



Jurong Christian Church

The Vine Committee

Editors:

Martin Cheah mart5003@yahoo.com ;

John Lee john_jccls@yahoo.com.sg

Publisher:

Nick Wong

digi_ics@yahoo.com

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Editor's Word

In the short span of 2 months, 4 famous people whom I grew up with on TV are gone. David Carradine - 3 June 2009,

Michael Jackson and Farrah Fawcett - 25 June

2009 and Karl Malden - 1 July 2009. So where is David doing his meditation now, or Michael holding his next concert? Is there really another angel in heaven and is Karl walking the streets of gold?

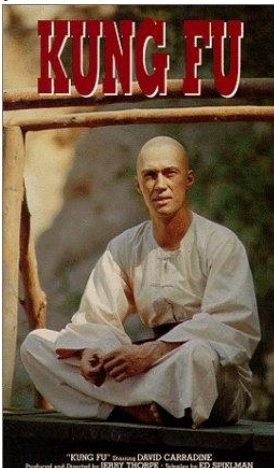


I pray that in God's mercy, they are all with Him. However, their famous lives are

"This is a moment I wished I wouldn't live to see... As much as we may feel that we need Michael here with us, God must have needed him far more," said Stevie Wonder

far for exemplary, so how could they earn their way into heaven? Does money or fame buy you a place in heaven? Can good deeds cover up all your sins? Do all these wonderful

things people say about you guarantee you a place in heaven?



The Bible says, "all have sinned and fall

"Farrah had courage, she had strength, and she had faith. And now she has peace as she rests with the real angels," Jaclyn Smith said

Said Cheryl Ladd: "She was incredibly brave, and God will be welcoming her with open arms."

"She was an angel on Earth and now an angel forever," Lee Majors said



short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) I believe you will agree with me that these famous people are no exception. They may be even more sinful than we ordinary folks.

What is the punishment for sin? “The wages of sin is death....” (Romans 6:23) So what is the Good News of the Bible? “...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

What difficult work must we do to get into heaven? “There is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’” (Romans 10:12-13)

God does not require us to work until we are rich and famous before He accepts us. Neither does He expect that we must be perfect, without sin, since the day we were born. In fact, “If we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and His word has no place in our lives.” (1John 1:10)

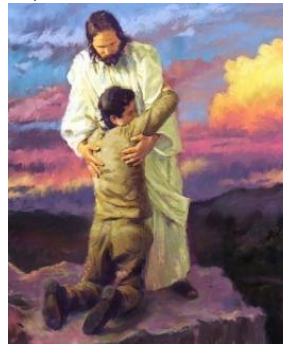
How can you receive God's free gift of love and life?

Romans 10:9-10

“that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

So if David, Michael, Farrah and Karl had confess Jesus as Lord and believed (*to believe is simply to take God at His word*) in Him, then I can assuredly say that today they are in Heaven with Him. However, I do not know this and so I am not sure where they are. I hope that when Jesus told Michael, “I’ll be there”, he did not answer, “Beat it!”

As I read the newspapers, more and more people I know of are starting to appear in the headlines. It reminds me of how much more time I may have left. Are you prepared to meet God as the righteous Judge or as the loving Father who is waiting for His prodigal children to come home?



Martin Cheah

Church membership? Yes

An argument for the importance of formal membership.

Thabiti Anyabwile

There's a new debate among today's Christians. Does the New Testament require, suggest, even hint at local church membership? Are Christians required to belong to a local church, or is it an option? And what does such belonging entail?

The New Testament knows nothing of a creature reborn through faith in Christ, baptized in identification with Christ, communing with Christ at His table, and not a member of a visible, local, identifiable congregation of other born-again baptized believers.

By "membership" I mean the way in which the individual is known to be intentionally committed to every other member of the congregation, and the congregation known to be committed to the individual. On nearly every page of the New Testament, local church membership is assumed.

For example, no one disputes that each Christian is a "member of the body of Christ." We all belong to the spiritual body of our Lord, united to Him inseparably as Head to torso. In that sense, "member" is a peculiarly Christian idea (Rom. 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:11–16)—not an idea lifted from Rotary, golf, or ski clubs. But the Bible shows that this spiritual union gets worked out in local church membership with other flesh-and-blood believers.

Consider also the "one another" passages of Scripture: "love one another" (John 13:34–35), "honor one another" (Rom. 12:10), "restore one another" (Gal. 6:1–2), etc. Many believe these commands can be carried out with their friends in a coffee shop. But all these commands are given to the entire church. And they mark out the entire community as separate from and witnessing to non-Christians (John 13:35). So, what the apostles have in view isn't the easy, cliquish love of friends, but the radical congregational love of the entire church. This radical vision calls for "no divisions in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other" (1 Cor. 12:25). Equal concern for every part requires the reciprocal commitment of self-conscious, intentional membership.

Finally, pastoral ministry requires local church membership. The apostle Peter exhorts the elders to "shepherd the flock of God that is in your care." The pastor isn't responsible for all the people of an area, but for the "flock of God." This doesn't include just any Christian he contacts, but that identifiable group or flock that is in his care. The sheep, then, must be known and committed to being "under" the care of the pastors. The command to obey your leaders requires local church membership (Heb. 13:7, 17).

Well, if the need for local church membership seems so obvious, why are some people breaking out in hives at the very idea? The reasons are legion, some good and some bad, some theological and some practical. But let me submit that every Christian—with the exception of the most renegade individualist—practices some form of membership. It's either a good practice or a weak one, but it's there.

Some Christians see their active involvement (regular attendance, perhaps serving in a ministry, giving, etc.) as sufficient evidence of their commitment to the church. Beyond that, they don't see the need. But what's critical for building strong, healthy spiritual community is that a few things be clearly in place and taught as part of what it means to be committed to the church.

First, you cannot practice meaningful membership or community where anonymity reigns. If people don't know each other, then it's impossible to knit the relationship fabric that is so central to biblical Christianity. So you need a practice that clearly reduces anonymity and increases interpersonal knowing.

Second, you cannot practice meaningful membership where gospel commitments and imperatives are not explicitly expected. Membership exists in large measure for the impartation of spiritual grace (1 Pet. 4:10–11), the exchange of love (John 13:34–35), correction (Gal. 6:1–2; Matt. 18:15–17), and so on. Membership means we are better together than we are apart. The membership process should make this clear, calling the members to "sign on the dotted line" of loving others across economic, social, linguistic, cultural, and other barriers.

Third, you need a practice that makes it clear that people are submitted to and desiring of pastoral oversight (1 Pet. 5:2). You cannot practice meaningful membership or community where anti-authority, anti-

leadership, anti-accountability attitudes predominate. I'm afraid that these attitudes explain much of the resistance to membership; people don't want to be accountable. They imagine that their accountability to Jesus may be maintained without any accountability to His people. But it's among His people—through their love and care and commitment—that Jesus ordinarily establishes accountability with His sheep.

Finally, we need a membership process that maintains the Bible's temporal sequence of conversion, baptism, membership and communion. The observable pattern of the New Testament is: first, gospel preaching; second, hearing mixed with faith; and third, public profession of faith in baptism, which marks entrance into the covenant community, and consequently the privilege of communion at our Lord's Table.

Many have come to believe that membership is not essential because this pattern has been broken apart. It's possible to partake in all the benefits of membership (e.g., communion) without any of the commitments. It's the spiritual equivalent of "shacking up" with someone not your spouse. Until the conversion-baptism-membership-communion sequence is restored, the borders of the Christian life and church will remain fuzzy and membership neglected. Faithful pastors must repair the breakdown of this sequence.

The essence of biblical church membership is alive on every page of the New Testament: mutual love and commitment to all the other Christians in the assembly under the care of godly leadership as an expression of the kingdom and rule of God. That's not abstract. That's concrete, gritty, essential New Testament Christian living (Eph. 4:11-16) that brings discipleship and growth.

Thabiti Anyabwile is the senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Grand Cayman

A cheerful heart is good medicine – Proverbs 17:22

What's the difference between people who pray in church and those who pray in casinos? The ones in the casinos are serious.

What did the gangster's son tell his dad when he failed his examination? 'Dad, they questioned me for 3 hours, but I never told them anything!!'

Committee: Individuals who can do nothing individually and sit to decide that nothing can be done together

Continuing from the last issue, John Lee's version of INVESTING....

Theory vs. Reality

The reason for big-time investors to “BUY HIGH, SELL LOW” is that “BUY LOW, SELL HIGH” is not guaranteed possible in reality even though it sounds plausible in theory. If it were so easy to make money, why have large numbers of investors (including experienced ones) got themselves burnt severely? Commonsense logic tells us that there must be many losers to support every winner. Sob stories and financial disasters abound. In the current volatile climate, it is right in front of your eyes that even titans, the likes of AIG, Citibank, General Motors, Merrill Lynch ... (the list is rather long to lay out), turned out to be enormously bad bets of investment gurus. Billionaires downgraded to millionaires, millionaires downgraded to indistinguishable individuals among the ordinarily wealthy, and the not-so-wealthy downgraded to the Club of Bankrupts.

I happened to come across the following headlines:

“Temasek Portfolio lost \$39.91 billion in 8 months” (The Wall Street Journal, Fri-Sun, May 29-31)

“Temasek recoups half of losses in S'pore portfolio” (The Business Times, Monday, June 1)

Wild swings are a common feature of the stock market. Big-time investors (whether corporates or individuals with huge wealth to play like Ooi Hong Leong) can lose big even though:

- They are no greenhorns.
- They invest, not speculate. (“Investing means doing research, understanding the fundamental reasons for investing in a particular stock and having a game plan, said Mr Ben Fok, chief executive of Grandtag Financial Consultancy.” – Sunday Times article.)
- They are fully experienced with the strategy of BUY LOW, SELL HIGH.
- They invest what they can afford to lose.
- They adopt advanced strategies and have sophisticated tools and top-notch advisers at their disposal.

Can greenhorns do better than the experts?

Many greenhorns are captivated by the seemingly fool-proof mantras of “BUY LOW, SELL HIGH” and “INVEST ONLY THE SPARE CASH YOU CAN AFFORD TO LOSE”. The excitement of punting by market moods (herd instinct) or so-called “reliable advice of experienced people” (staying close to the coat-tails of the veterans, imitating their every move) easily lands them in boiling soup. A

suicidal attempt is like this: When the newspaper reports that the institutions are buying, I buy; when the reports say that institutions are staying their moves, I stay put.”

Institutions do get killed, or at least have near-death experience, in the stock market! One difference between them and you is that they have huge funds at their disposal to buy time for “salvation” if necessary. Their near-death may mean instant fatality for you!

A general caution: Not all BUY or SELL recommendations are unbiased. There may be some made with vested interests to move the market in one direction or another. Ask yourself whether people who recommend a stock are themselves invested in the stock. If yes, could they be making plans to sell by first recommending it to move the price up? If not, why is the stock so good to recommend to others but not self? Conversely, for a SELL call, could institutional investors be waiting on the side to pounce when the price drops? Even authorities’ pronouncements about world conditions may sometimes be fraught with motives. Statements that are politically correct, economically correct, financially correct ... may just turn out incorrect for your investment decision.

Self-deception

To a greenhorn joining the game, it is often deceitfully self-assuring: “Oh, this \$10000 is my savings that I don’t need soon and it is earning nothing in the bank. This amount I can afford to lose, but I won’t lose it anyway because I can afford to hold my investment until the price goes up.”

Sadly, when the market moves down 5%, 10%, 20% ... and shows no sign of recovering soon, PANIC will strike mercilessly. Most often it does! No joke! THIS IS NOTORIOUS EMOTION AT WORK! The loss staring in the face is no longer “what I can afford to lose” but “Oh my gosh, I better do something! The sky is overcast. It looks like the world is ending soon!”

What is the “something” that can be done? Cut loss by selling quickly, hoping to buy back at a lower price since the market is falling and falling? Gnash the teeth and hold on to the stock until a better time that will surely come? Hold on to the stock and sink more money in, averaging the cost down so that when market

recovers, the profit is for the taking? Beware that the following scenarios may play out to your utter anguish; and believe me, such scenarios are routine throughout the history of the stock market:

- You cannot “tahan” (hold) anymore, so you decide to bite the bullet and sell to cut loss. Today you sell, tomorrow the price shoots up and you cry, “Alamak! Why like this? If only I waited another day! (Even big boys have been caught buying HIGH and selling LOW by dint of market reality – so, greenhorns beware!)”
- You hold the stock, buying more to average down your cost. (You have heard about the technique called AVERAGING, so you put it to good use as you pat yourself for your cleverness.) The price has gone down and down for several weeks and it can’t go lower for such a respectable company, so you believe. Aiyoyo! How wrong can you be? The price continues to fall and fall. You finally capitulate – SELL. After that, the price shoots up. It has happened to big boys. (Who could have predicted it? Ask the experts and they are none the wiser.)
- You lost 30% last month, but recovery is in sight as the price is moving up and up. You are happy, deciding to wait a little longer. Finally, the price rises to a point that you are in fact in profit territory, but the price is still moving up. So greed gets the better of you and you tell yourself that you will wait until a reasonable un-greedy target of 10% profit. Alas! The target fails to arrive and the next moment you hear that the stock is suspended. Want to sell at any price also cannot. The next piece of news you hear is that the company has folded. YOUR MONEY EVAPORATED 100%!

In all the three scenarios above, you can’t have your chance to buy back at a lower price.

This is not the end to be continued in the next issue of The Vine....

TEACHER: John, why are you doing your math multiplication on the floor?

JOHN: You told me to do it without using tables.

DO WE NEED 100% CERTAINTY BEFORE BEGINNING?

- Did Noah know all about the flood? No, but he built the ark anyway.
- Did Abraham have a road map? No, but he left Ur of the Chaldees anyway.
- Did Moses know he was going to have to part the Red Sea in order to escape Egypt? No, but he led the people to the edge of the water anyway.
- Did Joshua know how the walls were going to come tumbling down? No, but he marched around Jericho anyway.
- Did Gideon fully grasp God's plan to defeat the Midianites? No, he doubted it from the beginning, but God delivered his people anyway.
- Did young David know for certain that he could defeat Goliath? No, but he picked up the five smooth stones anyway.
- Did Jehoshaphat know how God was going to defeat the Ammonites? No, but he put the singers at the front of the army and sent them out to battle anyway.

I am reading a book by Ray Pritchard and in one of the chapters, he posed all the above questions and concluded that the life of faith means living with uncertainty even in the midst of doing God's will. Too many people want what God has never promised – 100 percent certainty before they will act. They refuse to go forward because they are waiting for a level of confidence that almost removes the need for faith altogether.

Dear faithful people, are we in the same boat as most people? Do we always want assurance that the thing will work before we put our money on the line. Is that why whenever there is a call to participate in an event, not many will sign up until the penultimate moment, when we are sure that the event will happen? Will we only contribute to the building fund when we see the architectural drawings?

Somewhere along the line you have to take the step of faith because you know that God requires it of you. Could you have become a Christian without taking a step of faith? **Never sure but always trust.**

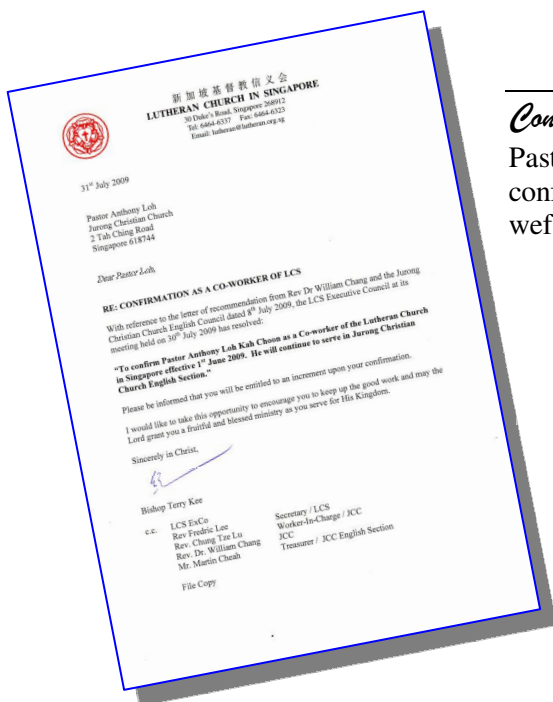
We sing “God will make a way where there seems to be no way” but do we really mean it? We are in Noah’s position now and God is telling us to build the church but we don’t see the need. It’s not going to rain we seem to be saying. We want to see the harvest before building bigger barns.

Sitting in the Rebuilding Committee, I hear that we think it will take 10 years before we can raise a mere \$3 million dollars for the first phase. I know JCC and the money will not come in until the first pile is in the ground, because we live by sight. We want to see before we believe.

Do you believe me if I tell you that after 5 years if we do not see a single pile in the ground, the building will not be raised up? Yes indeed we will loose faith in the project if after 5 years nothing is done and the money will dwindle down instead of growing up to target.

So people we have to encourage each other to reach our target in 3 years time or we will almost certainly not start at all.

Martin Cheah



Congratulations to
Pastor Anthony Loh on his
confirmation as Co-Worker in LCS
wef 1 June 2009



JCC Reaches Out

Planning is now going on with Taman Jurong RC and Jurong Town Corporation



to organize a Children's Day / Lantern Festival Celebration at the Chinese Gardens on Saturday, 3rd October 2009.

Look out for the announcements soon. Sign up early and be part of the celebrations which opens up many opportunities for us to bring someone just a little step closer.



Martin Shield Bible Quiz 2009

Two months before the announcement of the Bible Quiz, the young people were already eagerly preparing for the quiz in their cell groups. The adults were as usual in the "blur" mode, not knowing what was going on and not caring.



I guess the judges are the ones who set the questions and they being adults may have set it with adults in mind

and that may be the reason why the adult team won the quiz for the second year running.



Congratulations to Ewe Ewe, Meng Chye, Samantha and Frank.

JCC Food Trail

The day after Singapore's National Day started out with heavy rains in the early morning before sunrise. By the time the sky was lighted up, the rains had ceased and we had a cool morning to venture forth on JCC's Food Trail 2009.

Two busloads of people comprising a mix of 50% JCC members and the rest guests and friends of members left JCC at about 11.00 am and proceeded towards Beach Road. The buses dropped us in front of Beach Road Hawker Centre and quickly the people got into their assigned groups and started to hunt through the hawker centre for the foods to taste based on the clues given.

Most of the groups took a leisurely time to savor the delicacies found in this place but the winning group had a plan. They bought the food for take away and were off on the trail eating along the way. Only the fast food generation could have conceived of such a plan, they were the young girls from the Girls' Brigade company.



Groups were required to answer various questions about the food found in



the hawker centre and along the way to Arab Street where the trail ends. I have never walked along the quaint shop houses along Bussorah Street and Arab Street, nor have I stepped into the Malay Heritage Centre before. I looked totally liked a tourist with my video cam and lost in wonder look.

Finally we reached our destination, a Mediterranean type restaurant nestled among the shop houses of Arab Street. They served what seemed like middle eastern fare which some of the people enjoyed very much. Due to health reasons, I only sampled some of the varieties and what I tried was quite palatable.

We had a time of fellowship here and I notice that Margaret was making the most of the opportunity to share with Mr Ling's wife. Soon the buses came and we quickly packed into them and were on our way back to JCC for the prize presentation. A fun day indeed for the people to remember.



Excerpts from PM's speech

On National Day, 9 August 2009

My fellow Singaporeans,

We did not start out as one people. Our forefathers were different peoples from different lands, who had come to Singapore to seek better lives for themselves and their children. But our formative years fighting for independence, then striving as a new nation to survive against the odds, brought us closer together. Each time we were challenged, we responded as one, everyone pulling together and working for the common good. And each success further cemented our cohesion, and helped us to meet the next challenge.

*We are doing this again in this crisis. **Everyone of us – government and people, employers and unions – is working together....***

Whether fighting the recession or the flu, we made sure every Singaporean knows he is not alone, but that the community and the country are behind him. So long as you make the effort and do your best, the rest of us will help you to pull through.

This unity is key to our success in many fields. We must work hard to strengthen it, and to bridge potential divides within our society, be it between Singaporeans and new arrivals, between rich and poor, or most fundamental of all, between the different races and religions.

*My fellow Singaporeans..... **Let us stand shoulder-to-shoulder, so that whether it rains or shines, we can work together and achieve the best results for Singapore.** This is how we build a better and more vibrant nation, and make Singapore a special place that we are all proud to call our home.*

I wish all Singaporeans a Happy National Day.

Our Prime Minister, Lee Hsien Loong spoke about many things in this year's National Day message but what came out clearly to me was that he was highlighting the importance of unity. If Singaporeans were to be

fractured into small groups, whether by race, language or religion, we would not be able to tackle all the adverse situations, eg the economic crisis, H1N1 flu and terrorist attacks.

I believe the importance of this unity holds true for the church as well. We cannot be segregated by Mandarin, English, Dialect, Adult, Youth, Clergy or Lay each running their own programs with disregard to the others. We are all part of the same body and will only work best when we synergize with each other. *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach **unity** in the faith...Ephesians 4:11-13a*

*The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body...1Corinthians 12:12. Read the rest of 1Corinthians 12 to understand how each part of the body are needed and that *If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. (1Cor 12:24).**

I place part of PM Lee's speech here and it seems to fit very well with what the Bible is saying:

This unity is key to our success in many fields. We must work hard to strengthen it, and to bridge potential divides within our society....

Can we hope to succeed as a church if we all worked as individuals without commitment to each other, to be our brother's keeper? The Bible proclaims: *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work (Ecclesiastes 4:9)* Read the rest of this chapter to understand the power of two (unity).

My prayer therefore for JCC this National Day is that we stand united against our common foe, the Evil One, who tries to cause disunity between brothers. I just watched **300** about a united band of brothers who were able to hold out against a much stronger force. May we stand shoulder-to-shoulder in this battle.

Martin Cheah

Lessons we can learn from the Shi Ming Yi case

LOOK OUT FOR STAFF WHO LIVE A LAVISH LIFESTYLE

- Shi is currently under trial in the Subordinate Courts of Singapore on charges of conspiracy, misuse of funds and forgery and may face imprisonment as well as removal from the Buddhist sangha order if convicted. It was revealed in the court that the monk bought luxury cars, race horses, country club membership in Perth, Western Australia and lived in lavish lifestyle, an unusual trait amongst Buddhist monks.

ENSURE ALL GUIDELINES ARE COMPLIED WITH AND THERE IS NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- On 26 November 2007, Ren Ci Hospital was under investigation by the Charity Council of Singapore for 3 possible violations of the Code of Governance for Charities and Institutions of a Public Character. Shi was alleged to have made interest free loans in violation of Ren Ci's own guidelines on Financial Management and Controls and Disclosure and Transparency, and had also served as both Board Chairman and CEO of the hospital which is an infringement of existing guidelines since it creates a potential conflict of interest and a lack of check and balances.

BENEFICIARIES SHOULD NOT SIGN CHEQUES

- Shi is accused of forgery, providing false or misleading information to the COC, conspiracy to falsify a payment voucher and give false information to the COC and misappropriation of Ren Ci funds.

SALARY MUST FOLLOW THE PRESCRIBED SALARY SCALE

- Mdm Chan Ching Oi, Honorary Secretary of Ren Ci, told the court that the management committee didn't approve, nor did it discuss about a pay increment for Ming Yi in 2001. A pioneer of the charitable organisation, Mdm Chan said no one approved nor determined Ming Yi's salary at that time. Previously, auditors from Ernst and Young testified that 47-year-old Ming Yi earned 16 thousand dollars a month.

Subtitles put in by me. The text was extracted from the Internet. Hope we can learn from this case and not fall into the same pitfalls.

Martin Cheah