

The Vine

For internal circulation only

Volume 7/2007



“It’s over!”, the committee sighed with great relief. After months of preparations, planning, encouraging and even some arguing, the 40th Anniversary Celebrations have come and gone.

Hopefully, we have made many of you happy, but most of all, I hope we have reminded you of God’s faithfulness to JCC. If the above photo was taken with everyone wearing the 40th Anniversary T-shirt, you would probably only see GREEN. Yes, there is a new generation waiting in the wings, to

carry JCC for the next 40-year lap. When JCC celebrates its 80th Anniversary, this would indeed be an old photo.

Does each new generation want to throw away the values of the previous one? Hopefully, the next generation will carry on and bring up to date the traditions of the previous without discarding everything as irrelevant and unspiritual.

Can you imagine the day when homosexuality and casinos become

Art of Journalling

Journal 12.5.07

A little surprise in the morning...
a little pink bag written: "A special gift for you."

In it, a photo frame with "If mothers were flowers, you would be the one I picked"

and a little booklet with many touching verses to read.

As I opened the little attached card, tears began to flow...

None other than one in my prayer list, and whom I have often pleaded for a "fresh touch" from the Lord Prayer we cannot omit, even when everything seems in vain.

This is an encouragement for mummies who have joined me to pray for the children; we will see the rainbow after the rain. So press on, pray and keep believing. The Lord works in both visible and invisible ways.

I do not fantasize "Mother's Day" in a commercialized way; still, the Day serves as a reminder of God's blessings and trust in us (Richard & myself) by entrusting to us 4 beautiful lives (created in their uniqueness) and to bestow the responsibilities and stewardship to guide them according to His purpose and for His Glory. I acknowledged this, and am glad to have surrendered them to His Lordship.

part and parcel of our daily life because it is the "now" thing to do. Will divorce be as common as marriage? Will our values change so much with time?

The times may have changed but the values must remain. You can't update the Ten Commandments even though it is more than 6000 years old.

Forty years from now when you look back, I hope you can say, "Thank God for faithfully keeping JCC these 80 years."

Martin Cheah

From then (2 years ago), I have had no regrets and will not hold back any one of them – It is in my prayer that they and their spouses will love God with all their hearts, and they and their families will serve the Lord all their lives. I am sure this is our greatest joy and hope as parents.

Ever since then, when the path is so shadowy and misty, I no longer feel so freaky like I used to be (filled with anxieties and fear). The assurance in Ps 23 will always be my anchor. I am not ashamed to share about the experience I once had when I was a Christian who was still very carnal in many ways. It is just

human nature – as parents, we can be ignorantly self-centered and full of desire to achieve our dreams in our children so that they may "do better" and have hope of a "better and comfortable future." But as I allow God to come into my life and acknowledge Him to be Lord of all, this mindset is no longer valid in me. Now it is God's agenda and He is the Father of the children, and I let God rule and reign over them.

We follow what the Lord teaches us; impart them to the children. His teaching is to love unconditionally. Therefore, no matter how the children fail or fall, continuing affirmation of love is very powerful in restoring their whole being – body, soul and spirit. His teaching is very simple but perfect (stress-less if we follow). Towards the end of the day, it is the heart which is most important and accountable to God personally. Therefore, teach them to love unconditionally and be exemplary ourselves. Giving love is so wonderful and eventually it is love that unites, secures and endures forever.

Thank the Lord for saving us through His unconditional love. Let's ask Him to impart the strength and abilities to love as He does.

May this mother's day be so special to you all, not forgetting to give affirmation of love to the children. And may all the children honour their parents just as what God has taught us to do.

Margaret Lee



Have you ever found an "abandoned" book lying in the wild – on a park bench or even above an ATM machine – which seems to have no owner but waiting for someone to pick it up? On the cover you'll sometimes find a yellow stick-on with these words "I'm free! I'm not lost! Please pick me up, read me and help me with my journey!" or even a sticker inside the front cover that says "I'm travelling around the world making friends. Please read and journal it so that my owner will know I'm safe in your hands..." There's possibly also a yellow running-book logo



on it, running freely to its next destination.

This is what bookcrossing is about. It promotes the habit of reading and sharing your books with other readers, and encourages people to register their books at the site www.bookcrossing.com to track where their books have gone or travelled. You may leave your books anywhere you deem fit for someone else to find; such as hotel lobby, coffee café, benches in shopping mall, etc...

You love your books enough to let them go – into the wild – to be found by others. Then the next person will journal with the bookcrossing ID (BCID) number which you have registered and indicated on the cover, and you'll know where your book has travelled. Anyone who picks up the book after you will Read and Release. This encourages more people to share what they have read with others, pass them on instead of letting their books collect dust on their own bookshelves. It's serendipity. Nothing is happier than to find a book lying there for you to find.

You may think nothing is free in this world, but you are wrong. The book is really free for you to read, and keep it if you want. But of course the main idea of bookcrossing is for people to share their books without feeling like they are losing something. Just think of all those books on your shelf, which you have found so much pleasure in reading and gaining knowledge from, with no one else sharing in that excitement of yours. And the bookcrossing site is free. You do not have to pay to register as a member; and even if you are still sceptical about the whole thing, you could just journal it as an anonymous finder. I tell you, by taking just a little effort on your part to journal your find, you'll make the owner of the book very happy his/her book was found by you. The owner will also not be in suspense wondering where the book has gone. The owners love their books enough to let them go, so it's basic courtesy to journal

that you have found the book. Sharing one's book has never been more exciting, more serendipitous than bookcrossing. The site's goal is simply to make the whole world a library.

I am telling you about book-crossing because I've found a lot of my released books not being journaled by their finders. Maybe a lot of people have not heard about bookcrossing; and when they chance upon a book lying in the wild, they become wary and doubtful about what they should do with it – whether it's free for picking up, whether registering their find by a journal entry on the bookcrossing site will draw undesirable attention to them, ... Well, as I said, anyone can journal as an anonymous finder. You will discover much fun to register, even by just using a pseudonym. With registration, you will find it easier for you to keep track of your own books released for others' pleasure of sharing in your reading pleasure. It will be your added pleasure to know how your books travel around the world and benefit a lot of people at no cost to you. Incidentally, by my registration on the bookcrossing site, I can easily keep track of all my books, knowing what books I've read so far and how many people have had the chance to read them as well.

There are no rules as to what books you could register. I've known of a bookcrosser registering her bible as a

permanent collection, and other Christian reads on their bookshelf. Even if some book-owners fight shy of releasing their religious books in the wild, interested people who see you having a certain book on your shelf which they would like to read will *pm* you (i.e., sending you a private message) requesting to borrow the book or trade with what they have on their shelves. I've done that. Bookcrossers are a generous bunch of people if you care to find out.

Here is a thought-provoking message from the bookcrossing site: *"You know the feeling you get after reading a book that speaks to you, that touches your life, a feeling that you want to share it with someone else. Bookcrossing.com gives you a simple way to share books with the world, and follow their paths forever!"*

So, if you like what you've read so far, and have been wondering all this time how to keep track of your books online and share them, you may visit www.bookcrossing.com and find out the way. By your generosity of sharing your books, you are encouraging others to do the same – **Read**, **Register**, and then **Release** their books "into the wild" and then track where they go and the lives they touch. What a great concept it is to share your books and follow their journey forever. Best of all, it's **FREE**.

I came to know about bookcrossing in 2004 when our National Library Board and Starbucks started a Pass-it-on Campaign. SingTel sponsored 5,000

second-hand library books, encouraging people to read and pass them on. You could pick up any books from a wicker basket located at every participating Starbucks outlet, read and then pass on the book. This way, others can enjoy it as well.

"A book lying idle on a shelf is wasted ammunition. Like money, books must be kept in constant circulation. Lend and borrow to the maximum." **Henry Miller**

At the official launch and MoU signing of BookCross@SG on 3rd July, Singapore was recognised as the first BookCrossing country in the world. (<http://.blogspot.com/2007/07/launch-of-bookcrosssg-books-need-to-be.html>) Are we proud of it? It is meaningful for us to be proud of it only if we make it real by our participation. In the Chinese classic 红楼梦 (Dream of the Red Chamber), there is a phrase 书中自有黄金屋 (which literally translates as "In books, there are houses made of gold.") This tells us about the preciousness of books, a source of knowledge; and we all know that knowledge is power. I may add that good books can also a source of spiritual nourishment. Whatever is valuable, why be selfish to keep it for ourselves? When we share with others, God is using us as a channel of his blessing. When

others share in return, we gain blessings for ourselves too!

Now, for more articles about BookCrossing, read them at:

<http://www.bookcrossing.com/ReadersDigest-Aug2003.html>

<http://www.passit-on.com.sg/procedure.html>

READ, RELEASE AND SHARE!

Sally Lee

AN ODE TO JCC'S 40 YEARS

Recently, the inspiration for a poem in connection with JCC's 40th anniversary came. However, it was in Chinese as I share here below. I hope readers who understand the language will enjoy it. However, for those who don't understand Chinese, I have included an approximate rendering of the poem in English, which does not have the fullness of the original composition in Chinese.

信实40

四十年来有风雨交加
当然少不了晴天太阳
风吹雨打日照多美好
它是大自然给予祝福
巩固咱们生命的活力

亲爱的主内弟兄姐妹
教会四十年华在心中
生活事奉行在光芒中
且别忘每日数算祝福
耶稣是我们的好朋友

裕廊教会立足四十年
谢主陪伴没难走的路
不怕风雨闪电或雷鸣
让我们永远唱著讚美
耶和华是我们的牧者

接下来的道路还漫长
主阿我们要紧跟随你
以行动付出宣扬福音
求神祝福赐恩膏之泉
我们把荣耀全归于你

李忠林



Thy Faithful 40

In 40 years, we have had stormy weather
 Still, we have the sunshine of fine days
 How nice are the wind, rain and sunshine
 They are the blessings that nature provides
 To build up the vitality of our lives

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ
 With JCC's 40 years in our heart
 Our lives and ministries shining bright
 Do not forget to count our blessings
 For Jesus is our best friend

JCC standing firm for 40 years
 Thanks to God who makes our journey
 light
 Wind, rain, lightning or thunder we fear
 not
 Let us sing praises without ceasing
 To Jehovah Jireh our provider

The road ahead is still long
 Dear Lord we want to closely follow you
 Giving you our all in sharing the Gospel
 May your blessings upon us freely flow
 All glory be to you on high

John Lee



THE SINNER'S PRAYER

Are we in despair? Are we feeling unworthy? Thoughts that bring grief and sadness? Accusation for our failures, weaknesses or is it simply Satan trying to "point a finger" at us and said things that destroy our confidence. This is a prayer that will make us rise up again and to know that we are children of God and the affirmation of Christ love for us that He sacrifice himself, died a painful death so that He will rise up to redeem us from "condemnation" and Satan has no right to accuse us again and again.

I glory in Your holy name, dear Lord, for in Christ I am righteous with His righteousness. I am justified - just as if I'd never sinned! I'm totally right with You! Thank You that on the cross Jesus bore all the guilt of all my sins, including past and present and future ones. How grateful I am that, because of what Jesus did, "You crossed out the whole debt against me in Your account books. You nailed the account book to the cross and crossed the account."

Now, Father, I bow before You as the Judge to whom I am accountable as the final Authority, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of all the earth... and I thank You, I praise You that You have said - and Your Word cannot be broken - "No condemnation now hangs over the head of those who are in Christ Jesus. The judge himself has declared us free from sin."

How I rejoice that through Christ I am all right as a person, now and forever; totally clean, every stain removed... totally forgiven, no matter now great or recent a failure I've had to confess, or how often I have failed.

What amazing grace! What undeserved acceptance and favor! How wonderful that You ask me to do absolutely nothing to earn Your forgiveness - no striving to measure up, no self punishment, no prolonged remorse, no self-blame, no deeds of penance..that I don't have to sink down into regrets, or into shame, or into denial or into excuses for things I do wrong. I'm so thankful that You don't hold a pair of scales and ask me to pile up enough good works to outweigh my sins, my failures, my unworthiness..that it's all grace through faith. What an incentive to live a life that pleases You, that brings You joy and not grief!

I greatly rejoice in You, Lord; my soul exults in You; for You have clothed me with the garments of salvation, You have wrapped me with a robe of righteousness and beauty, as a bridegroom dressed for his wedding, as a bride adorned with her jewels.

Amen.

Remember you are wonderfully created by the Almighty and you live to worship and praise Him.

777 Did you miss the 7th day of the 7th month in the 7th

year of the 21st Century for a date with the Registry of Marriage? If you were not an eligible bachelor or bachelorette, you might still have reason to accompany a relative or friend for the important date. Note that the date has 7 in a triple occurrence, and 3 times 7 is 21, the number of our current century. It seems that many people are mesmerized by the so-called beautiful number, and the date becomes a hot one for love and marriage.

Why is 777 considered an auspicious date? Straits Times columnist Ms Lim Xinyi mentioned that “the number seven is auspicious in many cultures. In Judaism, God rested on and sanctified the seventh day and Buddha walked seven steps at his birth. And there are seven heavens in the Islamic tradition.” For gamblers, “three sevens gives a player 21 points on a blackjack table, while 7-7-7 is a winning line on slot machines.” Lucky 7 indeed!

We live in a bright and colourful world – thanks to God’s well-chosen 7 bands of the light spectrum! Unfortunately, in a world of beautiful colours also dwells an ugly human race bent on hostilities. The number 7 must be really unlucky, being associated with the infamous “China 777 Incident”, so-called because it was on 7th July 1937 that Japanese troops bombarded the Marco Polo

Bridge, setting off the 2nd Sino-Japanese war. 07-07-2007 is the 70th anniversary. This triple 7 date also casts a dark shadow for another reason – It is the 2nd anniversary of the terrorist attack of London King’s Cross station, which killed scores of innocents. People have become more inconvenienced in their daily lives and more fearful of man’s potential for self-inflicting evil as a beautiful world has become a killing field.

While 777 is not mentioned in the Bible, there are Christians who attempt to extract spiritual meanings out of it. The positive-thinking ones associate it with God or Christ by counting the numerical associates of letters in relevant words in Greek or Hebrew. Besides, digging through the Bible, extraordinary significance is attached to the number 7 on the basis of its “inordinately” frequent and “notable” occurrences, as in Book of Revelation: 7 letters to 7 churches, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 angels, 7 lamps, beast with 7 heads ... (The list is endless.) So 7 is a divinely perfect number, they say. The negative-thinking would not want to lose out in having their say on its link with doomsday. Numerology enthusiasts can certainly have their field day pondering all the luckiness and unluckiness associated with 777, depending on which way they prefer to look. While at it, they can also discover to their delight or chagrin that 111, 222, 333 ... all carry beautiful and ugly associations too.

Whether man invented numbers merely as a counting tool or God put them in His Word with symbolic undertones, numbers do have their inherent beauty in patterns and logic. Even in the apparent chaos of primes, patterns can be discerned. For example, 37 is a prime (i.e., it can only be divided by 1 and itself). All the numbers 111, 222, 333, 444 ... 888, 999 can be divided by 37. Numbers can be enjoyed for recreational value. Games can be played with them. However, one must be wary that any curiosity beyond a plain marvel can kill one's soul when "special" numbers develop into idols of worship; when, like the thin end of a wedge, one's plain leisure activity with numbers is pushed deeper into a fascination with pseudo-numerology and then is lured into the darker occultic depth by Satanic deception.

Back to the prime numbers for illustration, if you list them out in a line, you will find no pattern of progression. However, if you map out a vast number of primes in 2-dimensional space (with the aid of computer power), some seeming order can be discerned in a field of apparent unruliness as you discover noticeable clustering. A most important question to contemplate is, "Does a pattern extracted from a sea of primes suggest that there is a heavenly meaning attached to it?" Now, in similar vein, if one were to wheedle out patterns from an ocean of numbers, letters and

words in the Bible, with the aid of supercomputers, do they necessarily point to a divine design that is going to make a significant difference to our Christian lives? If we get to know some "truth" by extra-biblical revelation when God has never chosen to be explicit about it in Scripture, can we become more spiritual with the knowledge? We have to be wary that sometimes, certain things God does not have in His plan to reveal is grabbed by Satan to divulge with a sly twist to the truth. Finally, we feel excited by our "intellect" or "wisdom" to grasp the twisted truth; and gradually, we become led up the garden path paved with beautiful tiles with all kinds of thrilling numbers that captivate us. Our soul becomes numbed and oblivious to the more important nourishing fruit of the Spirit that we should concentrate on.

In the final analysis, there is nothing really uniquely lucky about the number 777, or the date 07-07-07. Many thinkers (or dreamers) of marriageable age who hold dear their idealism of picking the right date with the right hotness to see them walking down the red wedding carpet, happily ever after, need not despair if they have missed out on the triple 7. There will come 888 (which is even more exciting to the Chinese) next year, and 999 the year after, followed by 111, etc. (according to your creativity in playing around with the digits in dates). The sound of 999 in Mandarin could suggest lasting nuptial bliss.

111 refers to the date 01-01-10 – just erase the “superfluous” zeroes as we are “justified” to do to arrive at 777 from 07 July 2007. Perhaps a triple one is less auspicious to some compared to a quadruple 1111 – an extra lucky 1 for 01-01-11 coming a year after 2010. Without waiting impatiently for the year 2-2-22, you can contemplate 12-12-12 that dawns earlier with double happiness knocking at the door (双喜临门) since the individual luckiness of 111 and 222 come together. With a bit more of imagination, any other date can always be made to work out to some beautiful number of good luck by summing digits, multiplying, or any other device of manipulation.

Of course, I feel better if you care to chuck out all the nonsense that I have just said about what luckiness there are in such numbers as 999, 1111, I was just taking a little liberty to humour those who are hot-headed about having hot dates for marriage. In fact, many stable marriages around us were solemnized not on special hot dates. It is a somber truth that there are marriages of the modern generation that fail to flourish not because of wrong dating (by the calendar) for the solemnization, but of blind dating between guy and gal who are also impatient to escalate courtship to marriage while lacking discernment of the critical elements that should underpin a serious relationship.

John Lee

LESSON FROM ORGANIZING

There is a tendency in Chinese thinking towards respect for the elders, whilst those with a Western mind set have a tendency towards youth. Maybe that is why those Chinese companies in Singapore have more old workers compared to the more Western type of corporations with all their highly qualified young people.

With that in mind, it will make working with our Chinese counterparts much more efficient. Their concern is on their elder members who may be less well off than the younger ones. Therefore their planning will always take this into consideration. The type of entertainment and activity will also cater to the taste of the elderly rather than the youths.

The Chinese section value history over current events. So there is a need for the English section to work a balance program that will fit our emphasis towards our youths and the future of JCC with the Chinese emphasis of history and the past glories.

I dare say that it is almost as if God planned it this way so that we have a balanced church, not lopsided in any direction.

Martin Cheah

Why I'm still a Christian.

My daughter must have forgotten to ask me the question which Mr Chong Ser Choon posed at the Youth Service on 15 July. She may have felt threatened that I would give her a long sermon, but I am a man of few words.

Like Mr Chong Ser Choon, I too have a Bible verse which I may like put up when I become Stone Cold Martin Cheah. It is Psalm 62:1:

**My soul finds rest in God alone;
my salvation comes from Him.**

Maybe it is because I was born into a Catholic family that I have known no other way except Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life. I used to think that I could live such a good life that God owes me a place in Heaven, maybe not on His right or left, but at least somewhere, there would be a mansion for me, which would not be en bloc.

However after years and years of Confession as a Catholic and even as a Christian, I am now humbled enough to know that my salvation comes from God and not by my own strength. If the thought that I could make it by my good deeds alone comes, it will soon vanish when I realize my sinful nature.

Sometimes people feel that it is unfair of God to punish the good and bad people alike. However, if we

are ever truthful to ourselves, we will realize, as what the Bible has proclaimed in Romans 3:10 - **“There is no one righteous, not even one;”**

We only have different degrees of badness, some people sin more than others but there is no one who never sins.

However, we have a loving God who sacrificed His life for us and made us righteous, see Romans 3:22 - **“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”**

So why am I still a Christian? I know of no other way to be saved except that my salvation comes from God alone. So my friend, if you are struggling to be good enough for a place in Heaven, **continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose. (Philippians 2:12-13)**

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope (Romans 15:13).

Martin Cheah

Dialect Ministry Fellowship

at Yishun Christian Church on Sunday 15th July 2007. A convoy of 4 cars left JCC after service to drive up to Yishun to meet up with their counterparts in YCCL.

Lunch was provided by YCCL, followed by singspiration of Hokkien and Cantonese songs by the YCCL band. This was followed by some “Pass the Message” games. Then the JCC team were requested to present a song before ending the session with a group photo and some more food.

From this meeting, the Dialect Ministry managed to learn some new songs to add to their repertoire.





Boys' Brigade Old Folks

Outing to Changi Airport and Vivo City on Saturday 21st July 2007.

On the way to the airport, the bus got caught in an hour long traffic jam at the AYE due to a fallen tree.

The boys' spirits were not dampened even as they stammered due to their lack of proficiency of the dialects. This was where the Dialect Ministry group was able to help out in some ways. The Dialect Ministry were impressed with the great care and concern shown by the boys for the old folks.

This is a case of two ministries of JCC working together effectively for the glory of God.



The Lord's Prayer

I cannot say

If I

OUR

keep my faith only to myself and never share it with others

FATHER

do not trust in His loving and complete concern for me, forgetting that He always answers prayers how and when He knows is best

WHO ART IN HEAVEN

am so attached to the ways of this world that I neglect to seek God first in everything

HALLOWED BE THY
NAME

am unwilling to let His holiness penetrate my life and help me grow in my own holiness.

THY KINGDOM COME

am not using my life to bring His love into the world

THY WILL BE DONE

live by my own ideas of morality or choose to follow the world's standards

ON EARTH AS IT IS IN
HEAVEN

am not devoting my life to serving Him here on earth

GIVE US THIS DAY
OUR DAILY BREAD

am not willing to be generous with whatever God gives me

FORGIVE US OUR
TRESPASSES

don't want to put forth enough effort to change.

AS WE FORGIVE
THOSE WHO TRES-
PASS AGAINST US

still hold a grudge, if I'm still angry, or if I still insist that other people change

LEAD US NOT INTO
TEMPTATION

deliberately or knowingly place myself in a position to be tempted

DELIVER US FROM
EVIL

am not actively fighting against evil through deeds of love and service for everyone in my life, especially those who cause problems.

40th Anniversary

Banquet

A night to remember for some time to come ...

