

The Vine Committee

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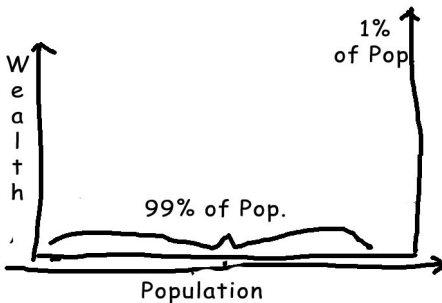


I am always getting my inspiration from the news and one of the hottest topics is about how much is considered sufficient wages. For instance, in the Straits Times of 28 Jan 2012 (pg B15), there was an article about how much the CEO of

Royal Bank of Scotland received as bonus, - S\$1.9 million on top of a basic salary of \$2.4 million. During the last year the bank had shed thousands of jobs.

Does he deserve such remuneration? I can't answer that but a question lingers in my mind, did the money come from the savings of the thousands of lost jobs?

There is a chart called the "L" curve which charts the distribution of wealth of all the people. Why is the chart called an "L" curve? Because when you draw up the chart, it looks like an inverted "L", where 99% of the population



earns a minimal wage and only 1% of the population earns great wealth.

Why are there so many poor? In Africa it is claimed that the poor outnumber the rich by 20,000 to 1. According to Wiki.Answers.com, 13,698 persons die of starvation per day.

The Bible mentions: "*The poor you will always have with you*" Matthew 26:11a. "The statement must not be construed as a cynical admission of the inevitability of poverty. Rather, the implication is that "you can help them any time you want!" - as made explicit in Mk 14:7" (quoted from Dr. Knox Chamblin).

Do we really expect the rich to help the poor? In the Straits Times of 31st Jan 2012 (pg A3), there is a story of an “underage” investor suing a bank for the loss of \$900K. Here we see profit being made at the expense of the foolhardy. Did I mention that this is a “dog eat dog” world?

However as Christians, we are reminded in Mark 14:7, “*The poor you will always have with you, **and you can help them any time you want.***” This doesn’t sound like a command to help the poor but if taken in context of the whole Bible, it is. In Exodus 23:10-11, “*For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, but during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then the poor among your people may get food from it*” and Leviticus 19:10, “*Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the alien.*”



If you only react to a commandment, then Deuteronomy 15:11 applies: “*There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I **command** you to be openhanded toward your brothers and*

toward the poor and needy in your land.”

Do you always turn the cheek the other direction when you see a beggar coming towards you? Will it hurt your pocket to part with \$2 for some tissues? Do not be like the rich man towards Lazarus (Luke 16), be generous because “*Good will come to him who is generous*” (Psalm 112:5a). No doubt there are con artists around, just be wise on the generous side. I remember a long time ago a supposed repairman asked my wife for money to go to hospital and promised to return the loan but to this day he has not been seen or heard. However that does not stop her from being generous because Hebrews 13:2 advises: “*Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.*”

I end with a quote from Spiderman: “With great power comes great responsibility” If you are one of the rich and powerful, you have a great responsibility to the underprivileged. God has blessed you to be a blessing to others.

Martin Cheah

Thanksgiving Night

30th December 2011

It was a night of thanksgiving for JCC to testify to God's goodness throughout the past year. Here is an excerpt of what was shared by our members.



John Lee thanked God for The Vine which by God's will has been going on for decades. He said that it is also by man's will as shown by the human support that has kept the ministry going. He expressed optimism that it will continue for years to come with the continuing support of church members.



Richard Lee gave thanks for the unity of the church which will lead to growth.



Dorothy Ow shared about her year of suffering from cancer and thanked God for providing people to support her in her times of trials, giving her strength to persevere through the treatment regimen. She continues to trust God for a healing.



Shirley Yeo was thankful for the pastors that God had provided for JCC, and also many fellow brothers and sisters in Christ for their encouraging presence in the Church. Dismayed that her children had left JCC, she pined for their return some day.



Margaret Lee thanked God for the miracle she experienced at the airport in Israel. She was able to carry through tight security two bottles of olive oil which she treasured for her husband to make delectable salads. She also prayed for the unity of God's people, the Jews and the Gentiles.



Benedict Lee was thankful for the PULSE ministry, trusting God for it to grow in strength into the new year.



Jason Tan shared about his recent struggle at his workplace, with numerous resignations of colleagues affecting him with sorrow. However, he thanked God that through all this, he ended up with a confidante – a girlfriend found by God’s leading.

The night ended with a prayer for God’s guidance in the rebuilding of JCC, and blessings to all.

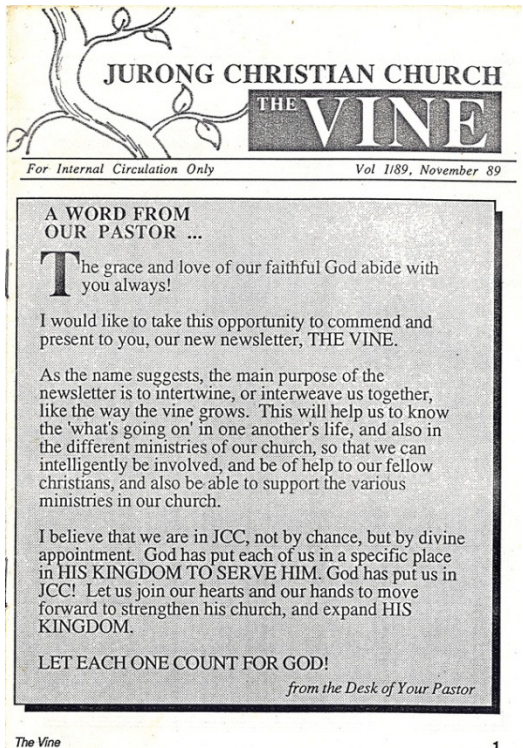
EDITOR WRITES:

John in his excitement mentioned that The Vine has been hanging on for 30 years. Perhaps he miscalculated the length of time to include the newsletter ministry time he spent with Bedok Lutheran Church before he joined JCC.

I have the first copy of The Vine with me and the actual length of time The Vine has been around is only 22 years, which is one year older than Debra.

You may be surprised to know that the original Newsletter committee comprise of Rev Dr William Chang, Se Ping, Joo See, Amy Saw and myself. The rest have moved on to other ministries and I am the only one clinging on to The Vine.

A whole new generation has grown up during this time and The Vine which was originally created with an XP computer is now produced on a Pentium i7 laptop. Yet we are far behind in comparison to others who have ventured into the world wide web, a dangerous place to be in for sure. We need this new generation of web savvy people to bring The Vine into the final lap. Will you take over?



Martin Cheah

The Moment, God is with me

I wish to share my experience which happened around 1pm after my lunchtime on Wednesday 4th Jan 2012 at my workplace, SAF Printing Centre in Pasir Laba camp.

I went to top-up my water-bottle at my office pantry area, which is beside the front office area. As I drank from the bottle, a colleague told a joke and it made me laugh until I choked and coughed continuously. I was knocked out for about 1-3minutes. My three colleagues beside me, tried to wake me up (during that 1-3mins time I had fainted). I felt something (should be Our Lord) telling me to wake up and I woke up feeling very clear in mind.

My colleagues told me how I had fainted, choke and threw up some food and blood and they thought I had a heart attack. They activated the ambulance to send me to NUH. At the Emergency ward, I was warded for 24 hours under observation and went through 3 blood tests, 3 ECG scans, 1 X-tray scan and the doctors confirmed that everything was normal and it was not a heart-attack.

It was probably because my choking and coughing made me breathless causing me to faint. I was discharged on 5th Jan 2012 to rest at home.

During this period, I think, I have to praise and give thanks to Our Lord Jesus Christ for that moment to bring me to my senses, clear in mind and walking freely. He provided me my colleagues (SAF Printing Centre), co-workers and NUH staffs.

I also thank to Rev Loh for the verse from Isa 43:1 "Do not Fear, for I have redeemed you: I have summoned you by name; you are mine." after I sms him at the hospital and bro Richard Lee for his advice to me to share this experience.

As I don't have the guts to stand and speak in front of the congregation, I think this is the best way to express my love and thanks to Our Father and Jesus Christ for the love and guidance to me. I also thank God for JCC members, fellow bros & sis in Christ in Singapore and the world.

Thank you

Bro Nick Wong

LIKE THE RED SEA EXPERIENCE

On our recent holiday to Cebu, Philippines, my family and I experienced some of God's blessings which we feel is like how the Israelites must have felt when they encountered the Lord at the Red Sea.

It was December, the rainy month in the Philippines. If you follow the news you might have read about landslides, etc caused by the rains but we were not there. Where we were, there was rain but God blessed us with sunshine at the most opportune times. Many times it rained hard while we were indoors shopping and when we came out, it was sunshine and we were able to enjoy the sightseeing.

On the day when we arrived at the resort, it was raining with flood just outside the resort. We thought our day will be spent in the resort's room instead of the beach. However, the rains stopped and instead we headed to jet skiing. On the 2nd day, it was again raining heavily in the morning when we had intended to go for an island hopping adventure. We decided to go ahead with our plans and when the time came to board the boat, the rains stopped and we had sunshine throughout our boat journey.



On another day, we booked for a trip to Bohol Island and again God's blessing continued to pour upon us. Times when we were in the car, it rained and when it was time for us to get out for sightseeing, the rain stopped!

Unless you have experienced it, it just can't be expressed in so few words.

I want to thank God for His blessings on our holiday.

Esther Yam



HOW HAPPY ARE YOU?

“We the citizens of Singapore, pledge ourselves as one united people ... to achieve happiness, prosperity and progress for our nation.”

Every Singaporean is familiar with the pledge, which is recited daily in schools and on every National Day Parade. How many Singaporeans say the pledge with focus on the words to understand their import and to imbibe the Singapore Spirit embodied in it? You may contemplate this question by this attitudinal analogy: How many of you sing the Christian hymns so often in Church with attention on the words and their essence so that you may fully draw out the spiritual unction and edification for a blessed life?

“We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!” (A Christmas carol) Perhaps we can also call this popular Christmas carol a New Year carol. Frequently, Christians greet one another “a Blessed Christmas” concomitant with “a Happy New Year” because they have a sublime grasp of the greater scope of blessedness in place of merriness, and happiness comes with the appreciation of the blessedness embracing us even if we encounter high winds. This happiness that exudes from blessedness is from the Spirit and it brings cheerfulness to our face. (Prov 15:13)

How many HAPPY NEW YEARs have you collected so far? Hopefully, the more you collect, the more happiness you will enjoy. If someone wishes you Happy New Year, the meaning of it literally is a desire for you to be happy in the New Year, the whole New Year; i.e., every day in it and every moment. Wow, this is a huge desire! Of course, most of us share the common experience of being happy some times, not so at other times, and even downright sad on occasions. So, the question “HOW HAPPY ARE YOU?” is a question that you have to contemplate from moment to moment as the weather and season change in their courses. If you are very happy, what makes you so? If you are only a little happy, or not at all, why? Understanding the What’s and the Why’s help you to objectively determine, when you seek happiness, whether you know what you are seeking or you are simply chasing winds.

The Bhutanese as a kingdom can say why they are happy or not happy by reference to the GNH (Gross National Happiness) yardstick; and they can follow this up with working towards patching up the shortfalls in the score. Singaporeans too pledge to achieve happiness for our nation by being a united people, but we do not have a measure to tell us our achievement or

failure of attainment and hence we do not have an objective guide to a discernible goalpost.

Last November, the New Paper launched something that suggested we could personally measure our level of happiness on a scale of 1 to 10. The Paper called it “The Happy Project”, which sought out people to tell what made them happy and how happy they were currently. Here is a sample of the responses with the respondents’ self-scoring for their degree of happiness:

- “Happiness comes from simple things in life, like having meals with your family, sketching and listening to music,” Patrick Ng. (Age 40; Musician; Score: 8/10)
- “Having time to read makes me happy as I learn new things. It also means having time to myself while the rest of the world is rushing to meet deadlines,” Wendy Weng (Age: 23; Student; Happiness score: 6/10)

How would your personal response be to the New Paper’s questions?

The GNH is a national indicator, unlike a Personal Happiness Index (PHI) if there is such a measure. Similarly, our Singaporean Pledge is about achieving happiness for the nation. Which comes first – Individual citizens working selflessly to achieve the national happiness or national leaders selflessly devoted to deliver national happiness that reflects the contentment of the individual citizens? My humble opinion is that the two are mutual, and not mutually exclusive. As an analogy, think of a family: Parents sacrifice their “happiness” for their children. When the children grow up well, “happiness” sacrificed becomes happiness gained. The parents and grown children, recognizing the significance of a faithful alliance, regenerate the spirit of sacrifice – not for self but a united family. We can see the spirit of unity at work, from the top to the bottom, from the bottom to the top, in a dynamic relationship. Happiness accrues to everyone. Break the fragile dynamics (built on SELFLESSNESS) and happiness is robbed by SELF-CENTREDNESS. This applies to a family group as it applies to a nation group.

Progressing to happiness together (not with the “me alone” focus) is also in the spirit of Singapore’s National Anthem, which has the starting lyrics as follows:

Mari kita rakyat Singapura (Come, fellow Singaporeans)

Sama-sama menuju bahagia (Let us progress towards happiness together)

Alas, many people do not understand the meaning of happiness. I almost fell into the same trap of misunderstanding above when I said that parents sacrifice their “happiness” for their children ... At first, I left out the quotation marks; then I asked myself what happiness sacrifice I wanted to talk about. I realized that when parents sacrifice their “happiness” (in quotation marks), it is not real happiness (without quotation marks) that is sacrificed, because the parents are contented to give their all to raise the children; and being in the state of contentment to do what they do for the children, where is the happiness sacrificed? In our mind, whenever we talk about happiness, do we have a definition of happiness to frame our discussion? Or do people rejoice or complain about their lot without really knowing the What’s and Why’s of their happiness or lack of, without knowing what they are seeking called “happiness” and then they just chase winds?

If we seek happiness, the foremost thing we need is to know what it is that we want called “happiness”. Happiness seems to be the universal goal of everybody, but what is it actually? Is it defined by good health, peaceful country, fine food, fashionable wear, well-appointed house, luxe holidays, expensive gadgets and so forth? “Wow, if I have all this, how happy I would be!” Is this your way of thinking?

If you have difficulty trying to define what happiness is to you, the Bible can be a help. To Christians, happiness is often described as having joy:

- Joy is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22)
- Joy is desirable (Ecc 3:12)
- Joy is for all times (Ecc 7:14)
- Joy is linked to righteousness (Ps 68:3; 97:11-12)
- Joy is for asking from God (John 16:24)

The joy that is the mark of a mature Christian is of the Spirit and not of the world. Thus, we see that there are two kinds of joy, the Christian joy and the worldly joy. The former is lasting joy founded on being contented with what God blesses us with, not dependent on the inexhaustible wants that our flesh covets. It has all the features as mentioned in the Scripture verses above. Can one be afraid of some happening and be joyful at the same time? Being afraid and being joyful seem contradictory in our human perspective, but recall that at Christ’s resurrection, some women hurried

away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy. (Matt 28:8). This is an illustration that human perspective does not always gel with God's perspective. So it is with joy – the worldly kind according to human standpoint of having all wishes and desires met contrasting with the “impossible” advice of Scripture that we can have joy when times are good and when times are bad. (Ecc 7:14)

The Bible also declares,

“The fear of the LORD leads to life: Then one rests content, untouched by trouble.” (Prov 19:23)

Joy is not exactly the same as contentment. Contentment with our life is the factor that brings us joy – the sense of bliss sans worry and fear because we know that we are well taken care of by God.

Are you happy (joyful)? If not, why? Is it because you do not know what joy to seek, being burdened by worries and fear, being away from God?
“Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray.” (James 5:13)

“I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil—this is the gift of God.” (Ecc 3:12-13)

If you already have the gift of God, the satisfaction in your toil, as you bask in happiness and doing good while you live, eat and drink, then you should sing songs of praise. (James 5:13) You know the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. You can do everything through the Lord who gives you strength. (Philippians 4:12-13)

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, *“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”* (Heb 13:5)

May the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful. (Ps 68:3)

John Lee

Warning:

“Next issue (Feb): THE CEO IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT”

A GENERAL INVITATION

Dear readers,

Wishing you a blessed 2012!

If you have been contributing articles to the Vine in 2011, sharing with other readers your food for the soul, here is a big THANK YOU. I trust that all readers will continue to look forward to your contributions in this brand new year, 2012, because they have always benefited from your words of inspiration.

If you have not been writing for the Vine, may I ask you why?

Please hold on ... don't tell me; let me guess: No inspiration, No ability, No time, ...

If any of the above is your reason, do not fret. It is okay; you are not alone. I too face the same issues from time to time. I search high and low, from the ceiling to the floor, turning over pillows and bed sheets, looking under the bed and into the wrong cabinets. In the end, I still can't find the right inspiration to put down in black and white. Aiyoh, so difficult! In short, the ability is not there for me to contribute anything. Yet, there were moments when my mind was filled with inspiration that I couldn't wait to pour out into print; but alas, I was so filled with other more important things to do that time was not in my favour!

Do you enjoy eating? I do! I have friends who are quite good cooks. On occasions of get-togethers with food on the table, how fortunate I feel, appreciative of the hosts' culinary brilliance. I have no skill in food preparation, but I can help very much with the consumption. Talking comes naturally with eating when in a fellowship setting. So I would talk (maybe with food bits still in my mouth), "Dear host, you are so good in your food creations, but all the food would go to waste if there is no one who would eat. Thank God that I am around to help with the eating, which I am good at, to appreciate your great contributions in your own way – the food preparation."

It is a fact that people who cook well and willingly share their food normally enjoy the company of people who eat well and appreciate the food. You can see the smiles in their (the hosts') faces as the guests also smile as their tummies are filled with the health-giving food.

Voltaire said, "Nothing would be more tiresome than eating and drinking if God had not made them a pleasure as well as a necessity."

To me, eating is not just physical pleasure and necessity, but mental pleasure and necessity as well. I cannot agree more with what British novelist Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) held, "One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well."

So after each meal, my tummy is filled and my mind is energized. If good food is wise medicine¹, then it is also a wise cure to my “lack of inspiration” when the ailment attends.

From what I have said so far, are you aware that when you lack inspiration to write, there is a place where you can look for it? It is in the fridge or the kitchen cabinet (not any cabinet, not under the bed ...) where food is. It is very much in The Vine, a repository of food that does not decay even if the containers fray at the edges from wear and tear.

Unquestionably, at fellowships when Christians gather for chit-chats, lots of food, spiritual food, may be shared and exchanged. I enjoy such sharing, and I talk much (thus contributing my two-cent share) to elicit more valuable returns. You may not realise that I always carry a tape-recorder hidden in my head, so that with all that I tape down from those who would claim inability to put their thoughts down in black and white, I help them to do the job by playing back the tape at my leisure. ☺ The words of Katherine Paterson² are very apt in expressing my thoughts, “As I look back on what I have written, I can see that the very persons who have taken away my time are those who have given me something to say.”

You are the ones who have given me something to say; you are the ones who have given me the inspiration. Most likely, the other writers on the Vine team share my sentiments. So dear readers, count yourselves as important partners in the Vine ministry in your own special way. From issue to issue of the Vine, you have read the small number of authors who have been cooking up delicious (hopefully; or at least palatable) food for the soul. Plato asked a question and gave his own answer: “And what, Socrates, is the food of the soul? Surely, I said, knowledge is the food of the soul.”

The authors are appreciative of the fact that even if you do not cook, you are important partners in the tasting of the food cooked for you; for, if without your participation, the food would be all wasted. Still, I am shooting out this general invitation to writers among you, the Vine readers, to join the Vine’s writing team if you have not already done so; with the optimism that the arrows do not return in vain, but they will hit at least a few of you who feel able to be added to the cooking team to cook more to bless the increasing number of hungry souls. More cooks are needed to contribute more flavours, so it won’t be dish after dish of the

¹ According to Alison Levitt M.D., Doctor in the Kitchen®, www.drinthekitchen.com

² American author of children’s novels

same. If more writers respond positively, then we may get to enjoy a monthly buffet spread instead of once in a longer while.

Charles Dickens has just given me another inspiration to share with you. He said, “Reflect upon your present blessings – of which every man has many – not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.” My mind reflects, “Whether it is about your present blessings, or your past misfortunes, it is fodder that you can process (fry in your wok or stir in your pot) to produce the soulful spiritual aroma that fills the air in JCC, benefiting all members of the Church.

“If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than [physical] food to stay alive.”³

Jim Trelease observes, “Story is the vehicle we use to make sense of our lives in a world that often defies logic.”⁴ Writing out your thoughts, such as in sharing your personal experiences, has a liberating effect on your life. Surveying the sinful world and musing on the vanity of human pursuits, the substance that regurgitates in your mind as you contemplate doling out to your brothers and sisters in Christ will wise yourself up to understand better the life that you live as God has given you. The whole thing can be an exercise in spiritual catharsis. “My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.” (Psalm 63:5)

While the Bible tells us that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body (Matt 15:17), words are different. “They are like harpoons. Once they go in, they are very hard to pull out,” Fred Hoyle.⁵ The power of the words in sharing your blessings as you are blessed, in spiritually profiting your brothers and sisters in Christ, will return to you more blessedness.

The air still smells sweet out of the holiday season of Christmas and New Year. The celebrations that we have had, in typical Singaporean style, could not have missed out on tasty food – food for the stomach on buffet tables as well as

³ Quoting from *Crow and Weasel* by Barry Lopez

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Trelease

⁵ Sir Fred Hoyle FRS (24 June 1915 – 20 August 2001), an English astronomer and mathematician.

spiritual food good for the soul served from the pulpit. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! (Psalm 34:8 ESV)

“I eat my fill of prime rib and gravy; I smack my lips. It’s time to shout praises!” (Psalm 63:5, MSG)

Blessed to be a blessing!

John Lee

PONDERING THE IMPONDERABLES

People were sleeping. Never would they expect death to visit at such unearthly hours. They had a very good reason: Such a thing as a storm bringing torrents of rain and mud had never happened to their city.

Unfortunately, something that would never happen actually happened; taking hundreds of lives in its wake when Typhoon Wasi struck the Philippines.

Nobody expected the floods that inundated many parts of Singapore last year, with vehicles submerged in underground car parks and even shops in Orchard Road engulfed. Admittedly, the kind of floods we saw here is nothing compared to the kinds of natural disasters in other countries; but the level of flooding was nevertheless unprecedented and unexpected. How could this have happened in super-efficient Singapore which always planned things (e.g., drainage systems, reservoirs, Marina Barrage) well ahead with helicopter vision? How could it have happened that the MRT broke down again and again, with increasing severity in a short span of days that a Committee of Inquiry would have to be set up? Is Singapore, well-known internationally as a little red dot that punches above her weight diminishing in the efficiency of her governance and systems? How could this be? How could this be!

A few months ago, DPM Teo Chee Hean said, “Businesses should guard against the unpredictable risks of terrorism, cyber-threats and natural disasters which can cause disruptions to operations.” (*Underlining mine*)

After the MRT disruptions, DPM Teo spoke again about being prepared for emergencies, “It is not possible to eliminate emergencies such as MRT train breakdowns or home fires, No matter how careful we are, there will always be instances when things go awry, and we must be prepared for that.”

The thrust of the DPM’s message to all is that not everything can be predicted. In other words, unexpected things do happen and we better be always prepared for the unforeseen. I agree.

No matter the best effort in everything we do, the finest skills we engage with determination, there is always Murphy's Law. (If anything can go wrong, it will.)

The "unexpected" can be man-made events or happenings that people like to invoke God's name for– "Acts of God".

Considering the man-made, Singapore today is not the same as Singapore in 1965. Singapore in 1965 was not the same as Singapore in 1819. Singapore in 1819 hardly resembled the Singapura in the 14th Century when she was founded by a Palembang prince. Is there a crystal ball one can rely on to look into how Singapore and her neighbours will be in the year 2050 – more crowded or less crowded, more prosperous or less prosperous? The truth is: "*Que Sera, Sera*, whatever will be, will be, the future's not ours to see, *que sera, sera*."

Indeed, whether Singapore will be better or worse, the world will be better or worse, hinges on a lot of human undertakings and exploits, human altruistic drive or self-centred motivations. For whatever we do or fail to do, we can never have 100% certainty of what unexpected man-made outcomes we will have to confront.

Noting the increasing occurrences of increasingly devastating natural disasters around the world, when will an "Act of God" of such a magnitude strike that is beyond man's best ability to cope? Will it be a single event that will bring an end to it all?

Singapore is claimed to be in a very enviable geographical position, shielded by land masses from tsunamis and lying in a seismically stable zone beyond the earthquake belt. So far, no major natural disasters have ever visited this little island. There has been no official record of snow in Singapore, although hailstones falling in Singapore were confirmed by NEA in 2008 and reported by people in other years too. There have been no earthquakes in Singapore, although we do experience tremors from time to time arising from earthquakes in Indonesia. No typhoon ever hit Singapore, although there were strong winds in 2009 that uprooted many trees, and water spouts have ever been sighted in Singapore waters several times. No tsunami has ever hit Singapore, but Professor Wong Poh Poh of the National University of Singapore geography department said in 2008 that the island-state can be hit by a tsunami generated from three locations and the waves could damage key coastal infrastructure without being too high.⁶

In the light of the dramatic global climate changes and unexpected Acts of God (storm shock, winter temperature during summer season and summer temperature during winter season, etc.), nobody can tell what will be in our least

⁶ <http://wildsingaporenews.blogspot.com/2008/09/singapore-not-completely-immune-from.html>

expected moments; but we can surely believe *que sera, sera* – not everything is within man’s grasp. It is ironical that even man-caused events are not totally within man’s own grasp. Is it simply because mankind prefers to “just do it” and “when things happen, then see how?” (Call this typical man’s *bochap*⁷ attitude!)

Towards the conclusion, let’s ponder the imponderables:

- What will you do when one day all the MRT lines break down at the same time either due to a major electrical failure or sabotage?
- What will you do when one day a magnitude 10 earthquake strikes near us and some tall buildings in Singapore prove their foundations to be jelly against the “die-die-never-expect” ferocity of the “earthly” violence?
- What will you do when one day an asteroid splashes into the sea at just “the right spot” South of Singapore?
- What will you do when one day a nuclear power tryout in a nearby place goes terribly wrong?
- What will you do when one day ...?

I suppose there is nothing you can do about it when any of the above things happens. Do not rubbish pondering the imponderables as just a pointless exercise for an idle mind that can be put to better use applied to solving the vast number of ponderable problems besetting us. A question to ask is: If we apply our minds to all the ponderable problems, do we have the conviction to state that we can solve them all and there will be no imponderable event (man-made or God’s Act) that will startle us? While man can try his level best to deal with any problem, I have an almost unsolvable problem trying to reconcile my mind with the belief (whether of the fully conscious or subconscious kind) held by some people that it is reasonable to expect an impeccable way out of bad things such that nothing will go wrong (or should go wrong) again.

As we stretch our mind in the exercise of pondering the imponderables, may we be cognizant that it is not just the mental thought process but also the spiritual perceptivity that we draw on that enables us to reach a meaningful conclusion about what it is all about – the simple truth in life – that man proposes, God disposes. *Que Sera, Sera*. Let’s be humble to acknowledge that life is not everything within our grasp. There is certainly more to LIFE than just a humdrum cycle of eating, sleeping, waking, working from cradle to grave.

John Lee

⁷ Heck care

CHRISTMAS 2011

24th Dec 2011 – JCC witnessed the Baptism of **Sarah Catherine Forsyth**, daughter of Jeffrey and Roma. If I am not

mistaken, this is Rev Anthony Loh's first baptism for the English service, he had done a few at the Dialect service prior to this.



Sarah means “princess”. God bless you little princess.

25th Dec 2011 – At the mini outreach, the skit was performed by only 3 persons with a supporting role from the Dialect singers. At the end of Pastor Andrew's message, some people responded to an altar call.



I brought a colleague but she did not respond to the message. She says she will be coming again this Sunday, hopefully, this time God will touch her.

Martin Cheah



YMCA *Outreach by Dialect Team*

21st Dec 2011 –
YMCA Orchard
Road.

The Dialect
Ministry was
invited to sing
a few Hokkien
songs at the
YMCA
Outreach
program.

Once there
we found out
that our role
was wider
than just
singing a
few songs.
We were to
befriend the elderly
and even serve
them food and play
games with them.

The team took it in
their stride as two
by two they sat at
the tables with the
elderly chatting with
them and helping
them to get their
food. It was a joyful
time with the old folks and when we sang, they were moved and
responded.

Indeed when you move around with this team you will find that they
all work as one with the joy of the LORD.



CNY Visitation by Dialect Team

28th Jan 2012 –
A second
round of CNY
visitation by
the Dialect
Team led by
Deacon
Peter visited
6 homes from 10 am in the morning
to about 7 pm in the evening.

At each house, we blessed the people
with our presence and our prayers. The
elderly were very happy to have us as
their guests and we felt blessed in
return.

It is unfortunate that due to the tight

schedule, we
were unable to
visit more homes.
We may have to
form more teams
to visit all the
homes but we
have a limitation,
there is only one

Deacon Peter
Cheong. We
have to start
raising up
another so that
we can cover
more territory
each Christmas
and CNY.



Christmas Caroling by Dialect Team

23rd Dec 2011 – The Dialect Ministry Caroling Team went to a few homes around Taman Jurong to bring Christmas cheer to our elderly members and their friends and relatives.

Indeed, the elderly were not so much looking forward to great musical talents but friends with a heart to share Christmas with them. They provided the team with food and drinks as the team blessed them with Hokkien Christmas songs and prayers.



Indeed, if we wanted to have a team who can sing on par with professional performers, which require months of practice and training, we would not have gone out and no one would have been blessed.



I am not proposing that we have carolers who can't even sing and don't even practice but rather that we do not wait till we are up to standard before we dare to step out. That would be depending too much on our own strength. Some-times, I think we should follow the NIKE statement: "Just Do It!"



And let God do the rest.

Martin Cheah