

The Vine

The Vine Committee

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EDITOR'S WORD

Singapore just celebrated its 40th Birthday. Even as I watch the celebrations on the television, I can't help but realize that I am watching the achievement of one man's vision and dream that made Singapore what it is today.

Great things have been achieved by the tenacity of one man. Major religions have their beginnings from one man, eg. Judaism from Abraham; Islam from Mohammed; Christianity from Jesus and The Reformation from Martin Luther. Hardly have these great movements been the cause of a committee. Why is that so? Probably because committees are made up of various types of people and it is very hard to get everyone to agree to the same dream and vision with the same gusto.

Even as the founder of the movement retires or dies, the movement begins to lose its direction. Hasn't the IR been a change in policy from the founder's original blueprint? Isn't Christianity so splintered against the Master's prayer (John 17:21)? Aren't the

Lutherans changing its position on the Catholics?

I am not so much writing about the changes that will come as time goes on but rather about the need for that one person who will be willing to give up everything for his vision. Taking the example of Nias, that one idealist was Michael Christian. He was willing to give up everything for his dream of taking care of the orphans of Nias. The price he paid involved giving up a comfortable life in Singapore for a hard life in Nias.

JCC needs such a visionary if we want to grow the church. There are some signs of visionaries arising, like Peter who has started the Old Folks Ministry and Wong Mui who is starting the Young Adults Ministry. Have they counted the costs? Only time will tell. May God grant them the strength for the long haul because Singapore wasn't built in a day. But when we look back 40 years, we can really see how far we have come and how much we have achieved because of the tenacity of one man.

Martin Cheah

News from Thailand

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Dear co-labourers and praying friends,

Blessed greetings once again in the blessed name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do join me in praising God for His faithfulness and what He is doing in Thailand. The last six months has seen some eventful happenings.

Life in Ladprao

I am now comfortably settled in Ladprao Lutheran Church. The first few months were difficult, as there was no one to guide me. Reading the incoming letters took a while for me to understand. But praise the Lord, I am much quicker in reading the letters and minutes now. Once or twice a month, I preached in Thai. Although I find preparing the translation from English into Thai a bit tedious, it helps to build up my vocabulary. And I do have help from Noi, Yiam, Mon and Et who works closely with me. As for Bible study on Sundays, I teach alternately with Yiam, a Bible student.

Currently, I am teaching discipleship class to a young girl. Mai is 15 years old, intelligent, knows her Bible and teaches in Sunday school. Some church members have stepped up to serve as worship leaders. I thank the Lord that He has heard all our prayers! Winai, a music director now conducts keyboard classes every Sunday. And yesterday, we have started guitar and English lessons for the neighbourhood children.



Mai in jeans helps in Sunday School

Once a month, I go to pastors' prayer meeting of the various denominations praying for the needs of the churches in Thailand. The most talked about event now is a youth prayer meeting, 'Youth For the Nation' to be held on 31st July at one of stadium in Bangkok. They are targeting about 50,000 youths for this meeting.

We lost one of our sister, Nok, last month whom we have been visiting regularly. She succumb to Aids. Her health deteriorated rapidly even though she was on medication. The last time I visited her, she was bedridden and tires easily although she understands what was said in the Bible when we read the Scriptures

to her. She is now with her Lord Jesus. Do pray for her husband and small son, who are believers too.

New Preaching Places

In June, a new preaching station, Rom Phrakhun was officially opened in Ubon under District 4. A lot of people from the neighbourhood came during the 2 days opening. Officials from the town council came too to witness the opening of this station.

Chuang, the evangelist is in charge of this place and about 70 people gather on Sundays to worship in one of the member's house. And as in many places in Thailand, this member has offered to God part of his land to build a church there. He grows rubber trees and has a little shed where the latex is dried and rubber is produced. Some members from the church works together with him as jobs are scarce. Part of the sale of the rubber goes towards the church fund.

Two more churches were opened in Nan, Northern Thailand in July. Between Baan Den and Baan NaPong, membership numbers to over 300. Situated in the hilly mountains, these two churches are the fastest growing congregations. Members meet in makeshift pavilions to worship, as they do not have a proper place yet. Children learn about Jesus in Sunday school. They are praying that they will be able to build a church for worship and meetings. Rev. Thawip, the pastor-in-charge welcomes mission trippers who can teach English and computers to the children and youth. It is a great opportunity to minister to these young believers.

Upcoming Events

Next month, we will be having our fellowship meeting with the Senior Citizens together with the Lutheran Diakonia Department in the slums near Ladprao. This coincides with the Queen's birthday. We had one before in April and the response has been good. The gospel message was given. Pray for good co-ordination between the Chairperson of the slum and us. Ask God to prepare the way for us, for openness of heart of the people when the gospel message is shared to them.

In August, students from LITE and the Diakonia Department will be going to Takua Pa, the tsunami hit area to help volunteer to build houses. The area there is short of volunteers and some locals still have no house to live in. We will be there for two weeks. Pray for good health for all of us, safe trips and opportunity to share Jesus with the locals there.

Once again please join me in prayers for:

Thanksgiving:

- BLC has decided to support Fa, who will be studying in LITE fulltime next year.

Prayer needs:

- Pray for Nong Han church in the Northeast. She still needs 50,000 baht to fully complete the church building. God willing, it will be ready by December this year.
- Pray for our Saturday classes in Ladprao, that many children will come.
- For Bia, one of our church member who has Aids. Bia has been on medication for a long time, but lately she has not been feeling well. Pray for God's healing for her.
- For our senior members in the church who has undergone eye operation and other ailments. Pray for God's touch for them.

Serving Him

Rosanna Hutagalung

Bangkok, 24th July 05

An Internet Story:

BROWNIES WITH A DIFFERENCE!

Many parents are hard pressed to explain to their youth why some music, movies, books, and magazines are not acceptable material for them to bring into the home or to listen to or see.

One parent came up with an original idea that is hard to refute. The father listened to all the reasons his children gave for wanting to see a particular PG-13 movie. It had their favorite actors. Everyone else was seeing it. Even



church members said it was great. It was only rated PG-13 because of the suggestion of sex-- they never really showed it. The language was pretty

good--the Lord's name was only used in vain three times in the whole movie.

The teens did admit there was a scene where a building and a bunch of people were blown up, but the violence was just the normal stuff. It wasn't too bad.

And, even if there were a few minor things, the special effects were fabulous and the plot was action packed.

However, even with all the justifications the teens made for the PG-13 rating, the father still wouldn't give in. He didn't even give his children a satisfactory explanation for saying, "No." He just said, "No!"

A little later on that evening the father asked his teens if they would like some brownies he had baked. He explained that he'd taken the family's favorite recipe and added a little something new. The children asked what it was.

The father calmly replied that he had added dog poop. However, he quickly assured them, it was only a little bit. All other ingredients were gourmet quality and he had taken great care to bake the brownies at the precise temperature for the exact time. He was sure the brownies would be superb.

Even with their father's promise that the brownies were of almost perfect quality, the teens would not take any. The father acted surprised. After all, it was only one small part that was causing them to be so stubborn. He was certain they would hardly notice it. Still the teens held firm and would not try the brownies.

The father then told his children how the movie they wanted to see was just like the brownies. Our minds lead us into believing that just a little bit of evil won't matter. But, the truth is even a little bit of poop makes the difference between a great treat and something disgusting and totally unacceptable.

The father went on to explain that even though the movie industry would have us believe that most of today's movies are acceptable fare for adults and youth, they are not.

Now, when this father's children want to see something that is of questionable material, the father merely asks them if they would like some of his special dog poop brownies. That closes the subject.

*Note: This is a good story to tell your children, since it puts sin into its proper perspective. I presented this story with the appropriate props (brownies and the "difference" - securely sealed in a plastic zip-lock bag) to our Children's Sunday School Class. Needless to say, it made a big impression. They were also somewhat wary of eating the brownies afterward, and wouldn't do so until I assured them many times that the brownies did not have the additional ingredient. **Bon appetite!***

DRESSING RIGHT – A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

“Well ventilated clothes may cause others to hyper-ventilate!” I once came across in a magazine article. In the last issue of The Vine there was a snippet, “Pray, don't wear mini-skirts” which ended with this statement, “Frankly, I don't know where to look when serving Communion wine. So please don't stumble your Communion ushers.”

What does the Bible say about dressing and decorum? Paul addresses this issue in his letter to Timothy. Apparently, they had issue of a similar nature then. Paul writes in the context of public worship:

“I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.”

God the creator who fills the earth with beauty and colour, is not against beauty and looking good. However, if we don't dress appropriately, there is an inconsistency between our inward life and our outward expression. To come before God humbly while dress inappropriately is inconsistent and hypocritical.

How we dress should be reflective of our desire to honour and glorify God. Paul mentions three words in regard to appropriate dressing - “modestly”, “with decency” and “propriety”. A study of these 3 words is helpful to understanding more fully Paul's instruction for appropriate dressing relevant to Christians today.

Dress Modestly

Modesty, in Greek, “kosmos” is derived from “kosmos” - God's universe, and carries the idea of being well-ordered; as is manifested in the universe. The inner self and humble attitude of the Christian woman is reflected outwardly in well ordered, dignified and becoming attire. Donald Guthrie, a theologian notes, “A woman's dress is a mirror of her mind.” A person's character is reflected in his style of dress.

Paul's instruction to dress in a modest, orderly and becoming way is relevant for man and woman today. Our dressing should be in good taste, not outlandish or flashy, scruffy or sloppy. A person can dress immodestly

by neglecting personal appearance as well as giving excessive attention to it.

Modesty prevents sin and preserves intimacy. The call to dress modestly is to prevent sin. Modesty prevents lustful desires and preserves something very fragile yet fundamental in a marriage relationship – protecting our intimacy.

Some dress to show off their clothes, others dress extremely plainly because they want to convince others of their humility. Both are proud, one of their clothes, the other of their humility. Our dressing should be neat, orderly and becoming, so that no one will be offended by it.

Dress Decently

The second word Paul uses to characterise appropriate dress is “with decency” - in Greek “aidos”, the essential meaning is “reverence” or “respect”.

How can a Christian woman show reverence and respect towards God, others and herself through her attire? By dressing with decency and not causing shame or embarrassment to God, herself and others. Paul's instruction to dress with respect is particularly relevant today where modern fashion rejects reverence and respect. The objective is to exploit the sex drive of the human body by marketing immodest clothing to feed pride and sexual attraction.

The call for the Christian woman to dress decently is not a call to be less attractive, but to protect something fragile and can be easily lost – to protect and preserve intimacy by preventing intrusion from the outside. Clothes can evoke intimate responses – the feeling of lust and uncalled for expression of sexuality which should be preserved within the intimate marital relationship.

Mary Quant and the mini-skirt.

Mary Quant the designer who launched the mini-skirt was quoted as saying that her aim is “to dress woman so that men would feel like tearing the wrapping off.” She designs clothes to shock because, “if clothes don't make you noticed, then I think they're a waste of money.” When asked

“what is the point of fashion, where is it leading?” Mary Quant replied, “Sex.” Seduction is also the goal of the line of cosmetics she designs. She states, “All this decoration is put on in order to seduce a man to bed, so what’s the point of taking it off?” The admission of a leading designer that the goal of modern fashion is to seduce and appeal to sensuality makes it imperative for the Christian to heed Paul’s admonition to dress with decency, sensibly without causing shame or embarrassment to God, ourselves or others. A woman who dresses to show off her physical and sexual appeal encourages men to treat her as a sex object. A Christian woman must always remember that her charm lies not in what she reveals but what she conceals, the spiritual qualities which our sinful world needs so much to see.

Christians should take courage to fight the vulgarity in fashion, the bad taste of our times. We must fight slavish obedience to fashion, to reject the seductive allure of fashion and heed the Bible’s counsel to dress reverently. Outward appearance should be decent, dignified showing respect for God, others and ourselves.

Dress with propriety

The word Paul uses to describe appropriate dressing here is the Greek word, “sosphrene” translated “with propriety” or “soberly.” There is no equivalent English word, for “sosphrene”, it is a compound of two words, “sound”(sos) and “mind”(phrenes). Essentially it means mental vigilance, i.e. using the mind to exercise restraint and self-control. In the context of dressing, the Christian woman should show self-control by restraining any desire to wear attention getting clothes or jewellery.

Our Christian life is reflective of the way we think. Paul urges Christians to resist conformity to the world and be transformed by the “renewing of your mind” (Rom 12:2). The renewing of the mind is essential to resisting the pressure to conform to the seductive fashion of our time.

The instruction to show self-restraint by rejecting attention getting clothes and ornaments and instead wear decent and dignified clothes is particularly relevant to our times. Today’s fashion tempts us to look like the slick models that appear on fashion magazines. Some Christians follow the seasonal changes of fashion slavishly, even depriving themselves of basic necessities to look “in.” In so doing we reveal our inner insecurity. We are not satisfied with our real selves, so we want to

look like someone else we admire. The image portrayed in fashion magazines is not the image of the Kingdom of God. To resist the tyranny of seductive fashion we need to heed Paul's instruction to dress with propriety restraining the desire to wear attention-getting clothes.

The study of the terms used by Paul's reveals three important principles:

- 1 Christians should dress in modest becoming manners avoiding extremes.
- 2 Christians should dress in a decent, dignified way showing respect for God, themselves and others.
- 3 Christians should dress with propriety restraining any desire to exhibit themselves by wearing eye-catching clothes, cosmetic or jewellery.

Remember, our outward appearance is a constant silent witness of our Christian identity. It tells the world that we glorify God and not ourselves.

Tan Swee Leong

Amen!

Amen is recurrent and emphatic among God's people. It is robust and exuberant. There is nothing cowering, cautious, or timid in it. It is an answering word, purged of all negatives.

Justin Martyr in his description of Christian worship in the middle of the second century (c. 150 A.D.), tells us that prayers always concluded with a vigorous amen by the congregation. Justin uses a colorful and enthusiastic word to describe their amen - epeuphemei, "shout in applause." The word expressed the conviction that not only would prayers be fulfilled by God in the future, but that the fulfillment was already present in Christ. "All the promises of God" St. Paul had written, "find their Yes in [Christ]. That is why we utter the Amen through him to the glory of God" (2 Cor.1:20). Isaiah had given God the title "amen" (Isa. 65:16), and St. John gave Jesus the same title (Rev. 3:14). When the four living creatures shout their amen, they are making their own what has been made a reality for them by God. Amen was often on our Lord's lips: "Amen, Amen, I say unto you" occurs no less than sixty-three times in the gospels. The German scholar Schlier concludes his study on the word amen by saying, "In the 'Amen' of Jesus the whole of Christology is contained in a nutshell." When we Christians say or sing or shout, "amen" God hears our unequivocating assent to his irrevocable Yes to us, the Yes of our redeemer Lamb, the Yes of our creator King.

Extracted from REVERSED THUNDER by Eugene Peterson

JCC celebrates National Day.....

August 9, 2005

Thank God for the fine weather. It was just nice, no sweltering heat and no rain. The people started coming in around 9.30 am and by 10 am there must have been about 400 people under the tentage. The people warmed up to exercises led by very active JCK teachers. This was followed by games for the whole team, the children and the bigger ones.

After the games, lunch was served and this was the time when we had a chance to fellowship with some of the JCK parents that remained.



Pastor How giving the opening address....

The Excitement of the Games.....



Little Ms. Cool



Lunch Fellowship...



CONFESSIONS OF A WORSHIP LEADER.....

This month's Prayer Meeting was assigned to the Jurong West Cell Group to lead the worship. I knew that way back in the beginning of the year. At the back of my mind, I had planned to adapt some Christian hymns, eg "This World is not My Home" to be sung to the tune of some National Day song because the Prayer Meeting was so close to our 40th National Day.

However procrastination set in and I did not prepare the songs list until the last minute. Even as I selected the songs, my wife kept giving negative feedback that the songs were too ancient. Imagine Christian hymns which were sung by the late Elvis. That is how old some of the songs were. Anyway, to my surprise, the people who came for the Prayer Meeting were able to sing these songs spiritedly and some were even touched by the lyrics. I am happy to be of use to God even though my gifting is not in the musical area. He is able to work through my weakness. However, don't think I will be able to do this all the time, that would be putting God to the test.

Secondly, Anthony requested me to do a short devotion. I know you may not believe me when I say that my mind normally goes blank after the introduction. That's because I never practice what I am going to say. I will run over the ideas in my mind and then on the actual day, I will just spit out the introduction and after a while, all the ideas are lost and I just struggle along

with what still remains. Maybe I looked so calm on the outside that many of you thought I said what I planned to say. Actually, inside I was praying, "God, help me." If what I said spoke to you, then thank God.

It is good to receive your praises, prayers and morale support as a form of encouragement but all glory must belong to God who is the potter and I am only the clay. May I be of encouragement to all those who still have not yet done their turn at leading the Prayer Meeting worship, that God can turn your clay for His glory.

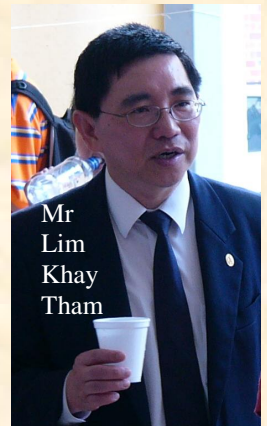
Martin Cheah

Quotation:

Christians are not spared bad things..... We need to correct the mistaken view that Christians, especially those who are faithfully attending church, reading the Bible, that they will have a prosperous and carefree and painless life.

(with reference to Matthew 14:22-33)

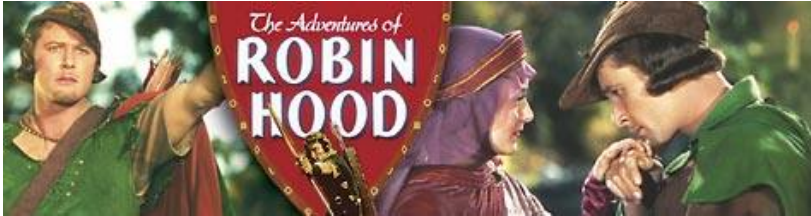
You can borrow the sermon CD (Aug 7) from the church library.



Does the end justify the means?

“Take action. Donate to Robin Hood, where 100% of your dollar goes directly to charity.”

Statement taken from the website of a New York's charity organization named “Robin Hood”.
(<http://www.robinhood.org/home/home.cfm>)



Most of us should be familiar with the legendary Robin Hood story, about a man who became an outlaw to extract justice. What a contradiction: When law is supposed to convey justice, its guardian (the Sheriff) used it effectively as a tool of tyranny and so it would require a lawbreaker (a ‘bad guy’) to do good to bring solace to a suffering people in the face of the law enforcers (the ‘good guys’) who went about doing all the bad things. In history, highly-regarded people doing wrong could be seen in how the Pharisees misappropriated the Law to serve self-seeking ends. In present-day societies, it is easy to witness clever people abuse the law, such as in practising contractual duplicity legally, for their selfish ends. Where the ends are iniquitous but the means are fine according to societal judgment parameters, can our conscience rest at ease to say the means justify the ends? The answer to this question should equally apply to the case where the means are morally underhanded but the ends are virtuous – No double standards!

If Robin Hood, the *Prince of Thieves*, did right in stealing from the rich to help the poor, then he must be considered to be a good *Prince*. Contrast this with another ‘*Prince*’ created by an Italian politician named Machiavelli – He wrote *The Prince* (1532), and shared an idea that goes something like this: “If the goal you are working for is important enough, then whatever you do to attain it is acceptable.” For his creepy vision that a leader might gain and maintain power by any means, ethical or unethical, the word *Machiavelli* is now part of the English vocabulary as a synonym for evil, deceitfulness and mercilessness; anything *Machiavellian* today is regarded with disdain. If someone says that so-and-so is a *Machiavelli*, you may surmise that the person has a destructive rationality. Understandably,

the name became linked to an old Italian proverb that has often been translated as “the end forgives the means”. If this proverb is to be rebutted in relation to Machiavelli’s thoughts, why should it apply to Robin Hood just because the latter is a more likable person?

The idea about the end justifying the means, etched in a proverb centuries ago, remains very relevant for today’s contemplation. It has been applied to the American military mission in Iraq. If the end of a situation is all that counts, by situational ethics, and the means immaterial in morality, then the jury has great reason to remain divided on this particular adventure because, while the aim of the war was to eradicate evil (with Iraq being labelled as a terrorist state harbouring WMDs), the end aimed at of a more peaceful world has never been in sight with the rising threats of terrorism. In the hopeful future event that peace finally prevails with all the terrorists vanquished, we will still have to ask “At What Price?” in contemplation of the large number of innocents sacrificed. Or can it be said that the end justifies if the best available means is employed, there being no better means at disposal to manage the discontent of the disenfranchised who have no qualms about subscribing to the annihilation of their enemies whereby the same may be returned with interest? Will not this heighten the arms race, or the race of might because the mightiest shall rule the world? If the means to a good end leaves a bad trail, then can the means be morally defensible on the basis of the end alone with complete disregard for the hefty collateral price?

The word “*end*” in fact has two meanings – *end* as in *purpose*; and *end* as in *ending*, which can be identified with ‘situations wrought’ or outcome. So if one applies some means to achieve some *end*₁ (purpose) and, regardless of whether success comes by the means, it leads to a cruel *end*₂ (ending) in one or more facets, it still begs the question of whether the means justifies the end.

If Robin Hood was justified to rob the rich based on his noble intentions, then how about justifying robbing a group of poor to fill the coffers of the already wealthy so that the latter may be better encouraged to apply their enterprise to launch wonderful and costly development projects to benefit the poorer of the poor around the world? In evaluating the merit of the idea, can a person be biased in favour of Robin Hood and prejudiced against Machiavelli according to his own perception of right and wrong? After all, people of *Machiavellian* ilk can argue with equal conviction as people of Robin Hood’s persuasion by using human rationalization.

In deciding right or wrong, one may argue on utilities or morality – human rationalization or Holy dispensation. If you choose the former,

then it is alright for you to play a good host to friends to play mahjong through the night (food and drinks courtesy of the host) while you, as a non-gambler, don't play. It seems to be a no-lose situation for you because no matter who lose their pants on the mahjong table, there will be a winner who will reward you with cash rewards that you can use to support your children's education. Isn't it great? After all, if you don't play host, your next-door neighbour will and it will still be the same for the gamblers; so by playing host, you get to reap some worthy interest without doing any more harm to the gamblers who have alternatives. By not playing host, you end up lamenting the opportunity cost you suffer. (Think with Economics terms. ☺) A good education for children can never be criticized as an unworthy end. Can the means that causes no added harm to the gamblers be unacceptable when it serves a good end? The truth is, unfortunately, that it is not really a no-lose situation. The sight and sounds of the gambling environment does have a slow but sure harmful effect on the young ones. The indirect contributory damage is akin to what a non-smoker suffers in a smoking environment. So in the end, a non-gambler suffers in a gambling environment.

Whether you look at the war on terror, the mahjong-host illustration or any other examples you can think about, you would find it hard to come out with any that carries no negative collateral consequences. Even the 'charitable' act of Robin Hood would lead to anarchy if every folk were to follow suit with a twisted vision of the noble aims. Those who do not rob would also have less incentive to work hard, for they can just wait upon the Robin Hoods to deliver their needs. The end_1 (purpose) and the end_2 (the changes wrought, in the end, on the whole landscape of people living peaceably and responsibly together) have to be similarly tackled to justify the means.

As Christians, we should be cognizant of God's view about our action and its justification. Whatever we do, ought to be pleasing to God. If God says a definite NO to murder, but someone goes ahead to kill a person and then proceeds to harvest the organs to give new leases of life to ten other persons, what is the end that you would use to justify the means? Would you consider the end on the side of the ten recipients of life-giving organs, or the other end – to please God? Would you also consider the distress wrought on the lives of the deceased's family members? One end 'justifies' the killer's action, and the other end condemns him for being callous towards God's command against murder.


When talking about ends and means, there are invariably multifarious ends (both end₁ & end₂) attached to multiple means, all of them meshed up so that they are almost impossible to extricate to weigh their right or wrong independently. People often like to justify their actions on the basis of what these attain; i.e., they look at the utilities of the actions. Utilities are definitely on a different plane as moral considerations. So when we try to rationalize that the end justifies the means on a utilitarian basis, we are going off-track from God-centred morality. If we go against God's way and believe that our human way of rationality (or irrationality) is best, we still ought to recognize that what is best in giving us enjoyable utilities needs not be useful to our overall being by its main effects and attendant upshots.

If parents don't exist, children are on their own to swim or sink. They might do anything with abandon as long as they find satisfaction, and their actions could be of any description – moral, amoral or immoral. Of course, they bear the consequences. On the other hand, if parents exist, the children have a 'higher consideration' to satisfy. They have to regard the guiding rules laid down by the authority (parents) they recognize and respect. Similarly, Christians cannot say that they recognize the existence of a higher authority (God), yet go about justifying their actions upon personal utilities alone without regard for the moral imperatives set by the One to whom we owe allegiance, honour and respect. When children obey their parents, things tend to be well without them getting into troubles easily. Similarly, if we obey the Word of God that provides us the guiding principles for our actions, the mesh of actions and outcomes will tend to follow some invisible dynamics to evolve a beautiful net that gives us good support through life instead of entrapping us in tangles.

Does the end justify the means? The answer rests on whether you uphold God's teachings or choose to follow the way of the world. The latter may be wishy-washy, all very confusing – to each his own understanding. However, God's teachings are absolutely clear. The Bible instructs that we are not to do evil that good may come. (Romans 3:8) "Don't be misled. Remember that you can't ignore God and get away with it. You will always reap what you sow!" (Galatians 6:7 NLT) We have seen enough examples in life.



John Lee

WILL HOPE STRIKE BACK?



PULSE
EPISODE I
THE HOPE STRIKES BACK
COMING TO YOU 13 AUG 05

Event: Music & Drama Concert
Date: 13 August 05 (Saturday) & 14 August 05 (Sunday)
Time: 1530h to 1800h (both days)
Venue: MPH, Jurong Christian Church
organised by: Pulse Youth Ministry, JCC

Register now @ <http://www.jcccls.org.sg/pulse> and get a free original music CD collection.

The above postcard tells it all, the date, the time, the location and the organizer. However, we may never know how much effort and sacrifice have gone into the production of this concert, not unless the youths are forthcoming with their story. The good news is that it was a success. About 30 persons indicated that they would like to know more about Jesus.

I was present at both shows and I must admit that I am impressed with our young ones professionalism. Indeed, they hammered out the music with all their might and quite deafening for my old ears. It was a treat for music lovers especially since almost all the songs were original compositions. *(My daughter must have screamed until she ended up with a sore throat and missed school the next day.)* We may need to copyright them before someone steals it.

The testimony by Peter was very electrifying and I am sure it kept everyone rooted to their seats even though it was a sudden change from all the loud music.

For all these we must give glory to God for He is the provider. He provided us with good weather, talented youths, courage to invite friends and classmates. We must also thank God for protection against the devil's attacks as some of the youths suffered loss of voice, injuries, etc.

The storyline did not quite end properly. Is there going to be Episode II?



PULSE
EPISODE I
THE HOPE STRIKES BACK

Requirements:
Internet Explorer
Macromedia Flash

center



AMAZING GRACE



Talking with our guests....



What Are They Really Asking?

How to answer spiritual questions.

by Judson Poling, *Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois.*

One of my colleagues told me the story of a professor, a brilliant man, whose father couldn't support the family. As a boy, this professor listened as the extended family argued over who was going to get stuck with raising him. In the middle of their arguing, feeling abandoned and unwanted, he slipped away to his room. There he found solace and escape in books.

His initial reaction to Christianity was to ask skeptical questions. He's not the only one for whom intellectualism becomes a way to mask pain. More than he needed his thinking corrected, he needed his heart mended. That brilliant boy did find healing in Christ, and today teaches seminary courses.

My ministry has brought me into contact with thousands of curious, questioning people. I've discovered that people ask spiritual questions because something in their lives isn't working. Uncertainty, fear, and pain provoke their questions. What they really want isn't information, but relief.

Most seekers' questions, whether intellectual or emotional, indicate underlying issues. Choosing to believe in Christ carries major

internal ramifications. Snappy, pat answers don't satisfy these inner struggles. Nobody wants a two-cent answer to a million-dollar question.

Behind every question is a person asking that question, and we need to minister to that person—if we can find him.

What Do You Think?

A great irony in Scripture prompted me to rethink how I answer seekers' questions. When the Son of God walked the earth, people came to him with dilemmas, doubts, and questions. He had all answers available to him. And yet he met their questions with questions of his own.

In Luke 10:25-26, "An expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?'"

Jesus didn't give the answer. Instead, he asked a question in return. "'What is written in the Law?' he replied. 'How do you read it?'"

In Matthew 18:12, Jesus asked, "What do you think? If a man owns

a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go look for the one that wandered off?" The heart of the parable is nothing but two questions!

In Matthew 22:41-46, Jesus conducted a little Bible study on Psalm 110 with the Pharisees. "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" Through this conversation Jesus affirmed that the Christ would be more than an earthly son of David, but also the Son of God. Jesus' answer was to recite one verse and ask four questions.

He responded not to the question, but to the person behind the question.

I remember overhearing a college professor talking to a student about spiritual matters. The student claimed she didn't believe in God. Rather than argue, the professor asked a probing question. "What is this god like, the god you don't believe in?"

The student described a vengeful god, a god who looked to punish her as soon as she steps a little out of line.

By asking a probing question, the professor uncovered the underlying fears that caused the student's doubt. She wasn't

looking for proof of God's existence. She was looking for relief from condemnation. Up to this point, only her claim that God didn't exist provided that relief.

"Well, I don't believe in that god either," said the professor. "Let me tell you about the God I do believe in, the God of Jesus Christ."

What to Ask

I've found several specific questions effective at reaching the underlying issues. Now, when someone asks me a spiritual question, I almost always reply, "That's an interesting question. What do you think?"

This is the approach Jesus used when he asked, "What's written in the Law? How do you read it?" It gives me an opportunity to understand the person. It also affirms that I care for him or her, even more than I do about having the "right" answer.

Often, exhibiting care for the questioner is a greater ministry than answering the question.

Another good question: "What situation in your life makes you wonder about that?"

Kathy had tried Christianity before. It didn't work out. Her husband, Jim, was raised in a secular

Jewish home. When I met them, they had lots of pointed questions about God, Christianity, and faith.

Jim, a logical man, said he wanted proof of Christianity's claims. How should I answer his skeptical and sometimes antagonistic questions? I thought. Is he really after more information? Why is he asking in the first place?

We could have spent our entire evening lost in theology. Instead, I asked what situation prompted their questions. That's when we discovered they were uncertain about their children's upbringing. Should they be brought up Christian, Jewish, nothing, or a little bit of each? Knowing the key issue directed our conversation toward cooperation rather than theological debate.

Sometimes, however, a seeker's questions and thoughts do require challenge. For instance, many seekers today are struggling with Jesus' claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. "No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

They ask, "Does Jesus really mean he's the only way? Isn't that kind of narrow-minded?"

"If I were to say that he really meant it," I reply, "would you rule

out the possibility that it's true? Why won't you even consider that a possibility?" Such questions help them examine their skepticism.

When I was in college, students often boasted phantom objections and rationalizations to discount Jesus. Cutting through these smokescreens, I sometimes asked: "If you found out you were wrong, what would be at risk?"

Many times what keeps people from faith is fear of the consequences. Many of my college friends were living with their girlfriends. They knew if they accepted Christianity, they'd have to stop. So they put up diversions. As long as they could keep God looking silly and Jesus looking less than divine they could continue their unexamined lives. Their doubts had little to do with theology and everything to do with morality.

Once the objection is uncovered, it can be addressed with compassion and truth. "In Hebrews 11," I might say to one who fears what God will demand, "it says they who seek God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder. He rewards, not tramples, those that serve him. His character is not to make you miserable, but to give."

East Asia Mission Trip



It has indeed been a great learning experience during this trip.

Although there were many ups and downs, and many of us felt like giving up, but God was there to assure and guide us. Our team had claimed a verse from the Bible as our main objective to press on during the trip:

Mark 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.

All in all, we spent about a month in East Asia. We started our mission on the 20th of April to the 18th of May. We stayed at a university under the foreigners department during this period. On our first week, we had the privilege to attend a meeting together with the local staff and get to know what their ministry was like as we converse with them.

As East Asia is a closed country, there were many things we had to take note of. One of our struggles was that we had to worship God with the TV volume on for security purposes and we learned that we were so blessed in Singapore that we were able to worship God freely.

On the first week, other than getting to get to know the staff, at the same time, we got to familiarize with the new surroundings and also to start off the battle by praying for the campus.

By the end of the week, we were already making new friends whom were people that we had targeted to share Christ with. We were excited that God had brought many people to us. At night, we would come together to give thanks and to share with one another what was happening during the day. This was to encourage one another to press on. We also took the time to pray for

each other and for the friends which we had made that God will give us an opportunity to share with them. Our team would also come together and share different ways of mingling with the students there and we learned from one another.

We also attended lessons like Chinese culture and Chinese calligraphy in the morning. We learnt 10 things about Chinese culture and learnt writing words.

It was useful as it broadened our knowledge about East Asia. Around this time, our team had our first “Sheep”. By this term, we mean that a person has accepted Christ. This was an encouraging day for all of us. God was working for us and through us. This made us realized that we really need God to intervene.

Throughout those weeks, about 10 people received Christ and we praise God for working in their lives indeed. By the end of third week, it was our last week there and we followed up on those who had accepted Christ. At the same time, we also continued to share with those who still had not accepted Christ as time was scarce.

We were putting extra effort as it was our last week there as we wanted more people to hear about this good news. Around this period, we also passed over the students who had accepted Christ and those who showed interest in knowing more about the gospel to the Local Staff there.

To sum up everything, though many were new to this, but God was faithful in leading us through this wonderful experience. We learned to depend on Him solely in this mission trip.

Indeed, it was not a smooth sailing trip compare to the Mongolia trip I went last

year, but it was definitely a fruitful trip where prayer was my sole dependant. The brokenness displayed in all of the team members through the trip was something I treasured most. I understood humility.

I am also thankful that He uses weak people like us to partnership with Him to bring 14 people to receive Him and over 40 people hear the full gospel presentation through

this trip. I was truly encouraged that my God does not look at outer appearance but my Heavenly Father looks at the heart and that is why we were chosen by Him to accomplish His purposes.

Thank you for loving us by praying and also blessing us through this trip.

All Glory be to Him!

28th BB Company wins Bible Quiz



A short history of

Apollo C Quiboloy



Apollo C. Quiboloy hails from Davao, Philippines. His parents were native of Pampanga. His family was former members of the Roman Catholic Church before they were converted to Methodism. After staying in Davao for sometime, they were enticed to join the United Pentecostal Church (UPC) where the young Quiboloy became very active and later on rose to leadership. However, things did not work out good between him and the UPC leaders a reason why he was expelled which according to him is due to the latter's jealousy over ministry matters. After this incident, he brought with him 15 members which now grew to approximately 3 million according to one source. During those early days, Quiboloy is not readily bold in proclaiming his being "the Son of God" but nowadays he is now forthright in stating publicly that he is the "sent one" of God quoting verses like John 7:29 and 8:18 which is obviously reserved for Jesus Christ.

The Holy Alphabet

Sabrina Tan sent me an email, sharing the beautiful "Holy Alphabet", as reproduced on the left below. It was inspiring, and it inspired me to create another one – on the right below. Hope you enjoy reading both.

John Lee

A lthough things are not perfect
 B ecause of trial or pain
 C ontinue in thanksgiving
 D o not begin to blame
 E ven when the times are hard
 Fierce winds are bound to blow
 G od is forever able
 H old on to what you know
 I magine life without His love
 J oy would cease to be
 K eep thanking Him for all the things
 L ove imparts to thee
 M ove out of "Camp Complaining"
 N o weapon that is known
 O n earth can yield the power
 P raise can do alone
 Q uit looking at the future
 R edeem the time at hand
 S tart every day with worship
 T o "thank" is a command
 U ntil we see Him coming
 V ictorious in the sky
 W e'll run the race with gratitude
 X alting God most high
 Y es, there'll be good times and yes some
 will be bad, but...
 Z ion waits in glory...where none are ever
 sad!

"I AM Too blessed to be stressed!" The shortest distance between a problem and a solution is the distance between your knees and the floor. The one who kneels to the Lord can stand up to anything. Love and peace be with you forever, Amen.

Author Unknown

A storm is brewing
 But do not fear
 Commander Jesus is in control

Despite the rising tempest
 Entreat Our Lord Most High
 Faith in Him we cling upon:

"Get up and rebuke the wind
 Hold us safe in your hands we plead
 In similar manner as the Gospels' record"

Jesus will calm the wind and raging waters
 King is He above all people and domains
 Let us all dedicate our lives to Him

My Lord and my God!
 Never need we be seized by worry
 On the ship o'life we sail with you onboard

Please keep us safe from the travails
 Questions Satan may throw to deceive
 Rest us assured of your presence close

Sure and safe in your hands always
 To testify of your grace mercy and love
 Undeserved as sinners though we are

Verily verily we offer our praise to you
 Who bears the wonderful name Emmanuel
 X'tolling you in all that we did and do
 Yesterday, today and forever more

Zion of God, home of the blest, we dwell in
 thee

John Lee