

# The Vine

## PASTOR'S WORD

### A 3-Generational Church

With the commencement of the Dialect (elderly) Service on 2 March 2008, JCC is now a 3-Generational church: Youth Service (Pulse), Adult Service, and Elderly (Dialect) Service.

What are the implications of a 3-Generational church?

#### 1. Family is the immediate context of our spirituality.

Spirituality, in our understanding, is loving God and loving Man. Loving God is to worship, honour and glorify Him. Loving man is to represent God to others by bringing His love into their lives to meet their needs.

In a 3-Generational church, we want to worship, honour and glorify God *first* in our *family*. In a 3-Generational church, we want to

represent God *first* to our *family* by bringing God's love into the lives to meet their needs. The family has always occupied an important place in Christian spirituality and Christian witness. In God's divine plan, every family (Christian) is a 'church' and every church is a 'family'- family life and church life cannot be divorced. In the 10 Commandments, what God is to the church (1<sup>st</sup> commandment), parents are to the family (4<sup>th</sup> commandment). Parents are given to children to represent God to them – to love, teach and protect them. And when children learn to love, honour and obey their parents, they begin to learn *how* to love honour and obey God. We would certainly miss the point in the process of spiritual formation and the practice of spirituality if we neglect our 'duties' to our family. We cannot fulfill our 'duties' well in the church (as family) if we have not fulfilled our 'duties' well in the family (as

church). The one cannot be without the other!

If Christian spirituality takes effect in a family, Christian witness follows suit. True Christian witness takes place not in an individual but in the way an individual interacts with another individual.

## 2. An integrated and cross-generational approach to ministry.

As a 3-Generational church, we are well aware of the danger of *just* doing individual and independent ministry. This will break the fabric of the 3-Generational church.

This means that we must ‘cross’ over generations to support each other in our ministry. The ‘crossing’ facilitates a conducive environment and ministry culture for working together cross-generationally. It helps put in place a channel for passing on important values from one generation to another, and establishes an effective means of communication between generations.

JCC must not lose sight of this all-important mindset for ministry. And that means we must be prepared to ‘open’ ourselves up to each other, we must be willing to suffer a little ‘clumsiness’ for the strengthening of the church family. I am sure, we and our generations to come will eventually be blessed by this 3-Generational church.

It is heart-warming to know that the youths of Project Joshua (PJ) will be appearing 4 times at the Dialect Service presenting song items in dialect. What a way to go! May this set the tone for all of us.

As your Pastor, may I encourage you to regard the ‘laying’ of the foundation for our 3-Generational church an honour and privilege God has given to each one of us at JCC.

God Bless our 3-generational church!

We Are Family!

Revd Dr William Chang  
Senior Pastor

**A Balanced life tries to keep everything in.  
A Focused life tries to keep unsuitable things out so that one can move on.**

# The Meaning of Wealth

## (Part I)

Recently, I watched a documentary on cable TV about the primitive Wolani tribe of western New Guinea. A war between rival clans was looming over the killing of a clan chief. The settlement negotiation according to established tribal process reached a deadlock. The clan of the murder victim demanded compensation in cowrie shells. However, the New Guinea government prohibited the use of cowrie shells in place of money. The killer's clan did not object to paying compensation, but wanted to follow the law. However, the clan of the murdered could find no use for money. There was simply nothing they could buy with it in the jungle where they lived their primitive existence. The law with good intention (for uplifting the tribe) became a potential spark for a deadly clan war. Lethal weapons were being prepared for a showdown. Thankfully, the war was finally averted by a compromise agreement that broke the law – the compensation would be paid half in shells and half in money, saving some face for both clans.

It is evident that to tribes living purely out of jungle resources away from modern civilisations, money means nothing. The people may wear little or no clothes at all. Jungle food is readily available all the time, as proven by the fact that they live from cradle to grave without ever coming across a stall selling merchandise. So, if you were to have the opportunity to visit any of these tribes and leave behind a chest of money in the form of printed bills and minted coins, it wouldn't be surprising that these would be chucked aside as useless stuff compared to the much preferred original nature's valuables.

The documentary makes me think about money and wealth. The Wolani tribe has a lot of wealth (including unpolluted air so necessary for a good life), but little or no money. People in modern societies have a lot of money, but do they necessarily have wealth? Let's take a look at the following definitions:

*Wealth - valuable possessions or resources*

*Money - a medium of exchange, a measure of value*

Many in modern societies are considered poor because they do not have lots of money, let alone enjoy billionaire status. (Nowadays, being a millionaire is no longer highly esteemed.) Yet, like the Wolani tribe, they do have valuable possessions or resources on which they survive. Good health, loving relationships, self-sufficiency from the land, a liveable dwelling place, etc. All this wealth is sufficient for a good existence without need to attach a monetary value to it. It is also amenable to sharing among kith and kin in altruistic spirit of love and trust. (Think of the kampong spirit in our olden days.) There is no need for money to intervene as a medium of exchange in the context of communal cohesiveness.

The New Guinea government meant well to mandate the use of money, but obviously it was not welcome by the target people (the tribe) and actually could be done without. **The lesson is that noble human intentions and sincere acts for progress do not necessarily translate into what is desirable to fill a people's simple need.**

At the beginning of mankind, men lived well by barter that served its practical function acceptably. Then the human race, as clever it was, decided to have something better for trade. So, in the course of time, money was invented. At first, the invention simply served as a medium of exchange. Unfortunately, the clever human race would not rest its mind on making it better and better, more useful and more useful. So it has come to pass that today, the “gizmo” called money – the object of greed – has become so sophisticated that it is no longer limited to dollar bills and metallic coins. It may even have the appearance of blips on electronic screens. Instead of being a medium of humble exchange, it has spawned complex instruments of financial trading (not merely goods and services exchange) whereby it becomes an entity itself for buying and selling, for smart dealings to increase its quantity. **Do you realize that instead of money as a measure of value of wealth, modern people are attaching value to money itself? Money as the desirable thing may grow or diminish in our possession but the underlying wealth that it represents may remain static in quantity or even get lesser and lesser.** Let me cite some illustrations:

- A landlord increases the rent. The shop tenant increases the price of his goods. The consumer fights for a higher salary to keep up.

The employers (businesses) try to get back from the market their higher operating costs. The cycle of inflation from one round to another to another does not in itself represent any real wealth creation. A bowl of staple food with nutritious add-ons for each of two full meals in a day is ample to keep one alive and kicking. It cost cents decades ago. Today, it costs dollars. Of course, the amount of money in circulation may have grown, but the real wealth to sustain increased populations is diminishing whereby, in accord with the economics theory of higher demand chasing lower supply, inflation continues its spin.

- A house bought a long time ago for a five-figure sum is now worth a seven-figure sum in the market. So long as you live in the house, the wealth remains the same. However, you are tempted by an en bloc offer to part with it for a million dollars. With that windfall, you buy another apartment in a condo development, but the new apartment has lesser floor area for you to enjoy than the old house and the amenities soon decline in enjoyment value over time. While the greed of man may constantly push its monetary value higher and higher, the wealth to be had to meet the real need of living space shrinks even if financing expands. If price can rise, so can it fall – even at short notice! It is a daunting thought that people are chasing after expensive housing with nary a thought that the physical glitzy wealth may just sink in monetary value at market's whims. A property owner may just end up being a poor wealthy – with the wealth suited for a comfortable living environment, but in pathetic debt! If not owing money, then being in negative equity with respect to wealth in possession with its fixed intrinsic value is just the shape of things on paper without practical significance.
- If you have a 4-room HDB flat, \$5 000 in your bank account and a monthly income of \$1500, and you live on this sufficiency for the rest of your life in good health, do you consider yourself less wealthy than your friend who is into more money and moves to a 3-room private apartment, keeps \$20000 in his bank account and earns a monthly income of \$3000, a significant portion of which

goes into paying mortgage interests and financing health bills that do not serve any purpose in adding to his wealth?

After factoring in inflation, some people may still seem to have more wealth now than their forefathers and they attribute their prosperity to the country's economic progress and their money-making smartness. A closer look will tell you that the same store of wealth nationally or globally is being swished about, invariably ending in a lopsided distribution that exacerbates the gap between the haves and have-nots. The haves continue to feed the greedy to inflate the prices of goods and services whereby the have-nots beat a continual retreat from the marketplace. The spiral creates an ever widening gap. This is modern man-made economics at work; not God's economics! In God's economics, there is no scarcity (with His abundant provision, fruitfulness of the land, Ps 104); no worry about what to eat, drink and wear (Mt 6:25-33); and no worship of money (Mt. 6:24). The idea of scarcity in man-made supply-and-demand economics feeds actions of greed to grab by *kiasu* power instead of promoting openhanded sharing. (*Rf* Deut 15:11) The grabbing (not because of real need) feeds a vicious cycle of rising demand and worsening scarcity of resources, and the breakdown of economic order is accentuated by greed-based market manipulation of supply to maximize takings. No wonder that greed is one of the seven capital vices (deadly sins). According to St. Thomas Aquinas, it is "a sin against God, just as all mortal sins, in as much as man condemns things eternal for the sake of temporal things."

Deut 8:10 – "When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you."

Deut 8:17, 18 – "You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today."

*John Lee*

# Rev Oh Beng Kee & wife

SAFRA Yishun, Saturday 16 February 2008.

Yishun Chirstian Church organized a hi-tea for the old folks and Rev Oh delivered the message.

About 20 JCC Dialect Ministry members and their elderly drove up to Yishun in 4 cars.



Saturday, 15 March 2008, news

began spreading among the Dialect Ministry members of Rev Oh's car accident in Indonesia. He suffered serious injuries and was transferred back to Singapore General Hospital.

His latest state can be seen in YouTube. Search for "Message from Mrs Oh".

Indeed we continue to pray for his full recovery that he may carry on his ministry to the elderly in dialects.

He still has a lot of speaking engagements to fulfill.



# History in the making...

**Sunday, 2 Mar 2008 – our 1<sup>st</sup> Dialect Service**



Thank God for Ps David Ng from Yishun Christian Lutheran Church and his team who have come to support us as we start up the Dialect Service in JCC. His sermon was aptly about the small mustard seed that grew up into a big tree. May we grow accordingly.



The total attendance was 82.

The attendance figures are inclusive of all the ministry members from YCC and JCC and any other groups which we invite to give the message.



**Sunday, 9 Mar 2008 – our 2<sup>nd</sup> Dialect Service**



Praise God for Ps Simon Neo who shared God's Word and the Breakthrough Mission team for their life transforming testimonies.

The total attendance was 90.



With joy and gladness we want to thank the Lord our God for bringing to birth the dialect service in JCC. This in itself bears testimony of God's assurance that he will surely bring to completion the work which he had called forth his people to do in JCC. Let's



continue to press on with rejoicing in the Lord's harvest field, for our effort shall not be in vain.





### Sunday, 16 Mar 2008 – our 3<sup>rd</sup> Dialect Service

The total attendance was 61.

Praise God for those came back again, especially the following:

- Tan Kim Chye (Yen Luan’s dad, a pre-believer)
- Ng Lai Choon (Julie’s mum)
- Hui Bing
- Joo See’s brothers & sisters-in-law

Do continue to uphold those who came and also those who did not make it this time, and ask the Lord to pave the way for them and others who could only understand dialects to come and worship Him, the true and living God.

All Glory Be To God!



Peter Cheong



## Dialect Ministry Gathering at Swee Leong's Home

21<sup>st</sup> March 2008, the Dialect Ministry met at Swee Leong's home for a time of fellowship and planning for the future takeover of the Dialect Service from Yishun.

Some of the issues discussed were the timing of the service, the songs, the worship team, stewards and other roles.

There was great camaraderie and support among the members and they were no longer fearful of doing this service as when they first began.

Even the Youths have promised to give some support to the Ministry.



### Praise the Lord





***Why did Jesus say that John is the greatest man who ever lived, yet the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than John?***

*James Sum*

The verse from the Bible reads:

“I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”  
— Matt. 11:11

Let us look at a few facts about John:

- John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins because their mothers (Elizabeth and Mary respectively) were cousins. The birth of John was foretold (Luke 1) just as the virgin birth of Jesus was foretold. John was prophesied as a messenger who would prepare the way before the Lord. (Malachi 3:1)
- John the Baptist was born of a barren woman who was already quite old and well beyond normal childbearing age. His birth was a miracle, an act of the Holy Spirit, just like Jesus' birth by Virgin Mary was a miraculous act of the Holy Spirit (albeit the two acts had their distinctiveness). When Mary visited Elizabeth, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Both Mary and Elizabeth were effusive in their praise of the Lord, being fully aware of what God was doing.

In a sense, John was no “ordinary” man, being specially prepared or predestined by God to be born by miraculous conception, and to be the voice in the wilderness calling out to clear the way for the Lord as Isaiah 40:3 also prophesied.

Evidently, Jesus in Matt. 11:11 was extolling the unique status of John compared to persons “among those born of women.” John was a privileged God-sent messenger, more than a prophet. (Matt. 11:9-10)

John was born to Elizabeth six months before Jesus was born to Mary. He was specially sent from God as a witness concerning the true light so that through him all men might believe. (John 1:6-7) Although he was privileged to be the chosen one for the role of first messenger and witness, he readily confessed to be not worthy even to untie the thongs of the sandals of the One who would come after him. (John 1:26) He did not pretend to be superior to Christ, to be what he was not. Great as he was for his providential role, he was not equal to Christ. Matchless as he was “among those born of women”, he was not yet (at the time Jesus was speaking) comparable to those in the kingdom of heaven. By the term “kingdom of heaven” (which is only encountered in the Matthew Gospel), we may conceive of a dominion or realm where grace, power and purity according to the full gospel dispensation are at their zenith. John was as yet imperfect, unlike the Son of God, and it would take some more time for him to advance to God’s ultimate glory.

Jesus’ comment in Matt. 11:11 put in perspective the listeners’ standing (in the world, not yet in the kingdom of heaven) in relation to the witnessing forerunner. As a witness for Christ, John did acquit himself well by his simple living, eschewing the pleasures of the world. He survived on water, locusts and wild honey. He spent much of his time close to God in prayers. Barefooted and in unfussy clothing, he went about delivering God’s warnings. His demeanor and wholehearted preaching reminded the people of their bygone prophets. Indeed, it was because he spoke out strongly against the sins of the ruler, Herod Antipas, that he landed himself in prison.

Incarcerated, John was likely in a wretched state. Jesus’ comment might just be for the listeners’ benefit of seeing John the Baptist in the correct light as God’s preeminent servant/messenger and to vindicate his reputation from the accusations of enemies. It was a plain statement of his status among men in the world, not meant as praise to be carried to his ears to lift his pride. It was a cog in the whole wheel of God’s plan that was rolling forward as John continued with his ministry from his prison cell more effectively given the enhanced understanding, support and resilience of his disciples as the whole scheme of God’s work unfolded through the developing events.

*John Lee*

# *The Editor's Comments*

## **THE MAS SELAMAT OF TERROR**



The face of terror is everywhere. By information from the government, this man was intent on crashing an aeroplane on Changi Airport. If he had carried it out, it would be a disaster of great proportions. Fortunately, he didn't make it. Unfortunately, fear may be greater in the suspense than in an actual happening that is done with. Of course, we do not wish for the actual happening; but we also do not like the feeling of being constantly under threat of what may happen if the terrorist continues to roam free.

Already, a heavy price is being exacted in terms of economic productivity lost to the traffic paralysis at the causeway, the huge expenses on resources that will continue to climb as long as the fugitive is not caught, the inconveniences to many due to the need for increased caution, etc. Suddenly, by the single act of escape, the peace and security of the nation is put on tenterhooks. So, in a sense, the act of escape itself is an act of terrorizing a peace-loving people, subjecting them to a nagging anxiety over a number of "what if's" – What if he continues not to be caught? What if he manages to escape from the country? What if he manages to muster help and launch a strike? What if ...

It is not a case of imagining too much. If the potentiality of bad things following the escape is all just in the mind, it would be ridiculous for the no-holds-barred and no-expense-spared heightening of the search-and-hunt actions by serious security forces. If only the staff at the detention centre were more vigilant, if only the government had a better security system in place, if only complacency did not set in, if only the relevant leaders did their job .... Any number of "if only's" will not help to lasso back the horse that has bolted from the stable.

MM Lee says that the Mas Selamat's escape is a severe lesson on complacency. Maybe, some crooks had been thinking that Singapore had been too peaceful, so they fancied giving her a bit of excitement. Maybe some persons who mattered were lulled by simple complacency and so

they ventured a little bit of risk-taking that went out of hand. Maybe ... Now, it is serious complacency if we think that so long as the hunt is going on in full steam, the man will always remain trapped (if not caught) in some corner in the country and will not have the means to do anything terrible and individual citizens just don't have to bother. Leave it to the security agencies, not my business. This is the kind of complacency that nobody wants – a smugness or misplaced self-assurance that makes the unthinkable becomes reality, the unthinkables becoming realities in all spheres.

The severe lesson we have to learn should not be merely about how not to be complacent to let a terrorist escape; it should be about how not to be complacent about lasting peace; we need the devoted effort of everyone to maintain religious and racial harmony, community cohesiveness and goodwill to all. Terrorism is not about individuals who have gone *amok*; it may be about groups which cannot peaceably deal with ideological differences in the spirit of give-and-take or live-and-let-live, whereby individuals in the groups gradually raise their cudgels to fight for their perceived entitlements against the opponents. It is unhelpful to use labels to mark one group as ideologically right and another as ideologically wrong; because in a contest of ideologies, what is right to one is always wrong to the other and so rights and wrongs are all mixed up. However, if two ideologies maintain a divergent stance, logically it cannot be both right or both wrong at the same time. If a bridge cannot be had to connect the gap, the best way to maintain peace is for both sides to live and let live on either side of the gap without offence.

Agreeing to disagree between groups with deep differences is easier said than done. While there may be general mutual tolerance between the groups, it just takes an individual with a personal agenda, a misdirected sense of being oppressed or a burning sense of outrage/grievance against some wrong (perceived or real) to light a spark for an inferno (a massive conflict). We consider ourselves sensible people who are out to make love, not war. We check our conscience and find it clear of any bad agenda to take it out on other people. We lead a happy life with no grievance. However, whether an individual alone or a member of a powerful group, any person has the potential by a careless word, decision or action to be the spark that starts a small simmering fire that becomes fanned in due course

to grow into a larger blaze that finally becomes a firestorm. Terrorism and suicide attacks are not this century's inventions; they have occurred throughout history. Unfortunately, men still have not mustered the wisdom to deal with the roots effectively.

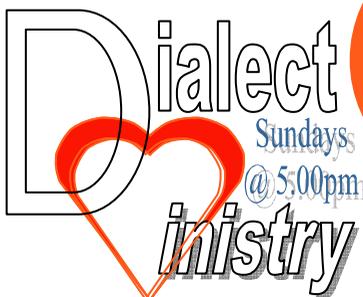
“Terrorism is not a Christian, Buddhist, Jewish or a Muslim belief. It is to be condemned no matter who the perpetrator, be it an individual, a group or a State”, President Musharraf of Paskistan said in 2001. It is without doubt that terrorism has no support from any respectable religion that preaches love and peace. It is not just the Mas Selamat of terror that ought to be vanquished, but also the Osama of terror and most importantly the roots of terrorism. No one in all echelons is spared the responsibility.

*John Lee*

## **SPIRITUAL COMPLACENCY**

*"Wake up, O sleeper..... Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil." (Eph 5:13b – 16)*

Make the most of every opportunity that JCC has drawn up for us all.



## **THE EASTER MESSAGE**

Fill in the boxes in sequence with the letters corresponding to the correct answers in the questions below. The letters will spell out the Easter Message.

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1 The event of \_\_\_\_\_ fulfills the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9-10.

- (A) Maundy Thursday
- (S) Easter
- (C) Palm Sunday
- (D) Ash Wednesday

2 Easter is the celebration of:

- (E) the death of Christ on the Cross
- (H) the resurrection of Christ
- (O) the passion of Christ
- (U) the Passover

3 More than 500 witnesses saw Jesus alive after his death and burial.

(1 Cor. 15) Jesus appeared to them over a period of \_\_\_\_\_ days. (Acts 1)

- (R) forty
- (E) twenty-one
- (O) thirty
- (U) seven

4 When Judas betrayed Jesus, Jesus addressed him as a/an: \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt. 26)

- (A) hypocrite
- (E) enemy
- (I) friend
- (O) betrayer

5 Easter celebration is:

- (P) before the last day of Lent
- (M) on the last day of Lent
- (N) in the season of Lent
- (S) after the season of Lent

6 When Jesus was crucified, the words on the Cross were written in \_\_\_\_\_ language/s. (John 19)

- (T) three
- (U) one
- (V) four
- (W) two

7 On Maundy Thursday, we remember:

(E) the last supper Jesus had with His disciples.

- (A) Jesus washing His disciples' feet.
- (O) Jesus' command to His disciples to love one another. (John 15:12)
- (I) all of the above.

8 Judas betrayed Jesus for \_\_\_\_\_ pieces of silver.

- (S) 30
- (N) 20
- (T) 10
- (M) 100

9 Who asked for Jesus' body from Pilate?

- (P) John
- (A) James
- (R) Joseph
- (E) Jonathan

10 When Jesus was arrested, to which high priest was he first taken?

- (E) Caiaphas, the father-in-law of Annas
- (I) Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas
- (A) Caiaphas, the father of Annas
- (O) Annas, the father of Caiaphas

11 Who was first on the scene after the resurrection of Christ?

- (S) Mary Magdalene
- (N) Simon Peter
- (E) Thomas
- (P) Cleopas

12 After Jesus' resurrection, he appeared to seven of his disciples on the shore of the:

- (A) Red Sea
- (E) Sea of Galilee
- (O) Dead Sea
- (U) Sea of Tiberius

13 Which of the following is most essential to the Christian faith?

- (D) The Ministry of Christ
- (R) The Passion of Christ
- (M) The Crucifixion of Christ
- (N) The Resurrection of Christ

## Faith Renewed

For guilt, my place He took  
Mountains of pride unfold  
Guile, hypocrisy, and cunningness  
In action and in indulgence  
Always a reason to give

To see Christ died for me  
Hide my face I did  
In the dark closet of abasement  
A gentle touch from a nailed pierced hand  
A warmth embrace and new light I see

Rev Daniel Ang  
20 March 2008



**Jesus praying at Gethsemane**  
by Harry Anderson

# Easter Sunday 2008



Baptism and confirmation for 6 young ladies.



Stephanie Ang, Felicia and Samantha Soong



Gildabella, Sacharissa and Ai Lin



There was also a dance presentation by the Youth Dance Team. This was a flag dance rather than the usual tambourine dance, displaying their versatility in both instruments.

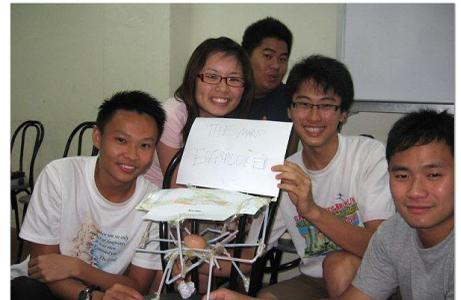


**The Lord is Risen,  
He is risen indeed.**

## PULSE LEADERS' RETREAT 2008



*I don't know the stories behind these pictures but the Youths seem to have a fun time of bonding at Sentosa.*



# Happening Lunch

Something new is happening in JCC after Sunday Adult Service. Koinonia Lunch or Fellowship Lunch is the order of the day. Every Sunday starting from 9 March 2008, cell groups are recruited to man the stalls selling packaged lunch to members. New comers are given a treat as we interact with them and with each other.



It is hoped that our 3-generational church will close the generation gap through this means.



On the menu, expect to find dishes like Chicken Briyani, Mee Siam, Laksa and many more. Too bad I have gout.....

**Martin Cheah**