

# The Vine

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## EDITOR'S WORD

Are you a good father? It is not an easy job. The Bible is literally filled with stories of bad fathers, like Aaron, Eli, Samuel, King David, King Hezekiah and others. They all had children who did not walk in their footsteps and some rebelled against their fathers. Could it be these fathers were over-indulgent and did not discipline their sons? In Rev 3:19, God says, "Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline."

Do you think that only the Old Testament characters had rebellious sons? A modern day example would be Franklin Graham who rebelled against his father Billy. However by God's grace Franklin repented and is now serving the Lord faithfully (read his book "Rebel With A Cause").

Do I have an answer to this problem? Well, discipline seems to be part of the answer but I am also reminded of Eph 6:4 which states: "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them

up in the training and instruction of the Lord." It also seems that training and instruction of the Lord is part of the solution. So it is not just discipline but also training in the Lord.

However is this the perfect solution? If it was then salvation is by works and not by grace. If your sons do not share your faith right now, keep praying, keep reaching out, keep loving and maybe one day you'll rejoice when the prodigal comes home.

I too am not the perfect father. Oftentimes I am over-indulgent because I only have one child. However I am constantly praying that the Lord will bring her up to be the woman He wants her to be. Thus discipline, training in the Lord but most of all praying for your child is my advice to all fathers who are over-indulgent with their children.

*Martin Cheah*

## VISIT TO THAI GOOD NEWS CENTRE

Sunday 06 Nov 2005

Our feet first stepped into an unfamiliar territory. Packs of strangers sat on newspapers along the walkways and having a chit-chat session over a simple lunch. These were the Thai people who gathered in the Golden Mile Complex, which is home to many tour agencies and also home to Thai Good News Centre (TGNC). And our agenda was to learn as much as we could about their culture (and get a taste of Thai food also).

Pastor Rickson Leong introduced us to the ministry at Thai Good News TGNC. He did so by first giving an introduction of the Thai people and their culture by “walk-a-talk” (walking around the premises and talking). He highlighted that many of the Thais are very friendly and approachable (proved true), and enjoy social activities such as singing and dancing (very evident). Yet he cautioned us about the incidence of loose culture and vices, which include marital infidelity, drunkenness, drug taking, gambling, sexual immorality, etc. He advised us to stay together as a group.



We were privileged to hear the Word of God from our own Mission Chairman, Jim Lee. We learnt the universal word which is the same in all language – Hallelujah. The service at TGNC was similar to ours (based on the Lutheran Liturgy), with worship in songs, sermon, song of response, offering, and also Holy Communion. How blessed are we as one body in Christ – though from distant lands and different tongues, we can come together and partake of the Lord’s Supper. Indeed, it is this bond in the Lord that brings us closer together.

After service, we were treated to Thai delicacies. Thai food tend to be spicy and sour, but we got a taste of the sweet side with papaya salad and fried rice, along with two other dishes of chicken and offal.

We had more time to interact with the Thais at TGNC. They were all very hospitable and forthcoming. If we had thought language would be a barrier, we were proved wrong when some of them understood simple English and even Hokkien and Chinese! They were so kind to let us sing-along with them in a “karaoke” session. We sang some Thai Worship songs gracefully accompanied by their *dii mak-mak* (very good, musically talented) band.

Later, a Thai sister led in a time of fellowship as she shared on the topic “turning others away from sin” that touched her during her devotion. This was the interesting part – there was interaction in both Thai and English, and a number of

our brothers and sisters, including Pastor Rickson did very good translations between the two languages. The session was fruitful, and we received many blessings during the sharing of God's Word.

During further interaction and sharing, we got to hear from some fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, which we took note of:

#### Brother Saam-Nam

- Shared that he accepted Christ more than 3 years back. To date, his family has all accepted Christ too.
- Learnt Chinese when he went to Taiwan to work more than 3 years ago.
- Setting up a home church in his home in Nan
- Lacks financial support, but Pastor Rickson has plans to support.
- Thank God for his open invitation to visit him at his home in Nan and be host to us.

#### Brother Saa-Am

- Just accepted Christ.
- Shared on his coming to know Christ through receiving an invitation from Thai Good News Centre.
- Though he tried to enter the centre a couple of times, the place was locked.
- Praise the Lord that his passion to know Christ did not die off and finally he was able to join them.
- Today was his second time attending service.
- He's talented in playing the keyboard or organ, and wishes to learn this skill from Pastor Rickson to serve in the centre.

Bro. Wilson, a parish worker there, took us on a crash course on the Thai Language and culture. It was also fun time as we assimilated many interesting points, such as taking care to place both feet on the ground when seated and never crossing our legs or point our toes at others as doing so would be considered by the Thai as being disrespectful.

With so much take-away in learning from our first encounter with the Thais, it leaves us yearning for more blessings from our Lord.

*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" – Isaiah 52:7*

*Mervyn Lee*

# **The Earth Accursed & Future Glory To The Saints (Romans 8:18-28)**

As I write this, I have just stared at today's news headline "Now it's the turn of a hurricane named Beta". The report goes, "The Category 3 storm packed winds of 175 km/h" – TODAY 31<sup>st</sup> October.

Taking a little trip back in time, the worst tsunami caused by a volcanic eruption happened in 1883 with the convulsive outburst of a volcano, followed by a cataclysmic explosion that ripped apart the island of Krakatoa (between Java and Sumatra), killing more than 30000 people.

The worst tsunami set off by a 9.0 earthquake happened recently in the Indian Ocean in 2004. You have heard the news. You have watched the horrific destructions on TV and the awful pictures of suffering in the newspapers. More than 300000 people perished (including Singaporeans) when Mother Earth vented her wrath that even islands shifted positions and her own spin was shaken.

It is easy to lose track of the string of names that continues to be rolled out – □□ (typhoon *Haitang*), Katrina, Rita, □□ (typhoon *Longwang*), Stan, Wilma, Beta ...

Singapore is very fortunate to be geographically shielded from the tsunami, typhoons and hurricanes. However, if the world becomes an inhospitable place with all the disasters while Singapore, a little red dot, stands alone and protected, what kind of survival can Singaporeans and her permanent residents have? The answer to this question should lead us to understand the fact that no man is an island. Wherever people are on this planet, their lives are intertwined with one another such that individual altruistic or selfish actions impinge on a shared interest to stay alive decently and meaningfully.

The sad reality is that climatic calamities are not all the disasters that befall Man. If dread diseases, pandemics, droughts and famines are not enough to add on to the list of threats to lives that 'cruel nature' deals us with, the smart human race volunteers its contribution to its own destruction through suicide bombings, nuclear gambles, armaments contest and bio-terrorism. On these, people may be guilty of either acts or omissions contributory to the elusiveness of the treasure called 'serenity' that everybody can only long for in the heart. I do not see the list as exhaustive of the iniquities we know of because Man is always seeking new heights of knowledge that in the final reckoning only proves his abysmal ignorance of the infinite universe and of the wrecking he is subjecting the Earth to.

Is Man worse than animals that he is so lacking in intelligence to avert his own extinction like the dinosaurs? Sometimes I wonder whether all the so-called natural disasters are really natural or man-made. Consider the following:

- The greed of Man in denuding the forests unbalances the retention and distribution of water in the ground, increases soil erosion and landslides,

and reduces the natural barrier against winds and waves. Good topsoil and fertile agricultural lands are wiped out. Therefore human actions are contributory to the worst droughts, floods and famines that ensue.

- The greed of Man in over-exploiting resources (oil and wood, for example) lead to scarcities, uneven distribution of wealth, trade deficits, inflation, poverty and famines in third-world or “fourth-world” countries because it becomes too expensive for the poor to even meet their basic needs while the rich abandon themselves to obnoxious luxury. Exploitation *per se* is one thing, but the channeling of good resources to bad uses for self destruction, with hundreds of billions of dollars spent on arms in a year instead of amply feeding the whole population of the Earth with surplus to spare – what a bizarre irony and an astonishing testimony of Man’s madness! What is there natural about the devastating human pains and sufferings that the world is beset with? (If Man is so smart, why not he use the huge cost of landmines to educate and provide medical care to the innumerable poor instead of for killing and maiming?)
- Nature strikes a balance between the production and destruction of ozone in the stratosphere just like the natural water cycle and the Carbon Dioxide-Oxygen cycle to ensure adequate provision for our survival. Stupidly, Man takes it upon himself to destroy the ozone faster than its production to his own detriment because of his uncontrolled greed in satisfying his immediate wants for modern-day comfort products. A hotter Earth, higher sea levels with the melting of the Polar icecaps ... – heatwaves, submerging of islands – Are these natural or man-made tragedies?

Thriving fish populations turn bellies up overnight not because of pollution, but due to weather changes – Have you heard? This was what happened when *El Niño* struck the eastern Pacific in 1997 and 1998, raising water temperatures, causing global crop failures and bringing widespread diseases in its wake. Do you think Man has no part in spoiling the dynamic equilibrium of nature?

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (Gen. 1:1) The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed ... and trees bearing fruit. And God saw that it was good.” (1:12) God let the sea teem with creatures and filled the air with healthy birds (without bird flu), and blessed them to be fruitful and increasing in number. (1:20-22) God did not forget to let the land produce

livestock BEFORE he made Man to rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. (1:26) How caring of God to provide for Man to be sufficient and be enabled to “be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.” (1:28) Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant ... and every tree that has fruit ... They will be yours for food.” (1:29) “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” (1:31)

Man, granted the authority to rule over the Earth, should have no fear of the Earth and no worry of hunger. Regrettably, Man now lives under the threat of the Earth – for all the pollutions, the destructions, the animal-based diseases, the insufficiency of food (such that some people have to institute urgent measures for population control instead of “be fruitful and increase in number”) and the calamities that we attribute to nature so as to shirk our responsibilities. Instead of a lovely creation that pleases the soul, we see the hardness of Man’s heart and feel the pain and suffering of all of God’s creation that is continuously being subjected to abuse.

The Earth is sick, very sick, because Man is sick in sin. The greed of Man knows no bounds. To understand human psychology, I would like to refer to Abraham Maslow (1908~1970) who came out with this model of a hierarchy of human needs:

1. Biological & physiological needs – food, shelter, sleep, etc.
2. Safety needs – protection from the elements, law & order, etc.
3. Belongingness & love needs
4. Esteem needs
5. Self-actualization needs – self-fulfillment, to max out experiences, etc.

Man is never satisfied. After we have had the five levels, we want more. So we add to the five the following three that were not in the original Maslow’s model:

6. Cognitive needs
7. Aesthetic needs
8. **Transcendence needs**

The world was originally a beautiful piece of God-created canvas with all its features and built-in structures in a state of natural balance for our enjoyment. Man attempted his own handiwork on this piece of canvas and finally finds that it is destroyed. Throw it away and have a new piece to work on? **We now seek transcendence.** What we have in our knowledge is not enough for our survival. Let us delve into a different world, the world of an atom with a central body (the nucleus) and particles (the electrons) revolving around it in layers of orbits. Isn’t it

like the planets orbiting a star? Interesting or crazy thoughts, it is not enough. Let our space scientists explore the macrocosm of the solar system.

On 20<sup>th</sup> July 1969, Neil Armstrong took Man's first step on the moon and made the historic claim, "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." That was a small step with an astronomical expense. 36 years on, we still marvel at Man's greatness, but what giant leap have we made in solving the myriad of life-and-death problems confronting the world? In 2018, perhaps, there may be another manned mission to the moon. The mission may well refresh us with dreams of all the romantic possibilities that the moon hold out for mankind, such as it being a nice place for an alternative home in case we are forced to abandon Earth because it becomes too much ruined to a point that recovery is impossible. We can then have a new piece of canvas to re-do our handiworks. Wonderful!

Before the next moon expedition, many people are already excited. To show that they mean business, these people have already plonked down different sums of money to stake their ownership of lunar territory. This is not a joke – it is true, as has also been reported in the Straits Times. Real people have plonked down real money to book their dreamland in the sky. (Looks like Singaporeans are not the only ones guilty of the common accusations of being *kiasu*.) To get you really excited, and make sure that you too do not miss out on the opportunity, I shall seriously refer you to this website <http://www.planetaryinvestments.com/> where it is stated that there are now over 1 million lunar landowners from 176 countries with ownership of more than 300 million lunar acres. I am truly dazed at the thought of what the moonscape would be like in just a short time in the event that Man colonizes it. Think of what greedy and foolish Man has done to the Earth in his Godless power struggles for dominion!

Before you think of investing in lunar real estate, think about what you hope to recoup from your investment that you can live to enjoy. Think of what your amount of spare money together with the amount already spared by the over 1 million lunar landowners can do for the impoverished around the world, in both physical and spiritual senses. The world governments' annual military budgets do not amount to a bead of sweat for their treasuries. Great men of the world try to solve problems, and they explore the outer space for prestige and some obscure gains for mankind, costing them just a few peanuts in investment – what they feel as very affordable. Yet, uncountable numbers of the poor without even a shirt on their backs are dying for just the need of a decent daily meal or some basic medical care. We know that the world is warped when the wealthy and highly educated, supposedly full of knowledge and wisdom, speak grandiloquently of great leaps by their contributions while there are the poor and needy suffering silently, ignored, in the backyards without any clue as to what the word 'affordable' means.

Does the relentless chase after knowledge and celestial explorations give us hope of better lives for Man? Would it not have been better if Man had just remained simple and innocent without succumbing to the temptation of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? (Gen. 2:9) We would surely not face the consequence of having death staring at us for the little knowledge (a dangerous thing) that we gain from that forbidden tree. (2:17) The knowledge of good and evil was the seed of Man's cravings for more knowledge. Now, he seeks that knowledge across the cosmos. Yet, despite his ardent quest, he always ends up with an infinitesimal fraction of the whole, and sorely lacks the wisdom to apply it, if it is of any use, to solve the dire problems that the world is faced with.

Out of our expensive extra-terrestrial quests, nothing down-to-earth significant has been achieved to meet the real needs of the human race for survival. Can we say that we have already conquered the moon? Maybe 'yes' to the brilliant minds, and we have actually now gone further to Mars. And we are also training our telescopes to discover the 10<sup>th</sup> planet of the solar system. We can boast of the potential of our intelligence to span the breadth and depth of the universe, from quarks to quasars. It is surreal. Beyond the transcendence that we seek and achieve, what else will we add to Maslow's hierarchy on account of our insatiability? Can man be like God, omniscient? **Will our pride and arrogance lead us on to aim for transcendence beyond the universe, to reach beyond God?** The truth is that we are wasting our time, energy and resources on the needless egotistic wants instead of focusing our efforts on the real and immediate problems that can do with solutions that are in-the-world, not out-of-the-world! IN-THE WORLD, we have enough resources for all that we need if only we know how to use them without sinful wastage and without thoughtless actions that further damage the delicate Earth.

The never-ending disasters that frequently trouble us can often be traced to man-made factors, and these can be further traced to Adam and Eve, the time when sin entered the world. We have hope, however, for the future glory God will give us. As Paul said to the Romans,

"... what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will give us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, everything on earth was subjected to God's curse. All creation anticipates the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And even we Christians, although we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, also groan to be released from pain and suffering. We, too, wait anxiously for that day when God will give us our full rights as his children, including the new



bodies he has promised us. Now that we are saved, we eagerly look forward to this freedom. For if you already have something, you don't need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don't have yet, we must wait patiently and confidently.

“And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.” –

Rom. 8:18-28 (NLT)

***John Lee***

### **Can you find 21 books of the Bible hidden below?**

**Hi, may I share some facts about myself with you? John is my name and it was not by a fluke but by God's revelation according to His grace that I came to know Christ more than 20 years ago. It is my pleasure to introduce this fun recreation to you about the books of the Bible. Do you know them all? Yes there are some hidden in this jungle of words, and it is a most easy job for you to count them with the numbers from 1 to 21. All for fun say “cheez ra ra ra ...” and go on your hunt and easy does it. Some may think they need to be as wise as the judges, or that the quality of their intellectual genes is not up to par for the challenge, but it usually just takes a pair of sharp eyes looking systematically line by line to help you. Here is a tip. Mark out with a pencil any you can find, then take this game with you when you are on a drive. Truth is that you may get caught in a jam especially in nasty traffic and so you would feel it better with your previous effort on this game to compete relaxingly rather than charging up your blood pressure with lamentations over the high road tax you pay for the bad road service. A friend, Matt Hewlett, does it this way: She brews a cuppa of tea or coffee to drink for mental power before sinking into her comfortable couch to tackle this interesting game of words while at the same time humming a tune from a song of songs that are among her Christian favourites. Sounds fun, doesn't it? Now, give it a try. To start you off, the name of one of the books has been picked out above. Look for the other 20 and check your answers in the next issue of the Vine.**

## How can I rise above office politics?

Hold yourself above gossip and jealousy.  
Deuteronomy 5:20, 21

What makes an office uncomfortable? Rumors, circulating behind the backs of coworkers; jealousy that causes colleagues to distrust each other; theft of ideas, of credit, or even of paper clips! All these things can produce a terrible office atmosphere. And all of them are against God's law.



The Ten Commandments give basic rules for how to behave toward others. And the last two commandments, nine and ten, are particularly valuable in governing office relationships.

The ninth commandment orders not to tell lies about others. That means anything that's even slightly untrue—including half-truths, exaggerations, even stories that might be true, but you don't know for sure! If you follow the ninth commandment at work, you'll find yourself refusing to pass on juicy information about your coworkers. Instead, you'll spread kind, encouraging, and complimentary words.

The tenth commandment says not to want what other people have. We often think of this in terms of possessions—big houses, fancy cars, nice clothes. But the commandment also covers not wishing for a colleague's power, prestige, or job responsibilities. Instead of looking at what other people have, you're to examine your own responsibilities and fulfill them as well as you can. (See also Esther 7:1-6; Matthew 20:20-28; Galatians 5:13-16; Colossians 3:22-4:1; James 3:5-18.)



Good Words to Remember:

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet ... anything that is your neighbor's. —Deuteronomy 5:20,21

Today's Challenge:

Do you spread good (complimentary) or bad (inflammatory) gossip?

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/biblestudies/questions/riseabove.html>

# EARTHQUAKE STATISTICS

Date	Location	Fatalities	Magnitude
1908	Italy, Messina	70,000-100,000 (est)	7.2
1920	China, Gansu	200,000	8.6
1923	Japan, Kanto	143,000**	Not available
1927	China, near Xining	200,000	Not available
1932	China, Gansu	70,000	7.6
1935	Pakistan, Quetta	30,000-60,000 (est)	7.5
1948	Turkmenistan	110,000	7.3
1970	Peru	66,000	7.9
1976	China, Tangshan	255,000	7.5
2004	Off Sumatra	232,010*	9

\* This figure includes the number killed and missing in the tsunami triggered by the earthquake.

\*\* Many thousands were killed in the Great Tokyo Fire caused by the earthquake.

Source: United States Geological Survey, [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov)

## Major Earthquakes around the World, 2005

Date	Location	Magnitude1
Feb. 5	Celebes Sea	7.1
March 2	Banda Sea	7.1
March 28	Northern Sumatra, Indonesia	8.7
June 13	Tarapaca, Chile	7.8
June 15	Off coast of northern California	7.2
July 24	Nicobar Islands, India	7.3

NOTE: A major earthquake is defined here as having a magnitude of 7.0 or more.

# THE OVERINDULGENT PARENT

An annoyingly durable adage says that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. David Bredehofft wants everyone to remember the part about the good intentions, even if your parents never taught you how to do laundry. Chances are, they only wanted to make your life easier. Who would have thought it could backfire?

Bredehofft studies the consequences of an effortless childhood. He calls it an overindulged childhood. The trouble is that these beloved kids stand a fair chance of growing up into angry adults, which can come as quite a shock to Supermom'n'pop, who were expecting some gratitude. The people whom Bredehofft interviewed said they're embarrassed to find that they don't know how to manage money, or remove an ink stain, or show up on time. Some tell him they have trouble knowing when enough is enough, whether they're eating, shopping, drinking, or loving.

Bredehofft is a psychologist and chairman of the Social and Behavioral Sciences department at Concordia University in St. Paul. Since 1996, he and fellow researchers Jean Illsley Clarke and Connie Dawson have done three studies and 2,000 interviews.

What exactly is overindulgence? Bredehofft says it's when parents give kids too much of what looks good, too soon, for too long. Bredehofft's bottom line is blunt: "Overindulgence is a form of child neglect." It keeps kids from learning basic lessons of life, or of thinking beyond their own needs, partly because their parents never let on that this was a sacrifice or hardship.

As parents, we've been counseled about setting limits, about not spoiling our kids, about raising responsible adults. But we also want our kids to like us. Parents who work long hours may make up for their absence by fulfilling their kids' every passing fancy.

OK, this is hitting a little close to home. Where's the line between enough and too much? Bredehofft acknowledges that it can be a tough call.

Which brings us to the kicker in the research: None of the adults who said they'd been overindulged as children were happy about it now. Not even one. They knew their parents had meant well, but they still resented feeling at a loss when it came to making a decision, or doing a household chore, or raising their own kids.

## **THE HOKKIEN HARVEST**

By Tan Swee Leong

### **The Dialect speaking Unreached People Group in Singapore**

The Holy Spirit moved in a mighty way amongst the young people of Singapore in the 70's, I was one of them and many of my contemporaries can attest to this. In the 80's we saw His work among the professional – the executive and managerial class. In the 90's the Holy Spirit is doing a great work among the dialect speaking population in Singapore. This observation was made by Rev. Oh Beng Kee during the Hokkien Harvest Seminar on 18 Nov 2005.

Based on data from the 2000 Census, 72% of Singapore's population is Chinese with the dialect speakers accounting for 31% i.e. around 1 million, out of the total population of more than 4 million. This is a very significant part of our population not just because of the size but they have been for a long time the unreached people group in Singapore. Of the dialect speakers, 47% are Hokkien, 24% Cantonese and 21% Teochew. They are the heartlanders of Singapore, 78% live in 4 room or smaller HDB flats. We see them and are in contact with them. They include the hawkers, shop assistants, taxi drivers, beauticians, blue collar workers; they also include the marginalized – the poor and needy, those in prisons and the Ah Bengs and Ah Lians. We are aware that the middle class, educated Singaporean are reached by Churches and para-church organisations such as Campus Crusade, The Navigators, Eagles. What about these neglected people among us? In the 70's and 80's dialect services within churches were a rarity, the idea of elderly dialect speakers attending Church was completely alien. God in his compassion and love has moved many churches to address the need to reach out to the dialect speakers – the “unreached people group” right in our midst.

### *The Hokkien Harvest*

The Hokkien Harvest network (Singapore) comprising of a network of Singapore Churches was formed to consolidate the concerted effort to reach out to the dialect speakers in Singapore focussing on the Hokkiens who is the largest group. Workers in the groups comprise preachers who have dedicated themselves to serving Singapore churches in the dialect ministry. Recognising that many churches in Singapore lack preachers who are proficient in dialect, the Hokkien Harvest network support churches in their effort to reach out to the heartlanders. The networks also provide training for English-speaking people who like to learn Hokkien in order to communicate with the Hokkien communities.

The work among the heartlanders has seen phenomenal growth in recent years. Based on available statistics, there are at least 70 services conducted weekly in dialects, with larger congregations having 500-1000 worshippers. God is indeed doing a mighty work among this group. The startling fact is that most of this work is done by English speaking churches. The Lord has moved and changed the heart, attitude and mindset of English speaking Christians. They have sought to return to their roots and honour their distinctive heritage as Chinese. There is a shortage of workers, many have equipped themselves by learning Romanised Hokkien. They do not know how to read Chinese characters but Romanised Hokkien provides the means for them to speak, preach and read the Bible. God has indeed honoured the heart desire of such workers and the recent years have seen the Hokkien harvest as well as the reaping of fruits among other dialect speaking groups.

## Engaging in Dialect ministry

During the Hokkien Harvest Seminar which saw more than 300 participants from more than 50 churches, a number of valuable insights were shared by churches who have been engaged in dialect ministry. There are a few key ingredients for a successful dialect ministry:

1. Committed core of leaders and helpers
  - Clear vision, target groups and goals
  - Set up proper structure
  - Develop more leaders, helpers
2. Training in Language proficiency
  - Romanised Hokkien Training
3. Resources and material
  - Hokkien worship and resources – some of these are available on Hokkien Harvest website : [www.hokkienharvest.org](http://www.hokkienharvest.org)
4. Pastor in charge
  - There should be a lead person. After the work is established there should be a full time worker in the ministry.
5. Faith in God
  - Many of the testimonies shared during the Seminar point to how the workers took each step of faith into the work praying and seeking the Lord's leading.

- Emphasis on prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit. Pre-service prayers, post-service prayers and corporate prayer.

Other key observations highlighted were:

1. Vibrant and edifying worship service
  - The praise and worship session should be lively and the message relevant to their lives. Life changing testimonies are also impactful.
2. Connecting with the elderly
  - Most of dialect speakers are elderly and to reach out to them one has to be able to connect with them. The key ingredients must be underpinned by the capacity to touch their lives, through care, concern and showing an active interest in their life's issues and giving them an attentive listening ear.
3. Close monitoring and Pastoral care
  - Close monitoring of attendance and telephone calls, visitations and follow up.

## Dialect ministry in JCC

We have recently formalised the dialect ministry work in JCC. We have done some work on a less structured basis in the past through participation in the fellowship and services conducted by Yishun Christian Church; through fellowship gatherings organised by the Bethel Care Group and ministering to the



dialect speaking attendees at the Church retreat. God has moved the hearts of our members and there is a committed core of leaders and helpers who meet on Sundays to prepare themselves to minister and share the gospel. There is plan to organise Romanised Hokkien training and to build up resource materials of dialect messages, songs and other materials.

God is moving in his own way and we are thankful for raising Peter Cheong who is leading this ministry. If you witness their diligence and enthusiasm during their practice sessions on Sundays, you will be encouraged to see how



they desire to serve and honour God. We need to “open our eyes and look at the fields.

*They are ripe for harvest” (John 4:35).* There are many unreached dialect speakers within the community of



JCC – our parents, relatives and friends. Let’s make the effort to give them the opportunity to come to know the Living God.

The feast has been prepared, we need to extend the invitation for them to come and feed on the spiritual food that has been prepared for them. Do join our hearts in

## **BLESSINGS FOR THE FAMILY**

*A Dialect Ministry Event*  
on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2005  
from 11.15 am to 2.00 pm  
at Jurong Christian Church  
cost only \$5.00 per pax

Speaker: **Rev Oh Beng Kee**



You are encouraged to bring your Hokkien or Cantonese speaking family members or friends to listen to this gifted dialect speaker share the Word of God.

seeking God to do His work, our hand in the work of ministry and our mouths to calling the lost to come to hear the Word of God.



# Coming Soon...

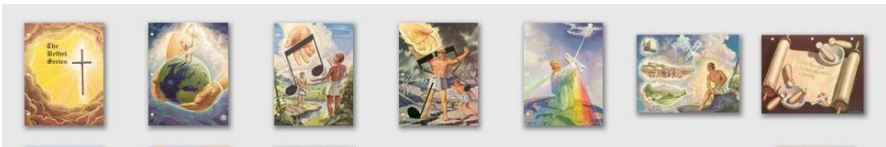


No, these are not scenes from the upcoming movie NARNIA! Do you know what these 2 pictures on the left represent? If you do, then very likely you must be one of those persistent people who managed to commit 2 years to go through the Bethel Series because these are the 1<sup>st</sup> and last pictures of the entire series. In all, there are over 40 colorful pictures to help you memorize important Biblical concepts so that at the end of the course, you would have a good overview of the entire Bible.

Incidentally, the Bethel Cell Group was born out of a group of ex-Bethel Series students who found their time together so meaningful that they decided to stay on together to form a cell group. So besides just learning and memorizing things, friendships are also formed through this study program.

Coming soon in 2006, JCC will again organize the Bethel Series program which will comprise of 1 and a half hour lessons over 40 weeks. Many of us have gone through this course already and the best advertisement would be by word of mouth. So I hope you will encourage your cell group members and the younger ones to go through this course which have helped you gain a fundamental background on the Bible.

Look out for more information over the coming months.

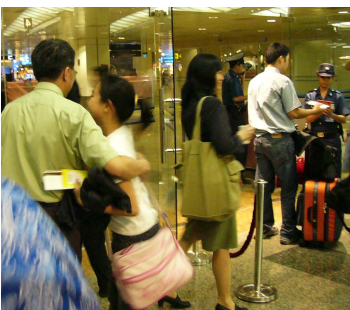


# Sending Out 2005 Mission Team

Sunday 20 Nov 2005 – The Mission Team going to Northern Thailand was commissioned by Pastor Samuel Wang. The Team presented a song in the Thai language and requested the prayers of the church.



Wednesday 23 Nov 2005 – The Mission Team gathered at Terminal 2, Changi Airport together with some well wishers who gave them some encouraging words and a prayer before sending them off.



One last hug and the Mission Team were on their way.

God speed and bring you safely back.



# The Do's and Don't's of Witnessing

"Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person" (Col. 4:5-6).

Like most things in life, witnessing has guidelines. Following is a list of 20 Do's and 12 Don't's. They should aid you while witnessing and help prevent serious errors. If, however, you choose to ignore them, witnessing will be difficult and awkward.

## Do's

1. Do Pray.
2. Do speak to please God.
3. Do read your Bible.
4. Do start with a positive witness for Christ.
5. Do keep things simple.
6. Do share your salvation experience with them.
7. Do know what you believe.
8. Do have a genuine love.
9. Do be simple and define your terms.
10. Do memorize appropriate Scriptures if possible.
11. Do be ready to learn from the people you witness to.
12. Do be patient and gentle.
13. Do listen attentively.
14. Do answer their questions.
15. Do ask questions.
16. Do let him save face.
17. Do bring him, if possible, to a decision about Jesus.
18. Do encourage him to study the Bible by itself.

19. Do use Scripture in context.
20. Do remember that greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

## Don'ts

1. Don't attack directly or make fun of someone.
2. Don't jump from one subject to another.
3. Don't expect too much from him.
4. Don't have a spiritual chip on your shoulder.
5. Don't lose patience.
6. Don't come on too strong.
7. Don't debate peripheral issues or doctrines.
8. Don't get sidetracked defending your denomination.
9. Don't be uptight.
10. Don't assume.
11. Don't argue.
12. Don't speak too fast or unclearly.

**All you need is to trust Him and go witness.**



**PLEASE REMEMBER US IN  
YOUR PRAYERS**