



The Vine Committee

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## Editor's Word

I don't want to sound old fashioned or even a prude but when I came across this article in the local press recently, I am greatly encouraged by the testimony this couple (I don't even know who they are) is giving to young people and to the name of Christ.

How often I have heard the rallying call of the non-Christian, "Even Christians do it!" It is about time to say, "Christians don't do it, why don't you follow?" Many times by being part of the activities of the world, we do not make a statement of difference to the rest of mankind. They see us as Christians and they see that we do exactly the same things they do. So what's the difference?

"You are the light of the world" (Matt 5:14) "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (Matt 5:16) "As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world." (John 15:19) "But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise" (1 Cor 1:27)

Yes, to blend in you would look "hip" (is this word still in use?) and if you don't you would be called a "square". Would you rather be worldly hip or a Christian square? The temptation to be hip is great, "Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and

The Straits Times Saturday, August 11, 2007 22.

COUNT-DOWN BEGINS: Will Liu will marry model Wang Wan-fei on Oct 7.

### No sex till wedding night

TAIPEI - Singer Will Liu says he has started the countdown to his nuptials - and wedding night - on Oct 7.

The 34-year-old and his girlfriend of eight years, model Wang Wan-fei, 28, have abstained from sex for four years after becoming Christians, say reports.

So, after he asked her father for her hand on Thursday, Liu told reporters: "I'm looking forward most to the wedding night."

China Times said Liu had tried to borrow a car from his friend Jay Chou for the ride to the future in-laws' home in southern Taiwan for the betrothal.

But he found out that all of Chou's cars were low racing vehicles and he would not be able to alight elegantly. So the pop star helped him borrow a luxury sedan instead.

Apple Daily said Chou and actor-singer Jerry Yen were to be Liu's best men and that singer Jolin Tsai had been asked to be one of the bridesmaids.

PHOTO: INTERNET

showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." (Matt 4:8-9)

*Martin Cheah*

# Harry Potter

The Hogwarts magician succeeded in raising a storm of demand across the world for the Harry Potter series of books, sweeping up lots of cash in its wake, exalting its author, J. K. Rowling, to billionaire status in a short time.

One cannot deny that the Harry Potter phenomenon is amazing, and Rowling should obviously be pleased with her gift of writing. As reported in The Straits Times (July 26), when she finished *Deathly Hallows* earlier this year in the luxury Balmoral hotel in Edinburgh, “she famously wrote in marker pen on a marble bust of the Greek god Hermes: ‘J. K. Rowling finished writing Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows in this room (652) on 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2007.’” I guess that she had a reason or two to appreciate the presence of the Greek god for her to make a point about her pleasure with the completion of her book. Maybe a little unfortunately for her, though, the famous graffiti was unapproved; and so the bust “has been removed by hotel management for safekeeping, and it says there are no plans to turn the room into a Rowling or Harry Potter shrine.” This means that there is one location less for Harry Potter devotees to make their pilgrimage.

Surely, Rowling is not going to be upset by the hotel’s unappreciative “rebuff” of the graffiti she penned knowingly, a graffiti that she could

have wanted to be remembered by. No doubt, with or without the graffiti, she will not be forgotten by her fans for some time yet, as long as Harry Potter continues to live in theme parks, movies, collectibles and more books. Evidently, albeit she has concluded the series, her writing ambition is still very much alive. Note the following from the Straits Times report:

“But she has not ruled out writing more ‘school books’ about Harry’s world in the vein of *Quidditch Through the Ages* and *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them*, both published in 2001. Written in a mock-textbook style under fictional names, they expand upon certain aspects of the magical world featured in the seven marvels, with all proceeds from their sale going to charity. Still, the new tome would be weightier than the two previous textbooks.”

Wow! What is to come along might not be a mere book, but a tome – an immense work. (In case you do not already know, Quidditch is a very physical sport played by teams of wizards and witches with broomsticks and balls in the first six books of the Harry Potter fiction.)

Rowling did make known on her official website in May that she “might do

an eighth book for charity, a kind of encyclopaedia of the world so I could use all the extra material that's not in the books." There is in fact an "Extra Stuff" section on the website, but most likely she has more yet unused material in store than those she has put out on this "Extra Stuff" section. I gleaned further information from the Straits Times that there might also be a non-Harry-related writing project about the classical Greek hero Orpheus, as she had been approached by a publisher to write for *The Myths*, a best-selling series on ancient tales.

I am impressed by the capability of this young lady, being only 42 years old, with many energetic years of writing ahead. If for all her efforts there is good that is gained for charity, there will be happy people. On the other hand, there are criticisms aplenty by American evangelists and concerned parents who consider the Harry Potter books ungodly. Going by the frenzy of readers who just could not wait joining long queues (overnight, if necessary) to be the first to lay their hands on each book as it was released, it is evident that there is more than simple fiction that meets the eye. There is a certain spellbinding factor in the story, a quality that bespeaks a great ability in whipping up readership with a magical touch of suspense after suspense. Before the truth came out that Harry Potter did not die, there were accounts of readers being sad or depressed over the supposed death of the key character, whereby they would have nothing more to look forward to in

the story they loved. This kind of emotional addiction generated by the Hogwarts magician, even if unintended, is definitely unhealthy. For parents who are concerned about their children being carried away dreamily by occultic stimulus, what should they do? Connie Neal addresses this substantially at:

*[http://www.cbn.com/  
spirituallife/  
onlinediscipleship/  
harrypottercontroversy/  
harrypotterconcernedparent  
.aspx](http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/online/discipleship/harrypottercontroversy/harrypotterconcernedparent.aspx)*

While I can love real people, I just cannot find any room in my mind or heart to have a kind of warped emotional bond with a character that dwells only in fiction-land. Therefore, at first I found it very difficult to comprehend how readers could comment on the books or the story affectively as if the unreal events and characters were so alive in their consciousness, either driving or drowning their spirits. Then it dawned on me the only logical conclusion that a fictional story needs not be just that, serving only entertainment, nothing more, nothing less. Truth is that an adeptly invented yarn (or wool over the eyes) can stretch and bind with a life-force. It is just like horror movies can frighten people out of their wits (even make the susceptible ones crazy with nightmares, literally) while a soulful love story can rub tenderly on one's heart. A story can

be infused with a power to influence for good or bad. So, how is Harry Potter's?

Interestingly, if not somewhat amusingly, Harry Potter's fans have ingeniously offered their response to cynics. Student Flora Yeo, 20, reportedly said, "Harry willingly died to save his friends, and in doing so was reborn even more powerful than before. Rowling is obviously alluding to Christ's resurrection after the crucifixion. Seeing as how Harry Potter is a modern classic, I think it is appropriate and not unexpected that she makes this biblical reference."

It seems quite a stretch to see Christian allegory in a whole plot just by pulling out snippets here and there that carry the slightest trace (fertilely imagined or otherwise) of some likeness to Christianity – be it in names used, festivals mentioned, events taking place, decent references or such other random bits that one may dig for. For the defenders, a "stronger" suggestion of allegory might be the inscription on the gravestone of the headmaster of the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, "*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*" Is that really a great morsel to suggest allegory by reference to the Gospel or is it akin to a piece of wool cleverly applied, causing readers to miss the wood for the trees? Regarding the rebirth of Harry who died to save his friends, another Harry Potter's fan, student Caleb Yap, 21, might have the better understanding that "it was just a cliché, especially in recent years, when we have too many Chosen Ones returning from death in fiction."

It is far too premature/immature to say that Harry Potter can be classed as a modern classic. The word "classic" ought not be used too loosely. By definition, a classic is a work of enduring excellence, first-class. In terms of endurance, will Harry Potter prove itself to be half as enduring as Shakespeare's works or will it just fade away, maybe after a little longer time than the rage over *The Bible Code* and *The Da Vinci Code*? In terms of excellence, I don't think that the measure should be by popularity or circulation alone. Rather, excellence should be better defined by the universal value a piece of work imparts that also transcends the milieu of the time it was produced and by its high standing that is unequivocally recognized in literary circles. In Shakespeare's works, there are frequent allusions to the Bible in the poetic eloquence that the playwright often puts into the mouth of the actors in his plays. What is the difference between Shakespeare (a great classic) and the modern-day popular fiction like Harry Potter? Those who read both should find the difference very glaring. The parallels that Shakespeare makes with the Bible are never gratuitous, and they are skillfully weaved into the plot of his plays to transmit a deep message about the state of man's nature and the environment that constrains. The plot is very ratio-



nal, its development very well-structured and reveals the sheer depth of intelligence and sensitivity of the playwright to the human condition that he wrote into his plays over 20 years. The work is very deftly crafted sans modern-day rush for publication deadlines and commercial considerations.

In contrast, Harry Potter is a piece of work finished in a few years, meant to egregiously enthrall readers with magic and spells. Despite a sprinkling of meaningful references (like the inscription on the headmaster's gravestone mentioned above), what is the plot of the whole tale? What is the thrust? What is the overall message of value that the different threads in the story bind? If it is just for recreation or entertainment, its fantasy is still seriously unlike the traditional children's fairy tales and other Christian-based fantasies like *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *The Lord of the Rings*. There is a book by Richard Banes, entitled "*Harry Potter, Narnia, and the Lord of the Rings: What You Need to Know About Fantasy Books and Movies*" that discusses this in great detail. The author had an interview with CBN.com, which you can read at:

[www.cbn.com/spirituallife/  
OnlineDiscipleship/  
HarryPotterControversy/  
elliott\\_RichardAbanes.aspx](http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/OnlineDiscipleship/HarryPotterControversy/elliott_RichardAbanes.aspx)

*Here, I quote some points shared by Richard Banes on how to differentiate between different fantasies:*

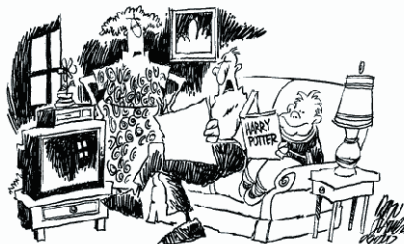
- *"A good fantasy communicates truths to children, putting across concepts that are biblically sound, in terms that they can understand -- issues like integrity, honesty, bravery, courage, forgiveness -- and you find these things in books like *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *the Lord of the Rings*.*

*A bad fantasy talks about values that are not biblically sound -- disobedience, lack of respect for things, sort of a moral relativism -- and these are things that come across in fantasies like the Philip Pullman books, and the Harry Potter books. And in Philip Pullman, which many children are reading, we have very anti-Christian views being expressed, so that can be dangerous as well.*

- *"One of the things you want to look at is what is the overall message that is coming forth from a book or from a movie? What are the characters doing in the movie or in the book? You can have bad characters doing bad things in any kind of fantasy, that is fine, but how does the story portray that bad behavior? Is it exalting it? Is it making it look fun? Or is it showing*

how that is not good? That's one of the main ways you can do that. And when it comes to spiritual issues, how closely does something like things of the occult appear in a book that is very similar to what you find in the real world? It is a very new trend for children's fiction to be dark, to be sinister, to be anti-Christian, to be filled with occult imagery.

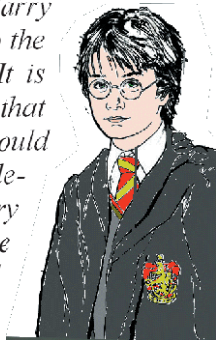
- “One of the easiest ways to know whether a fantasy book or film has real world magick in it is to just ask a simple question: “Can my child find information in a library or bookstore that will enable them to replicate what they are seeing in the film or the book?” If you go to *The Chronicles of Narnia* and the *Lord of the Rings* what you see in, story magic and imagination, it is not real. You can't replicate it. But if you go to something like *Harry Potter*, you can find references to astrology, clairvoyance, and numerology. It takes seconds to go into a bookstore or library and get books on that and start investigating it, researching it, and doing it. In fact, that's why real Wiccans, real witch-



IF ALL IT TOOK WAS A LITTLE WITCHCRAFT TO GET THE TV TURNED OFF, THEN I'M ALL FOR IT.

es, and real occultists are using the popularity of *Harry Potter* to lure kids toward real world occultism. They actually have advertisements for their own books that use *Harry Potter* as their appeal.”

It is clear that there are good fantasies and bad fantasies; and, unfortunately, *Harry Potter* belongs to the latter category. It is not my idea that *Harry Potter* should be banned wholesale, but it is very important for one to exercise good judgment and be selective of what



we read and the fantasy literature that we recommend to children. Young children, especially, are good imitators and it can be quite dangerous if they are bent on doing secret explorations of what they imbibe from the make-believe; at times, there may be bizarre consequences either due to active experiment with the occult or to the sublime effect of imagery that becomes internalized through constant exposure.

**John Lee**

## LOVE ABOVE ALL or DEATH FOR NOTHING?

How will you react if a murderer has killed your loved ones and now seeks your forgiveness? Will you be able to forgive and even love him sincerely despite what he has done, even if he really feels remorse and sincerely seeks repentance?

I attended the musical performance “Love Above All” at the University Cultural Centre recently. The story is about 5 young missionaries who were killed savagely by the Aucas in Ecuador when they tried to befriend these uncivilised people and bring the gospel to them. Their lives were lost trying to reach out to these Waodani warriors, men from the most savage culture who were known only for hunting and killing. Their bodies were brutally pierced with long spears and hacked by machetes. This happened in Jan 8, 1956. They left behind their wives, children & families. The wives later returned to the Ecuadorian jungles to face their husband’s murderers with the power of God’s love instead of bitterness and anger towards those killers. They made contact with the Indians and lived amongst the tribe. They established a church there and converted many of the Aucas into Christians. Quoting what they said after receiving news of their husbands’ deaths, *“The Lord has closed our hearts to grief and hysteria, and filled in with His perfect peace.”*

These five young men were Jim Elliot, Ed McCully, Peter Fleming, Nate Saint and Roger Youderian.

What was incomprehensible was that the missionaries carried guns, yet chose not to use them when facing death, as they had agreed to use only when necessary, and that this was also what Christ had done for us by dying on the cross so that we may be reconciled with God. During the whole course of attack, not one Auca was injured.

This set me thinking: If we were faced with such a grave situation, would we be as courageous as these missionaries and not find ways to protect ourselves from harm, and fight for our lives, even if in the end we still lose? Would we really be so high & mighty, and not strike first before being attacked. Isn’t survival our basic instinct, no matter under what circumstances, to cling on to our dear lives instead of giving up so easily? Shouldn’t we at least think of ways to survive rather than close our eyes and just die? At least there’s a chance of survival no matter how small it may be.



**Nate Saint** was the pilot who flew in search of the Indian tribe, and lowered

baskets with gifts of brightly-

coloured ribbons, machetes and cooking pots, etc., to show their friendliness and that they meant no harm.

Take the recent news of the Korean aid team being taken hostages in Afghanistan.

As I write this, two innocent lives were already taken. I wonder how they had felt and what actually went through their minds in those last minutes? Did they think about their loved ones they would be leaving behind, and find ways to talk out of the situation or even bargain for their lives? As Christians who trusted in the will of our Lord, did they have the fighting spirit in them or just leave everything to His will, with prayers, and die calmly, without any wails or struggle? Having been in the face of death, how do the surviving hostages see the killers? Would they curse their enemies or forgive?

Jesus said in Matthew 5:44 to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in Heaven. How easy can this be, especially when innocent blood is wantonly shed?

In the case of the Ecuadorian, many Auca Indians were converted to Christianity after the martyrs. Forgiveness and love from their widows led to the amazing success in

winning over the once murderous Indians. Will the deaths of the present Christians generate the same good results?

Just a thought – why can't a person live to see a new convert, instead of having to die for others to live?

Jim Elliot's life was lived honourably and he was known to have looked to God in everything he did. Jim Elliot once said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." He gave his all in faith to the Auca people, and he cannot lose in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Something miraculous happened after the killings. The Aucas saw what they later described as angels singing above the trees. They said they saw "cowodi" which means "foreigners" in their primitive language above the trees. Instinctively, they knew the bright lights they saw moving around and the music heard were of the supernatural. This experience was what drew one of the Auca women who were present during the attack to believe in Christ. They were able to later identify the music from a record player to be choral singing. How amazing this could be! God's presence was at that place during those times.

Was what happened similar to God's miraculous appearance in the burning bush on Mount Horeb? The bush was on fire, yet the fire did not consume it. I really cannot fathom how it was like seeing angels face to face. I believe they looked like those missionaries, else

those Indians would not have said they saw foreigners on the tree.

What happened in Ecuador happened in the 1950s. In all the worldly unrests today, will God still show himself, especially to the enemies and make them go wobbly on their feet, like what happened to Paul? I wonder whether those hostages who died saw God's presence during those last moments and felt peace within them when the bullets pierced their bodies. What was their end like? Did they die instantly? Was there pain? And most importantly, how did those killers feel?

How come in this case, miraculous signs didn't happen? Why didn't a voice come out from heaven saying, "Hassan, Hassan, why do you shed innocent blood?" like what happened to Saul on his Damascus' trip – Suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him, and a voice came out from heaven "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" And when Saul got up from the ground, he found himself blind.

Finally, some points to ponder:

1. Will you risk your life to share the gospel?

2. Will you be willing to live for your faith, which will lead to death and separation from your loved ones?
3. What legacy do you want to leave behind for your children?

**Whichever way you think is the right way to answer the above questions, it can't be helped that you will think long and hard about the darkness in the world. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph 6:12 NKJV) The cruelties that we see only prove the truth of God's Word about the evil darkness.**

*Recommended Reading:*

- ❑ The Journals of Jim Elliot (Edited by Elisabeth Elliot - Jim's wife)
- ❑ End of the Spear – A True Story (by Steve Saint, son of Nate Saint)
- ❑ Through Gates of Splendor (Elisabeth Elliot)

*Sally Lee*



Ed McCully   Peter Fleming   Roger Youderian   Jim Elliot



# Solid Rock-C3 Children's Home News

January –June 2007

Young, energetic and adventurous, kids at the C3 -Solid Rock Children's Home are blessed not only by good food and good housing facility, but also by different programs and activities aimed to explore and develop their talents, moral values, sense of responsibility and potentials.

## Special Classes

After spending half a day daily studying at the community's public school, most of the children still attend special tutorial classes for another hour or two. At the C3 Home, they are also kept busy studying English with our Filipino volunteers. Our Khmer staff tutors them in writing and reading in Khmer, and in other subjects.

As the popularity of English as an international language increases in Cambodia, the children's interest to learn it is very high. So most of the C3 kids attend informal English classes with our Filipino volunteers - Dan Obrero, Lito Corpuz and Lala Watchorna. The children enjoy learning and practicing English with them.

Little by little, their English vocabulary increases as they use it. However, with their mother tongue greatly influenced by French pronunciation, the ending "s" sound remains silent by force of habit. Such is noticed when they say, "Ma'am, plea give me allowan". Correcting them on this part is the difficult part for their teachers.

Learning the correct pronunciation and articulation of English words is the objective of the phonics class presided by brother Lito Corpuz, a Filipino volunteer from Northside Bible Baptist Church. Since Khmer alphabet and grammar is very different from English, reading and comprehending

English is quite a feat. But as they patiently study, many of the kids now can read simple English words and sentences, although others are still bewildered.

The younger Children who are in grade one are also being tutored by the Khmer staff in learning their Khmer alphabet. Their mathematical skills are honed as Malai and Sokchi, two of the Khmer staff, coach them to memorize the multiplication table and give them exercises in this subject.



The children's creativity is also explored during their Arts and Crafts time. In here, the children have drawing and coloring activities. One of the girls, named Sopheak, was observed to shade all the bible characters' robes yellow because she said it's her favorite color. Another boy, renamed



Elijah, was noted to prefer staring at the pictures and telling stories about them rather than coloring.



**Dr. F. Castro**



## Cambodia Trip

from 14<sup>th</sup> Jun to 22<sup>nd</sup> Jun 2007

The JCC mission team came back safely from Cambodia on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Jun 2007, except for Freddie and Lissa, who decided to extend their stay a few more days.

The mission trip served its purpose to bless the people of Cambodia, particularly in Kampong Chhang. With Freddie and Nick Wong capably handling the logistics matters, we were able to carry out the following ministries as planned:

- Youth Camp – Headed by Mervyn Lee and his team of 7, comprising youths from JCC and YLC (Lutheran).
- Hairdressing program for the ladies – Headed by Dorothy Ow, assisted by Jim Lee, James & Susan Tan.
- The children program – Run by Lissa and Christina Ang.
- Fish Farming Training – Organized by the pastor from World Vision to benefit the villagers with a sus-

tainable livelihood activity. The training, conducted with the help of interpreters, covers the basics of setting up the fish pond, fish feed and maintenance. The materials used were inexpensive and easily available in town. In response to the training, one of the participants happily shared that he could now set up a small pond for fish rearing to supplement his family diet; and, in time, to use it as another source of income.

On a previous mission trip, the main program was a medical one. This time, it is good that we have been able to extend our ministry experience into different areas. On the whole, the variety of work provided a meaningful ministry time that engaged the children, youths and adults. There is much more to be done for future mission trips to Kg. Chhang, especially when the social centre is set up. At the same, we need to explore ways of



the rudiments. As it is, the team is heavily dependent on interpreters. Thanks to Dr. Castro for being most willing to provide one for our mission team.



On the mission field, we have to tailor expectations to the reality on the ground. Team members need to be flexible and adapt to situations as they arise. The hairdressing program was a great example of team co-operation at work. Initially, it was planned to be handled by Dorothy alone, with all materials prepared beforehand. While at the field, the need for more helping hands became obvious. James, Susan and Jim saw the need and readily stepped forward in getting the hairdressing organized and giving other assistance to make the program a success.

May God continue to bless us to be a blessing to the Cambodians!

**Jim Lee**

# Car Wash

Sunday 12 Aug 2007.  
The Youths raised funds for their camp by offering to wash cars.



The cars were shiny and bright but unfortunately it lasted only till night, then the heavy rains came and all was back to its old self again. Probably, that is why I have not washed my car personally since the day it came out of the showroom.

The Youths are planning other means to raise funds for their annual camp. Hey John, how about offering them \$10 for each article they write for The Vine?

*Martin Cheah*



## Cambodia Appreciates

The church in Cambodia gave JCC a plaque in appreciation of the help we had given to them. The mission trippers brought it back with them on the latest trip in June 2007.



## God's Boxes

I have in my hands two boxes,  
Which God gave me to hold.  
He said, "Put all your sorrows in  
the black box,  
And all your joys in the gold."

I heeded His words, and in the two  
boxes,  
Both my joys and sorrows I stored,  
But though the gold became  
heavier each day,  
The black was as light as before.

With curiosity, I opened the black,  
I wanted to find out why,  
And I saw, in the base of the box, a  
hole,  
Which my sorrows had fallen out  
by.

I showed the hole to God, and  
mused,  
"I wonder where my sorrows could  
be!"  
He smiled a gentle smile and said,  
"My child, they're all here with  
me."

I asked God, why He gave me the  
boxes,  
Why the gold and the black with  
the hole?  
"My child, the gold is for you to  
count your blessings,  
The black is for you to let go."

--Author Unknown

## Finding Meaning in Our Labor

by Os Hillman

But I said, "I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is with my God." - Isaiah 49:4

Have you ever felt like you're spending your life using your talent for nothing? Life is often spent doing mundane activities that seem to have little eternal purpose.

The great prophet Isaiah was struggling with his own purpose. He knew he was chosen to be a voice for God, yet life became purposeless for Isaiah. We all go through periods when our purpose seems to be clouded with the mundane. We see little meaning in life. On the other hand, Isaiah didn't stay in this place. We read in this passage that he knew the truth of his existence. He could look past his present circumstance and know that his real reward and purpose would be revealed in eternity. He knew that God was just and fair, so he placed his faith on this truth.

When life appears to lack meaning and purpose, remember that if you devote your life to the purposes He has for you, the fruits of your labor will be manifested in due time. "The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it" (1 Thess. 5:24).



## **Forget Your Past, God Has A New Beginning for You**

Bishop Keith Butler

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, feed my lambs. John 21:15

Listen, if you're going to walk in the new beginning that God has for you; then you're going to have to let go of the past. Starting now, forget about what you did, or what they did and look toward a new beginning in your life. Today is your opportunity for a fresh start, but letting go of the past is key.

Peter is a good example of a man who had to forget his past. He denied the Lord three times and he even cursed while doing it. However, when that cock crowed three times, he knew he had blown it.

It hurt Peter so much that he had denied his Lord and he had trouble getting past that. In fact, even after Jesus had risen from the dead and appeared to the disciples, Peter was still in a depressed state. You see, Peter should have been out preaching that, 'Jesus has risen from the dead and he is alive!' But instead he decides to go fishing and all the other disciples went with him.

So in John 21, verse 15, Jesus asks Peter, Do you love me more than what you use to do, your old profession? Do you love me more than your self-pity?

Remember this: you can't have a new beginning if you're stuck in the past feeling sorry for yourself and drowning in self-pity. Sometimes self-pity feels good because people will sympathize with you and try to cheer you up; but Jesus didn't come to Peter with that stuff. He said, "Peter, do you love me more than this?"

And Simon Peter answered, "Lord, you know I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Then Jesus asks Peter the same question two more times and again Peter's reply was Lord, you know I love you, for you know all things." Jesus says, then get out there and feed my sheep.

Then Peter gets it. He understands, I'm not supposed to be sitting here doing nothing. I have a new ministry. Jesus has forgiven me. He's telling me to go preach even after I denied him.

Now, you might have denied the Lord and done some things you shouldn't have done, but if you will repent, God will forgive you. There is fresh mercy for you every morning. God is still calling you. He is saying, come to me, I have a new beginning for you.

# Dialect Ministry National Day Celebration 11 Aug 2007



The Dialect Ministry celebrated the 42nd National Day at JCC with over 50 people in attendance. About 15 of them were non-Christian relatives and friends of JCC members.



Continue to pray for these people that they will come to know the Truth and the Truth will set them free.

On 22 Sep 2007, the Dialect Ministry will be organizing another outreach. This time it is the usual Moon Cake Festival celebrations. Bring your dialect speaking friends. Give them a chance to hear the Good News. This may well be the last dialect outreach for the year 2007.

