

The Vine

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Editor's Views

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

Even as I struggled over what to write to you this month, to encourage and to inform, I received two "inspirations".

One I will share with you in this issue and the other, sometime later when the time is right. I received an e-mail from Bro. John Lee relating how much a nearby mega church collects annually from its 16,000 members, a cool \$14 million.

Being a maths teacher, he did some simple calculations and came to the conclusion that each member of this mega church contributes \$72.91 per month.

Then basing on my Income Budget for 2004, which is \$289,350 and dividing it by an estimated 200 persons, he concludes that JCC members are contributing an estimated \$120.56 or 65% more per head than this mega church.

Therefore the conclusion is that our members are giving above and even beyond all expectations and therefore the problem lies with the fact that we have too few members to support the operational expenditure needs of

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JCC.

This is indeed

one view of the situation if we use such simple assumptions in our calculations. With this, the solution would seem to be simply to increase our membership.

Before we all run out to invite people to join JCC for the wrong reasons, let me make another assumption. Suppose that the mega church, like most mega churches comprise mostly of young people who are not able to contribute much, then instead of 16,000, our denominator would be 8,000 (i.e. 50% are youths). Then their monthly contribution per member would be \$145.83 or 21% more than us. This is a more likely scenario.

However, thank God that we are not too far behind comparatively speaking. After saying that, I must encourage all of us to make more effort to invite friends to church. Not because we want their support but because they are our friends and their getting to know our Savior should be utmost in our hearts.

Take the opportunity afforded to us by the May 1st Family Day to bring your loved ones to join us and find out for themselves a family of loving and caring people in JCC.

Martin Cheah

A CRY TO GOD
by June Wu

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

O Lord, how unworthy I am.
I confess:
If I were one of those in Jerusalem,
I might not have believed you,
even with you standing before me.
I would be like the doubters,
seeking a miracle as a pre-condition for belief.
And Lord, for my unbelief,
I would not deserve to be called your own,
your child.

But Lord, you brought me out of Satan's hand,
with your life as a ransom for my sin.
You died for sinners, of whom I am one.
You are who you claim you are, Lord.
You are the Son of Man,
and the only begotten Son of God,
being of one substance with the Father.
Forgive me for once doubting you.
It must have hurt you deeply,
as do my ugly deeds in sinful ignorance.

Dear Lord, I thank you
for accepting me into your Kingdom.
At times, I was none better than the Pharisees;
my ways were to glorify myself,
and not you, Lord.
But now, I realize my wrong, Lord.
Keep me safe under your care,
so that I can be kept pure in your sight.
Free me from Satan's plot to corrupt my ways.
Let not my enemies triumph over me.

Lord, who am I to judge others,
if I don't want to be judged by them?
How qualified am I to throw the first stone,
if I am not without blame myself?
O Lord, only you have the authority to judge,
but you have shown compassion towards me.
Your compassion put me to discomfiture,
because I am not worthy of it.
If I were to list down my iniquities,
I would have to go on and on without end.

Thank you, Lord,
you keep no record of my sins,
that you freely forgive upon my confession.
Why then should I keep one of others' sins,

or be quick against them who sin against me?
Freely I have received,
and so freely I ought to give.
Grant me strength, Lord,
to speak only forgiveness,
and words that glorify your name.

Dear Lord, you are my good shepherd,
I listen to your voice and am your sheep.
You'll not give me over to thieves,
who plot for my life.
Protect me from the prince of darkness;
Let not his words hoodwink me.
You have known me
since I was in my mother's womb.
I shall only listen to you.
Let my life be yours only in all eternity.

My Lord and my God,
I thirst after your Holy Spirit,
my ever-present guide to the Truth.
I beg for a sensitive heart to feel your
presence,
And a sensitive spirit to know your will.
Let my eyes see and my ears hear
none of the deceit of the enemy.
Tell me what you want from me,
and help me respond freely, Lord,
for the sake of Kingdom's gain.

Lord, teach me humility,
and grant me perseverance to keep it always.
Instruct me on your Word,
and bless me to teach as you have taught.
Thanks for loving me first and more each day,
I pray my faith grows with passing time.
My dear Jesus, I love you;
and I mean it, my dear Lord.
For no one loves me this much,
and no one except you has given his all for
me.

Dear Almighty,
Let the world be filled with light
And let my all be for thee.
I praise thee, my Lord and my God
In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen!

FROM THE KEE'S

April 2004

*Rev Terry & Sally Kee, 77/267 Soi Phumijit, Rama 4 Road, Bangkok 10110
Tel:001-661-8275426*

Dear praying friends,

It is the hot season in Thailand. Reports of villages in difficulties due to water shortage hit the news everyday. I cannot help but think of Jesus' offer of living water to the Samaritan Woman in John Chapter 4.

As we dig the well within the compound of the Church site in Nong Han, I am reminded of the importance of water, and the importance of what we are doing here.

After Mr. Boonma's graduation from the basic Certificate for Church Ministry Course of L.I.T.E. in 1999, he began evangelizing to the people in his neighbourhood, starting with his relatives.

Terry was requested to assist him prepare his members as they prepare to become an organized congregation of the ELCT and as they prepare to build a Sanctuary to the glory of God. Taking up the challenge, Terry took up the responsibility as Pastor of Nong Han in addition to his ministry as Pastor of Siikhiu Church in August 2003.

After spending some time to understand the needs of the members and the ministry, a leaders' planning retreat was organized in mid-January 2004.

The motto, plans and objectives were adopted at their AGM on 25th January 2004.

We had elected the first official Council and moved that we apply to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand to be recognized as a full congregation by the General Assembly in April this year.

Church building Project

The land for the Church building was prepared in February, We had the well dug in March and is now waiting for the blueprint to be approved.

We expect to be officially endorsed by the General Assembly in April and have our ground-breaking service on 27 May 2004.

If all things went well, we should begin our construction in June or July this year.

Vocational Training

In February, we send 8 members of Nong Han for Vocational Training at a factory from Monday to Friday for one month. Now, with special arrangement with the factory, they are able to gather and work together as a group at the preaching place with products

delivered and collected by them. This enabled the women of the congregation to have an income. We have plans to extend this to the community when the Church building is completed.

In April, we will launch a co-operative Fund to help members in need of low interest loan as capital for their income generating projects.

Family enrichment

Among the many needs here in Thailand, one that deserves our attention is that of good family lifestyle. Separation and divorce rates are high. Neglect or conflict is common even among the Christians. As such a family life seminar is organized for the members in June and July and we hope to have a renewal/exchange of marital vows Service in August. The members are excited about it.

English Programme

By the grace of the Lord, after restructuring, the Provincial Education Unit was divided into 4 Zones and Nong Han was selected to be the Centre for Zone 3. The Office for this Zone is responsible for 241 schools in Nong Han as well as 5 other nearby Districts. Terry has the privilege of helping them with their English Teachers Training. He is also invited to participate in their Teachers gatherings. We hope this will prepare the way for the gospel.

We are planning for a Teachers' training workshop with trainers from Singapore this December and mini English programme for students with youth volunteers from Singapore.

Miscellaneous

Sally and myself were thankful that we had the opportunity to visit China Lutheran Seminary in Hsinchu, Taiwan in February and Terry had the opportunity to return to Singapore for the Board meeting of the Thai Good News Centre as well as the AGM of Singapore. Thousand apologies for not being able to contact or meet up with many of you as it was a zip in – zip out kind of visit. I only had the opportunity to preach at the Centre before leaving for Thailand with my mother. She will be my travel companion as I minister in different Provinces for a period of one month. Please pray for her health.

Yours in Christ's love,
Terry and Sally Kee



3) Teach your children to obey parents

The fifth instruction of the Ten Commandments is to honour your parents (Exodus 20:12). God has stated this command directly without ambiguity. Many verses in Proverbs reinforce this command. Proverbs 1:8-9, 4:1, 6:20 are just some verses telling us to listen and obey parents' instructions. God has given earthly fathers the authority to bring up their children in a godly way. Therefore, it is the duty of children to obey their parents. Just as the Lord disciplines those He loves (Proverb 3:12), we must also discipline our children when they are disobedient. A rod is for the back of him who lacks judgment (Proverb 10:13). He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him (Proverb 13:24). This is discipline not done in anger but of love in order for your children to conform to wisdom, the purpose of breaking self-will, avoiding foolishness and spiritual death and for the purpose of making them a delight to their parents.

If they learn to obey their parents and their parents are advocating the law of God, they will obey the law of God. If they learn to obey their parents, they will learn to submit to their father's authority. When they live in a society, they will learn to submit to societal authority. A disobedient child makes not only a spiritual disaster but also an anti-social personality and most often a criminal adult. Hence a disobedient child not only breaks his parents' hearts but also becomes an undesirable member of the society.

4) Teach your children to select companions

The father has the responsibility to teach his children how to choose their friends. The apostle Paul said : "Bad company corrupts good moral". Your children cannot rise above their acquaintances. Rarely does a child elevate himself beyond his constituent group in which he functions. Peer pressure from friends has a strong influence over him. Father, you have to teach and help your children select their friends.

Refer to Proverbs 1:10 to 19. In summary, these verses have this advice: "Don't follow sinners in their deeds no matter how they persuade you or how beneficial their schemes are. Because their ways will lead to death." Children especially in their teens value their friends' viewpoints and behaviour more than what their parents want them to be. This is the age where they tend to be rebellious and want to "break free" from their parents' domain and instructions. There is tremendous pressure on them to conform to the standard of conduct around them. Teach them wisdom for "wisdom will save them from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways. Who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways" (Proverbs 2:12-15). Therefore, fathers, you have the task to make sure your children befriend the right persons. You must proactively help them select their friends and not let wicked men choose your children to be intimidated by them into their alliance.

5) Teach your children to control their bodies and sexual purity

An understanding father will know that young adults especially men, will develop passions that can lead them to tragedies unless they learn how to control their bodily desires. It is during and after their puberty that young adults begin to discover their sexuality. Proverbs 2 specifically warn us to beware of adulterous women. They abandon their husbands and renounce their marriage vows and in search for other men to enjoy sexual relationships. Their adulterous behaviour leads to death because adultery is a death penalty. Passion for sexual desires can be so strong in young men that they can easily lose their self-control and fall prey to this unpardonable sin. Teach your children especially your sons sexual self control so that they will not destroy their lives and their families. Proverbs 5 warns that the “lips of an adulteress drip honey and her speech is smoother than oil”. But she actually tastes “bitter as gall and sharp as a double-edged sword”. Her paths lead to death. One moment of folly can have disastrous consequences. Divorce and tarnished reputation are some forms of punishment for adultery.

Proverbs 7 even illustrates how an adulteress seduces her victim. She uses many persuasions and reasoning and even physical seductions to entice young and innocent men to sleep with her. She wanders in the streets and public places to hunt for her victims. Once she spots her target, she will not give up easily. She will use all means and persuasions to trap him. Her prey, lacking judgment and self-control is easily led astray like “an ox going to the slaughter ... or like a bird

darting into a snare little knowing it will cost him his life” (Proverbs 7:22-23).

Teach your sons to be mentally alert to the dangers of adultery. Tell them to avoid places that they should not go and stay away from women who behave adulterously. Tell them to guard their senses. Instruct them to have self-control over their bodies and sexual purity. Let not your children regret by saying: “How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly.” (Proverbs 5:12-14)

6) Teach your children to enjoy their spouses

While it is forbidden to have sex before or outside the marriage, it is exulted within the marriage. Fathers, teach your children to find satisfaction with their spouses. The Proverb writer stated it poetically in verses 5:15 to 20:

“Drink water from your own cistern,
running water from your own well

Should your springs overflow in the
streets, your streams of water in the public
square?

Let them be yours alone, never to be
shared with strangers

May your fountain be blessed and
may you rejoice in the wife of your youth

A loving doe, a graceful deer – may
you ever be captivated by her love

Why be captivated, my son, by an
adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of
another man’s wife?

Sexual relationship within the marriage is
sacred and pure, meant only for the
spouses. Love your spouses always and
honour the marriage vows.



Take it seriously for Personal Eternal Assurance

A pop icon died. The media became awash not just with news of the death, but also stories of the deceased's life before death with little left for private consumption of the bereaved. Suddenly, people rushed to shops to snap up every available copy of the singer's albums with many more eager fans to be disappointed. If the singer were still alive, it would have been cause for excitement to note the massive support of fans and of course for smiling all the way to the banks. Alas, the album sell-out came only after the artist had kicked the bucket! As I am not the person already deceased, and therefore am not in a position to know what it would be like to know of such out-and-out patronage only when one is nowhere around in the world to savour its sweetness. I am also ignorant of what value posthumous accolades or support can accrue to a deceased, but I cannot help sensing them attesting to an idiosyncrasy of human character to revere a LIFE more when it is gone than when it is around for one to cherish.

The occurrence of death is but a moment in one's journey from infinity to infinity – i.e., from the realm of non-existence as our human faculty allows us to contemplate, passing through the period from womb to grave, and thereafter to time without end along either of the paths we choose to follow. Do you not realize that the period from womb to grave can be as short as seconds and as long as over a

hundred years? Whether early or late when death strikes, it makes little dent to the stretch of infinite time, and hence little difference to one's fortune beyond the stopover in this world. Hence, if people are only engrossed with the 'now' and neglect to think of what comes after, they may be shortchanging themselves of the fortunes available to them were they to plan and work for these as they do for the accumulations in this world. Knowing that we have blessed riches in store that neither moths cannot destroy nor deaths can take away, we can calmly say that we have been doubly blest, even on our deathbed, as what Jan Struther (6th June 1901 – 20th July 1953) wrote in her poem "Biography":

One day my life will end; and lest
Some whim should prompt you to
review it,
Let her who knows the subject best
Tell you the shortest way to do it;
Then say, "Here lies one doubly blest."
Say, "She was happy." Say, "She knew
it."

No one can avoid death, whether in the personal experience of it or in the vicarious feeling of its pain to the bereaved. Death occurs everyday and no age is immune from it, as you can grasp from the daily dose of obituaries or depressing news of tragedies. Whether death decides to visit upon old age, sickness or human madness, some people may have the wherewithal to buy a bit of time to delay it a while, displaying a front of bold resolve to defeat it, but no one has ever been or will ever be able to prevail over it. Is this not COMMON SENSE?

Since death is a given when life is given, I am inclined to meet head-on the question

of what LIFE actually is that it can be given and yet taken away. Is it a thing in itself or something we put into a thing? If you sense I am going on a philosophical tangent but you are not accustomed to it, it still behooves you to read on if you see LIFE as something very important and that it would be at your eternal peril to dismiss it lightly.

Ah ... as you have just read it in the preceding statement, LIFE can be said to be actually “something” and so it is a “thing” of sorts as our verbal communication betrays our thought of it, with the pronoun ‘it’ in agreement. Scientifically, things are classified as ‘Living’ or ‘Non-living’, living things being those that have life while non-living things are those without life. Now, scientists can only think of ‘with life’ or ‘without life’ in their scientific reflections and so they restrict the classifications to a dichotomy. In other words, they stop at the two (Living and Non-living), being helpless to weigh their mind up on a third – LIFE itself, that which is something within all LIVING THINGS, without which the scientists would have only to deal with one single group simply called THINGS without any adjective. Thus, even if you disagree strongly with the idea of LIFE as a thing because it does not fit into the conventional scientific dichotomy, you may call it a separate non-physical entity that is bound within a physical body in order to make it LIVING, to give the body breath, consciousness, conscience, and so forth.

Imagine that you are taking a good look at a living body side by side with a fresh corpse (not just pictures of them). What

difference do you notice? Without considering diseased state or age deterioration, the living and the dead are quite the same in every way. The outstanding dissimilarity that strikes without any effort to scrutinize is in the essence called LIFE – something that is there or not there that makes the difference. All chemical reactions down to the cells, genes, DNA and the individual molecules can produce heat for warmth and metabolism, new molecules and cells for growth and tissue repair, etc.; but they cannot produce LIFE. Think of it: A modern scientist can produce a tissue in a lab dish separate from the body, but he can never produce LIFE independent of cells and molecules. As you chew over the tissues and molecules down to the individual inanimate atoms that are alike



in both living and non-living compounds, you will realize that LIFE – that ‘something’ that often challenges human minds – is infused in some to make them ‘living’ while it stays clear of others to make them remain in their ‘non-living’ state.

I find it enlightening to look at LIFE independent of its dwelling place, the body. Can it be invented? Can it be made? From the Bible, we know the answer to these two questions. LIFE is God-breathed. It is some essence that is infused into things to make the non-living become living; and, if it can be infused, the corollary is that it can be “excised” (taken out). No scientist can explain how LIFE comes into being in the connections between molecules and the linking of molecules into tissues and the associations of tissues into organs. Hearts can beat and arms can move; robots can walk and

machines can roar. Let's say we break down the hearts, arms, robots and machines into their foundational elements (atoms) and rebuild them; can we by a deliberate human effort put LIFE into them?

For whatever scientists can do, they cannot spell out how LIFE arises out of the atoms and molecules and their chemical interactions. While scientists cannot explain the origin of LIFE, philosophers can do no better. Epicurus (c. 341 – 271 BC) wrote that “death is nothing to us, since so long as we exist, death is not with us; but when death comes, then we do not exist. It does not then concern either the living or the dead, since for the former it is not, and the latter are no more.” So according to the great philosopher of the Hellenistic period, LIFE does not exist before birth and it ceases to exist after death. This may provide some philosophical comfort to the dying or the bereaved, but it fails to satisfy man's thirst for the truth about how LIFE comes to be, from where it appears and to where it disappears. As a corollary to Epicurus' concept that “death is the cessation of all sensation”, LIFE is merely a sensation without meaning. Why then do we live it? Or who wills it to be in us that we are compelled to live it? If you don't buy the idea of life as a sensation, will you then accept the notion that LIFE is but a condition, as Seneca (4 BC – AD 65) seemed to suggest by what he wrote a few centuries after Epicurus:

“Death is the release from all pain and complete cessation, beyond which our suffering will not extend. It will return us to that condition of tranquility, which we had

enjoyed before we were born. Should anyone mourn the deceased, then he must also mourn the unborn. Death is neither good nor evil, for good or evil can only be something that actually exists. However, whatever is of itself nothing and which transforms everything else into nothing will not at all be able to put us at the mercy of Fate.”

Confused by the complex wisdoms of philosophers? Even so, one truth should stand out from the morass of great thoughts. For whatever philosophers try to describe about the nature of LIFE and how we live it from one point in time to another, they cannot spell out how LIFE as an entity, according to their philosophical concept, arises out of nothingness upon birth and vanishes into nothingness upon death; or, alternatively, how something becomes nothing and something originates out of nothing.

Scientists and philosophers fail dismally to explain the source of LIFE, and hence fail to grasp its meaning associated with its origin. This was the reason why I searched for my desired answer on LIFE in vain for many years through my scientific readings and through a Philosophy Course in which I had placed great hope, as you might have read my Christian testimony. Truth be told, the TRUTH about LIFE that seems so profound to scientists and philosophers is placed out very simply to all who would ask, seek and knock at the right door. (Matt. 7:7-8) The Bible contains the simple accounts:

"In the beginning God made from nothing the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1 NLV)

The Word (Christ) was in the beginning. The Word was with God. The Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. He made all things. Nothing was made without Him making it. Life began by Him ..." (John 1:1-4 NLV)

It is not my intention here to go into the depths of Christian Apologetics, but just to share my understanding that LIFE is distinct from the body in which it dwells. You can gawk at a cadaver and reflect on what Albrecht von Haller (an illustrious Swiss anatomist and physiologist known as "the Great" in his time, 1708-1777) said, "We have investigated machines created by the hand of God, in which nothing can be found that has not been made mathematically perfect." After this reflection, you can meditate further on how different this perfect machine that has no life is in comparison with the machine that is you the gawker who is full of life and spirit. What makes the difference? The atoms, the molecules, tissues, organs, systems...? No – it is something that is present or missing, something we call LIFE that even a perfect machine has to be coupled with in order to make it complete for a purpose! Can you tell me the source of this LIFE? Can you say that LIFE has no meaning? If LIFE indeed has no meaning, we don't have to bother to live it or be serious about it.

Rather than traversing a conduit from non-existence to existence and thereafter to non-existence, LIFE is really an existence

that comes out of nothingness (as you can read from Scriptural accounts) and it stretches beyond its stay in the body ad infinitum in time. It is immensely important for us to treat it with seriousness or else we let ourselves be prepared for the consequence of our neglect. LIFE and DEATH are not simply sensations. If they were, such must have an explanation for their source too – an explanation scientists and philosophers cannot provide. The only place where we can find an explanation on the source of LIFE is also the place that warns us about what lies in store in eternity for those who believe and those who don't. It is plainly clear from Scriptures that death is not "a release from all pain and complete cessation beyond which our suffering will not extend." Most people around the world believe that death is not the end. If otherwise, why would they bother with after-death rites? The sad thing is that while many know about the existence (continuance) of LIFE after death, they pay no heed to ask, seek and knock – to grab, and abide by, the TRUTH for personal eternal assurance.

John Lee

! An amateur photographer was invited
! to dinner with friends and took along
! a few pictures to show the hostess.
! She looked at the photos and
! commented "These are very good!
! You must have a good camera."
!
! He didn't make any comment, but, as
! he was leaving to go home he said
! "That was a really delicious meal!
! You must have some very good
! pots."

Narrow Gate

Beloved, Read today Matt 7: 13-14 and hear Jesus speak directly to you.

"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."

Most of us intuitively know the difference between light and dark, good and bad, right and wrong. Yet try as we might, by our own strength we fail to stay in the light. So easily we slip into darkness. We want to do good but we end up doing bad. We want to be right but so often we end up wrong. Even the prodigal son, who was born into a wealthy family, got lured away to the bright city lights and wandered off the straight and narrow. Many enter the wide gate to the broad road that leads to destruction. Few enter the small gate to the narrow road that leads to life.

"I have the desire to do what is good, but I can not carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do- this I keep on doing (Rom 7:18-19)".

We want to gain eternal life, but without guidance we plunge into destruction. This sinfulness is an innate part of fallen man... What a

wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? (Rom 7:24)

John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Jesus. His message was "Repent, for the kingdom of God is near. (Matt 3:2)" After His temptation, Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is near. (Matt 4:17)" Jesus knows that unless we have a change of heart, we can not have a change of direction. The human mortal earthly heart is fixed on things temporal. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt 6:33). "Repent, for the kingdom of God is near. (Mat 3:2)"

How do we find the narrow gate? How do we stay on the straight and narrow road?

We turn to Jesus.

- "I am the gate", Jesus declares (John 10:7).
- How do we enter the gate? How do we gain eternal life?
- Whoever enters through me will be saved (John 10:9).
- "If you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved!" Romans 10:9
- "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6)
- Jesus calls you. Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone

hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him and he with me (Rev 3:20). Jesus offers us an intimate relationship.

- "Teacher, what good things must I do to get eternal life (Matt 19:17)?"
- Go, sell, give, then come, follow me. (Matt 19:21)
- Jesus needs us to give up a worldly mindset, give up clinging to possessions, give up the idea that we can ever achieve righteousness and holiness on our own strength. We need to confess our sins and our own unworthiness. "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the very worst 1 Tim 1:15."
- We need to echo the humility expressed by Isaiah "Woe to me. I am ruined. For I am a man of unclean lips and I live amongst a people of unclean lips (Isaiah 6:5)"
- We need to echo the humility expressed by the humble tax collector "God have mercy on me, a sinner (Luke 17:13)"
- God tells us we should humble ourselves, pray, seek His face and turn from our wicked ways (2 Chron 7:14).
- When we realize that we are poor in spirit we will be blessed. When we hunger and thirst for righteousness we will be filled.

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation (2 Cor 7:10).

Confessing with your mouth that "Jesus is Lord" must be accompanied by the surrender of the lordship of our own lives to the Lord of Lords. No longer is it "My will be done", but Thy will be done". Jesus is Saviour. Yes. But He can only save us if we are willing to accept Him as Lord.

Once we have accepted Jesus as Lord, once we are through the small and narrow gate, is it smooth sailing? The father of all lies would have us believe that it is so. Once we let our guard down.. wham! we get zapped. Be warned. "Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm (Eph 6:11-12)" Do read Eph 6:13-18 which elaborates on the armour of God. The Amplified version is especially elucidating.

Salvation is assured, but there is the need to consistently guard against temptation and persistently work towards holiness.

Being a follower does not exempt us from temptation. Jesus teaches us "Watch and pray so that you do not fall into temptation (Matt 26:41).

The call to perseverance is clearly recorded in Hebrews 10: 19-39. I will quote the last verse...But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me".

- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline (Proverbs 1:7)
- For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding. (Prov 2:6)
- Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who leave the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways (Proverbs 2:12-15).

To avoid trouble we must avoid unwholesome company and unwholesome entertainment. Instinctively we know what that is. If there is a doubt, avoid it. We must deepen our spiritual walk, hunger for the Word of God, read it, study it, memorise it, meditate upon it. We must worship God in private and in corporate worship. We should love the Lord with all our soul and all our heart and all our mind. And we should love our neighbours as

ourselves. Then we have successfully entered the small gate. Then we have firmly set our feet on the narrow road. The path is not easy. It climbs steadily upwards. But it leads us to life. Jesus walks with us every step of the way. He is ready to steady us if we stumble, comfort us if we fall, bind our wounds, set us to rest, then journey again with us when we recover. What a loving Master, the Good Shepherd who looks after His sheep.

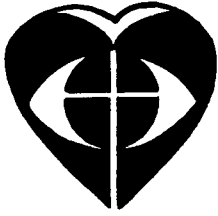
Dr Lim Su Min

Ed – Dr Lim is a gynaecologist who worships in the Methodist Church. Reproduced from <http://www.antioch.com.sg/well/devotional/sumin/ma11/0038.htm>. with permission of the author.

The minister of a city church enjoyed a drink now and then, but his passion was for peach brandy. One of his congregants would make him a bottle each Christmas. One year, when the minister went to visit his friend, hoping for his usual Christmas present, he was not disappointed, but his friend told him that he had to thank him for the peach brandy from the pulpit the next Sunday.

In his haste to get the bottle, the minister hurriedly agreed and left. So the next Sunday the minister suddenly remembered that he had to make a public announcement that he was being supplied alcohol from a member of the church. That morning, his friend sat in the church with a grin on his face, waiting to see the minister's embarrassment.

The minister climbed into the pulpit and said, "Before we begin, I have an announcement. I would very much like to thank my friend, Joe, for his kind gift of peaches ... and for the spirit in which they were given!"



盲人福音事工

Gospel Mission To The Blind Ltd

8 Lorong 27A Geylang #02-06 Guilin Building Singapore 388106 Tel: 741 4490
E-mail: gmb ltd@singnet.com.sg

3 March 2004

1 Chron. 11:17-19 David longed for water and said, "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!" So the three broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the LORD. "God forbid that I should do this!" he said. "Should I drink the blood of these men who went at the risk of their lives?"

Dear Praying Friends,

After David was anointed to be king over Israel, he had to endure many years of hardship. But during those years, the Lord enabled him to raise up an army. He granted him favours, victories, resources and also blessed him with a team of mighty men to serve him.

What a coincidence! The chairman of GMB is also named David, who has been serving for about eighteen years. And although the stressful and difficult times we had experienced during these past twenty-four years in GMB cannot be compared to those experienced by King David, we have enjoyed the help, the blessings and favours of the Lord.

I pray that GMB will have many people who would serve like the three mighty men. Of course the difference here is that people need not risk their lives to serve the blind. But they often would have to put up with inconveniences.

And just as King David saw the water as the blood, which is the lives of his men, we see the time and money given by our helpers and supporters as part of their lives too. And we want to pour our thanksgiving to the Lord for all these dear ones who have been such a blessing and help to GMB.

I was asked two different questions by two groups of visitors who came to visit GMB last month. One asked what is the greatest satisfaction serving in GMB and another asked what is the greatest need in GMB. My immediate answers to them were -

Our satisfaction and joy is to see blind people receive salvation, taste of the Lord's goodness for themselves, and then wanting their love ones to also receive the Lord Jesus and the abundant life which He promised.

And as reaching out to the blind is always a labour-intensive ministry, our greatest need is for workers, and especially for volunteers with vehicles to ferry the blind people to GMB.

祈求聖靈開啓心靈的眼睛，承受耶穌基督的恩典

Pray that the Holy Spirit will open their spiritual eyes to behold Jesus as Lord.

However, as I thought over my answer to the first question, I would rather say our greatest pleasure and joy serving in GMB is to be able to enjoy the loving kindness of the Lord and see how He helps us and supplies our every need again and again.

On 29th January I visited a blind student, and his mother broke down in tears as she shared her concern over his education. She felt that her son needed some assessment books in braille for practice. But she could not buy such books from the book shops. And it would be too costly for the books to be transcribed into braille. I told the mother that we could try to help and took some of his books back to GMB. On 31st January, the Lord sent us two junior college students who came to volunteer eighty hours of service. They are now in the process of typing his books into the computer, and then to be embossed into braille. And although braille paper is very costly, we feel that it is worth investing so that some children can be helped. Pray that some of these children can be raised up to serve in future. The children also needed tuition. Therefore, besides giving them bible study on Saturday, we are also giving the children tuition in their studies. However, we were not able to help much as we also have the adults to minister to on Saturdays. I was greatly relieved when Cheng Huang, who is a trained teacher, offered her voluntary service to tutor the children on Saturdays. But we still have one more burden in providing this service to the children, and that is the transportation need. Please pray that more people with vehicles will come and offer their service.

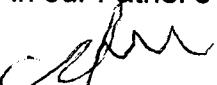
Alice Neo will be baptized on 28th March. On 23rd February, she called to inform us that her pre-believing husband had given permission for the idols to be removed from their flat. Our partners from the church went to Alice's home on 25th February to remove them and cleanse her home. Please pray for the Lord's protection to be upon them, and their teenage son, Martin, and that father and son will receive salvation soon. Alice would also like the Lord to bless her with good communication between her and the teenage son, for good health, and for a good job for her husband. She will be going with her son for an encounter camp on 12th-14th March. Please pray that the evil one will not be able to stop them from going to the camp. Pray that they will experience a personal encounter with the Lord at the camp.

Soh Hare Lim has also decided to be baptized in March. He is so happy that the Lord has answered several of his prayers. He is especially thrilled that the Lord has granted so quickly his request for a one-room flat in Toa Payoh. Please pray that he will continue to grow spiritually, and that he will adjust well to his new environment.

On 18th March, we will be bringing some young people and children for an outing at Pulau Ubin. Pray that the Lord will bless this outreach event, and turn the hearts of the youth towards Himself. Pray also that more blind children will receive permission from their parents to come for this outing.

May the Lord empower you to become a mighty warrior in His army. And let us continue to serve Him with joy in our hearts.

Yours in our Father's service,


Cheong Cheng Choo

K.I.D.S.

(Kids In Divine Service – JCC Sunday School)

Are your children missing out on our K.I.D.S. Church every Sunday?

In this time of great changes around the world, it is important to help in our children's spiritual formation, grounding them at a young age in the value of worshipping the One and Only almighty God.

Here is a sample of pictures of our K.I.D.S. engrossed in their activities or having their moments of peer fellowship.



We hope that apart from learning useful skills and growing together in Christian Spiritual Formation, they can enjoy ordinary fun with birthday celebrations, games and the freedom to be children away from their busy school life on weekdays.



So, Parents in JCC, are your children in K.I.D.S. Church every Sunday? Do not let them miss out a great time together with their peers.

Tony Koh



The BB & GB companies had their Enrolment service on 18th April. More than half of the church hall was covered by the blues of their uniforms.

Indeed this is a significant number of young people, many of them

pre-Christians. If we handle it rightly, our main hall will be filled one day when all these young people grow up.

Open your eyes to see the harvest that is sitting right in our hall. Pray about it that God will send the labourers. Could it be yourself?

