

THE VINE

For internal circulation only

October 2003

Vol. 9/2003

Editor's Views

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus.

Even as I pen down my thoughts for your encouragement this month, I wonder how to share with you the feeling of being in an extended family church. I have just returned from the wake of Mdm Loy, the mother of Sis. Ting Ching and Richard Teng. From my observation, more than 50% of those around were made up of JCC members and even some ex-members. Indeed, we are a close-knit family who will lend a shoulder to lean on in times of bereavement or share camaraderie in joyous moments.

Can you feel being part of this family? Do you come to church just to be entertained by the musicians, preachers and occasionally the Treasurer? Or do you come to JCC to be part of the family of God, worshipping and serving where God has placed us? Indeed if you are worshipping with us, the only way to be part of us is to get involved. There are many avenues of contact – cell groups, church retreats and outings, Bible study and the various ministries that are crying out for more hands to make work light. Once you are involved, you will feel the difference, you will find fulfillment (although sometimes you will be stressed out) in service and enjoy being part of the family of JCC.

The year is coming to an end and soon the church will be making a call for your commitment to service and giving for the next year. This is your opportunity to get involved in the work of the Lord in JCC, to be part of this family. I encourage you to sign up for the various ministries or cell groups.

What's Inside...

1. The Kenya Mission Part 2



2. The GB Story
3. Husbands, love your wives...

You don't have to be good at everything but I'm sure you are not good for nothing. There must be some God-given gift in you waiting to be revealed.

You can join The Vine as a writer and maybe one day take over as Editor. Let me thank all those who have contributed to The Vine over the years. May you realize that you are actually sharing your life with everyone. Your experience which may be unique to you may be edifying to our readers. Thank you for sharing.

I look forward to the 14th anniversary of The Vine next month.

Martin Cheah



The Story of the 17th Girls' Brigade Company

After reading last month's The Vine about JCC Pastors over 36 years of history, I thought maybe it would be timely to tell the good old story of how The 17th Girls Brigade Company was started in 1982. I thought to myself, I better do it while I am still able to remember some facts and numbers before I forget and the legacy might be gone.

I am convinced it is God who started the 17th Girls Brigade because when our Boys Brigade was recruiting boys in Yuan Ching Secondary School about 30 over girls registered for it. Could it be possible that more than 30 girls heard the word GIRLS instead of BOYS. This is the work of our Lord, which is beyond all human understanding. So that's how our Girls Brigade started with girls but No Captain and Officers.

1982-1984

Our very 1st Captain was Mrs. Daniel Christian (Pastor Michael's mother). She was about 56 years old when she became captain. She was an ordinary Christian housewife and a grandmother who knew nothing about Girls Brigade but knew and trusted our Lord and believed in praying. I am sure many sisters can testify that at every Prayer Meeting she was there without fail and her faithful husband would always be there to walk home with her after the prayer meeting.



One of my memories of Mrs. Daniel:

“One evening we had a Captain's meeting in Peace Center and so I brought her there to attend the meeting. While walking towards the Peace Center, the sole of her slippers came off half way but she kept on walking and was not even concern about the difficulty she had to go through walking with a flipping sole all the way.”

1984-1986

She served faithfully for 2 years until Mrs Molly Chua came back from her mission trip. Molly our 2nd Captain with only Primary 6 education served in India for 2 years as missionary and also served on board the Ship Dulos for 1 and a half years. She came back to Jurong Christian Church and she took on the Captaincy from 1984 to 1986. She left us



for a higher calling to serve God with her husband who became a Pastor. Presently her family is serving in mission partnership with Swansea Pastorate Presbyterian Church of Wales (UK).

One thing I learned from her was her eagerness to learn, a very teachable heart and a heart for people. With only a Primary 6 education and speaking only a little English, she is also one of the graduates in Singapore Bible College.

1986-1988

Our 3rd Captain Mrs Sally Kee, wife of Pastor Terry Kee joined us when Pastor Kee was posted to pastor JCC. The timing was perfect when Molly was married and had to join her husband to pastor another church. Sally took over the post very willingly without fear even though she did not know anything about Girls Brigade. She was with us from 1986 to 1988. While she was



with us, coping with many things in hand (being just married, as a pastor's wife, working and serving in the Girls Brigade) she showed much love, care and desire to give God her best in all she did. Later she joined the Singapore Bible College and went to serve together with Pastor Terry Kee as a Missionary in Northern Thailand.

1988-1999

Our 4th Captain Miss Teng Ting Ching served from 1988 to 1999. She is the longest serving Captain so far. She was a missionary in Pakistan. When she came back, she joined the Bible College and worked as a Parish Worker in JCC. Knowing nothing about GB but the urgent need to have a Captain, she took the challenge and move on with the girls. During her captaincy in 1994 there was no pastor in JCC and normally the Pastor would be the Chaplain for the Company. So one of the things that Ting Ching did, for which we are thankful, was helping to involve our brother Wong Mui to be our only lay leader to take up the position of a Chaplain. From then on brother Wong Mui has been with us (more than 9 years). Ting Ching left us for a higher calling to be involved with children who needs love and care. We are grateful for her for helping us to keep this ministry till today.



1999-2003

After Ting Ching left, one of our own GB girls, Yap Mei Yah, who grew from the ranks, took up the heavy responsibility to be the acting captain. Despite being inexperienced as a leader she faithfully took on the role and showed the girls faithfulness in staying in GB after graduating. Many of our younger girls must have followed her footsteps and stayed on to serve. Presently, we have 6 more ex-GB girls staying on to serve in the ministry. Mei Yah served from 1999 to 2003.



2003-

Our current acting captain is Lee Li Khim. Like Mei Yah, Li Khim rose from the ranks and in spite of parental objections to continue in GB she is still faithfully serving the Lord. Isn't it great to see young people taking the leadership and responding to God's calling to serve.



So the trend from knowing nothing about being a GB Captain has now become Captaincy rising from the within the ranks. I believe this is the way it should be.

May God continue to bless this ministry and even if we have only a handful of girls we are thankful that God is working His purpose through us for the harvest to come.

21st Anniversary
17th
Cny
**GIRLS
BRIGADE**
1982 - 2003

Michelle Lee

This year we celebrated our 21st
Anniversary



BB Cares Project

By Justin Tay



30 Aug 2003. We arrived at Fairfield Methodist Church for our **BB Cares Project** which is a coordinated community service project with the VWOs (Voluntary Welfare Organisations). Our duties were simple. Together with volunteer helpers from Fairfield Methodist Church, we were to pack bread and other snack items and then distribute them to the elderly living in the nearby Chinatown area. Since most of the elderly communicate in Cantonese, the VWOs acted as our translators.

On arriving at the block of 1-room flats, the whiff of incense filled our nostrils. The VWOs told us that most of elderly were non-Christians, so we were very pleased when we saw a cross hanging on the wall when one of the doors opened. When we visited the different homes, we saw a 20-person double-decker antique bed, traditional charcoal stoves and heavily lacquered rocking

chairs. We asked about the purpose of the thin wooden sheets attached to the metal door grills, and found out that these self-made sheets were placed to prevent water from splashing in when the cleaners jet the floor. Creative INDEED!

The VWOs also told us that some of these elderly were still working. Some collected paper cardboards and some were seamstress. While we admired them for their dexterity and perseverance, we felt uncomfortable to see them working at their age (most of them are above 70).

One old lady we visited had fungus infection on her head causing her sleepless nights. The VWO asked her if she had seen a doctor and she nodded her head. Then the VWO suggested that we pray for her. Surprisingly, she agreed immediately. So we prayed for her in Cantonese. I only understood part of the prayer when the VWO encouraged: "Jesus. Depend on Jesus". After the prayer the VWO told the old lady to touch her head and cry out to the Lord when it hurts.



Next, we came to a house of a former domestic maid. As expected, her house was spick and span. Although she was in her nineties, she was still young at heart. When we asked her to take a picture with us, she went to look for her comb and mirror. She put clips on her hair before donning her most priceless asset, a beautiful pink cheongsam from long ago. After taking

the picture, we showed it to her and complimented her. She smiled.



Then we came to another home. This time it was an old man. In fact, he was the only male we saw that day. The VWOs told us that he was the caretaker of the church and he was one of the oldest males around, at the age of 94. He showed us a large photograph of his beloved wife in her teens and lamented that his wife passed away when he was 50. 94 minus 50. He was alone for almost half a decade!

At the end of the trip, we concluded that we learnt a

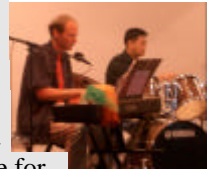


lot that day. It was a new experience for many of us. So many lessons were learnt. The elderly were not just cared but also evangelized to. The Boys did not just learn contentment but also how to make others contented. The Boys were also asked, "Is there anything you would like to ask them (the elderly) but feel that it is inappropriate?" Their collective response was, "Where are their sons and daughters?" Exactly what we wanted to hear from their hearts. A lesson well learnt.



20 Sep 2003 I was in church for a Combined Council meeting but due to unforeseen circumstances, the meeting was cancelled and thus I ended up at the Johannes Concert.

Johannes is a German pastor. He was traveling in the region and so made a stopover in Singapore for a performance. What a show!



An accomplished piano player and singer/composer, he introduced us to some of his songs. They were very catchy tunes. Well known in Europe, he is relatively unknown here. One day when he becomes famous in Asia, we can all say that we have been to his concert.



Johannes with the JCC Dancers

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”

John Lee

I sat attentive in my pew as Bro. Wong Mui delivered his charming sermon on the subject of marriage on 21st September. My only regret was that my wife was away in P. Ubin, or else I would perhaps speak into her ears “*Hear, Hear, ...*” as Wong Mui spoke with such authority from Scripture calling on wives to submit to ... (well, you know whom.)

Not that my wife has been the non-submissive sort; far from it, she has been the most wonderful woman I could discover as my wife (at least in my eyes). However, which man, no matter how good his wife already is, would not wish for his wife to be a little more ‘good-der’, a little more ... submissive (yes, that is the word to use)? I leave it to your imagination whether there was any man who did not murmur something of affirmation of the marriage lesson into the ear of his wife. The Sunday after, at post-service fellowship in church, there was a little ‘miscommunication’ about coffee between my wife and me as Wong Mui passed by. I requested him to repeat his previous Sunday’s sermon to my wife – I mean, just the first part of his sermon would be enough. ☺ It was all in good humour and his charming smile in response was good enough for me to marvel at

his ability to veil the steely courage he demonstrated just seven days before when he proclaimed boldly through the mike, “**WIVES, SUBMIT TO YOUR HUSBANDS ...**” without any

body quiver or lip shake that would mismatch the firmness of his voice. Surely, God was on his side as he based his arguments confidently on Scripture and no Women’s Lib’s

member was in the pews, or else I would shudder at the thought of missiles flying in his direction. I have no doubt his enunciation of the marriage instruction from Scripture was well supported by his wife, as evidenced by his ability to maintain his charming smile on the second Sunday.

Unlike Wong Mui, I would not have his courage to speak on my feet the way he spoke on the topic of marriage. If given the chance, I would do his message to wives and husbands in reverse order. To begin with, I would speak out loud and clear (without need for a mike to amplify my booming voice): “**Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her!**” (Eph 5:25) Then I would carefully put in the Holy command for wives to submit to their husbands to make it easier for them (the husbands)



to love them (the wives). Ha ... Ha ... by so doing, I would have nicely made the command not seem so heavy on the women. Oops ... I must still keep my fingers crossed that while being spared any possible umbrage from the ladies, I would not instead get landed in trouble in a different way if any chauvinist happens to be around who would not take kindly to my emphasis.

As I pondered Wong Mui's message which called on wives to submit to their husbands and husbands to love their wives, there was nothing I could not disagree with him simply because his exhortation to men and women came out of Scripture. However, I could not help thinking that it is easier to be a woman than a man. You see, a man as the head of the house has to answer for all mishaps in decision-making while a wife can perhaps just pass the buck over: "Go, ask the head."

Just like in an organization, junior workers aspire to be senior and the seniors look with admiration at the head for all the liberties to do this and that without being questioned. Is it that simple?

The truth can only be told not by words but by actually letting the heads and the supporting helpers change places. Ask around and it wouldn't be difficult for you to find that while there are people in their ignorance of the truth desiring after their bosses' seats, there are bosses who would be only too willing to give up their

responsibilities of position if only they can so as to be a little more relaxed, a little more free to do more of the things they want, and a little more risk-free to embark on some adventure knowing fully well that there is someone above who will provide cover when the result does not look good. A head of an organization is not placed in his position for him to boast or for him to throw his weight around without anything better to do. With empowerment comes a whole load of responsibilities to keep order and he can do so not alone but with the collaboration of his helpers whose interests and well being become his own. A chief executive may be seen to tell his helpers to do this and that, but much weight of his own duties is carried behind the scene.

In the home, God has placed the man as the head. His duty is to lead with love and the test of his performance is whether or not he achieves the bottomline of his home-building business – i.e., that the love invested in him by God grows in the household under his management. God knows that he cannot be alone; therefore, he is provided with "a helper suitable for him." (Gen 2:18) The helper is not alien, but the man's own, for she was a part of him in the beginning and she is called "[my] woman" (In Mandarin or other Chinese dialects, the term "我的女人" is still in use by some people), a term that shows a close relationship between her and her man,



“to have and to hold” within marriage. Of course, there should be no bigoted sense of ownership by enslavement. Although the Hebrew for “woman” and for “man” also sound alike, the closeness between the two is best attested to by the fact that the man can claim her to be “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” (Gen 2:23) and “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” (Gen 2:24)

Marriage between man and woman was already in God’s mind in the beginning, with the woman taken from man’s side and to be by man’s side in union as one flesh. Man and wife are definitely not separate; they are two parts of one body. Nobody can bear the excruciation of physical body parts being torn asunder. More than figuratively, in real breaking up of man and woman into two (from original matrimonial union), the hurt and the distress are usually intense. Not to that extreme of separation, whenever there is disagreement between the head and the body in the home, the hurting and the loss of peace is also highly perceptible.

I like the humour piece that Bro. Wong Mui quoted, about the man’s claim to be the head and the woman’s counter-claim of being the neck that turns the head. ☺ Let me add a little extra bit to this humour by saying that the neck can turn only under the command of the brain that resides in the head. If the neck sends a request that is out of order, the head can easily countermand. This said, it must also be noted that if the head has

a problem of dealing with reasonable signals from the neck, the latter can lose its functioning ability and cease to work well in collaboration with the head. When this happens, the neck will be feeling much pain ...oh, maybe not the neck but the head because the sensation is with the nerve centre in the brain. This is an illustration of how closely tied together the interests of the head and neck (husband and wife) are for the well being of the whole body. There needs to be a lot of understanding and support of each other’s roles as the neck submits to the leadership of the head while the head ensures that the neck is given its due respect and what it deserves in love and care. While the head feels secure with a thick and hard shell, the neck has more reason to feel insecure because of its susceptibility to injury such as whiplash. Herein is the rationale of Peter’s instruction to husbands to “be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.” (1 Pet 3:7) Think: You can’t concentrate when praying with your neck hurting.

Paul makes the same point for husbands to love their wives and not be harsh with them while exhorting wives to submit to their husbands as is fitting in the Lord. (Col. 3:18:19 NIV) Submission of wives and the love from husbands are two interlocked essentials in the relationship.

The call to wives to submit to their husbands is qualified “as is

fitting in the Lord.” If a wife says “I submit because I have no choice”, then she is submitting not out of love and I would doubt that this could be considered as “fitting in the Lord.” Similarly, submitting immorally such as being willing or unthinking accomplice to a husband’s criminal ways would not count as fitting in the Lord. Submitting in love and in righteousness, as Christ submitted Himself to God, not out of convenience to suit one’s wish or preference, is the manner of submission that will make a wife delightful in her husband’s eyes and move an unbelieving husband to embrace Christ as he sees the love of God in his wife. In Christ’s submission to God, there is no bargaining involved, and so it cannot be that a wife bargains with her husband “You love me enough then I submit” while the husband makes the counter offer “You submit first then I shall love you with all my heart and all my soul.” Even if a wife feels unloved, submission to her husband is still the way to go, for isn’t it the marriage vow that “I take him as my husband, to have and to hold, for better or worse, in sickness or health”? This marriage vow “for better or worse” applies equally to the man. He is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her. (Eph. 5:25) Where does Scripture say that this “love your wife” is conditional upon the wife being “lovely in the man’s sight” or being submissive? Even if the wife has all the bad lifestyle one can think of, God is not going to entertain anything as a

bargaining chip for the husband to reduce his love and care ‘accordingly’. So, is it easier to be a woman or to be a man?

God is objective. The instructions of Scripture for husbands to love their wives and for wives to submit to their husbands are actually two parts of one single instruction for the family to be in harmony according to God’s way. Ideally, a man loves his wife so much that he makes it effortless for his wife to submit. Alternatively, a woman loves her husband so much that she makes it effortless for her husband to love her. Which should come first? The ideal is that both come at the same time. In the event that one party falls short, it should be for the other party to double his/her effort to be loving/submissive to change things for the better, with God’s help, instead of withholding love/submission as an attempt to get back at the failing party and thus gradually and thoughtlessly unraveling the threads that tie the relationship. Ultimately, husband and wife are equal in Christ, neither is greater than the other but only that each is a part of the body doing its share of duty to build up the family in love.

Scriptural prescription is always ideal, always perfect. Unfortunately, man in his fallen state is often too ready to advance this point to argue against following the divine order. Human societies have seen enough of marital breakups, which certainly are not pleasing to God. It used to be a common view that philandering men were the cause. If

that view was correct, then the tide must have turned and liberated women are now calling the shots for revenge. A headline in TODAY (29 Sep 03) spoke loudly, "*Affairs after six months of marriage. Rising number of young women cheating on their husbands a worrying trend.*" The report went on to quote statistics to show the climbing divorce rates among the age groups 20-24 and 25-29 with a record number of all divorces and annulments last year. Is this because of higher expectations that are unrealistic and unfulfilled? Or is it because of increasing travels and separations that relationships turn cold? Whatever it is, I think it is not wrong to say that much is due to the 'modernization' of human thoughts and habits when the old, old truth taught by Scripture becomes "old fashioned". So by their own choice, couples abandon the ideal and perfect prescription of Scripture and make up their own minds on what they want and what they will do if they don't get what they want. The results go with the choice. We cannot have our cake and eat it. If we want to bend the rules because of the hardness of our hearts, God may just grant us our wish as in the case of Moses writing permissibility of divorce into law. (Mk 10:5)

What exactly do married couples want and dating couples wish for? Marriage is not just a wedding march with bells ringing and the minister declaring, "From this day on, I pronounce Tom and Sue man and wife and they will walk down this aisle happily ever after." The

ceremony is but a step out of many towards lifelong bliss of two persons becoming one flesh in nuptial bond. Good men and women know that a relationship in marriage needs constant care and nurturing, like a delicate flower that is beautiful at first sight but can wilt quite easily if neglected. For Christians who make their vow of "until death us do part" on the authority of Scripture, they ought to maintain their faith that God is and will be with them in their happy and harmonious lifelong relationship governed by love and submission according to God's way. I thank God that despite my innumerable failings and shortcomings, my wife still has faith in me as her husband. On the other hand, my wife must be thankful to God too that no matter how she falls short based on human expectations, I am still 100% committed to love her as my own until death us do part. You see, to be honest with you, my wife and I are both imperfect persons with a perfect commitment to our marriage vow: "*I DO ... FOR BETTER OR WORSE.*" †

Note:

If you wish to know more of what I think 'OF WOMEN'S SUBSERVIENCE AND MALE AUTHORITY IN A CHRISTIAN FAMILY', you may refer to April 1993 issue of THE VINE, which is available in the Church library. Also, in next issue of The Vine: 'Men are one kind, women ...'

- John Lee

Thoughts on Worship

by Ivo Ivanov

Many Christians misunderstand the purpose of congregational worship. Many times our congregational worship has become an experience in which man is the focus. Worship has deteriorated into an "I didn't get anything out of that sermon" experience. Man has become the object of his own worship. He is there to be entertained and spiritually massaged. It hardly occurs to some that worship is primarily a matter of God receiving something from us - our praise, adoration, and confession of dependence on Him as our Saviour.

1. **Our culture.** Worship could vary a lot from one culture to another depending on the people's understanding of it.

2. **The Balance.** This is another factor that contributes in our understanding concerning the purpose of worship. Worship involves a balance of our intellect, emotion and will.

a) **Intellectual response.** Worship involves knowledge. We must know about God. We must know something about who He is and what He has done, before we can ascribe worth to Him. Unfortunately many often concentrate on an intellectual response. It is important but it is not the whole of it.

b) **Emotional response.** Emotional excess in some quarters has made many wary of any emotional expression. However, when we focus

on the greatness, power, majesty, wisdom, and love of God it creates a joy, exuberance, and a liveliness that is the opposite of dead, ritualistic services.

c) **Our will response.** Worship also involves our will. We must constantly submit our will to His will. We must voluntarily place ourselves under His Lordship and Headship.

3. **We must have private time of worship.** The lack of it is the reason why our worship services can often become more of a form than reality. If we are not thankful, praising, worshipping people in our private lives, we probably will not engage in meaningful congregational worship either.

Our whole relationship to God is to be characterized by an attitude and practice of thanksgiving. It is impossible to instantly experience fellowship with God at precisely 11:00am on Sunday morning. Congregational worship is a continuation of what has already happened during the week, in our lives.

4. **Finally, God wants our worship more than anything else.** Congregational worship is an expression central to the purpose and vision of the church. Worship is so critical to congregational health that it needs to be emphasized. Congregations need to be taught what worship is, its purpose, its function, and its place in the life of the body.

Dearest friends,

Before I begin, I extend to you the warmest greetings from the people from Kalyet Africa Gospel Church, Tenwek Africa Gospel Church, local and missionary staff of Tenwek Hospital. It has been a blessing for me to be amongst them, and they repeatedly reminded me to bring their greetings to all of you here.

Kenya

Kenya is a beautiful country blessed with national parks, scenic, fertile and lush green highlands carpeted with tea bushes, savanna grasslands and a simple and friendly spirit in the people. However, it is also a land tarnished with poverty, corruption, alcoholism and AIDS.



What I found surprising was that about 80% of the people are Christians (including Roman Catholics – about 25%, and Jehovah’s Witnesses and other marginal Christian groups), with about 50% Protestant Christians! However, there is a problem of nominal Christianity amidst this very impressive statistical figure.

The economy depends mainly on agriculture, and famed for Kenyan tea and Kenyan coffee!

Tenwek Hospital



Tenwek Hospital is located some 200 plus kilometers away from Nairobi – the capital of Kenya. The nearest town from the hospital is Bomet, roughly equivalent to the small cluster of shops opposite JCC. The hospital is located in the highlands of the Rift Valley province, and surrounded by breathtaking scenery, to the glory of our Creator God.

Tenwek Hospital began as a small clinic, started by an American doctor, Dr Steury some 50 years ago. It has since grown to become a referral center, receiving referrals from smaller hospitals and dispensaries in the region, and easily the best healthcare provider for the area it serves. The hospital is staffed by both local and missionary staff with senior

medical and administrative staffing largely dependent on the long-term missionaries and short term visiting staff.

The ministry of the hospital can be broadly grouped as follows:

- ❖ Medical – both inpatient and outpatient
- ❖ Spiritual – the Chaplain ministry
- ❖ Community Health – mobile clinics to villages, health education for malaria and AIDS prevention
- ❖ Nursing School – a state recognized nursing school headed by 2 American nurses.

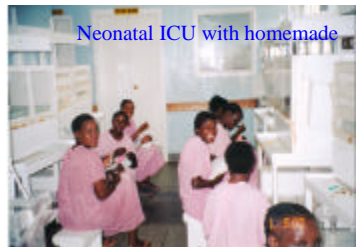
Medical Services

The Hospital has medical, surgical, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, orthopaedics, and eye wards with a total of about 300 beds. However, 2 patients on one bed is a common sight, bringing the total number of inpatients higher than 300.

Missionary medical staff and visiting doctors provide a very high standard of reliable healthcare. Donations from America and visiting doctors as well as supplies from an African-based medical supplies cooperative ensures that the pharmacy and medical supplies units are relatively well stocked. Sometimes even to the extent of having equipment too sophisticated to be compatible with hospital facilities! But I am not complaining, it was just an amusing observation. I am glad that the medical work is logistically well supported.



However, before you come away with the idea that it is a medical haven there, let me clarify that poverty is very real there, more than most of us have ever experienced. The average Singaporean would find it unsanitary and primitive. Items which are disposable and meant for one time use are reused after disinfecting with a type of bleach solution, the entire hospital only has 1 ventilator which periodically malfunctions, urinary catheters which are changed every 3 days here in Singapore, are left in for 1 month there. The Neonatal Intensive Care Unit houses underweight, premature babies in homemade incubators which basically consist of a wooden box with a light bulb to provide warmth, and a bowl of water for humidifying the air. It is not uncommon to find a baby in a continuous state of seizures, unresponsive to seizure medication, and left fitting away the whole night just



because there is no means of intubating the baby to stabilize the child. But most of the patients survive the adverse physical circumstances, and it constantly reminds the doctors that Jesus is the Great Physician, and that we are merely vessels of His healing grace, bringing the healthcare workers constantly to the foot of His throne in prayer for these patients. Aptly, the Hospital's motto is: "We treat, Jesus Heals". Indeed, how true, and all glory to our Lord.

Spiritual Ministry

What distinguishes Tenwek Hospital from Singapore General Hospital is the existence of a spiritual environment and spiritual ministry. All the staff are Christian and ward nurses, ward clerks gather each morning to begin the day with a time of singing praises to God, and reading scripture and devotional material together. How sweet is the sound of hymns resounding in the corridors each morning!

The Chaplains in the hospital are the ones responsible for the spiritual ministry. They function just like a medical team and more! When doctors do their rounds on the patients, they might request to "refer to Chaplain", just as how they would say "refer to cardiologist". And the patient gets a Chaplain 'consultation'. Chaplains then go around and encourage the patients and family members in their time of illness, and often, grief. For those who have yet to know the Saviour, Chaplains share the good news of the Gospel with these patients, and for those who are already believers, the chaplain prays with them, and encourage them in the Word of the Lord. This is a very needful ministry in the ubiquitous situations of illness, death, grief seen in the hospital setting and many are led to the Lord through this ministry!

Chaplains also organize a daily evangelistic gathering in the Hospital Chapel. This happens at 10am every morning, and all patients and relatives are encouraged to attend unless they are on an intravenous drip or on oxygen supplementation and are unable to leave the bedside. A similar programme for children happens at 2pm daily. Chaplains also fill the wards with rousing Christian choruses from a tape player they roster amongst the many wards. It is such a joy to walk into a ward full of patients joyfully singing along and praising the Lord in song!



Anna Tsutada – Japanese Nurse

Another branch of this ministry is the Hospice visitation ministry. This is undertaken by Pastor Simon who is a local Chaplain, and Ruth Tomisawa, a

Japanese missionary nurse who started this ministry. They travel out to visit patients who are terminally ill and discharged from hospital care because there is nothing more the hospital is able to do for them either due to a lack of facilities, or due to the advanced stage of disease. This visitation has a dual purpose, Ruth is a fully qualified nurse, and assesses and assists the patient in new or existing complications to the disease. She always carries with her a big bottle of morphine syrup which she can give the patient for pain relief, which is the mainstay of palliative treatment. Besides the limited medical aid rendered, Ruth and Pastor Simon spend time encouraging the patient in the Christian faith, reminding them of the love and promises of our Lord, and how as believers we are no longer bound by death. And how His grace sees us through the sufferings in this earthly sojourn.



The Chaplains are also rostered to be on night call just like the doctors and there is a Chaplain on call every night in case of emergencies.

Community Health Outreach

The Community Health Programme is a very successful project first started by an American missionary, Dr Stevens, 20 years ago. It has since expanded to include mobile health clinics, malaria, alcohol and AIDS education, assistance with sanitation and an economic branch to help the farmers to plan and manage their finances and crop. The programme is very comprehensive and extensive but I'll just make special mention of a few aspects. The Industrial division makes these



homemade water filters from cement and gravel and aggressively markets the filters at an affordable price to the villages. Providing them with clean water is said to have significant impact on disease prevention at the population level.

Mobile Clinics are operated every weekday to different villages around the hospital. They provide childhood vaccinations, antenatal care, and occasionally conduct a few deliveries if a pregnant villager happens to be in labour on 'clinic' day. These have resulted in a significant decrease in diseases that used to be rampant in the area.

My Thanksgiving

And so I left Singapore on 10 April 2003, just as SARS was increasing in Singapore, and as the Iraq war raged on. I arrived in Kenya on that same day, 10 April 2003.

The first few weeks were a real struggle. I felt out of place amongst Kenyans and Americans who had never even heard of Singapore. I felt grossly inadequate in the hospital where medical students were expected to take up the physician's role and actually manage the patients. Medical students in Singapore sit-in outpatient clinics and passively observe the consultation, medical students follow the ward rounds like ghosts, shadowing the doctors. There at Tenwek Hospital, on the ward round, I was to see patients on my own, see patients at the outpatient clinic on my own! I felt lost, and totally miserable.

I couldn't be as useful around the hospital as I would have liked to be, and I felt like I was a burden to the missionary doctors. Daily I prayed for wisdom and strength, and daily I felt defeated and sunk further in despair. The learning curve was steep, and I fell so many times. But by the grace of God, He saw me through each and every small crisis I encountered, and with these small victories, led me through the entire time there to a spirit of rejoicing and thanksgiving. Through all the difficulties, God has truly provided very well for me. He provided for every obstacle I faced, and blessed me with such a blessed time of learning and fellowship. There was always a kind word from someone, or a doctor who would teach me and encourage me with their own testimonies of their own struggles and the Lord's provision, surprise parcels and cards and emails from family and friends. In my despondence, I told myself to write down each day something the Lord has blessed me with. And to my surprise, there was no lack of things to thank the Lord for! In fact, I found that I had more than 1 thing each day to thank God for!



Sovereign God has been so good. Will He call me to be fishers of men? It will be my greatest privilege to do so.

What about you my dearest reader?

MY FIRST RETREAT RECCE TRIP



It was 6.45 am on a cool Saturday morning when a group of us gathered in JCC awaiting transport to Malaysia for a recce of possible sites for Retreat 2004.

We traveled almost 4 hours before we reached our first destination. It was a beautiful beachfront resort with a mini golf course. We spent some time there discussing with the management and also surveying the place. As it was about lunchtime, we took

our lunch at the resort.

After lunch, we proceeded further up to another location. This was also a beachfront hotel. We did not get a good first impression of this place.

After a cursory look around, we then proceed to drive back, making one stopover to eat durian chendol. We arrived back in JCC at 10.30 pm.

Indeed we hope you will like the location we picked when you join us there in June 2004.

Martin Cheah

DO YOU NEED A BIGGER FRYING PAN?

Two men went fishing. One man was an experienced fisherman, the other wasn't. Every time the experienced fisherman caught a big fish, he put it in his ice chest to keep it fresh. Whenever the inexperienced fisherman caught a big fish, he threw it back. The experienced fisherman watched this go on all day and finally got tired of seeing this man waste good fish. "Why do you keep throwing back all the big fish you catch?" he asked. The inexperienced fisherman replied, "I only have a small frying pan."

Sometimes, like that fisherman, we throw back the BIG plans, BIG dreams, BIG jobs, BIG opportunities that God gives us. Our faith is too small. We laugh at that fisherman who didn't figure out that all he needed was a bigger frying pan; yet how ready are we to increase the size of our faith?

Whether it's a problem or a possibility, God will never give you anything bigger than you can handle. That means we can confidently walk into anything God brings our way. Nothing is too big for God.

Stop telling God you've got big problems, but instead tell your problems to a BIG God!

Prayer Requests

Thanksgiving

- ❖ For Retreat SPEAKER - Mr. Chong Ser Choon, Dean of Student, Singapore Bible College
- ❖ Confirmed Dates of Retreat - JUN 11-14, 2004.

Pray for

- ❖ Abilities, strength and wisdom for JCC 2004 Retreat Committee:

Pastor Anthony, Advisor
Co-Chairman

Chris Wang / Kin Siong

Treasurer & Registration

Martin Cheah / Peter Cheong

Program & Publicity

Joseph Liang / Nick Wong

Logistics & Prayer

Alan Yeo / Tony Koh

- ❖ FAITH TARGET:110 Participants (80 Adults 30 Children)
- ❖ Choice of RETREAT THEME and THEME SONG.....

Please PRAY for us.

Tony Koh

Is it necessary for a Christian to be a Lutheran? Why is just being a Christian not good enough?

If a student of Raffles Institution wishes to identify himself simply as a student, it does not make him any less a Rafflesian. Similarly, if he calls himself a Rafflesian, it does not make him any less a student receiving instruction under the Singapore Education System.

Using another illustration, you can be a Singaporean, but you cannot deny your roots as a Chinese, Indian, Eurasian, etc. And if you are a Chinese, you cannot deny your roots as a Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka or any other dialect group that are your ancestral heritage. Each heritage carries useful lessons and has an influence on one's conduct and approach to issues.

As a Chinese, I regard my Chinese heritage as important and useful in providing me a type of living perspectives. However, it does not detract me from my loyalty to the Singaporean pledge. In the same way, I am proud to be a Lutheran, benefiting a lot from the teachings of truths that have been passed down from Martin Luther, such as the emphasis on justification by faith, the ancient creeds that provide a constant living guide, the concept of dwelling in the freedom of Christian love and that I share a common faith with all Christians who accept the teachings of the Bible. So while the Lutheran heritage and the ministry of the body

provide me with a focus for spiritual growth and development without the distractions of a multitude of groups and conflicting teachings, of a cacophony of voices attempting to guide me in different directions, I am basically still very much a Christian as any other Christian who has the promise of salvation in Christ Jesus and who faithfully upholds the fundamental tenets of the faith.

From a Christian babe two decades ago given a lot of opportunities to serve and to grow under the guidance of the Lutheran teachings, I am like a student who has belonged to a certain school and who is very much identified with the school's merits in contributing to his present state. The Lutheran Church provided me with the spiritual ballast when I needed it most and it continues to provide me with the spiritual shelter in my walk with Christ.

This is my reason to say that it is not good enough for me just to declare that I am a Christian without identifying myself as being a Lutheran having been raised in the faith by the Lutheran Church. If I tell you, "Yes, I am a Singaporean and I am proud of my Chinese heritage," intelligent you will not misunderstand that I am putting down Singaporeans of other races. Same way, you will not misunderstand that identifying oneself as a Lutheran means despising members of other Christian denominations as lesser Christians. Lutherans believe that they share a common faith with other Christians who may have their own denominational distinctives.

The above enunciation points to the fact that while just being a Christian is ok, there is merit or purpose for one to identify himself/herself as a Lutheran (or a Methodist, or a Baptist, or ...). If you willingly register yourself as a member of the Lutheran Church, you are necessarily a Lutheran. Yes, it is perfectly right for you to say that you are first a Christian; second a Lutheran. As you identify yourself with the local church you belong to, and people see your testimony of faith, people will come to recognize this local church and its teachings as right for them to join the church. The Lutheran name becomes an identity that people associate with right Christian teachings and it becomes recognized as a church for people who want a safe spiritual mooring to learn and grow in the faith in the fellowship of believers. In fact, the Lutheran Church has been in existence for over 400 years and its doctrinal clarity by way of its Confessions written down and collected together in the Book of Concord (easily available for anybody to inspect) is a helpful guide to the development of a growing Christian in search of spiritual truths.

You identify yourself as a Lutheran because you believe in the doctrine advanced by Martin Luther. You bring no disrepute to the Lutheran name and the Lutheran name

is no impediment to your spirituality if you faithfully follow the doctrine that is actually the doctrine of Christ. Martin Luther simply brought this doctrine of Christ to the fore in the light of doctrinal confusions at the time of the Reformation. So identifying yourself as a Lutheran is identifying yourself with the doctrine of Martin Luther and it means identifying yourself with the doctrine of Christ. The Church's faithfulness to Scripture in her teaching and preaching is evident in the Lutheran Confessions.

Apart from doctrine, identifying yourself as a Lutheran also means that you identify yourself with the style of the church practices in non-spiritual aspects such as financial stewardship, administrative control, membership determination, handling of church-state and religious harmony issues, etc. If you value the sense of belonging to a group with its distinctives, knowing that being in such a group does not make you any less a Christian according to the teachings of Christ, you won't have to ask whether there is a need to identify yourself with the group – you will simply identify yourself with the group without question. So it is with the case of a Lutheran proudly declaring himself as a Lutheran.

John Lee

This year's Reformation Day Service will be held at Yishun Christian Church (Lutheran) on 31st October. Bishop Robert Solomon from The Methodist Church in Singapore will speak on the theme "Affirming Christ Centeredness In The Church Ministry Today".

Please give your full support with your attendance.