

# The 2000 VINE

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Greeting's in the Lord's Holy name. Recently on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2000 some concerned psychiatrists in Singapore published a book called "I am not mad" which explains the causes and symptoms of various mental illnesses. This book is indeed timely as many people suffer from depressions, mental illnesses of various degrees due to pressures and crises in life. But as Christians how do we look at depression, which is prevalent among many people in Singapore. How can we help them?

## WHAT IS IT?

To be **depressed** literally means to be pushed down. When depressed, you are weighted down under a heavy load of bad feelings too heavy to carry. That heavy load includes great guilt, hopeless despair, deep sadness, fatigue and listlessness. As a depressed person, you are unmotivated to do much other than continue to sag under and possibly complain about that load of feelings.

Certainly all people have depressive feelings at one time or another (example in the Bible includes Elijah who suffered depression when pursued by Jezebel, as was dramatically recounted in 1 Kings 19:3-5), and yet are not considered to be under the weight of a diagnosed clinical depression, that is, a depression requiring a doctor's care or hospitalisation. A truly serious or debilitating depression is one in which you feel very much at the end of the line without any place to go, and so you go no place.

The experience of depression is somewhat like the feelings you would have at being trapped on an ocean floor without any oxygen tank or other means of breathing. It is as if you would not die in several minutes. Your life is prolonged while you continue to experience the feelings of panic, imminent death, total despair, utter anguish, fear and misery. These feelings



continue to occur and persist with great intensity while stretched out over a long period of time. During all of this time at the bottom of this sea, you still think and analyze. Life itself seems remote and far away. It is pitch dark, murky and ominous with no hope of escape. The past looms large before your eyes and guilt clouds your mind. As a depressed person, you very much feel this way. The feelings are genuine and the experience real. It is not a pretense nor playacting for someone else's benefit. You really feel you are at the bottom of the ocean without an oxygen tank!

If you have prolonged periods of depression or continue to have bouts of depression off and on at different times in your life, the latter bouts can be like the experience of being lost deep in an unfamiliar part of a cave you once knew. You have wandered back into the cave and cannot find your way out. Although it is black and scary, filled with all the familiar feelings of fear and despair, it becomes a safer refuge than trying to find your way outside of the cavern into the light of day. Thus depression becomes a self-perpetuating cycle that it is extremely difficult to break out of. You are indeed lost in the cave in deep, dark despair. Yet you hesitate to try to grope your way out of the cave, fearing all the dangers - the spiders, snakes, sink holes and secret animal lairs - away from your so-called "safe spot of terror", clinging to a cave wall. Better a known horror than an unknown catastrophe.

## **WHAT CAUSES IT?**

The onset of depression can come suddenly like an explosion or gradually like drifting away at sea. It almost always involves a loss of some kind. Depression can be touched off by some severe loss. Examples of such severe losses which trigger depression are loss of a loved one through death, divorce or separation of some kind; loss of job or vocation; loss of home, possibly by a move; great financial loss; and loss of health. Depression can also be set in motion by a lesser sequence of stresses - little losses so to speak - that contribute to a fear of major loss. A string of more minor stresses such as loss of promotion, loss of family closeness through problems or hostilities, loss of contact with friends, loss of hobby or enjoyment outlet, or nagging physical problems can push you beyond your tolerance limit. Then depression can set in.

Guilt feelings surround you in depression. They may be a cause of depression and certainly contribute to its perpetuation. You feel guilty about the things you did or failed to do that brought about your loss. For example, you feel guilty about what you judge to be your failures in a marriage relationship, your failures

at work, your failures with friendships, your lack of exercise or poor eating habits which led to poor health, etc. Or perhaps you feel angry about the loss of a loved one through death, or angry about an injury in an accident for which you can blame no one but God. Then you feel guilty about being angry with God! Guilt feelings are an integral part of depression. Anger is also very much present. The equation may read like this: when guilt dominates it is anger turned inward; when anger dominates, it is guilt projected outward. You may become angry with everyone else and blame them or God for your misfortunes. In depression you tend to swallow this anger but certainly feel it as well as the guilt.

Is this guilt justified? Is sin at the bottom of depression? Sometimes yes and sometimes no. There may be a very real cause to feel guilty. For example, you commit adultery. You cover it up from your spouse and friends. You carry on as if it had never happened. Guilt feelings overwhelm you. You fear the loss of family and friends should your adultery be revealed. You have already lost self-respect. Depression may certainly result from such an act and guilt feelings in this case would be justified.

On the other hand, there may not be a real cause to feel guilty. You may set standards for yourself which are impossible to achieve and then you feel guilty when you fail to reach those goals. As a student in school, you set the goal of keeping an A average, making the school's basketball team and gaining a part in the school play. Perhaps because of your extracurricular activities you get a few B's on your report card and you feel guilty. As a perfectionist, you become so disappointed with not reaching your unrealistic goals that you are almost obsessed with your guilt and failure. Your depression is not a result of breaking God's law but failing to meet your own standards and is a false guilt.

Most often the guilt feelings can be a mixture of real guilt and false guilt. Your marriage ends in divorce and you feel guilty about all the angry words, the lack of love, and the selfishness you exhibited, even though you worked vigorously for reconciliation. Still you blame yourself for the divorce and for all the things you failed to do, even though the other party rejected your reconciliation efforts and obtained the divorce over your opposition. There would be a mixture of real guilt for real wrongs you had committed and false guilt for expecting the impossible of achieving a reconciliation with the spouse totally opposed to it.



Depression, then, is brought about by loss of some kind, stress that eventually overwhelms you, guilt that may cause and will certainly perpetuate it and anger that is swallowed up inside.

## **WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT?**

Four words provide a simple and concise summary for dealing with a depressed person. These four words are listen, acknowledge, love and assure.

The first thing to do when dealing with a depressed person is to **listen** - really - listen, to him or her. Remember that this means a process is involved, the developing of a relationship, which usually cannot be accomplished in one session. Listening may not be very easy to do. One problem may be in getting the person to talk in the first place. Some depressed people are so subdued that getting anything out of them may be as difficult as pulling teeth. You ask a few questions and you get slow, short, monosyllabic answers. But remember that they are at the bottom of that ocean without oxygen and carry a heavy load of guilt feelings. Persist in approaching them and in trying to establish a bridge over the chasm into their little corner of the cave. It may take any number of attempts before they feel confident about really confiding in you.

Others, be aware, may be of the angry type whose deep-seated guilt feelings are projected outward as anger toward anyone and everything they blame for all their problems. This type may be ready to speak at the drop of a hat and spew forth an angry torrent of abuse at all of their alleged antagonists. Again the advice is the same - listen to them. If you are able to persist patiently in listening long enough, their first flood of anger may dissolve into real revelations and conversations closer to the actual source of their problems. This reaffirms the implication that the relationship needs nurturing and results are not accomplished in just a few short moments with that person.

A critical consideration in the listening stage is to be careful not to criticize or preach to them. Remember that they have much bottled up within them and are not aware of the meaning of it all themselves. To lecture or criticize at this point, even if you do not agree with much of or anything they say, only heaps more weight on their shoulders and destroys their confidence in opening up to you. You would become for them like the friends of Job, useless and a source of increased pain.

If you cannot preach to or argue with them, what can you do? You can **acknowledge** their feelings. As you listen to them, agree where you can. This

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should be possible, especially where the pain and suffering are concerned. Since depression is almost always connected to some loss, try to pinpoint that loss or series of losses for yourself in your own mind. Then as you listen to your depressed parishioner or friend, acknowledge that it is natural to feel sad, depressed, angry or guilty at the loss of spouse, health, job or self-respect. Keep the acknowledgment low-key. Don't go into long bouts of analysis of their problems and offer a lot of advice as to how to correct their situation. Let them come to the point of acknowledging their own loss to themselves. Let them discover and express how they feel about their loss and then you can confirm the validity of those feelings. Even if they express an extremely angry attitude with which you cannot agree, let it wash over you for the time being. Just acknowledge that you can see how very upset they are without arguing as to whether their feelings are totally justified or not.

As you listen to them and acknowledge their feelings, communicate your love to them. This is the most important part of all. What will really come through to the depressed person is whether their friend, pastor, counselor or relative really cares about them. You want to communicate to them that you love them and accept them just as they are. That is, you love them as God loves all of us. He gave his Son to die for us when we were his enemies living in rebellion and sin. God loved us unconditionally and freely forgave us all because of Christ's sacrifice. God's love for us does not change but remains constant in spite of what we have done and continue to do. God's love does not depend upon our feelings. God loves us and accepts us just as we are. To acknowledge that is what finally motivates us to change our way of life and live as he wants us to live.

In dealing with the depressed Christian, you want to get them to see and accept themselves as they are. They need to acknowledge to themselves that they are the adulterer, student perfectionist, divorced person or whatever their current status might be. Whatever it is, God still loves them and accepts them, forgiving their faults and offering opportunities for their future. Conveying your love to them and acceptance of them as they are can be the key to open the door for them to see God's great love for them, the ultimate and true cure for depression.

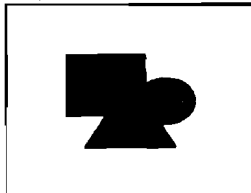
Then you reach the point where you can assure them of a future. When they accept themselves for what they are and know that others still love and support them and - best of all - that



God loves them, then they can start to look ahead and begin to change. They may now begin to accept God's promise spoken through Jeremiah:

*"For I know the plans I have for you, I declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future (Jeremiah 29: 11)*

They can learn about themselves from their past experiences. They can turn that knowledge to their advantage as they focus eyes forward on where they want to go. Then the pastor's or counselor's advice is more likely to be useful and heeded. For each depressed person, the amount of assurance and advice may vary. Some recover quickly, and soon do not need continued counsel and assistance. Others may be in constant need of the regular reassurance of advice, love and support. Some may need medication to help stabilize their moods. As a competent counselor, you will have to judge the individual case, but usually the indications of need will come from the recovering person himself.



These are important points to keep in mind when dealing with a depressed person: Establish rapport so that the depressed person feels comfortable enough to speak freely with you. Really **listen** to them, pinpoint for yourself the loss, and **acknowledge** the feelings of pain, suffering and guilt. Be certain to communicate to them that you accept them and **love** them as they are. As this love melts their walls of depression, point them to and **assure** them of their future.

Remind them that God keeps his promises. Others may let them down. They may let themselves down. But "God is not a man that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (Numbers 23:19)

May the Lord have mercy on us.

*Pastor Martin Yee*

# Are We Hypocrites?

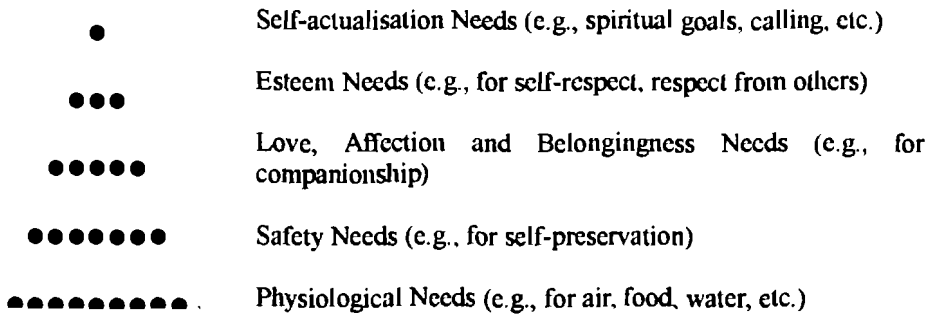
*John Lee*

Time and again, when we reach out to pre-Christians with the message of the Gospel, we hear the refrain, "Not interested lah ... What good is the Church when you see so many Christians saying one thing and doing another..."

Such sentiments may be asserted aloud or, if the pre-Christian is conscious of politeness, expressed in non-verbal language that nevertheless leaves no one in doubt about the heartfelt feeling about the hypocrisy prevailing among Christians. There are sins and there are hypocrisies; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and all have been hypocritical without need to be encouraged just like little children do not need to be taught to tell either a black or white lie. There are big sins and small sins and so there are gigantic hypocrisies and teeny-weeny ones. No matter what appearance hypocrisy takes, it does have a critical effect on our Christian testimonies and hence the effectiveness of our evangelical efforts.

While pre-Christians might be spot-on in labelling Christians as hypocrites, they are less frank in recognising the same shortcoming in themselves. Isn't it hypocritical to call others hypocrites when one himself/herself is not any purer in character? Whatever Christians preach about "sinners all, without exception" whereby salvation is possible only by the redemptive blood of Christ, by grace and not by works, is a truth that applies universally to both Christians and pre-Christians. So, in our preaching, we are being very honest and not hypocritical at least on this truth. We do not go about proclaiming ourselves as immaculate who are necessarily "better-than-thou". It is by the very fact that we are sinners that we need Jesus Christ. For pre-Christians to expect us to be without sin and "hence equal in standing with them" before they would contemplate stepping into the Church is futile because were we to fulfill their vista of a sinless Church, then there would be no need for them and us to step into the Church at all since sinless people do not need the redemptive grace of Jesus Christ.

There is basis in human nature to suggest the prevalence of human hypocrisy (never mind whether big or small) at a personal level and at a societal level. At the personal level, the great humanistic psychologist Maslow (*died 1970*) identified human needs as hierarchical in nature forming the steps of a pyramid. This proposition, known as “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs”, is familiar to those who do Management Studies and is enumerated below:



Placed at the bottom of the pyramid (the broadest base suggesting the most common preoccupation of people) are the physiological needs and right at the apex (suggesting only relatively few people can scale the height) are the needs for attaining high spiritual goals, a state of satisfaction and fulfillment in attending to one’s high calling, etc., that make one stand apart from the majority. By human standards, strength and will power, it is an arduous process to climb past the lower level instincts and reach one’s highest potential. The inclination to lie (to save one’s skin) and the tendency to be hypocritical (being pretentious to save one’s face) are the common preoccupations of man in his sinful state and he is driven by such low-level (read “base”) instincts to achieve many of the “needs” which, by higher-order reasoning, are more akin to “wants”.

At the societal level, self is often subjected to the will of the society. Therefore, climbing the steps of the pyramid is not only labouring against the gravitational pull of one’s personal nature but also contending with the intrusions of cultural conditioning, national regulations, family expectations, etc., which act like grease providing an easy slide down the pyramid.



Imagine a woman's inner self speaking with a clear voice about what she is to be (say, a doctor) and the path she is to take to achieve her calling of serving the poor needy with her medical skills and with compassion. The path to the calling may be fraught with external obstacles:

- Cultural – “In our culture, no woman becomes a doctor.”
- National – “Sorry. Due to limited quota for the medical faculty, ...”
- Parental displeasure – “We have all the years wanted you to be a lawyer to carry on the family tradition.”

After a period of feeling dejected and restless for being unable to override the forces opposed to her sense of calling, rationalisation sets in and she finally settles on studying law and muddle through as a lawyer earning a decent income. She thinks, “Maybe it was right for me to read law after all.”

An Aesop's fable tells about a fox being unable to reach some juicy grapes on a high vine. Finally, the fox quit trying and thought to himself that the grapes were probably sour; and he went away without the grapes. When the fox could not have what he wanted, he pretended that he stood to lose nothing. The fox was being dishonest to the reality of his inner voices just like the woman who could not achieve her self-actualisation of being a compassionate doctor cooks up pretensions about her career journey. Not being truthful to one's inner voices is a very common case of human hypocrisy.

Hopefully, the above is an easy-to-understand illustration. The truth illustrated applies equally to any man or woman in any place in the world who is born with some innate self-actualisation goal but who grows up being subjugated to the imperfect realities of his/her society which is in turn subservient directly or indirectly to the natural global forces that are man-created.

Regardless of whether the human hypocrisy succumbed to is at the personal level or at the societal level, the only way man can hope to break free

from the stranglehold of human instincts and reach higher grounds is to seek out a higher source of strength and power outside of himself to provide a spin to his latent potential. As Christians, we have access to this higher source to overcome the undesirable forces of the natural world that constrain us to compromise our high calling as witnesses for the Lord's Kingdom. While we have the access, it is up to our free will whether we want to make the approach and reap the gains. Confessing that we are sinners and hypocrites is not granting ourselves the licence to continue merrily in our sins and hypocrisy "since we cannot help it and it is just the normal thing nothing to be ashamed about." There is a difference between a pre-Christian who does not know Jesus Christ and a true Christian who embraces the Lord's teachings. Let me put forth two illustrations of this difference:

- A Christian is like an animal that enjoys being clean but unfortunately falls into a muddy pool. He struggles to get out of the pool, shake off the muddy water from his body and moves on. Much as he puts in effort to stay clear of muddy pools, he does on occasions have a misstep or two and get himself dirty again. Well, he will continue to make effort to be careful and with the passage of time and experience with such happenings, he finds himself less and less likely to fall into such bad situations.

A pre-Christian, on the other hand, is like an animal that just enjoys wading in muddy pools. He doesn't always find opportunities for such wading fun, but on occasions he finds himself landed in such a pool whether by accident or on purpose. Instead of attempting to get out, he goes about thrashing the water with glee and what fun he has wallowing in the muddy bottom with abandon!

- Hypocrisy to a Christian is like a long stick in need of shortening by half, which is not easy. He puts in a tremendous effort in shortening it and so he succeeds. Alas! The stick is still there poking at his conscience, though shorter than the original by half. He tries again very hard to shorten it by half again, and again, and ... the stick continually becomes shorter and shorter although a remnant is always there. Well, there is progressive improvement

and in the fullness of the Lord's time, the final remnant will be taken away and exchanged for a reward for the efforts made.

Contrast a pre-Christian whose hypocrisy is like a long tree branch in his garden but which does not bother him at all. Instead of pruning it regularly, he lets it grow longer and longer until one day it becomes too long for comfort not because it pokes at his conscience but that it gets in the way of his neighbourly relations.

If we are observant enough, it is not difficult to notice that in some people's exhortations on what high principles (thrift, benevolence, charity, etc.) they want their audience to seek, and their pronouncements on the ideals they themselves would pursue, there is a personal bottom line to carry the weight of their statements. How high up or low down the Maslow's pyramid this bottom line is, only the individual can tell. Pondering this point, we are clearer to understanding the accuracy of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in defining the framework of human behaviourism. It is a "matter-of-course" framework that brings out no beauty of human nature. It is this lack of beauty that brings out A LAMENTATION ON HYPOCRISY. (*Poem below*) It also underlines the virtue of what we are entreated in 1 John 3:18, "Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." For us to rise above the lower instincts of human nature and go for the higher levels, we should not be discouraged by our own limited ability. We should lay claim to our access to the higher source of power, our Lord Jesus Christ. He does assure us in Luke 18:27, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

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### A LAMENTATION ON HYPOCRISY

*John Lee*

I sat on my chair

Resting from the chores of the day

A cool spring emanated within my soul

Refreshing me – my whole

I felt relieved of all care and fray

Musing the pause from life's daily race

I sat in rumination

At the people of the world

Lovely people – God's creation

Ugly souls – in a kaleidoscopic world

What an incongruity to observe

A feeble core within a splendour to behold!

I sat in meditation

With a heart in half resignation

A rueful thought arose of man bereaving his beauty

The worship of hypocrisy rooted in its place

Man has sparkling eyes but he would not see

A paradox he embraces

Man has wonderful ears but he would not hear

A calling from God so near and clear

I sat in contemplation of man's pitiful state

A shrill cry broke the silence

A cat was meowing in need of sustenance

Looking at me with expectation

I brought a bowl – with commiseration

The cat turned away from sight – with apprehension

I left the food and shut the door

In meditative contemplation again I paused

“M...e...o...w...”

The cat returned

A cry for sustenance

An empty bowl at some distance

Some mice squeaking away with their meal

A dubitable cat falling asleep

The feline had missed the food for its own good

A mishap, a fumble, a blunder in response to a blessing?

A cool breeze...

A moment of quiet...

A LAMENTATION AT HEART!

# IT DEPENDS...

A basketball in my hands is worth about \$19.

A basketball in Michael Jordan's hands is worth about \$33 million.

It depends whose hands it's in.

A baseball in my hands is worth about \$6.

A baseball in Mark McGuire's hands is worth \$19 million.

It depends whose hands it's in.

A tennis racket is useless in my hands.

A tennis racket in Pete Sampras' hands is a Wimbledon Championship.

It depends whose hands it's in.

A rod in my hands will keep away a wild animal.

A rod in Moses' hands will part the mighty sea.

It depends whose hands it's in.

A sling shot in my hands is a kid's toy.

A sling shot in David's hand is a mighty weapon.

It depends whose hands it's in.

Two fish and 5 loaves of bread in my hands is a couple of fish sandwiches.

Two fish and 5 loaves of bread in God's hands will feed thousands.

It depends whose hands it's in.

Nails in my hands might produce a birdhouse.

Nails in Jesus Christ's hands will produce salvation for the entire world.

It depends whose hands it's in.

As you see now it depends whose hands it's in.

So put your concerns, your worries, your fears, your hopes, your dreams, your families and your relationships in God's hands because - **it depends whose hands it's in.**

# Sengoi Mission Trip Report

September 6 – 12, 2000

Prior to the Sengoi Mission Trip, I harboured the thought that Christ's Great Commission did not have much to do with me save for the occasional opportunities when I won over a few non-Christians to Christ through the cell group I had once attended. For me, then, the call was apparently directed at God's ordained servants, pastors and priests, rather than at ordinary lay people like myself. All I had to do was to attend church on Sundays, pray regularly at home, offer thanksgivings for the food I ate and not be naughty (sin). It never occurred to me that mission outreach work could be a shared mission with ordained servants of God, is enlightening as much as it is an enjoyable one too. How wrong it was that I thought ordinary lay people need not be involved. It is time consuming and an ever on-going task. So much time, labour and efforts were put into the planning by Pastor Michael. Not forgetting the prayers he must have prayed so earnestly for fine weather and positive response from the people we were to visit among other things.



Late in August with Pastor Michael's invitation, I felt I had to join his team. I was keen and ready to go but somehow felt unsure. I had some reservation as to how I could be of help and not a hindrance to the team's work. I had never had any experience in outreach mission before and felt a sense of quiet reluctance, if not fear. Eva, my wife, was however, very encouraging and prompted me to go.

## Cameron Highlands

The team members (Pastor Michael, Patrick Boey and myself) were assigned our parts. Patrick would handle the story telling; and I, the games. We departed from Singapore on 6 September, arrived in Tapah early afternoon the same day and were met at the foot of Cameron Highlands by Pastor Jensey, pastor of the church at Kg Sekau. That night our team lodged with Pastor Jensey in his spartanly furnished wooden house with bare amenities. (No electricity, no air-con, no electric fans and no waterheater — the modern comfort that most Singaporeans take for granted.) We bathed in cold mountain water piped into his house and partook in the simple food spread out for us. Everywhere were mountains, lots of greenery and kampong chickens. I saw the humble aborigines, the Orang Asli, for the first time in my life. I woke up to the morning filled with the sound of crowing roosters, the tweeting of birds in the trees and crisp cool mountain air. "How Great Thou art, Lord" my soul sang as I dwelled temporarily in the midst of his creation at the highlands. Indeed, at that moment, I felt very grateful that I was there with the team.



On the morning of 7 Sept, second day of the mission outreach trip, we had our first public service in

Pastor Jensey's church. A simple timber building with zinc roofing, bare floor, without chairs or the usual church wooden benches that one would expect to find in a church. I watched, amazed, as I saw children and womenfolk trooping down the various nearby hill paths towards the church. Most were barefooted and wore simple clothing. Nothing glamorous. Unpretentious. I was awe struck when the children walked into the church, sat silently on the floor, displaying a discipline that I had seldom seen except in the army. They sang like God's little angels without songbooks, clapping their hands in unison and with joy written all over their faces. They sang sweetly from memories, songs after songs. They clasped their tiny hands and prayed so earnestly that I felt the Lord's Heart must have surely been touched. So touching and uplifting a scene I had not witnessed before; it made me feel how lacking I was in my own worship. The aura of adoration and reverence for their Creator in the way they worshipped seemed to permeate the little wooden church. These folks who had not the privilege to receive even a rudimentary education nor been taught the finer mannerism of society were able to worship in such a manner often found lacking in city churches. I felt so inspired, so humbled and so blessed to be among them.

After the service, came story telling by Patrick and games by me. It was such joy to see the aborigines enjoying the stories Patrick told them. How they were mesmerized by the 'magic' string used by Patrick in telling the story of how Jesus reconciled men's relationship with God. It was again a joy to see their eyes glued to the pictures of Jonah when the whale story was told. It was also such fun to see the young ones enjoying the games that we had brought to them; in particular, the game of pinning the donkey's tail on the donkey. Though an 'ancient' game which thousands of children must have played now and then in most countries, it was a new game for them. Incidentally, I prepared the donkey and the tail complete with the pin and brought them all the way up to Tapah from Singapore. Upon arriving at Pastor Jensey's home, I found it missing! I was dismayed and prayed in my heart that I would be able to find some material to do another similar game. I praised and thanked the Lord when Pastor Jensey searched his room and found a similar large piece of white Styrofoam board material that I had used earlier. For some reason, I had brought along a black marker pen and the donkey was very quickly drawn again, a tail fabricated with some cloth and Mrs Jensey's sewing pin. (Incidentally, flat Styrofoam boards are generally not easily available in small towns and villages.) The Lord was so gracious in providing the right material on time. Praise the Lord Jesus for His precious love and provision.

## 19<sup>th</sup> Mile Village

At the 19<sup>th</sup> Mile village the service was again very enjoyable. Children and womenfolk sang without songbooks. Prayers were uttered in real earnestness. We were very blessed indeed to be with simple folks in their spartan wooden and bamboo huts that they called home. Again, this place was without any modern amenities. The food and refreshment were very down-to-earth but we enjoyed them because those were offered from the hearts. Those were all that the aborigines had. Their income levels are very low and they live off the land most of the time. Thank God — 'The Lord will provide'. Pastor Michael mentioned that



in previous mission trips the Orang Asli were mainly living off tapioca and this time round we saw that they had rice.

### **24<sup>th</sup> Mile Village**

At the 24<sup>th</sup> Mile Village on the way down Cameron Highlands, we had our service in a dilapidated church constructed of wood with zinc roofing. The floor was bare ground and without cementing. Children and womenfolk joined in the service. Some chickens and a dog came along. Again, songs were sung beautifully from memories to the guitar accompaniment played by Pastor Jensey. After the service as we were about to depart, an elderly woman in the congregation seemed to be feeling dejected as we could not accept her invitation for the refreshment that she had prepared. Sensing this, we accepted her invitation whereupon her face immediately broke out into a beautiful smile. We trooped into her bamboo and wooden hut devoid of any furniture. When we had sat down ... guess what? Praise the Lord! It was a big durian of XO grade — the flesh was soft, thick and creamy. The woman's husband had gone into the jungle that morning at 6 am, returning home two hours later with the precious fruit. That's hospitality right from the bottom of their simple hearts. She had nothing else to offer us. Our Lord God surely knew how to grant my desire and gave me the choicest of the fruit. To top that, the woman told her husband to bring out three more and insisted that we should accept them. Those were all the cash crop they had. We made her a love offering of money in return so that they would be able to buy provisions for themselves. We brought those three durians to Grik, Perak, to share with Pastor Sin, another durian lover.



### **The Grik Dam/Termerloh Area**

At Grik, we had a wonderful time sharing and fellowshiping with Pastor Sin and Siew Bee, his wife. The church in Grik is small, with about 30 Chinese worshippers, mostly middle-aged and elderly. Children make up about the same number and come mostly from non-Christian families. They participated in worship songs and prayers. They listened and watched with "captivated" eyes as Patrick again captured them with his "magic" string and reconciliation story of Man To God. They also had a wonderful time with pinning the donkey's tail game. Incidentally, the previous board made in Pastor Jensey's home was left with him. In like manner, God provided the same type of Styrofoam board material for the game which was played in Grik and in an Orang Asli village in the Grik area and in some villages on islands located deep in the vast Termerloh hydro-electric dam area. It was so wonderful to witness the young and old enjoying the game

### **Spiritual Condition Of The Orang Asli's Heart Now**

In the Orang Asli villages in the dam area as well in the village near the Grik township, we discovered people were willing to listen to the Word of God. We had requests for Gospel reading

material in the Malay language. Basic medicines are needed for the treatment of colds, runny nose and fever that are common and prevalent especially among the children. Modern medical centres are far away. Land and water transports are hours away and costly. Most of these Orang Asli folks are living in abject poverty; living off the land and on whatever little government assistance. Most are unable to travel away from their villages for medical help. Child mortality rates are very high among the Orang Asli children for want of basic medicines. For Pastor Sin and Mrs Sin, these villages represent fresh pioneering work for they are hardly reached because of cost and time. Besides the cost, travelling by boat takes a few hours under a usually blazing sun.

In comparison, the Orang Asli villagers in the Cameron Highlands have made good progress after several years of pastoring care and hard work by pioneers such as Pastor and Mrs Sin and others. They now have a full-time pastor (Jensey), kindergartens, and women lay leaders; and eat better food other than the tapioca, which they ate in earlier years. However, they still need financial and material help.

The fields are ready for sowing the Seed of the Gospel. The acute shortage of workers is keenly felt. More workers must come forward to help Pastor Sin and Siew Bee to plough the fertile land, sow the Seed and harvest the fruits. May I ask you also to pray for the Lord to strengthen and intensify the passion of Pastor Sin and Siew Bee for their work in the Grik town and among the Orang Asli in the villages. May we also pray for Christian doctors to join in their efforts of bringing the Gospel, medicines and medical help and last but not least for lots of workers to share the workload and burden. It is also of interest to note that Orang Aslis who embrace Islam are given better material assistance; e.g., solar devices to provide electricity for their homes. Those who don't are excluded. Indeed we must be awakened to the fact that the battle in winning souls for Christ needs much concerted effort and urgency.

Now that I have personally experienced the joy of mission outreach work, Christ's Great Commission certainly applies to me and to every member of Christ's congregations. We must be His witnesses to the end of the world. (Matthew 24:14, 28:19, Mark 16:15-18, John 4:34-38 " ) Contributions of efforts, money and materials to serve the mission cause are all welcome. Still, prayers must still be the foundation stone for a successful endeavour.



May I urge you to volunteer and share with great joy in the Great Commission ministry and be similarly blessed as I have been. Would I go again? Yes, very resoundingly. Praise God for his Gracious Mercy & Love for all the good things. He has provided us in Singapore. May we as the Lord's redeemed people share our blessings with those who have so much lesser, for the glory of God our Heavenly Father. Amen.

**Philip Fong**



# Purpose of Prayer

Prayer is not a normal part of man's life. We heard it said that a man's life would not suffer if he does not pray, but I question it. What will suffer is the life of the Son of God in him, which is nourished not by food but by prayer.

When a person is born again, the life of the Son of God is born in him, and he can either choose to starve or nourish that life. Prayer is the way the life of God in us is nourished. We tend to look at prayer as simply a means to get things for ourselves, but the Biblical purpose of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself.

Sometimes the problem is that we do not ask, we ask only when we are at our wit's end. Jesus said, "Ask and you will receive" (John 16:24). We actually may ask Him for very few things, yet a child exhibits a magnificent boldness to ask. Our Lord said, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matt 18:3).

Be yourself before God and present Him with your problems. If you think you are self-sufficient, you do not need to ask God for anything.

"Prayer changes things" is in fact not as close to the truth as saying "Prayer changes me and I change things". God has established that prayer changes the way we look at things. Prayer is not a matter of changing things, but one of working a miracle in a person's nature.

God gives us prayer so that we can partner with Him in transforming society, the lost and establishing His kingdom. Sure, God is sovereign, all wise, full of love and almighty and is capable of doing all things without us. In His love, He always choose what is best and in His power He is able to do what is best. He does not need us. Yet in His sovereign good pleasure, He choose to involve us, through our prayers, to accomplish His will.

Our prayers are important to God and should be important to us. The Bible provides us with ample reasons for prayers including:

1      **God rules in response to our prayers.**

**"Pagan societies believe in spirits, in animals. Hindus have many gods, so do many Chinese and Japanese.**

**Christians, Muslims and Jews are monotheists, believing in one God.**

**Those who have faith in their religion can face adversity and death with greater equanimity."**

S.M. Lee

When I heard that God rules in response to our prayers, I was skeptical. I viewed that God knew what to do, decided what to do and did it.

I still believe He knows what to do and decides what to do but I have come to realise that He just doesn't go ahead and do it. Instead He prompts His people to pray and then acts in response to their prayers.

*Let's look at some Biblical incidents.*

Remember Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18 - how Abraham pleaded with God not to destroy the city. The fate of Sodom and Gomorrah rested on Abraham's prayers.

Ezekiel 22:30 - "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none." The fate of nations depend on fruitful intercessors who will pray on behalf of the people - God is willing and ready to respond to the prayers of His people. The last part of the verse is so sad, "but I found none." and God poured out His wrath upon them and consumed them with His fiery anger.

Nehemiah 4 - an account of the rebuilding of the wall with opposition from Sanballat, Toblah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod. These men plotted. God's people prayed. Verse 15 records: "When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to his own work." As a result, the wall was built in 52 days.

Things happen or didn't happen because of prayer. This does not mean that God can be manipulated through prayer to do what we want if what we want is contrary to His will. Instead God reveals His will to us by His work and works in us by His Spirit so that we know His will and pray in accord with His will. Then in responding to our prayers, He accomplishes His will and ours and in the process involves us.

## **2 God releases His grace and power when we pray.**

In prayer, the believer goes before God to beseech Him on behalf of others to release into their lives what they themselves (the one who prays) cannot supply. "Then Jesus said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend, and he goes to him at midnight and says, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,<sup>6</sup> because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.' Then the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.'<sup>8</sup> I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend, yet because of the man's boldness he will get up and give him as much as he needs.'" (Luke 11:5-8)

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16) It is not the prayer itself that is powerful. The power in prayer is God's power released and activated by prayer. God responds to our prayers.

"Prayer is the key that unlocks all the storehouse of God's infinite grace and power. All that God is and has is at the disposal of prayer. Prayer can do anything that God can do." R.A. Torrey (Power of Prayer).

### **3 Prayer is the Key to great works.**

Jesus at the end of His earthly ministry said to His disciples, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father." (John 14:12-13)

Awesome words, awesome promise. Let's look at the verses carefully.

- These words are not addressed to the disciples but to "anyone who has faith in Me."
- God would continue His work through His followers.
- Prayer - the ministry partnership in which God will supply the power the disciples need.
- Through prayer, His power would be at their disposal so that they can accomplish "even greater things than these."

Wow, what a powerful combination - Jesus on the throne empowering us to build His kingdom. We ask, He acts and the work is accomplished to the glory of the Father.

### **4 Prayer Transforms Society**

Paul writing to Timothy in 1 Tim 2:1-2 urges "that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." A peaceful and grace transformed society is God's ideal. Request, prayers and intercession offered by God's people are God's ordained means by which transformation is brought about.



### **5 People Are Saved Through Prayer**

The Bible instructs us to pray for those who are not saved. Jesus modeled the prayer for the unsaved when He prayed in John 17:20, "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message.." Paul prayed in Romans

10:1, " my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved." 1 Timothy 2:4 remind us that God "wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

In prayer evangelism, God moves in the heart and lives of people in response to the earnest prayers of believers.

## **6 Prayer Defeats Satan**

Two powerful forces work in the world today. The power of God and the power of Satan. The power of God is infinitely greater than that of Satan, but we are affected by both. Paul reminds us that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12)

In order to stand against the evil one, we are instructed to put on the armour of God. We are then reminded to "pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Eph 6:18). In response to prayer, God brings His power to our defense so that we can stand against the devil's schemes.

When Peter was severely tested by Satan, having denied Jesus three times, Jesus came to His defence with prayer, "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." (Luke 22:31)

The devil dreads our prayers. A prayer warrior once said, "Satan laughs at our toiling, mocks at our wisdom but trembles at our prayers."

Prayer changes human hearts, families, neighbourhoods, cities and nations. It is the ultimate source of power because it is the power of God. By prayer the kingdom of God is built, the kingdom of Satan is destroyed. Where there is no prayer, there are no great works and no building of the Kingdom. Where there is much prayer (fervent prayer) there are great gains for the Kingdom of God.

Through prayer God's power is directed, His will is done, society is transformed, lost persons are saved, saints are enabled to stand against the devil's schemes.


I trust you have found enough compelling reasons to devote ourselves to prayer. More importantly, I pray it will cause each one of us to change our view of prayer and really pray.

**Tan Swee Leong**

*The above was shared during the Youth Fellowship on 7 Oct 2000.*

# WHAT THE REFORMATION GAINED WHICH WE TODAY COULD LOSE

Dr. D. Bloomquist



Reformers like Martin Luther saw that each side of the following 3 sets must be kept to have the kind of Church God wants. I have been reminded of the critical need of each of these in conversations at JCC in the past couple of months.

## 1. SPIRIT AND WORD

We need to believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts and history of people today. "Jesus could not do many miracles there because of their unbelief" (Mark 6:5-6, paraphrased). But too many people today want "Spirit" without Word--which can result in people believing anything (compare the recent article in JCC "Vine" on the Harry Potter craze). Luther called such people "emotionalists."

We need God's Word in thoughtful words to give God's view of everything in life.

## 2. LAW AND GOSPEL

The heart of the Reformation. When Apostle Paul says goodbye to the Ephesian elders for the last time, he says he had set before them the whole of what God wanted them to hear:

Acts 20:27. God's "Law" is God's perfect way we should live: the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount. God's Law is what we should do. If that were all God's Word is, our religion would be demands, which we can't attain.

God's "Gospel" is His forgiveness of our sin through the death of Christ for us. God's Gospel is what He has done for us, which we could not do for ourselves.

Focussing only on God's Law would make us either proud legalists ("Pharisees") or drive us to despair (what Luther had felt). But if we think God has abandoned His standards and now is only loving and forgiving, we despise His holiness and cheapen God's Gospel.

The whole of what we need to hear is Law and Gospel.

## 3. ONENESS AND PURITY

"We alone are right!" is the attitude of sects. The Reformers saw the Lutheran Church as one with the whole Christian Church in the world at their time, and also as one with the Christian Church through history until Christ returns.

But, "the Church must be constantly reformed" emphasizes also the need for purity: thus the "Protestant" ("protesting") movement of the Reformers in the 1500's.

Luther wanted to reform the Church by seeing what God wants in the Bible. But Martin Luther did not want to break away and start a new church! Focussing on purity apart from oneness often leads Christians to self-righteousness. Christ came to earth for sinners and all humans are sinners until we die. Focussing on oneness apart from purity can lead Christians to carelessness regarding right teaching, and blurring the crucial distinction between Christian and non-Christian.

Martin Luther taught that both oneness and purity are vital for Christ's Church.

Let us be sure we do not lose what the Reformation gained:

- SPIRIT AND WORD
- LAW AND GOSPEL
- ONENESS AND PURITY

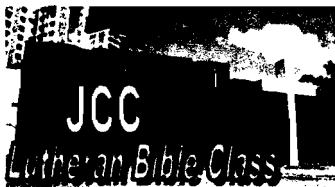
## **IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU BELIEVE SO LONG AS YOU ARE SINCERE.**

(extracted from "You Must Be Joking!" by Michael Green)

A moment's reflection will show what a ludicrous creed it is! We would never apply it to matters we consider important, would we? We would never apply this argument about sincerity being enough to economics or to examinations. Who could suppose that it doesn't matter what firm you invest your money in so long as you sincerely believe that it is sound? Who would maintain that it does not matter what you believe when you write an examination? You can put down sense or nonsense; it makes no difference, so long as you are sincere! As we all know to our cost, you can be very sincere and very wrong.

Nobody could be more sincere than the Pharisees. They were meticulous in their worship, fastidious in keeping clear of defilement, and dedicated to keeping the Law of God. Sincere in their practice, they were mistaken in their belief. It does matter what you believe.

"What shall we do that we may do what pleases God?" Jesus replied, "This is what pleases God - to believe in Him whom He has sent" (John 6:28)



### ***3 What Distinguishes Lutherans from other Protestant Groups?***

You don't hear Lutherans say, "It doesn't matter what you believe, just so you live right." Lutherans think that a way of living is a by-product of a way of believing.

Since Lutheranism developed from Luther's intense experience of salvation through faith, it has been marked by concern for faith as the essential part of religion. So Lutherans, more than most of the other Protestants, emphasize doctrine. They insist on unusually thorough education of their pastors and require young people to engage in a long period of study of the Lutheran Catechism before being admitted to full Church membership.

Lutherans do not stress prohibitions. They think of the Christian life as a grateful response to a loving Father rather than as obedience to a stern monarch. Such life should achieve a high ethical level without emphasis on rules and regulations. In this, Lutheranism is sharply different from some other forms of Protestantism.

Since Luther had been an ardent Roman Catholic before his excommunication, he was less drastic than some later reformers in abandoning Catholic forms of worship. These are retained among Lutherans in a simplified form.

Lutherans observe the festivals and seasons of the historic Church year. In their Churches, they have the altar, cross, candles, vestments, and other equipment of worship that most other forms of Protestants discard as "too Catholic." Lutherans believe that these forms of liturgy are not required but are valuable because of their beauty and because, through them, we share in the experiences of the family of Christian worshippers of all ages. Lutheran music is world famous, especially the compositions of Johann Sebastian Bach.

## **Dear Co-Workers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

**Warm greetings in the name of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ!**

**Let me update you with the following information of the LCS:**

- 1) The LCS organised a Pastors' Study Trip to Adelaide, Australia from 18th-29th June 2000. Twenty Pastors went on this trip. They spent five days for an intensive study of Lutheran Distinctive In Luther Seminary and the rest of the time they visited the congregations and ministry of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA). The Pastors were warmly received by the LCA. The visit was impressive and beneficial. It was a great learning experience to us as we are a young Church.
- 2) Three new Co-workers have been called and assigned by the LCS to serve in the following Congregations:
  - Pastor Michael Christian to the English Section of Jurong Christian Church effective 1st June 2000
  - Pastor Lee Ka Heng to the Chinese Section of Jurong Christian Church effective 1st July 2000
  - Pastor Roger Ong to the English Section of the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer effective 1st July 2000.May the Lord grant them wisdom and strength in their ministries.
- 3) The finals of the 2nd Annual Soccer Tournament "Bishop's Cup" organised by the Thai Good News Centre was held on 2nd July 2000 at the stadium of the Christ Church Secondary School. The team from Mas Kuning Lutheran Church (MKLC) defeated the Thai Good News Centre team by one goal.
- 4) The Thai Good News Centre (TGNC) organised a Musical Concert at the Preaching Point in MKLC and the Main Centre on 30th July 2000. It also held another "Talentine Concert" on 9th August 2000 at TGNC and the Preaching Point in MKLC simultaneously. Prizes and gifts were given to all winners and participants.
- 5) The mission team of Yishun Christian Church English Section visited Northeast Thailand from 13th-17th July 2000. Also the Bedok Lutheran Church English Section Mission Board is planning for a visit to Thailand from 5th-8th October 2000.



- 6) The Co-workers at its monthly meeting on 7th August 2000 discussed the Work Plan for year 2001. Activities and programs at LCS level were discussed and fixed for the year to come.
- 7) The LCS Consultation with our Partner Churches; ELCA, ELCA - Southeastern Synod, ELCB and LCA will be held on 25th-26th September 2000. We had two Pre-Consultation meetings on 4th July 2000 and 15th August 2000 for preparation of this Consultation.
- 8) A group of 10 from the Commission for Multicultural Ministries of the ELCA visited the LCS on 21st - 24th August 2000. This visiting group comprises of Bishop & Mrs. Murray Finck of the ELCA - Pacifica Synod; Dr. Fred Rajan, Executive Director of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries of the ELCA; Rev. Pongsak Limthongviratn, Rev. David Chen and other 5 delegates. Their itinerary included visit to the LCS Read Office, TGNC, Trinity Theological College, Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer and International Lutheran Seafarers' Mission.
- 9) The LWF Asia Desk is organizing a Mekong River Mission Consultation from 29th September to 5th October 2000 at Bangkok, Thailand. Bishop John Tan will be attending this Consultation.
- 10) The LCS Reformation Worship Service for this year will be held on 29th October 2000 at Harbour Pavilion at 9:30 am. This Service will be solely on worship without celebration programs as last year, so that we can spend time for fellowship together. There will be two pastors who will be ordained should they pass their ordination examination.
- 11) A group of Chinese Seamen from China are now attending a special service at Jurong Christian Church on every Sunday evening. The average attendance is about 40 - 50 people. Many of them have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Saviour. A group of brothers and sisters from Jurong Congregation is assisting this ministry. Pray for Rev. Peter Chong as he is in-charge of this work.

From the Bishop's Desk  
Lutheran Church in Singapore  
August 2000



the rest. If the prayer ministries are said to be the second most effective approach to evangelise the unsaved, then we always have to make it a priority.

To win souls for Christ, we, the Missions & Evangelism Committee members, are reminded to constantly stress the importance of our personal prayer lives and our prayers for the ministry. If we have been called to plan for the evangelistic programs for 2001, then in the Lord's presence, we will together ignite the passion to achieve and fulfill His task.

Here are some quotes from churches in America demonstrating the level of prayer commitment. Taken from *Effective Evangelistic Churches*:

- ❖ "An attitude of fervency of prayer has taken hold in our church since we began praying for the lost specifically by name."
- ❖ "Prayer, corporate prayer, explains the evangelistic turnaround in our church."
- ❖ "Our growth through conversion? It's the result of our prayer ministry that takes place seven days a week."
- ❖ "Our evangelistic growth can best be explained by our ongoing prayer ministry."



**"We cannot explain everything by reason, logic and science. The make-up of the human mind requires a belief in some powerful and unexplained superior force."**

S.M. Lee

A clear reminder for us at Jurong Christian Church is to continue praying for effective growth, for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must be UNITED in our endeavours.

May our Lord continue to bless us richly in His grace.

Pastor Michael Christian.



Precious greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In two months time, it will be the end of another year and many of us are already making plans for the next one. Some may be looking forward to a new year with

excitement for various reasons.

Sharing the excitement, the Church Council, identifying 'church growth' to be our weakness, is strongly emphasizing and projecting this area for the church to strive for improvement in the coming year.

The various ministries of the church, who will be preparing their plans for the year 2001, are going to spend tedious and precious hours for this task. The Missions & Evangelism Committee has already begun to do so and I have to say that our first session reached a dead end. At last, during the session, a member reminded the rest of us that maybe we had left out an important factor prior to our meeting – and that is PRAYER.

In the book of Acts 2:42, we are being told that when the disciples gathered together, one of the key things they did was devoting themselves to prayer. They must have recognized that in all that they did for the Lord, it was He who made it possible. Mark says in Mk 10:27, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

In his book "Effective Evangelistic Churches" Thom Rainer says that for evangelistic effectiveness, prayer ministries must occupy an important place; second in importance only to the pulpit.

Prior to the visible manifestations of God's Spirit through repentance, brokenness and people coming to Christ, we the church have to first embark on prayer and to see our own lives radically changed. We then provide this spark of excitement to the rest and eventually ignite an evangelistic emphasis.

Here I am reminded to think of our own prayer ministries – the fortnightly prayer meeting, the monthly Lego's Fellowship prayer meeting, the DTP prayer meetings and

## Pastor's Word On Worship in JCC

Greetings to all members and worshippers in Jurong Christian Church in the name and love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Worship is central to our life as a Christian community. In it we sacrifice and response to a God who loved us with adoration, praise, and, singing; and receive His grace and blessings through the Sacraments of the Word and Holy Communion.

To make our worship together meaningful, let us come to worship well prepared and punctually, let us come early to the sanctuary, prepare our hearts and mind reverently. You are welcome to come forward to kneel in prayer at the front before the altar railing before service begins. Let us endeavor and remember to switch our pagers and handphone off or to silent mode to avoid distractions to other worshippers.

The ushers are now called stewards to reflect their other services to God and worshippers other than mere ushering alone. For example they represent the congregation to bring forward the offering and tithes as sacrifice unto Him. That is why they now stand before the altar as the Pastor says the offertory prayer instead of walking back. Also it will ~~not~~ cut down distraction as there is less movement.

Some window panels in the sanctuary are now laminated with translucent plastic to avoid distractions as people walks past. We are also looking into operating a multimedia projector to upgrade quality of projections of liturgy and songs.

We also seek worshippers kind co-operation NOT to walk around or leave the sanctuary unless absolutely necessarily to avoid distractions to others especially during all confession of sins, prayers, scripture reading, recitation of creed and benediction. Also refrain from talking to those around you during sermon, offering collection, Communion or worship proper. Do note that the worship service only ends after the acolyte have extinguished the altar candles and saying of the three "Amens' and not after the sermon.

For the Holy Communion, we should pay close attention to the Words of the Institution by the Pastor. As such the children from Sunday School should only come in and join their parents after this so that the adults can concentrate on the Word of Institution of the Sacrament.

Let us work together, each doing their part to make our worship service a truly meaningful experience with minimal distractions. May we truly glorify God with a preparedness, reverent and worshipful attitude during service. Amen.