

The Vine

For internal circulation only

December 2003

Vol. 12/2003

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1. Reports and pictures of the recent Kids' Camp and Youth Camp
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T h e r e b i r t h o f t h e M P H a n d t h e Y o u t h M i n i s t r y s

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ. As the song goes, "...another year over and what have we done..". I think we have achieved much.

The rebirth of the CG, a painful process but I can see some gains even as the work of Lord is now being done through the CGs rather than detached individuals.

The building of the MPH and the beginning of the Youth Ministry. Most of us have the privilege of enjoying the building in which we can worship God without having to put any effort into its construction. So we have now built a small hall for the Youth to enjoy worshipping God.

If that's not enough, in the past few weeks, many had been involved in the camps and Christmas Outreach programs. Seems like this year, we have more young people coming to Christ than older people. God moves in mysterious ways. Maybe He is rebuilding JCC through the young people because we have been wandering for the past 36 years.

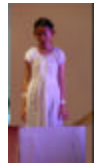
Even as you ponder over what you have accomplished in your careers, consider also what you have done for the expansion of God's kingdom on earth. "Thy Kingdom Come on earth", we pray every Sunday. Do we mean it?

As you consider the year ahead, are you ready for renewal? We are still going forward. There's no turning back. Are

we intimidated by the challenge? Contemplate neither the lack of physical splendour in our building nor the absence of any great artiste among us to entertain and draw in the crowd. Note that we are here in JCC principally for God's sake to dispense spiritual wellness to everyone who seeks by his/her free will. We are not in competition, but in partnership with over 400 fine churches in Singapore to take in the lost souls who are searching for a good spiritual dwelling place. You have faithfully served in a humble setting and God will bless you for your faithfulness.

Over the past few busy weeks, I have seen God's hand at work. Man can plan and make everything ready but there are many things we can't control and one of them is the weather. Over and over again during all the camps, we have experienced fine weather. Even last night at the Christmas Outreach, it rained throughout the evening but there was a small break in the weather at the time of the event so that many people could come.

Amazingly, what I thought would not come out professionally, turned out to be a very well done performance by all the kids. Praise God! Leaving it to God does not mean we do nothing but it certainly means that we do our part while God does His part.



As we serve together, may we also share **Spiritual Delight** in the Lord at the retreat planned for next year. Start signing up and committing yourselves to it right now!

Martin Cheah

Choices-Camp (29th Nov – 1st Dec)

GOD is good.

There are so many things we can thank GOD for this camp.

- ❖ Many children (20 boys & 10 girls) responded to the altar call, either seeking to know more about Christ or accepting Christ as their personal Saviour.
- ❖ Perfect weather for all our activities
- ❖ Protection and good health for all campers
- ❖ Smooth running of the camp
- ❖ All the fun and bonding among campers

On behalf of the camp committee, I would like to thank all of you who have dedicated your leadership and assistance to the camp. Thank you for taking care, teaching and blessing the children in many small and big ways. Though you had sleepless nights and felt tired throughout the camp, I am delighted that all of you gave of your best.

Let us continue to pray for these children that they will:

- ❖ Learn to make the right choice in things they do
- ❖ The Word of God will remain in their hearts
- ❖ Those who accepted Christ will keep their faith in Christ
- ❖ Be protected by the Holy Spirit
- ❖ Come to JCC to join K.I.D.S. Church or Youth Service

Give thanks and praise to God for His marvelous blessings

Pamela Chong
Camp Commandant



Camp Committee:

Pamela Chong	Michelle Lee	Julie Kao	Beng Lay
Young Kwang	Kim Keong	Keith	

C.H.O.I.C.E.S

29th Nov - 1st Dec

Combined GB, BB and K.I.D.S Camp
(for learning the secret to making right choices in life)

29th November to 1st December would be etched in my memory bank as 3 terrific days of joy and excitement as an assistant leader to my group ABRAHAM at the Camp.

Little kids filled the Sembawang campsite with fun and laughter. Managing them who came from different backgrounds was indeed an uphill task for a greenhorn 'leader' like me. However, it was these little ones who made the camp a successful one through their active participation in the games, group discussions and the performances put up on the "Night of Stars".



Samuel Tan, Stephanie and I had the privilege to be the station masters for one of the games. Were we still kids? Maybe not, but it was fun to be one with the kids. We spared none with mercy as we fired at them relentlessly with our guns. Fortunately for them, the guns had some problem – instead of spitting hard bullets, they only sprayed water so that the targets merely had to suffer a little soaking. Even the group leaders accompanying the little ones were not out of the watery peril. They too had to bear the ignominy of defeat, returning from the battlefield without a dry set of clothing on their backs.



The physical challenge increased in intensity as the games spilled over from the campsite proper to the nearby Sembawang Park. Fun? Yes. Exciting? Sure. Tiring? Certainly – with stairs to mount, hills to climb and all the running from end to end and all the shouting to gather the exuberant kids. Wow! It looked more like the young ones were having their great fun at the expense of the old ones like me who were no match for their inexhaustible packets of energy. Be this as it might, it was a joy to see the jolly faces of the kids who had found freedom from months of imprisonment at home buried in books. It was now great holiday time. Soon, holidays would be over; so let them enjoy as much as they would like to before they get shooed back behind prison doors again. As group leader, I found it very satisfying to see the kids working together as a team to achieve their goal.



Thank God for Sis. June and Ewe Ewe who enthralled the kids with their interesting messages. The kids had their turn to do the entertaining on the “Night of Stars” as they put their budding acting and singing talents on show. Sis. Shu Hui ably hosted the event to make it as entertaining as one would wish for. As for all those who went on stage to do the Indian dance, such as Mindy and Young Kwang, I suppose that they were also entertaining themselves with each dance step to make the night a great time for everyone.



As a whole, the camp committee deserved accolades for all their hard work and the sweat without which this camp would not be such a wonderful and memorable one. Hopefully, the secret to making right choices would also stick in the heads of the participants. Thank God for His blessings. It was quite heartening to witness many kids expressing a desire to know more about Christ and to accept Him as their personal Saviour. All glory be to God for the great things he had done.

Benedict Lee

WHERE DID EVERYBODY GO?

Dearest Friends,

I have just returned from CAMP CHOICES – the combined holiday camp for the kids from K.I.D.S. Church, and the Boys Brigade and Girls Brigade ministries and I am still brimming with excitement and joy at having been part of such a



great camp. I am glad to have had the chance to help out. It has been a real privilege for me to be one of the group leaders, and I have even enjoyed sharing a dormitory with several 6-7-year-old boys. Noisy and mischievous as they can be, they have totally won my heart with their make-believe gunfights using their long paintbrushes, their torchlight disco and their rule of having to say a password before entering the dorm. Indeed, children are a gift from the Lord. No wonder Jesus said to let the little children come to Him. But then again, Jesus also said, “Come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest”. A glorious promise to all who believe.



Anyway, I am not primarily writing about what went on in the camp. I trust there will be a better-written article complete with pictures to tell the story much better than I can. I am writing to share with you some other ‘spin-off thoughts’.

Firstly, I was reminded about one particular morning during my time in Kenya. A bus had overturned and all the casualties were sent to Tenwek Hospital where I was attached. There were some 40 – 50 people who had minor injuries, mostly superficial skin injuries on the head and on the limbs which required cleaning and stitching up but still needing a doctor’s assessment and X-Rays to rule out any unnoticed injury that could be more sinister. So all the missionary doctors rushed to attend to these people and stitched and stitched the morning away, mending broken scalps and lacerated skin.

All this began early in the morning, just after 6am. And even as the ‘sewing’ assembly lines were churning out stitched-up patients, I was blissfully unaware and enjoying my short walk to the hospital and thanking the Lord for yet another beautiful morning. I arrived punctually at 8am for the daily morning meeting only to find that there was no one in the meeting room. Strangely, there happened not to be any of the missionary administrative staff around either. I felt puzzled and made my way to the wards to see if the doctors were making ward rounds, but they were not in the wards either. Then WHAM!! It suddenly dawned upon me that maybe they were all raptured and were with the Lord, and that I had been left behind.

“But as the days of Noah were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left. Watch therefore; for you know not what hour your Lord will come.” - Matthew 24: 37. 40-42

For a moment, actually a few panicky, bewildered moments, I stood there thinking that everyone had been raptured to be with the Lord, and that I was left behind. Fortunately, it wasn’t too long until I saw that they were all tied up in the Accident and Emergency area.

My friends, looking back, I laugh at my silliness and I really don’t mind if you laugh at me. But bringing you back to the topic of the kids’ camp, there were so many adults from JCC and youths from the youth group involved over the weekend. Did you miss their presence during the Sunday morning service? Did you feel that it was emptier at the pews? For those who didn’t realize how many people were involved with the kids’ camp, did you wonder where everyone was? Perchance, was there anyone as silly as me who thought that the rapture had happened? Or maybe you saw Pastor sitting in front and felt reassured that it couldn’t possibly be that you missed the ‘rapture’ into heaven.

My dearest fellow cross-bearers and pilgrims on this earth, let us be reminded of who we are and what we are doing on this earth. That our Lord has died for us and paid the full ransom for our sins, and that He is coming again. And He has made it clear that “no one knows the hour”, and that “the Son of Man will come like a thief in the night”. Maybe tomorrow, but maybe today. My dear readers, when Christ

comes in glory, will we be like the unprofitable servant cast into the darkness weeping and gnashing our teeth, or like the foolish virgins whose lamps have gone out when the bridegroom comes? Or will we be like the wise virgins, with lamps trimmed and lit, watchful and waiting for the return of our Lord, assured and confident of our 'rapture' flight into the skies to be with Jesus? I pray that when the Lord comes, He will find us watching, and waiting.

“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man comes” - Matthew 25: 13

“ Remember therefore how you have received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore you will not watch, I will come on you as a thief and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.”
- Revelations 3:3

“ And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” - Revelations 22:12

Here, I also want to make special mention of the efforts of the camp committee and of the people who have been serving the Lord in the KIDS CHURCH all these years. We may or may not have noticed their periodic absence from Sunday worship service, but I assure you that they have been faithfully taking turns to nurture your young ones in the Word of God. All these years, from the old system of the Sunday school, to the time when Auntie Ewe Ewe revamped the Sunday school system to ensure it is more than a baby-sitting service for the children while their parents attend Sunday worship, to the current able leadership of Uncle Young Kwang and Auntie Iris. They even make the effort to remember all Sunday school teachers on Teachers' Day but have themselves not been recognized for their blessed service to the Lord. The Lord knows, and delights in the labour of their hands and in that final day, will reward them. But let us remember to give thanks for them, and pray for them to be strengthened as they are used by Him to plant the seeds of the precious gospel in the hearts of our precious little ones.

So to the camp committee and Kids Church committee, I bring to you my heartfelt thanks. May the Lord continue to bless your work in the Children's ministry.

Chui Yin



Now you can buy over 300 pictures taken of the Kids' Camp in one CD compilation for only \$2.00 each – very cheap! There is a TV and a PC version. Get more details from the camp committee. Available from Saturday 20th Dec onwards.



NO JOB TOO SMALL.....

When I was first asked to help in the Kids' Camp as a Kitchen Helper, I was very eager because I felt that I was not good in areas like leading or teaching. But kitchen work should be no problem to me or so I thought. Well God being all-powerful and all-knowing knows my weakness even though I didn't know it myself and He provided an additional helper.



On the morning of the camp, I met Sis. Shirley Yeo in JCC. She was there to send off Arnold and her friend's children. At the last minute, she decided to join me as a kitchen helper even without anyone asking. I really appreciate and thank God for providing her because when we reached the camp site, I realized that there was so much to do even though the food was catered. There were dishes to wash, fruits to cut, water to boil, etc.



Shirley was such a fast worker. She managed to do all the above very quickly and without complaining. I also thank God for Sisters Ewe Ewe, June, Poh Kiat and Linda (Pamela's maid). Without their help, Sis. Michelle and I would not have been able to manage the kitchen.

God has provided our leaders and helpers with gifts of leadership, teaching and patience with children. He also provided us with Young Kwang who supplied so much of the equipment, including the cups and plates.

I was really touched when I witnessed so many children responding to Sis. Ewe Ewe's altar call to receive Christ. I want to thank the camp committee for a job well done and to remind them that all their sweat and tears, and sleepless nights were not in vain.

Joo See

JCC Tuition Programme:



My Lesson Learnt from God and His People

I was filled with trepidation as I entered room 5 about 4 months ago. After a couple of years surviving with Mathematics only enough for me to get by in daily life, I am baffled by how hastily I agreed to help in the Mathematics Tuition Outreach to the 'O' Level students. As I looked through the

e-mails that were circulating pre-tuition, a verse hit me: 'I can do everything through him who gives me strength.'

Indeed, the verse reminded me to humble myself and watch Him do the work in me. Moreover, I realized that He is the one who allowed me to be used by this ministry. The Lord opened my eyes and heart, and taught me so many lessons through Uncle John, Jennifer, David, Poh Kiat and the other students. This would not have been possible if I had wasted the Sunday afternoons watching television and engaging in idle activities.

Apart from David, the rest who were involved in the Mathematics class and myself started off as total strangers. From the superficial words exchanged during the first few meetings, we moved on to develop lasting friendship that we hope to keep with God's help. This ministry also enables youths and adults to maintain contact and slog together for His kingdom.

Initially all I knew about Uncle John was that he is Benedict's father. Throughout the outreach, I learnt more about him. He tirelessly invited the students to join us for any activities that may be going on in church. Some of them include the mid-autumn fellowship as well as the youth camp. His fervent love for God and His people can be seen in his deliberate efforts to prepare tuition material that is useful for the students. As a qualified tutor, he could easily spend all this time coaching for a fee but he did not. He chose to invest his time on the lost and I am certain that God has rewards ready in heaven for him. Uncle John also constantly encourages us in this work for God. Without him, I might not have the motivation to accomplish the job.



God also sent another of His saints to work together with us. This new saint to our church is Jennifer. Despite being here for not more than 6 months, her contributions to the community are huge. Besides being involved in the tuition programme, she is mingling well with parents and children in the kindergarten. Although she is already a mother to 2 children, she is still very much in tune with the youths.



She can spark off a conversation very easily and it is so easy to talk to her about anything. This energetic woman is very empathetic, so the youths can share their secrets with her without qualms.



Jennifer's ease and boldness in sharing Christ is also a great inspiration and learning point. The way she shares of Jesus is so simple and not intimidating. The students were comfortable and open to listen to her narration of a Christian movie and personal experiences. On one occasion, we went to the fountain of wealth at Suntec City after our steamboat dinner gathering. By God's grace and

wisdom, we did not cancel the meeting despite the small number who turned up. Thanks to Him, one of the girls brought a friend to the dinner. Her name is Clarissa and that night, she opened her heart to Jennifer who spoke as a friend who understands. God has blessed Jennifer richly with the gift to reach out to people as a friend, the same way Jesus is a friend and brother to all of us.



My other co-worker is David. This gregarious guy will never reject the offer to befriend and lend a helping hand. He was able to delve into the depths of the hearts of those whom he was coaching and addressed issues that many of us will shy away from. This friend is also ever present and he develops the friendship even beyond the Sunday afternoon meetings. Despite a very hectic and stressful job schedule, David has steadfastly maintained the rapport with his charges. His generosity is also commendable and it is obvious in the ways he willingly shares and gives. He is a truly outstanding ambassador of Christ.

I also got to know Poh Kiat as part of the learning package of this tuition outreach. While her name is no stranger to me, I have never met her prior to this. She is extremely helpful and patient. She provides help without lamentation and assists cheerfully even if it is not her responsibility. A warm sunshine smile seldom departs from her face. I am absolutely sure that she has plenty of joy in her heart.

It is also impossible to forget Anthony and Meiling who very generously provided food for the celebration time. Michelle and Jim also ceaselessly gave us encouragement and contributed to chow. My fellow youth comrades also sacrificed their time to interact with the newcomers. They taught me how to be a joyful and cheerful giver, in terms of material possessions and time.



Every student in the programme has also contributed in this time of service learning. Meng Choo in particular taught me to be contented with what I have. She is always laughing and never afraid of being the subject of a joke. The others like Jingjing, Pauline and Weiling usually brought food items to share and added flavour to the 2 hours. The other 2 girls under David's wings, Yik Man and Charlene, were diligent

and focused on their work. Eunice is an extremely warm girl who can chat with anyone. The only other male is Yong Thieng who is very open to possibilities. He seemed quiet at the first instance but can be a very good company. Lastly but in no way least, Jonathan, son of Thomas, is truly mature and he makes the effort to befriend the other students.



*Yong Thieng – white shirt, seated.
He participated in our Youth Camp.*

All in all, God who is faithful and almighty has allowed me to be moulded through these people whom He has sent into my life. The lessons learnt have been numerous and important. Humility, submission, devotion, diligence, empathy, friendship, generosity, cheerfulness, joy and most significantly LOVE. Each action, word and smile by everyone sprung out of love. We do the things we have done for Him because we love Him and the people whom He loves. Ultimately, God is the greatest teacher. May we humble ourselves and be educated.

Mindy Yeo

Christmas Thoughts

A Little Girl Who Sold Matchsticks

“**O**n a wintry night on Christmas Eve, many families were making merry in the warmth of their homes welcoming the upcoming New Year. Oblivious to them, a little girl was making her rounds in the streets selling matchsticks, barefooted on a carpet of thick snow, with only a ragged dress on her body and an old scarf draping her head to shield her from the icy winds.

It was not the girl’s wish to go out in such inclement weather, but there was no food left in the house and her baby brother was wailing with hunger, having not been fed the whole day. Furthermore, she dreaded the thought of waiting at home to be thrashed by her father once he returned in his usual drunken rage.

“Matchsticks for sale! ... Matchsticks for sale! ...”

With Christmas approaching and most people in joyous party mood busily feasting on lots of delicious food, who would want to buy those teeny matchsticks?

Poor little girl! For what seemed an interminable time, not a single soul came along to give her a penny. She trudged along, laden with both hunger and cold as snowflakes fell on her golden strands and the wavy hair spread on her shoulders making out a pretty face. Unfortunately, in her pitiful state, she hardly had any mood to contemplate her good looks. **Bright lights shone out of many windows, laughter could be heard, and the aroma of roasted geese wafted through the air. She pondered, “Today is Christmas eve.”**

The little girl sat down at a corner between two buildings, despondent. She tried her best to draw her freezing feet into her ragged dress to seek some warmth. Her hands were getting frigid from the cold, and the matchsticks in them scattered on the ground. As she tried picking up the matchsticks, she thought, “If I use one of them to warm my hands, how nice it would be!” Notwithstanding a tinge of unwillingness to

spare any for her own use, the thought of not being able to sell off even a single matchstick had the better of her.

“Czzee...ee..,” a matchstick was finally struck, radiating a bright glow like a little candle. She quickly cupped the precious flame with her little hand and the hand immediately felt its warmth.

In her dreamy state, the wall in front of her brightened up to reveal a big room with a huge dining table in the centre covered with an immaculately white tablecloth and laid with exquisite crockery filled with all kinds of juicy fruits. Most tempting of all was a large roasted goose emanating a fragrance so delicate and mouthwatering.

“Ah, that’s great!” the little girl dreamily glimpsed the roasted goose leaping out of its plate, with a fork still stuck to its back, staggering towards her. Just at this brief but wonderful moment, the flame from the matchstick died out, leaving a thick and cold wall before her eyes. So, she lighted up another matchstick. In the soft glow, she visualized herself sitting beside a fireplace. Just as she was about to put out her feet to catch some warmth, the matchstick was extinguished and the fireplace disappeared.

The little girl’s feet were getting very cold indeed. She again lighted a matchstick, and imagined herself sitting under a lovely Christmas tree with thousands of candles on its branches. Hanging from the tree were also all sorts of presents and flowers, with some beautiful posters winking at her, much like those she had seen in shop windows. As she stretched her hand out to touch the presents, the matchstick flickered out. In that instantaneous moment she seemed to see the light rising into the sky transforming into twinkling stars, one of which fell down to trace out a long red line.

“Now, which person has died?” the little girl queried, because her grandmother had once said; “When a star drops from the sky, it means that in the world a soul is going up.”

She struck another matchstick and in the faint light saw herself being with her late grandmother who had loved her most and always protected her from her father’s drunken fury when she was alive. The grandmother was ever so affable, gentle and soft, the source of hope in moments of despair. It was as if the grandmother was speaking to her: “Child, how are you now? Where are your mother and brother? Does your father still vent his anger on you?”

“Granny, please take me with you. Once this matchstick goes off, so will you disappear. You will be like the roasted goose, the fireplace and the Christmas tree, vanishing with the twinkle of an eye,” the little girl spoke as her tears welled up. She quickly grabbed a bunch of the remaining matchsticks and lighted them up altogether

because she was eager to have her grandmother with her. She was longing for love and safety that she felt only her grandmother would be able to provide her with.

The next morning, people saw the body of a dead girl at the corner of a building. She was wearing a ragged dress and with her were some unused matchsticks. Her exposed feet were frostbitten and an old scarf belonging to her mother was draped over her head. Looking at her face, one could faintly detect a frozen smile.

The little girl had frozen to death without a penny in her pocket.

But who will ever know that before she died, she had seen a lot of beautiful things and dreamed of all the love and celebratory joy that many enjoyed while dancing around Christmas trees and feasting at tables spread with fresh fruits and succulent geese? ”

– *Translated and condensed from a Chinese children's tale 卖火柴的小女孩*

The above thought-provoking story has been told and retold with varying details. While we may not get the chance to see a poor little girl selling matchsticks on our streets in the winter cold, do we ever see old folks with backs arched making their rounds collecting used cardboards for livelihood? Even though we are a prosperous nation where no deserving needy would be denied help, we still frequently see scavengers digging for empty drink cans in rubbish bins. When we eat out, do we disparage people who come around with tissue packs or soft toys pleading for our compassion? **Christmas is a season of peace and goodwill, a time for celebratory joy; but the reality is that many people from year to year miss out on the peace, goodwill and joy while many others celebrate with abandon feasting on roast turkey and log cakes with nary a thought of being grateful (without complaining) for the blessings they enjoy, let alone sharing blessings with the less blessed in their midst.**

We are often very pragmatic in our rationalization about the need to distinguish between the truly disadvantaged and the false needy when reaching out with a helping hand or doling out a penny. We are also very pragmatic when it comes to ourselves being in need; we do not expect any ready helping hand even when we have the humility to make known our own situation. In other words, we are not accustomed to give freely, neither are we accustomed to the idea of receiving freely although we are all too familiar with the Scriptural message of “Freely you have received, freely give.” (Matt. 10:8) The reason, I think, is that we have yet to fully receive “the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.” (1 Cor. 2:12)

Admittedly, it is unrealistic to expect that anyone of us individually is equipped to meet the needs of every single soul who approaches us for alms. It is hard, humanly very hard, if at all possible, to reach out to every single needy soul who

comes into sight. However, we can do a fair appraisal of our personal Christmas spirit of love by asking ourselves whether we do at least spare a thought for 'others' instead of just limiting our attention to 'self'. If Christmas is a season of giving, we can try sharing our blessings on a:

- ❑ one-to-one basis – between individuals
- ❑ one-to-many basis – from 'I' to the masses through the church
- ❑ many-to-many basis – all Christians combining their serve to bless the masses
- ❑ many-to-one basis – Group of Christians extending helping hands to specific individuals who have needs

What is Christmas to you? Do you feel happy or sad? Some people feel sad during the Christmas season, like what a poet wrote:



As we celebrate Christmas with blessed joy, let us not take things for granted. Let us be grateful and thoughtful.

John Lee

Sad Christmas

*Christmas is a bitter day
For mothers who are poor,
The wistful eyes of children
Are daggers to endure.*

*Though shops are crammed with playthings
Enough for everyone.
If a mother's purse is empty
There might as well be none.*

*My purse is full of money
But I cannot buy a toy;
Only a wreath of holly
For the grave of my little boy.*

— Earl C. Willer



Next Issue: **Full Report of the Christmas Outreach on 20th Dec 2003.**

Youth Camp 2003

PULSE – Dead or alive?

5th – 8th December

With my brothers, I rushed to register for this year's youth camp on the youth leaders' assurance that it would be very fun.

The eagerly awaited day arrived on 5th December and my excitement was raised a notch as participants were divided into 8 groups with funny names and we were briefed on what to expect. The groups were *Anima*, *Leverne*, *Maisha*, *Vita*, *Nyawa*, *Leben*, *Vie*, and *Ichimei*. The names are all foreign words, each of which means "life". I was placed in the group with the Italian name *Vita*, which reminds me of *Vitagen*.

When time passes by slowly, it means that what we do must be very boring indeed. However, on Day 1 afternoon when we had the ice-breakers and our group sessions, I sensed that time was passing too quickly. Still, we managed to squeeze in a dance lesson and had great fun learning it. Very soon, it was dinner and shower time.

It was dinner and shower at the same time. ☺ While the first 4 groups had their dinner, the other 4 groups took their shower – so both eating and showering were taking place at the same time, although for separate groups. In this way, there would be no overcrowding in the bathrooms. Of course, there was also no dining in the bathrooms.



After dinner and bath, a game called "Report Card" was played. Actually it was a game made up of several games played at a few game stalls until supper, after which we had a group sharing session. Time again seemed to fly. With a blink of an eye, the day came to an end. We slept well in our rooms although the ground was hard.



Day 2 of the camp was also filled with games – at West Coast Park in the morning followed by more games in the church compound after lunch. In the evening, we had the opportunity to listen to a message delivered by Rev. John Tan. The message was encouraging, as the speaker related well with the youths. Everyone in the audience listened attentively and I believe that many among them gained a lot from it as I did.

We moved towards "Crossroad Junction" at Orchard Road the next day. This was the title of a game we played walking along Orchard Road in our groups competing to see who would finish the given task first. *Vita* came in fourth. That evening, after dinner, Rev. John Tan delivered his second message for the camp. It

was as challenging as his first, and I noted that one member in my group either accepted Christ or sought to know more about the Lord.

Day 3 was both sad and happy. It was sad because participants knew that time was running out for play and the next day would soon

arrive for us to pack and go home. It was happy because the *Omega Night* as we called the third camp night programme stretched all the way past midnight, breaking all past camp records, so that the youths had ample enjoyment. Yet, we were asking for more.

Prizes were given out and skits were performed. Hilarity was the order of the nite until supper time (or breakfast?) at 1.00 a.m. in the morning. The end of a long session was not in sight yet. After supper, I continued playing with my friends until 4.00 a.m. Believe it or not, there were others who still kept themselves awake while I slept.



Everything enjoyable had to come to an end. Day 4 and the final day was partly work time. Camp participants cleaned up the dormitories, leaving them spick and span. After that, we had a time of worship and sharing. Much of the sharing was enlightening. Listening to it, I knew that many had felt the positive impact of the camp on their lives. Personally, I learnt a lot from the camp and am looking forward to the next Youth Camp.

Ian Lee

3 Lessons about Giving

Tithing, like everything else we do as an attempt to walk in obedience to God's word, must be done by faith. This is probably the major attitude that any "tither" should first have. But we know that faith works by love. Galatians 5:6 - *For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love.*

Hence, our motivation must be right to receive the blessings that God has for His children, as mentioned in Galatians 4:3 - *You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.*

Did you ever ask for something from God that you later considered childish? Did you receive it? God will respond to such childlike faith to encourage us to come to Him for everything, as long as our heart is right before Him. We will need to grow in wisdom and maturity, though. We know that Abel's offering was pleasing to God because it was done in faith. Hebrews 11:4) We have to have faith. Hebrews 11:6 - *But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*

But... what do you think about the attitude of "giving to get"? Some say that "giving to get" is wrong, and those giving purely to "get" will not be motivated by love and will not successfully receive. And some ask for a harvest without giving or sowing in the first place. But, on the other hand, what would we think of a farmer who planted seeds and then said that he didn't expect a harvest? That would be just as erroneous as expecting a harvest without planting seeds. To please God, we must believe that He is a rewarder. If we give out of love for God and people, knowing that He will reward our efforts, we will have an expectancy about our seeds sown. If we believe that God's Word is true and His promises are "yea and amen", we will be expecting Him to bless our finances, and we will not be moved at the appearance of lack.

Lesson # 1 - We need faith, and we need it to believe that God is, and will be, rewarding us greatly.

Read Malachi 3:8-10 *Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed me. Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. Have you ever had such a response to your giving from the Lord? God actually commands us to expect His blessing upon our giving. It is the thief who steals from us. The Lord is a giver, not a stealer. We should open our hearts to the Lord and allow Him to replace religious notions of giving with what His Word says. His prosperity for us and its purpose in our lives are important aspects of growing the kingdom of God.*

Also, if we expect to move on to the deeper things of God, we must first become established in our giving. It is then that we will be made ready to partake of the meat of the Word. Meat - (Hebrew) - food, fresh, recently torn off as a fragment of a leaf. Luke 16:11 - *If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches.*

Lesson # 2 - Expect God to bless you with more prosperity than what you have now, in the natural and in the spirit.

Well, what comes first, the giving, the expectation, or the faith? How do you think it took place in your life? We see here that our giving should be done in **faith** that works by, or is motivated by, **love**. Faith will foster an expectancy in our giving and it then becomes a joy to give, which also pleases God. 2 Corinthians 9:7 - *Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver.* Holding on to what we should give to the Lord is motivated by the spirit of mammon. Mammon (Gk.- avarice or excessive love of money, greed, covetous) can be called a spirit, a god (demon) that says the answer, even every answer, is in money. A person who is greedy will most likely NOT GIVE. One who gives, even for the wrong reason, is at least not bowing down to the god of mammon (greed, the love of money). Matthew 6:24 - *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*

Lesson # 3 - God loves us to give, and to be happy about it. That is true service to God.