

# The 2000 VINE

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(a journal devoted only)

Grace to you and shalom (peace) from God Almighty. In March 2000 Pope John Paul visited Israel. He appeared visibly touched (at least on TV) as he visited the

Holy Land and especially since Good Friday and Easter is round the corner. How about us? Are we touched by what Christ has done for us? Let us meditate on:

## "Why did Jesus die?"

*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ROMANS 5:6*

The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ was a horrible affair. He had been tortured, mocked and spat upon through the night and hours proceeding His grueling trek to Calvary where nails were driven through His hands and feet, where the opened, bloody flesh of His back was placed against a wooden cross, where the people mocked Him and told Him to come down if He were the Son of God.

All of this was done for you and me. The cross is not an example of victimization, it is demonstration of a love that nobody on this earth can comprehend. The cross is not an example of powerlessness, it is the love offering of the strongest, most powerful, most courageous human being that ever walked the face of the earth. The cross is not an example of a martyr dying for a



Jesus is our Savior

cause, it is God come in the flesh, becoming a bloody sacrifice for His creatures. But the story did not end there...

After the Lord Jesus Christ died, He was wrapped in linen and laid in a grave. Three days later, He gloriously rose from the dead just like He said He would. Everybody knew that He had said He would rise. They even had soldiers to guard the tomb to make sure His body wouldn't leave it. In their insanity, they did not understand that no man can stop God. Before He went back up to glory where He came from, Jesus was seen by over 500 people. He now sits on the right hand of the throne of God where He ever lives to make intercession for His children.

Jesus came to this earth to die. He performed miracles so that people would know that He is indeed the Son of God, but He came to die. The reason that He died is for our sins. The Bible says that every person in this whole world has sinned. Examples of sin include lying, dishonoring our parents, and bad words.

God loves us so much that He came to this earth in the form of a man--Jesus--and died for our sins on a cross--that's the crucifixion. When Jesus was on the cross, He shed His blood to pay for our sins. But He did not remain dead. On the third day, He rose from the dead and was seen by over 500 people before He went back to heaven where He came from--that's the resurrection.

The Bible says that anyone who repents of their sins, believes that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, and gives their life to Jesus will be born-again and saved from hell. Romans 10:13 says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Amen.

**Pastor Martin Yee**

# THE EASTER STORY

## The Last Supper



When the hour came, he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. Luke 22:14-20. See also Matthew 26:17-29; Mark 14:12-25; and John 13:3-38.

## Jesus Before Pilate



Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; but they kept shouting, "Crucify, crucify him!" A third time he said to them, "Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him." But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. Luke 23:20-24. See also Matthew 27:11-26; Mark 15:1-15; and John 18:33-19:16.

When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Then he

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When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, "If you

are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" Luke 23:33-37. See also Matthew 27:33-44; Mark 15:25-32; and John 19:18-24.



MATTHEW 28:2-7 NKJ - And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

The huge stone was moved, and the Roman seal was broken, in spite of the guards at Jesus' tomb.



The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact verifiable from history. No one can challenge Christ's resurrection -- if they take an honest look at the evidence. Only those who never study the evidence -- or who refuse to listen to its testimony -- could deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If you have not studied the subject yourself -- how can you intelligently make a decision? Many learned men have tried to disprove Christ's resurrection -- only to become believers instead!

# More Testimonies from Wednesday Night Prayer Meetings

## **POEM FROM AN E-MAIL**

Bro Ronnie shared about an e-mail he received from his wife. I would not want to report the e-mail in its entirety because chances are you would have received it also. Anyway, it was about God, who patiently waits for us to talk to Him each day. However we in our busyness fail to talk to our Father in heaven. An appropriate reminder for the prayer meeting.

## **MORE UPLIFTING E-MAIL**

Bro Peter also shared an e-mail, which brought tears to his eyes. It was about a carpenter, who lost a pair of new spectacles, while packing parcels for shipment overseas. Only many years later did he realize that God had used his spectacles to answer the need of an overseas missionary pastor.

## **OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE**

Bro Roy shared that on one occasion he had an opportunity to share Jesus with a stranger. Although not prepared he did not lose the chance to answer some tough questions. (see 2 Tim 4:2)

Bro Peter also shared about how he took the opportunity to share Jesus with one of his Japanese clients. The

Japanese believe in many religions but they do not have a strong religious life because they live for the things of this world. When this client gave him an opening, Bro Peter quickly took it to share the Gospel.

Pray for these 2 persons that the seed planted will grow.

## **JAMES 5:13**

Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray.

## **JAMES 5:16**

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

Prayer is so important yet it is the least used weapon in the Christian's arsenal. We normally give up praying when things don't go right for us, and our lives are in a mess. Actually, this is the time when we should pray the hardest. Remember David praying that his son would be spared. He did not give up until the end. (see 2 Sam 12 15-20)

Do not fall for the Devil's lie when he tells you, "Don't Pray Pray!"

# An Update On Orissa

GRAHAM STAINES went to India at the age of 23. He spent 35 years in India, working with the Evangelical Missionary Society. Staines focus was always the poorest of the poor. He was involved with work to help orphans and those suffering from leprosy.

Last year, on the night of 23 January 1999, Staines and his two sons Philip (9) and Timothy (7) visited the village of Manoharpur in the state of Orissa. Because of lack of accommodation in the village, they decided to sleep inside their jeep. Some time later they were woken by the strange sound of people chanting outside their jeep. About 50 fundamentalist Hindus had surrounded the vehicle and were chanting anti-Christian slogans. Suddenly the darkness was lit up by huge flames. The Hindus had set the jeep on fire! When they tried to get out, they were pushed back in by men carrying long bamboo poles. They used the poles to jam the jeep's doors. The Staines were burned alive.

The President of India stated, "The barbarous killing belonged to the world's inventory of black deeds and it was condemnable that someone who had spent years caring for leprosy patients should be done to death in such a manner instead of being thanked and appreciated as a role model."

IN MARCH 1999, an evangelist named David Terryl came to speak in churches in Cuttack, a large city in Orissa. Terryl told the people, "The Lord has shown me that a terrible calamity is coming upon this land very soon."

ON THE MORNING of October 29, 1999, a terrible storm, with a status of "Super Cyclone" hit over the coast of Orissa. Winds up to 300 km/hour smashed into thousands of exposed coastal villages. Tidal waves 35-feet high crashed down on the villages, drowning everything that the wind had failed to destroy. Latest figures revealed about 60,000 Orissans were killed.

A MIRACLE was reported in the village of Batiagon in Jagatsinghpur District. Just 4 km from the sea, there were just two buildings made of concrete: a church and a rich man's house. The rest of the buildings were straw and clay. People rushed into the two buildings for shelter. About 300 people, both Christians and non-Christians, jammed into the church. They cried out to the Lord for protection. At around 11 am, a massive tidal wave about 30-feet high slammed into the village, instantly destroying the shacks and sweeping away the rich man's house. Witnesses inside the church say the wave seemed

to split and go around both sides of the building. All 300 people who had taken shelter inside the church survived.

After the storm, many of the secular newspapers and magazines in this part of India wrote that this calamity was the judgement of God on the State for the killing of Graham Staines and his two sons. The people feel they have experienced the awesome wrath of the Almighty God and many are humbled, especially as the rescue and aid efforts for the survivors were once again spearheaded by Christian organisations. Churches all over the state report more of an openness to the Gospel than before.



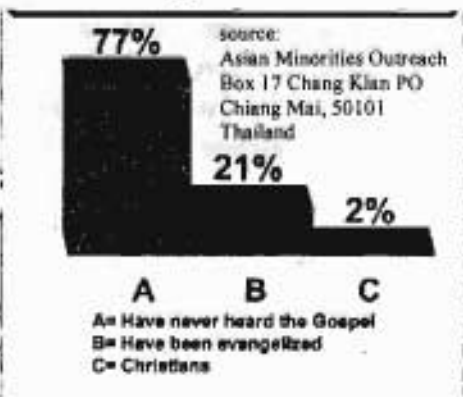
What can we do?

a) Pray for the people of Orissa:

1. that the Lord Jesus Christ would be rightfully glorified and honoured by each of the 273 tribes and people groups of Orissa
2. that millions of Orissans would seek to know the One True God
3. that God would bless the work of the Christian organisations seeking to feed, clothe and house the victims of the Super Cyclone.

b) Give

1. A gift of \$25 will buy one family a 30kg sack of rice, bed sheets and clothing and various medicines
2. For just \$173 materials for a simple house can be bought

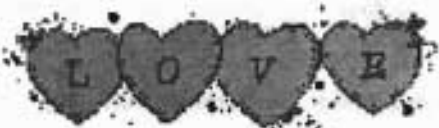




"Love"  
 A word so wondrous  
 And sonorous  
 Wrapping up such sweetness  
 And riches  
 One beholds in his imagination  
 Extending beyond the horizon

"Love"  
 An imaginative perception it could be  
 So seasonal  
 And mercurial  
 As one dreams with fancy  
 And exacts with audacity

When reality sets in  
 The bubble is burst  
 The sweetness and riches become lost  
 Leaving behind a chimera of happy valley



"Love"  
 Something so mysterious  
 One's often desirous  
 Wrapping up such sweetness  
 And riches  
 So freely given to all  
 Yet the multitude receive it not  
 To them you may give of your love in pain  
 Just as the Lord in anguish poured out the same  
 But never in this world a return could you expect  
 Least even an appreciative response to have in prospect

Men born of sin who know not free love to give  
 Likewise understand not what's free love to receive

In loneliness they cry out to the Lord with fervour  
 The warmth of love they seek with ardour

They grumble they wail and they clamour  
 But at love given they falter and they cavil

Deceived by nothing but the blemishes of their own reflections  
 They retreat in unbelief at the love given sweet reliefs

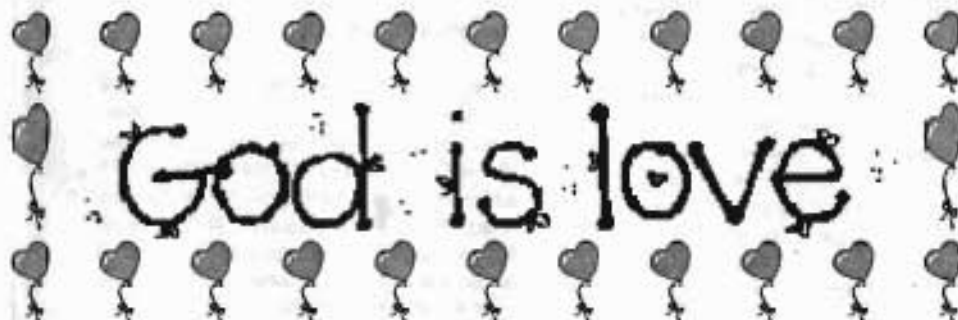
To wiles they throw their embrace  
 From truths they stand aloof

Surprise not when seeds of love sown fall on stony ground  
 Harken still the parable of the sower the Lord in wisdom pronounce

Simply rejoice and be glad for the privilege of a loving soul.  
 But not from this world in return an easy prize to hope

For no charity could be more valuable than an unselfish love  
 That finds requital in greater rewards in heavenly kingdom near

John Lee





## Why I Believe the Bible.

**Is there any way we can confirm this?**

Yes! There are several ways for confirming this, and each depends on the demonstration of the writer's knowledge being knowledge quite beyond what would be normally expected.

Isaiah's prophecies.

Take, for instance, the prophet Isaiah, who wrote in the period 739 BC to 681 BC His writing is alluded to over 250 times in the New Testament, and directly quoted at least fifty times in the New Testament. Why is it so popular in the New Testament?

If we look at the most famous segment of Isaiah, 52:13 to 53:12, we find it quoted ten times in the New Testament (Matthew 8:17; Luke 22:37; John 12:38; Acts 8:32, 33; Romans 10:16; 15:21; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:22,24,25). The passage begins with the disfigurement of a servant beyond recognition (Isaiah 52:14); he is rejected, he suffers death, is buried, and he is said to be a sin offering, and to see life once again. The servant's sufferings and death, followed by a new lease of life are exactly those things

that are written in the New Testament as experiences of Jesus Christ. If the New Testament record is correct, and we will examine this point briefly a little later, then how did Isaiah know of it about 700 years earlier? Or was the book of Isaiah merely a fabrication put together after the death of Jesus Christ? The latter option can safely be rejected, since a copy of the complete book of Isaiah was located amongst the Dead Sea Scrolls and dated at 150 BC. The book of Isaiah most definitely pre-dated Jesus Christ.



Well, perhaps it was the story about Jesus that was the fabricated part! Perhaps some Jewish people had read the passage from Isaiah and decided to invent a fulfilment, and so made up several narratives on a mythical character called Jesus Christ. Perhaps the whole New Testament was an elaborately contrived hoax! After all, it is well known that some Jewish fanatics did exactly that with other historic characters such as Moses and Enoch.

### Evidence for Jesus.

What evidence is there that Jesus actually existed? That what was written about him was factual, and historically correct? For a concise summary of this aspect I would refer you to the article titled "Who Was Jesus?". But right at the moment, give consideration to a particular verse in one of the New Testament letters. The city of Corinth in

the first century A.D. was a city of well-known reputation. The Greeks had a word for it: "to Corinthise", which meant "to live life to the full, with all scruples and principles thrown aside, every desire indulged in to the full". It was one of the most important ports of the Mediterranean area. It had a very mixed population with a very large number of travellers. It had for hundreds of years been the centre for worship of the goddess of love (Aphrodite & Venus).

With this background, consider 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

*"Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters, nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And this is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."*

Paul had stated a list of repulsive sins that the people had sunk to, when he suddenly writes "and this is what some of you were"! What made these people experience such a fundamental and dramatic change in life style? Was it that Paul was a personable man? He himself comments elsewhere that people belittled his presence.

*"For some say, 'His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is*

*unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.'"* 2 Corinthians 10:10

No, it would not have been Paul! Could it have been Jesus Christ if Jesus had been a myth, or even a religious con-man? It would seem that something very unusual had happened, and was happening. The most unlikely people had been converted by something!

### Jesus as Messiah.

The Bible identifies this spectacular something as person named Jesus. In the Old Testament he was the anticipated Messiah [Hebrew: anointed]; in the New Testament he was called the Christ [Greek: anointed]. The Bible is not alone in its reference to Jesus Christ. His existence was recognised in the writings of Tacitus (about 85 A.D.), Pliny [the Younger] (about 110 A.D.), and Josephus (about 100 A.D.). Further evidence in support of the historic existence of Jesus Christ is provided by the New Testament

itself. The Gospel of Mark has long been held as one of the earliest books of the New Testament,

being dated about 64 A.D., which is a little over thirty years from the date of Jesus' death.

However, in 1955 some fragments were found in Cave 7 at

Qumran, on the western coast of the Dead Sea, though their true significance was not recognised until



1972, when they were identified as being part a copy of Mark 8:52-53. The significance of this find was enormous, for it showed that the Gospel of Mark was in existence within twenty years of the crucifixion, that is, when eye-witnesses were still very plentiful. The story could not have continued to exist unless it had been authentic and genuine. The critical scrutiny and comment of eye-witnesses, Jews, Christians, Romans, and Greeks, must have accepted them as being accurate. So the inevitable conclusion must be that Jesus Christ was a real person, and that the record that was written about him was reliable and genuine.



This passage emphasises a second gathering of Israel from the nations. Both history and the Bible record the first restoring of the Jews to the land. It took place from 536 BC when Cyrus, ruler of Persia, conquered Babylonia where the Jews had been held for seventy years following their being taken into captivity from their land by the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar.

They subsequently again lost their territory to invaders, and were dispersed to foreign lands following the overthrow of the Romans in A.D. 70. Then in 1948, a remarkable thing happened, in that the territory of the Jews was returned to them as the re-established country of Israel. Since that date the Jews have been returning to Israel in very large numbers, and particularly from Russia during these last few months. How was it that Isaiah could speak of this situation about 700 BC - one hundred years before even the first regathering of Israel? Someone must have told him. It must have been God.

### The Jews.

The Jews are certainly heavily involved in the main thrust of the Bible. I would draw your attention to just one prophecy contained in the Bible concerning the Jews, from the hundreds available. It is to be found in the writings of the prophet of Isaiah.

*"In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from lower Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth."* Isaiah 11:11,12

### Prayer.

Some of the other reasons I have for believing the Bible are more personal. One example, for instance, is the conditional promise in the Bible that prayer will receive Divine attention.

*"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."*  
Jeremiah 33:3

*"Ask and it will be given you; seek and you will find; Knock and the door will be opened to you... If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"* Matthew 1:7, 11

When I was a teenager, I had a response to prayers when my father was very ill with a brain tumour. The manner of response was sufficient to know that it was not imagination; though the relief was only of a temporary nature each time. Nevertheless, it was to me a great consolation to know that there was a Supreme Power able to listen to me, and to provide visible results. Since that time, prayer has continued to be a part of my life, providing the assurance that what was written in the Bible was true even in today's world.

In believing the Bible, I found myself turning to it for guidance in how to live in the world of today; for the Bible has within its pages some absolute gems of wisdom. For if it indeed has been written under the inspiration of God, then it is logical that it contains information that is not only 100% trustworthy, but may contain advice that has yet to be endorsed by today's sociologists etc. Read thoroughly, for example, the book of Proverbs, and see whether or not you are duly impressed by the jewels of wisdom contained in it. For you will find that it is not a theoretical book but a series of practical statements that, if implemented by mankind, would completely change the face of

humanity. Certainly it has the potential to change your life. And not only does the book of Proverbs have this potential, but almost all the books of the Bible.

### **A unique message.**

The Bible is no ordinary book. It makes a unique claim that it is the Word of God. It carries a tremendous spiritual message. For every book within it confronts the reader with the reminder that we are all sinful characters, and that we need deliverance from that state. It presents the remedy, and it calls for action. The prophet Isaiah had the following message for the people of his day, and the message would not need changing even today:

*"Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."* Isaiah 55:6-9

The key to understanding life is contained in the Gospel of John;

*"If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own."* John 7:17

So ultimately, to fully appreciate the Truth of the Bible, one must commit ones' self to Jesus, and in so doing, as Jesus says, you will find out that what he says, and what he promises, are absolute Truth. What is needed on your part is an unhesitating, and enthusiastic commitment to Bible Truth. The Bible writers were intelligent men, not fools! Peter wrote,

*"We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty."* 2 Peter 1:16

The Bible message for salvation is that Jesus is soon to return to set up God's Kingdom on this earth. And you can have a part in this kingdom, if you genuinely accept the Word of God and endeavour to live according to the principles set within its pages. Eternal life could be yours; eternal death is the only alternative. Its surely worth thinking about. An anonymous author once wrote:

"The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, and the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are unchangeable.

"Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is a traveller's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter.

"Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully, it is a mine of wealth."

John recorded the following words of Jesus Christ:

*"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."* John 3:36

The choice is yours. I believe the Bible - do you?

[Bible Answers!](#)

[http://](#)

[Email:](#)

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Keep a lookout for the e-version of the VINE called "The VINE Online". It is currently in its planning stages but once it is finalized, you will be notified by e-mail. So please keep us informed of your e-mail address.



# People In The Press

## The Jurong Point Live-In Contest



Making headlines again is our Bro Lin You Fang, who spent 72 hours in Jurong Point in December 1999. For his efforts, he won \$10,000. No doubt his experience with the BB must have helped him to win the contest. He and two other contestants had to literally live, sleep and eat in Jurong Point.

Could this be a reward for his act of kindness to a boy suffering from cancer? Maybe so, but our God only promised to take care of our needs (Phil 4:19) and Bro Lin needed this money to repay his education loan. So we won't ask Bro Lin for a treat. He probably doesn't have any money left.

Welcome to JCC:

**CHARLIE CHANG**

*Mary Cher*

**Albert & Kathy Ng**

# STRENGTHENED FOR THE WORK

The July 14 Daily Bread talks about the stress and strain of Pastoral Work, which faces all pastors including our dear Pastor Martin Yee. Indeed as the writer of this message shares from Haggai 2:4, 'Be strong.... and work; for I am with you.'

It was my privilege to spend time with a group of church leaders at a pastors conference. It soon became evident that the rugged demands of the pastorate and the idealistic expectations of some congregations were taking a toll on these faithful servants of the Lord. Some were burned out and emotionally exhausted. Others were asking hard questions about the primary responsibilities of a pastor and how to find time for everything.

Some were stressed by the "watchdog" members of their church -- you know, the kind who watch every little move and let you know if you're even slightly out of step. Other pastors wondered how to know when it's time to leave.

In one meeting, the conference director brought an encouraging message from the book of Haggai. He reminded these faithful laborers in Christ's church of Haggai's words from the Lord to Zerubbabel, the leader of the project to rebuild the temple: "Be strong" (2:4), "I am with you" (v.4), "I will bless you" (v.19), and "I have chosen you" (v.23).

These words from the Lord should encourage all who are weary in the work of God. If you're stressed and exhausted, remember that God is with you and He will strengthen you for the work He's called you to do. -DCE

*God gives to His servants this promise:*

*"I never will leave you alone;*

*And when you grow weak in your struggle,  
My strength will prevail ~ not your own." Hess*

**GOD'S WORK DONE IN GOD'S WAY  
WILL NEVER LACK GOD'S SUPPLY.**

says the LORD.' we must remember that our strength for doing the work comes from the LORD and not from ourselves. So even as we complain about the pastor, we are actually complaining about God for He has chosen the man to lead us and it is He who provides the strength for the work.

This reading can be applied to all ministry leaders, who are tired of their work. Remember to call upon the LORD for strength to carry on.

I remember the time when I had to stand in front and present the accounts. I was questioned for what seemed to be hours. In my mind these thoughts flashed:

- ✦ these people don't even know accounting;
- ✦ do they trust that I would not cheat them?;
- ✦ hey, I am doing this free of charge;
- ✦ I'll step down from the council.

It is inevitable that people have high expectations of their leaders since they look up to them. However complaining about your leaders is not the solution to having better leaders. Pray for them instead. Pray that the LORD will bless your leaders and pastors with wisdom and strength.

*Martin Cheah*