mere servants compared to kings cocooned in palatial comforts.**

If anyone wants to know the will of God, making personal journeys of discovery cannot be left out of his endeavour. One cannot be a couch potato with a Walkman playing anything Christian for the ears, eyes poring over every word in the Bible, and hope to be able to stand up and shout, “Eureka, I now behold God’s will for me!” In deciding on one’s personal journey of discovery, one must be prepared for some risks of the unknown. Peter Chao, Founder President of Eagles Communications, writing in the Aug-Sep issue of VANTAGEPOINT said this when referring to leading fulfilled lives by pouring ourselves into a cause that is greater and beyond ourselves: “When I am true to who I am, I am free to take risks to fulfill the purpose of my life, and consequently, I am able to enjoy contentment and be at peace with God and myself.”

On a lighter note, Charlotte said “in half (or three-quarter) jest that no one can make money by writing in Singapore, whether you are trained to do it or not.” Let me add half (or a quarter) to make the jest whole. Writing is

an art, not a science, so writers are artists. It is a well-known fact that many works of artists would not even catch a glance by anybody even as the artists labour on with more works. (In other words, nobody attaches much value to the artists' efforts.) However, once the artists pass on, their works posthumously suddenly become collectors' treasures. People are funny, aren't they? ☺ or ☹?

Back to a serious point, regardless of where we choose to serve God, we share a common hope of being with one another for a common purpose of edifying by our services. We do not work at cross purposes, neither do we compartmentalize ourselves with the thought that we know best and others are best shut out from disturbing our peace and testing our patience. **The church can function effectively if we see ourselves like cogs in separate wheels that are always engaged with one another in order for the machinery to run.** Regular oiling is needed, but if one wheel impatient for the master's oil decides to tell another wheel to fly off because it is grating uneasily and noisily along, very soon one wheel after another takes flight for the same reason of feeling hindrance. The remaining wheels can continue to turn with the machinery producing no yield. This is why I hope that readers do not see The Vine as an out-of-place piece of antique in the overall equipping of the Church. **(Same thing, do not see any other ministry as dispensable!)** The Vine is one wheel that wants to engage with other wheels in the Church. Whoever you are and whatever your station in the Church, may you see the ministries as the wheels and the ministry team members as the cogs. Those who do not belong to any wheel can still see themselves as the bolts and nuts holding the wheels in their places. **Please do not disengage yourselves from your useful functions!**

*Sincerely,  
in Christ,  
John Lee*

**R**ediscovering  
*the*  
**L**utheran  
*Liturgical*  
**W**orship



# Rediscovering the Lutheran Liturgical Worship

During worship, the congregation is little more than an audience: we sit passively, we listen and watch but we seldom participate actively.

The mystery of worship is not present. We have little sense of awe and reverence. The atmosphere does not engender a sense of reverence and of creation. "Telling the glory of God" (Ps 19:1). Why is this so? What is worship all about? What about Liturgical worship, which we often complain as dull, predictable and too formatted. Are our views correct or are we misinformed?

## Worship Celebrates Christ

Worship brings the past into the present by telling and acting out the work of Christ. Worship is a time of rest, of relationship, a time to celebrate the truth that gives directions to my life. Worship connects me with the past, gives meaning to the present and inspires hope for the future.

In worship, my soul and spirit becomes blended into the drama of Christ's life, death and resurrection. How have we lost this sense of celebration in worship? Worship to many is dull, cold, formal and alienating. It has little impact on what goes on in our lives. What has happened?

The secular mindset of our culture works against worship as a celebration. Our thinking is much affected by the secular world where we lack a supernatural view of the person. Personhood is defined apart from the biblical concept that we are created in the image of God. Instead our worth is defined in terms of economics, status and social standing.

Worship is the antidote to secularism. Worship contradicts secularism that seeks to reduce human personality to a mere economic, intellectual or technological entity. In worship we come in contact with a sense of the supernatural, the mystery of life, we affirm who we are in Christ and this frees us to experience Christ through the festive occasion that celebrates Him.

In worship the past events are transported into the present. Scripture that is read proclaims Christ, the bread and wine in Communion presents Christ, and prayers offered communicate our dependence on God. Worship lifts us out of the drudgery of life and brings meaning to life. We celebrate weekly; the life of Christ is celebrated throughout the church year through:

- the cycle of light (Advent, Christmas and Epiphany)
- the cycle of life (Lent, Easter and Pentecost)

The cycles bring rhythm of living, dying and rising again of Christ into the experience of the believers' yearly life cycle.

Worship challenges secularism because it establishes a relationship with God. The Good News is alive, it is happening again, it affirms the reality of God, the significance of life, the worth of the human person.

Worship creates, sustains and enhances our relationship with God. It heals broken human relationships. Worship refreshes the soul, rekindles the spirit and renews life.

### **Worship Celebrates the Christ Event**

The content of Old Testament worship is determined by the Exodus event.

The content of New Testament worship is determined by the Christ event.

### **God Reveals Himself**

#### **In the Old Testament:**

In Exodus, God heard the groanings of Israel and remembered the covenant He had with Abraham. God's message to Moses was that He would liberate the people of Israel from their bondage and bring them into the promised land. He assured them "I will be with you." (Ex 3:12)

God reveals Himself as a God faithful to His Covenant.

#### **In the New Testament:**

In the Christ event, God reveals Himself. In the account of the birth of Jesus, Zechariah uses language similar to that in the Exodus - God has "visited and redeemed" His people", God "remembers His holy covenant", He comes "to give light" and "to guide our feet." In Christ God's love is revealed.

God has come to redeem His people.

### In the Old Testament:

Israel looked on the Exodus event as a redemption from the oppression of their enemies.

"Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day." (Deut 5:15)

The Passover celebrates yearly the Exodus event.

### In the New Testament:

The Christ event is understood as redemptive.

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed His people." (Lk 1:68)

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." (Mk 10:45)

God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." (2 Cor 5:19)

Christ connected His death with the Passover when during the Last Supper he made the bread and wine symbols of this death and salvation (Matt 26:26-29)

## **Creation Of A People**

### In the Old Testament:

God led Israel through the wilderness to Mount Sinai, where He entered into a covenantal agreement with them:

"He became their God and they became His people" (Ex 24)

### In the New Testament:

The book of Hebrews describes Jesus as the new covenant (Heb 7-10)

"The Covenant he mediates is better" (Heb 8:6)

"He is the mediator in the new covenant" (Heb 9:15)



In both the NT and OT, God's purpose in revealing, in redeeming and in bringing a people into existence is to create a worshipping community as a sign of His redeeming work.

We need to rediscover a truly Christ-centred approach to worship, concerning the death, resurrection and victory of Christ.

### **Celebrating the Christ Event**

Worship is a re-presentation of Christ. In a sense, worship is drama, it re-enacts the Christ event. Worship is characterised by dramatic re-telling.

#### **In the Old Testament :**

Nehemiah 8 records a dramatic re-telling in worship.

In Nehemiah, Israel returned from exile after their captivity by the Babylonians. During the rebuilding of the wall, the Book of Deuteronomy was discovered. Ezra, the scribe, a godly man called all the people to come together at the Water Gate in Jerusalem to hear the message of this lost book.

Imagine the excitement and anticipation. On the momentous day, they listened with wonder as they heard how God led them from slavery in Egypt, through the wilderness, how God made a Covenant with Israel and of Yahweh's exhortation not to disobey His laws and of His great love for them. The spiritual power of this reading was such that a great conviction fell upon the people who came to see themselves as breakers of the law and of the Covenant. They grieved and wept and mourned for their sins.

The reading of the Book of Deuteronomy had the effects of bringing the people of Israel through the Exodus - through the original experience - and into a new Covenantal relationship with God. It was as though they themselves had taken part in the event.

#### **In the New Testament:**

In the NT, retelling the story is also a major form of communication. The first recorded sermon of the Church, on the day of Pentecost, connects what is happening then with a story from the OT (Acts 2:14-36).

Jesus' disciples preached and proclaimed the Christ event as the new act of redemption. The disciples preached the Good News, as Paul instructed "Faith

comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." (Rom 10:17). The preaching was as Paul described, "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power". (1 Cor 2:4-5)

In retelling the event, we re-create the event, draw the people into the event, resulting in their repentance, conversion and commitment.

In Nehemiah, the people wept and returned to the Lord (Neh 8:9-18).

In Acts, the people "were cut to their heart, repented and believed" (Acts 2:37-38).

Worship is characterised by dramatic re-enactment. God not only speaks, He also acts.

In the Exodus event, the Jews were instructed to re-enact the Passover event. (Ex 12:24-26). In the re-enactment, the past event becomes the present reality.

Similarly in the NT, communion re-enacts the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection. It is not an event we memorialise but we celebrate a present reality, as a "participation" in Christ (1 Cor 10:16).

### **Worship Tells and Acts Out the Christ Event**

Worship acts out the life, death, resurrection and coming again of Christ through the Word and Communion. Two other parts : Entrance to worship and Dismissal were added subsequently.

Each of these 4 parts of worship not only unfolds the story of God's redeeming love but brings us through the experience of that love.

#### 1) **Entrance**

This is a time of preparation. An approach to God and generally incorporates:

##### i) Act of Gathering

- ii) The invocation
- iii) Acknowledgement of God
- iv) Confession of Sin
- v) Word of Forgiveness
- vi) Opening Hymn/Singspiration/Opening Prayer

### ***Act of Gathering***

This is a time of preparation for worship. We may sit silently, reflect on God's Word, pray and quieten our hearts. We reach out in spirit to all around us in prayer that we may be formed into a worshipping community.

***The Invocation*** (Let us call upon God to bless our worship with His presence.)

This represents God initiating worship and calling the body into being.

### ***Acknowledgement***

The congregation acknowledging God's presence responds saying "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen"

### ***Confession of Sin***

Entering into God's presence, like Isaiah, who after seeing the glory of God, declared "Woe is me! For I am lost" (Is 6:5), the congregation recognises its personal and corporate sin and confesses that sin to God.

### ***Words of Forgiveness***

Following the confession of sins, the Pastor proclaims God's forgiveness, assuring the congregation that their sins are forgiven and God graciously accepts them. The worshipping community is prepared for worship.

### ***The Opening Hymn/Congregational Singing***

Traditionally, worship commences with the opening hymn, when the Pastors, choir and other leaders enter and take their place before God. The procession or movement signals that the entire congregation is now coming before God.

We have adopted this time as congregational singing. This is part of worship as we praise and exalt God through songs in worship.

Entrance for worship is important. Through preparation, we are readied to hear the Word with a sense of peace and expectancy.

## 2) The Word of God

The second part of the worship service is organised around the Word:

- i) the reading of the Word and
- ii) the response to the Word.

First God speaks to us through the reading of His Word. We read from the OT, responsive reading of the Psalms, the Epistles, followed by the Gospel.

Worshippers experience Christ through the Word as we are telling the story of our salvation and responding to it. The story of God's saving work is Christ is fundamental to Christian worship.

The Bible records that in the wilderness at Mount Sinai, Moses "took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people" (Ex 24:7). By reading the Book of the Covenant, Israel was reminded once again that God, out of His love, had chosen them and called them out of Egypt to be a holy and unique people for Himself. Through the reading, the Exodus event becomes real and alive. The event was brought to them and they sense their involvement in God's action, entering anew the covenantal relationship with God.

Today as we listen to the reading of Scripture in worship, we remember it as the record of God's covenant with us. It is a record of how God has initiated a relationship with us, sought us out and brought us to Himself.

When we hear the Scriptures read, we want to respond in faith to the God of the Covenant. Scripture is the announcement of its own relevance to our needs today. When the Scripture is read and heard in faith, its actual meaning becomes fresh and new to us. We may have lost the wonder of the story.

More attention has to be given to the way we read Scripture. If the Scripture is the proclamation of God, the manner in which we read it publicly is extremely important. Remember it is the living Word of God for today, for Christians everywhere. It is new and fresh and as relevant to our needs as it was to the people in the past.

We should read the Scripture as an announcement to be heard and acted upon. It is God speaking.

### Responding to the Word

#### The Apostle's Creed / Nicene Creed (for Communion Service)

Historically the Apostle's Creed was the profession of faith made by converts at their baptism and formed the basis of their instruction. Today the Apostle's Creed is the test of orthodoxy (sound doctrine) for Christians and is used as an act of praise and response during worship. The Creed serves 3 main purposes:

1. It provides a brief summary of the main doctrines of the Christian faith.
2. It allows us to recognise and avoid inadequate or incomplete versions of Christianity.
3. The Creed emphasises that "to believe is to belong." To be a Christian is to enter into a communion of faith. We become a member of the body. The Creed expresses our faith.

The Creed offers the following insights:

- i) It stresses the humanity of Jesus Christ - Someone really human who shares the experiences of our human life.
- ii) The fact that He suffered under Pontius Pilate points to the tragic rejection of Jesus Christ by the world, a rejection of the Creator by His creation.
- iii) It points to the mysterious link between suffering and salvation. Jesus had to suffer in order that we might be redeemed. The doctrine of atonement serves to remind us of the reality of sin, the power and purpose of God to deal with it. Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12 powerfully describes a mysterious suffering servant, who through

His suffering brought healing to others. This was fulfilled in the suffering of Jesus Christ. In the Creed is the doctrine of redemption.

How is the Creed relevant to our Christian living:

The suffering of Christ is the fulfillment of His ministry. The incarnate God suffering alongside us and for us. God shares in their darkest moment of suffering of His people. God can be found in suffering.

The suffering of God reveals that God is willing and able to allow Himself to be subject to all the pain and sufferings which His creation experiences. We are not talking of a God who stands far off from His world, aloof and distant from its problems. We have a loving God who has entered into human situation; become man and dwelt among us as one of us.

The Creed opens up a new perspective to one of the darkest side of human life and brings hope through the comfort of knowing that God has been through it as well.

### Responding to the Word - the Sermon, Offering and Prayer

Having heard the Word of God, we respond in affirming and confessing our faith in God through one Creed.

In the OT, the reading and explanation of the Word of God was a way of telling the story of the Exodus event and the entire story of Israel's history.

The NT Church emphasised the importance of retelling the Christian story - the reading and exposition of Scripture is of paramount importance, for in Scripture the story of human existence and God's plan is retold and we look forward to Jesus' return to establish a new heaven and a new earth. The Word is life, reaffirming the faith within us.

In worship, God is present, caring for me, bringing me to Himself and offering me the benefits of His work on my behalf. How can I remain silent or passive or indifferent. So I respond with an appropriate "Amen" or "Praise be to You, O Christ." We respond to Him also in prayer. We bring Him our requests, lay them at His feet and cast our cares upon Him, making our supplication and thanksgiving known to God.

**Worship calls me to respond to others. I realise the reconciliation I have with the Father, which surely compels me to be reconciled with others. I respond also in response to the need of the Church and the world with my tithes and offerings.**

### **3) The Table of the Lord**

**The third part of the Worship Service, the Communion symbolises Jesus' experience at the Last Supper in which he took, blessed, broke and gave (Matt 26:26-29).**

#### ***Remembering***

**Jesus instituted Holy Communion in view of His death on Calvary's cross the next day. "Do this in remembrance of me. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." We remember our Lord's suffering and death at Calvary in Holy Communion, according to His own instruction. In Holy Communion, we remember what God has actually done for us.**

#### ***Preview***

**Secondly, Holy Communion is a preview of the great feast in heaven to come. Jesus says in Luke 22:16, 18 "I tell you I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God ... for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." It is just after instituting Holy Communion that Jesus said these words. Then the Apostle Paul says, in 1 Cor 11:26 "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." Holy Communion not only looks back to what Christ has done, but it also looks forward to His Second Coming. In addition, 1 Cor 11:26 makes Holy Communion evangelistic "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."**

#### ***Presence***

**The third meaning of Holy Communion in our text 1 Cor 11:23-26 is presence. "This is my body which is for you. This cup is the new covenant in my blood." Apparently, Jesus wants me to believe that just as surely as I receive bread and wine, so surely I receive His life into my life. When I receive that bread and drink that wine, according to His promise I receive also His Presence.**

Holy Communion includes past, future and present. Holy Communion REMEMBERS Holy Thursday and Good Friday. Holy Communion PREVIEWS the great feast in Heaven at Christ's Second Coming. Holy Communion conveys Christ's promise of His PRESENCE into my life right now.

Holy Communion is a personal experience of Jesus Christ. When I go forward to the Table, I say yes to all that Christ has done for me. When I stretch forth to receive the broken bread, I confess "I cannot live by bread alone, that I am in great need of my Lord."

When the wine is poured out, when I hear the words "This is the blood of Christ shed for you" all my senses (touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing) are evoked into worship.

Eating and drinking at the Lord's Table is an experience of God's work of salvation. It proclaims the Gospel, enacting the death and resurrection of Christ: The worshipper not only hears the words, but also sees, tastes, smells and experiences the symbol of Christ's death in the bread and wine - given for us. Christ is communicated to the whole person, bringing healing to body, soul and spirit.

#### 4) The Dismissal

Now that worship represented Christ and His work to the glory of the Father, the congregation is to be sent forth to do the work of the Kingdom.

We are sent forth as "ambassador for Christ" 2 Cor 5:20.

The Service is concluded with a closing hymn, followed by the Benediction or blessing which sends the congregation forth in the name of the Lord and by the power of the Holy Spirit. The congregation is dismissed by the order to leave, "Go in peace and serve the Lord!" to which we respond "Thanks be to God!"

The Dismissal is the beginning of our service in the world.