

**The Vine Committee**

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Yes, life does go on even after a loved one has passed away but it does not remain the same. Some things have changed.

To those closest to her, the changes are most significant and to those who knew her,

the changes will be felt, but even to those who have never met her some things will have changed. Joo See and I have colleagues who have never met Dorothy but they will certainly miss her breads. Dorothy was generous beyond measure sharing her bread with many of us but sometimes she provides too many and we bring it to office to share with our colleagues before the bread goes stale. Both of us

mentioned to our colleagues that they will no longer get to taste these special home-made breads again.

What about those who never got to taste her breads or even heard of Dorothy? Does it matter to them that she is no longer with us? I

don't really know but certainly if she had been praying for the lost souls or missions, then they will miss her without knowing it because their prayer intercessor is now with the LORD.

The Jurong West CG will miss her. She was a regular with almost 90% attendance record. Even in her deteriorating health condition, she still came and shared and prayed for us and with us and provided us with bread. She was full of hope of being healed and moving in to her new house. This hope is realized in Heaven.

At her funeral wake there were many people, her relatives, friends and members from JCC and Angora Brethren Chapel. In this world there were



many who were there to send her off and I am sure that over in the next world, there will be many who will be there to welcome her home, like Mr & Mrs Daniel (Michael Christian's parents), Mrs George, Auntie Grace, and all the dialect ministry people who passed on before her.

Though I ponder on the statement Martha and Mary said in John 11, "*Lord if you had been here, my brother would not have died...*", but I am reminded of Jesus answer, "I am the resurrection and the life. **He who believes in me will live, even though he dies..**" Since Jesus said it, it is good enough for me.



*"Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him."* – 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

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



**YEO YIAK BOON, DOROTHY**  
Age: 61

*was called home to be with the Lord on 14 March 2012.  
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.*

**Husband:** Ow Kok Wing  
**Mother:** Chia Lane Kiang

**Sons:** Ow Gar Hoong, Matthew  
Ow Tsun Hsien, Timothy

**Brothers, Sisters And Their Spouses:**  
Yeo Eng Kow & Christin Tay  
Yeo Swe Aeng & Phua Hock Ling  
Yeo Theng Kow & Jennifer Ong  
Yeo Puay Hui  
Yeo Moh Kow & Jolene  
Yeo Miang Kow & Ong Yeng Cher

**Brothers, Sisters-in-law And Their Spouses:**  
Ou Kwok Wah & Lim Song Gek  
Ou Kwok Soon & Hoo Pui Lan  
Ou Kok Thye & Lum Grace  
Ou Seng Fatt & Heng Swee Ping  
Ou Kin Mee & Thomas Koh  
Ou Kin Lye (deceased)  
Ou Kin Ying & David Yen

**Nephews, Nieces and all Relatives**

Wake is held at St. Teresa's Church-Chapel of Repose (Spes),  
510 Kampong Bahru Rd.  
Night service will be held on Friday, 16 March 2012 at 8.00pm.  
Cortege leaves on Saturday, 17 March 2012 at 8.00am for  
Mandai Crematorium, Hall 2 for cremation at 9.00am.

Dear friends, when someone near and dear to us is gone, we will surely feel the loss. There is the empty seat, the missed laughter, the thoughtful gestures and words. However, their absence from us means their presence with the LORD. (refer to 2 Corinthians 5:8)

We must be grateful that we had the opportunity to spend some time with them and we will look forward to the day when we will again meet them.

*"Therefore, as God's chosen people, ..... Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."* Colossians 3:13

*Martin Cheah*

# *Deeply Missed*

Someone once told me that cancer is a kind disease that gives us plenty of time to say goodbye. In 2006 when I was diagnosed with cancer, Dorothy was one of the many church sisters who rallied around me to encourage, support and pray for me on my difficult journey. She reminded me to journal my cancer journey as we are humans and can forget God's goodness to us when the trial is over. Up to now, my journal serves as a reminder to me to be filled with the spirit of gratitude for all that God has done for me.

Dorothy as we all know her, was incredibly close to God, always bearing the testimony of loving God and loving people by giving an account of the gospel of Christ, even down to the very last moment of her life. She chose to trust God even when it took her through the valley of the shadow of death. She chose to let the light of God shine through her even when she didn't feel like it especially during her painful moments. She would text me to buy flowers, not for herself but for patients in her ward to bring a glimpse of joy to others. For those who know Dorothy this was just in accord with her spirit of compassion and her refusal to dwell on self pity. In order not to dwell on her own affliction, she chose to turn to think about a greater suffering – Christ on the cross.

Her final one-and-a-half-year journey had been like a roller coaster emotionally but she still clung on to God. When I last saw her she was on a morphine drip, but her spirit was not daunted she was still full of determination to bless us by praying for us before we left. And when she prayed, God amazingly kept her from coughing so that she could do the work of God's calling.



Sometimes I still wrestle with my inner-most question of why God did not honor her faith and obedience and heal her. To say that I am not stumbled is a pretense. However over the weeks when trying to make sense out of the whole episode, God reminded me that he wanted the world to see the difference in her life. For every

non-believer that is down with cancer God also allows a Christian to have cancer. I saw God's faithfulness as he answered our prayers and delivered her over and over again with each synchronized prayer at 11pm. I saw love as brothers and sisters visited to pray and bless her, to assure her she was not alone in her difficult journey. And I saw that Dorothy herself was filled with peace and contentment, riding through all seasons keeping faith in God – seasons of sorrow and joy, seasons of hope and despair, and seasons of loss and gain.



From Dorothy's life, it was evident that it is not how long we live but what we do with this life that God has given us that matters. And Dorothy was one who loved life, cherishing and celebrating every moment of her life with the gifts God had given her. Her thanksgiving testimonies during thanksgiving service every year and in every email to us were enough to convince me that our God is worthy of trust. Let us learn from Dorothy's example to choose to trust even though we don't understand everything in life.



It has been a privilege for me to know Dorothy and I will miss the times of being ministered by her love, prayers and words of wisdom. She set an example for us to fight the good fight, finish the race and keep the faith. God has assured us in His words that she is safe and rejoicing in the bosom of Jesus who is taking her away from evil days ahead. Cancer can rob her of her life in this world but it cannot invade her soul for it is safe with God. To this I find comfort and strength to carry on.



Deeply missed and lovingly remembered by

*Poh Kiat*

# The Word of God

The Word of God is living and active. It (or should one say he) has a profound effect on the lives of believers. Heb. 4:12 (MSG) reminds us, “God means what he says. What he says goes. His powerful Word is sharp as a surgeon’s scalpel, cutting through everything, whether doubt or defense, laying us open to listen and obey. Nothing and no one is impervious to God’s Word. We can’t get away from it—no matter what.”



The Word of God guides the believer’s viewpoints, actions and attitudes so that it actively influences his behaviour. The bible is essentially God’s channel that operates to conform the believer to the likeness of His Son (Rom8:29); i.e., enable the believer to have the mind of Christ. Through knowledge of the living God’s verbal transactions with men and the enriching teachings of Jesus, the Messiah, the meanings, nuances and ideas make their way into the mind of the believer. Examples are listed below:

1. By reading the well-known story of Jesus calming the storm (Mark 8:35-41, Luke8:22-25), the believer understands the storm to be the trials and tribulations of his life, and that when “Jesus is in his boat,” the emotional turmoil resulting from these trials is a fleeting, miniscule problem compared to the mightiness of God.



2. Upon reading that disciples of Christ are the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13,) the believer learns that he and all other members of Christ’s body constitute the agent that prevents or at least dampens the pace at which morals decline in the world. This is tantamount to how salt preserves the flavour of food and lengthens the time needed for bacteria to decompose the food. As such, he is encouraged to live a holy and godly life. (2 Peter 3:11)

3. A believer recalls the scourges and afflictions of Christ at the hands of the Romans, and the beheading of John the Baptist and James the son of Zebedee, who either had a sword run through his body or was behead with a sword. He meditates on the suffering that Christ and His followers had to endure as



recorded in Scripture, and even horrific ones that saints suffered at the hands of those who hated God. He ponders how these saints had such a boundless passion for God, and had faith to deny even their own lives (Luke 9:23) and well-being to accept cruelty that came their way as helpless lambs. (Isa53:7) For they knew that it was eternal life that they longed after, not comfort on earth. In light of this, the believer submits himself to God's will every time he makes decisions which could potentially either honour or dishonour God. For he knows that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose. (Rom8:28)

*Andryl Leong*

## **Cell Group Activities**

3 Mar 2012 - The Taman Jurong and Abundance CG had a combined outing to Labrador Park. Here are a couple of photos taken by Tony Koh.



TJCG Shepherd, Yew Moi gave a short sharing about our Identity in Christ.

The two CGs had a good fellowship during the long

walk and also shared a meal together.

*Tony Koh*



*Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously wrote that "the church is only the church when it exists for others."*

*Most of us would agree with that statement, but there's a tendency for our churches to become internally-oriented over time. As churches age, they often devote more and more resources to their own programs and people, and focus less and less on reaching those beyond their walls. – Drew Dyck*



## IN THE LENTEN SEASON, PREPARING FOR EASTER

We are in the season of Lent, preparing for Easter. We all know the significance of Easter. Christ's resurrection lies at the heart of the Christian faith. If there is no Easter; i.e., no resurrection of Christ; then we do not have a risen Saviour and assurance of eternal life.

While Easter is significant, what about the preparation for its coming? What is the importance of the season of Lent? It seems that when you talk about Easter, everybody (including non-Christians) knows what it is about; but if you talk about the season of Lent, there are people (some Christians included) who have no clue about it, the only meanings they associate with the word "Lent" being the past tense and past participle of the word "Lend". The word "Lenten" is certainly not a mis-spelling of the word "Lantern"; so the Lenten season is not the time when we see children parading with brightly-lit lanterns.

Easter does not simply take place out of the blue as a random event because:

- God prepared for it before the creation of the world.
- Jesus Christ prepared His disciples for it.

### God prepared for Easter

Recall the time when God saved His people from slavery, when he sent down ten plagues upon the Egyptians, the last of which being the deaths of their first-borns. To spare the Israelites from this last plague, special and precise instructions were given to them to carry out on very specific days. Read Exodus 12:

- On the 10th day of the first month of the year, they should take a lamb without defect for each household or share it with nearest neighbor.
- On the 14th day, they should kill the lamb at twilight and sprinkle its blood on the door posts.
- That same night, they should eat the lamb, roasted over fire, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, leaving nothing till morning. "Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover." (Ex 12:11b)

God further commanded:

- "This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance." (v. 14)

- “Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.” (v. 17)

The Israelites were saved on a pre-notified God-chosen day (not any random day) by the blood of a lamb without blemish. God ensured that death would pass over them. This PASSOVER is to be commemorated forever, with a meal of unleavened bread. After the night of the 14th day when death passed over the homes of the Israelites, it was a fresh morning on the 15th day, a day of relief from the plague of death. The Jews celebrate PASSOVER on the 15th day of the month of Nisan in the Jewish calendar, which is April 7 by our calendar this year. (Easter Sunday falls on April 8.)



The PASSOVER is a holy event when God’s people were saved by the blood of the lamb (not any lamb, but the lamb meeting God’s approval). It was an event prepared by God in advance, not a happenstance.

Now, take a look at Jesus:

- A child came to the world through the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 1:18)
- He is called “Jesus” because He will save His people from their sins. (Matt. 1:21)
- He is the Lamb of God (John 1:29) to be sacrificed (Heb. 7:27) and we are saved by His blood (1 John 1:7)
- We are redeemed by the precious blood of this Lamb without blemish or defect, chosen by God before the creation of the world. (1 Pet. 1:19- 20)
- Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, days in advance as the Lamb to be sacrificed, just like the sacrificial lamb in Exodus was readied a number of days ahead of the PASSOVER.
- The night before Jesus was crucified, His disciples partook a PASSOVER meal with unleavened bread. Jesus was sacrificed within 24 hours of the PASSOVER meal just like it was within 24 hours of the meal of unleavened bread when the deaths of the first-borns passed over the homes of the Israelites in Exodus.

Note that:

- 1) The PASSOVER in Exodus was an event with significant preparations over a number of days towards the climax moment

when the plague of death swept through the land and God saved His people by the blood of the lamb approved by Him, the lamb being sacrificed in place of the people of God.

- 2) In the Christian era, the events in the Holy Week are a course of preparations towards the climax of Easter when God's people are saved by the blood of the spotless Lamb of God that took our place in being offered up as a sacrifice. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:21)

In Genesis, God also used the lamb as a sacrificial substitution in place of Isaac who was offered up by Abraham. Tracing the story of divine mercy from Abraham (Genesis) to Moses (Exodus) to Jesus (Gospels), the lamb is without doubt consistently a substitutionary atonement long prepared by God from the beginning unbeknownst to man.

The suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ were all already prophesied in Scripture; which again shows that the Almighty God had already prepared for all this to happen long before it happened:

- This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. (Luke 24:46)
- Ps 22 and Isa 53 allude to the Passion of the Messiah.
- Ps 16:8-11 cited by Peter in Acts 2:22-28, attesting to the fact of prophecy.



Jesus also foretold His resurrection several times in the Gospel narratives. We recite regularly from the Nicene Creed, "On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures."

The progression of events (in the preparatory process) towards a climax of deliverance shows how God often makes demands and then provides for the fulfillments contingent on man demonstrating faith in Him. "He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished — ... so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus." (Rom. 3:25-26) In a nutshell, Jehovah Jireh is our Provider, always; and the clarion call to us is: **RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH!** The preparatory stages do play a material role in enabling our full grasp of the implications of the final event.

The Son of God was long ago prepared by the Father to be our PASSOVER LAMB.

### **Jesus Christ prepared His disciples**

If someone knows that he is about to be arrested by his enemy, to suffer torture and then to be sentenced to die, would he choose to keep quiet or to inform those close to him so that the events would not come as a shock, or at least so that they could have some mental preparation? Jesus chose the latter, telling His disciples in advance of His Passion and His Crucifixion:

- Jesus predicts His betrayal (John 13:18 ff.)
- Jesus predicts Peter's denial (John 13:31 ff.)
- Jesus comforts His disciples (John 14:1-4)
- Jesus makes known that He is the Way to the Father (John 14:5 ff.)
- Jesus promises the Holy Spirit (John 14:15 ff.)
- Jesus prepares His disciples for persecution (John 15:18 – 16:4)

We can discern from the reactions of the disciples that they were totally unwilling or unable to accept the truth that the Lord systematically revealed. Nevertheless, the preparation process proceeded. Jesus said of His reason, "I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you." (John 16:4a)

As the events unfolded, the truth about their basis in prophecy and their inevitability gradually found clarity in the minds of the disciples as they remembered what the Lord had told them. Indeed, the preparatory process led them from scaredy-cats (Remember Peter's denial?) to become valiant defenders of their faith against extreme persecutions, having been prepared so that they then willingly put their lives on the line to spread the Gospel.

### **Preparing for Easter**

Any couple contemplating holy matrimony knows that the significance of the union itself does not overthrow the significance of the ceremony and the serious preparation that must transpire before the substantive event. It must be tremendously exceptional to have a man meet a woman, then decide to get married and in a jiffy announce that they are husband and wife. This is but one of many human examples that can be easily cited to show the ordinariness and significance of preparation for an end. The

worth and the necessity of it should never be questioned or underestimated.

The Passion and resurrection of Christ are no ordinary human examples of having preparatory episodes leading us to the momentous finale. The meaningful purposes served by the preparation are mentioned above, validated by none other than our Father in heaven and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Easter, the grand culmination, has not arrived yet; we are now at the stage of preparing ourselves in the season of Lent, in great anticipation. From the first day of Lent (Ash Wednesday) to the Holy Week (final week before Easter), the preparation process should involve us having our spiritual meditation to absorb the whole significance of the events from the Passion of Christ to His resurrection, traversing our journey from Palm Sunday (Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, preparing Himself for the irrevocable that is prophesied), passing through Maundy Thursday (the Last Supper, reminding us of God's PASSOVER mercy in offering the Lamb as substitutionary atonement for our sin) and Good Friday (reflecting on man's cruelty that God has to make Him who knew no sin to be sin for us), and finally reaching Easter when sorrow is taken over by jubilation and we burst forth with full energy singing:



Christ Is Alive! We Live in Him!  
Christ is alive! We live in Him!  
Freedom and joy where death had been.  
Join as the dance of life begins!  
Hallelujah!  
He took our sin, our death, our shame,  
Bearing the grief, the cross, the grave.  
Risen in power, He lives to save.  
Hallelujah!

Easter is not just a holy day (or holi-day) that pops out when we flip the calendar. It is the majestic culmination of a season – Lent – and is worth preparing for (our spiritual formation) as God prepared us for our salvation from before the creation of the world. It is the wonderful story of the whole season that gives the end its full-bodied essence.

**JOHN Lee**

More on Easter in the next issue of The Vine.

## **THE MISSING PIECE IN LIFE'S PUZZLE**

*Testimony of Preethi Jebaraj*



I was born into a Christian family and have known Jesus Christ all my life. Church and Sunday Class attendance were weekly affairs in my life. I knew about Jesus Christ through weekly Sunday Class lessons and numerous Bible stories narrated by my grandmother. God had blessed me with caring, responsible parents who provided not just for my needs but also satisfied my every whims and fancies lovingly. My grandparents showered me with love and affection. My life was almost perfect. Almost!

There was only one item missing from my perfect life – the Lord Jesus Christ. Though I had always accepted him as my God and the maker of all things, I had never let him inside my heart. There seemed to be no need for him. Soon, the weekly church going, daily bible reading and praying became mundane tasks which I performed for the sake of my parents and grandparents. Occasionally, I would say a true-prayer to God. But, true-prayers were said only when I needed a bewitchment – to obtain the top scores in my exam, admission into a good university or even a mere acne cure. Of course, some of them were answered and some were unanswered. When prayers were unanswered, I grew angry with God. But when prayers were answered, I dismissed them as nothing more than coincidence.

When time came for me to move out of my parents protective wings and make my own living, I experienced both ups and downs just like everyone. My success (the material things that I thought was success at that time) never seemed to be enough. There was always something or someone better than what I did. These appeared like colossal failures to me. I grew frustrated with every mascot of failures and disappointments I encountered. I was partly frustrated with myself and enormously frustrated with God. My sustained anger towards him intensified. I started blaming him for all my disappointments. I stopped my “nonsensical” tasks of bible reading and praying and went to church only when I was unable to escape the compulsion by a family member. There was an abysmal deep dark hole in my heart that I could not fill. There was a gigantic puzzle piece missing in my life which I could not find.

At this juncture of my life, I was given “Purpose Driven Life” written by Rick Warren which helped me perceive my life in a new perspective – God’s perspective. God spoke to me as I read the book and made me understand the reason of my existence. My life is not about me, but I was made for God’s pleasure, to fulfil God’s desire and to prepare me to live a life of eternity with him. No wonder, everything that I possessed or achieved seemed meaningless. No wonder my life seemed to be a big failure. I had not even tried to figure out the purpose of my life. I was just going around in a materialistic carousel, bouncing up and down on the worldly horse, without trying to get off it and walk the path that God had paved for me.

Instantly, my life’s cup seemed to be full and overflowing. A quick account of my life showed that God had indeed walked with me throughout my life though I had done a very good job of ignoring him. I still had my supportive parents, a loving husband and a sustainable job. The abysmal hole in my heart was no longer dark; it was filled with the glorious light of God. My life’s puzzle was finally complete; the missing gigantic piece was none other than Jesus Christ himself.

Since then, I have tried to walk in God’s path and leave the worldly material things behind. But, when Satan made his forays, I sometimes lost my battle and found myself enslaved back on the horse in the worldly carousel. But God always came to my rescue and set me back on track in no time. Certainly, I can feel a tremendous difference between my old Godless life and my current joyful one. He has anointed my head and my cup still overflows. His Goodness and Love has followed me all my life, though I was oblivious to it for very long.

## LUTHERAN WORLD MISSIONS



### Teaching and Gospel Outreach LWM Children Bible Camp

Period : **August 20-26** No of campers: **120**

Budget : **USD 1,500** – *awaiting sponsorship*

Ministry focus is on children – to nurture and instruct them so that they will not depart from the ways of the Lord. The Bible camp, through fun and activities, aims to nurture and reach the children with the Gospel, and to train them to witness to their family members & friends through creative ways



# WHAT WOULD JESUS EXPECT YOU TO WEAR?

It all began with an article in the New Paper concerning the dress code at Catholic churches in Singapore. I specify Singapore because no doubt some of you may ask what about the natives of Papua New Guinea, who practically walk around naked, are they also subjected to such dress codes in church? Are the churches of our age following some strict Pharisaic rule as in Jesus' day?

## No entry to church if you turn up in this....

By SARAH CHANG

A WOMAN who went for Sunday mass at a Catholic church two weeks ago was shocked when a church warden approached her after the service and took issue with her outfit.

Ms Lisa Chew, a housewife in her 50s, was wearing a pink sunfuo, a Chinese-style pantsuit that ended about 5cm above her ankles.

She was at the Church of St Anthony in Woodlands with her husband, Mr Eric Alagan, 56, a business consultant. They have attended services at the church for more than a decade.

The warden, who looked to be in her 20s, told Ms Chew politely that she would not be allowed into the church if she turned up in the attire again, said Mr Alagan. She was then handed a letter reminding her not to wear clothing that does not conform to the church's dress code.

The couple knew what the letter was about as they had seen wardens handing out similar letters in previous weeks' masses. Ms Chew was taken aback as she had worn a similar outfit to the church last month but was not approached.

First mooted by the church in February last year, the dress code was implemented in December.

The guidelines were published in the church's weekly bulletin on Jan 1. The bulletin was given out to all churchgoers.

The code allows women to wear skirts or dresses that end 2.5cm to 5cm above the knees. So, "it doesn't make sense" that a samfoo pantsuit that ends just 5cm above the ankles is not allowed, said Mr Alagan.

He said: "Be reasonable and consistent. That's all I'm asking for."

Mr Alagan asked the parish priest via e-mail how the pantsuit "offended any sensitivities, or outraged anyone's modesty".

He added that "the priest's e-mailed reply read: There is no mention of modesty or immodesty. We say it is appropriate for pants to be full-length".

Frustrated with the reply, he posted a photo of his wife's outfit on citizen-journalism website Stomp last Friday. The post has attracted over 26,000 views and about 165 comments.

Some netizens think that churchgoers should follow the rules set by their church, while



SUIT-ABLE: The samfoo Ms Lisa Chew wore to church. (PHOTO: STOMP)

others consider the rules to be too "puritanical".

One netizen said: "I really don't see what is wrong with her dress. I can understand mini skirts being frowned (upon), but this is not in that league."

Another said: "What you wear speaks (volumes) about you. As a lawyer, you will not wear three-quarter pants to court because it shows a lack of respect for the institution."

My paper contacted the church on Sunday for an explanation. The Archdiocese of Singapore replied in an e-mail yesterday that it is reviewing the dress codes of all 31 parishes here to decide whether the guidelines should be "implemented at the Archdiocese level".

Dress codes at Catholic churches have become stricter in recent years. Novena Church's Father Clement Lee told my paper that a standardisation of dress-code guidelines may turn out to be "counter-productive" for the majority of parishioners.

"The challenge will be to make those guidelines applicable to the majority. But then again, most are already doing their part," he said.

"These are guidelines, not impositions. They are supposed to be recommended, rather than forced on someone. If the Archdiocese wants all churches to undertake them, they should be called rules and regulations."

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Does the Bible actually specify what to wear in church? Well there is a verse which states, "And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head..." 1 Corinthians 11:5. I remember in the past women used to wear veils in the Catholic churches I attended but dress sense have changed over time as the picture above shows.

I think the Americans came up with the term – Sunday Best, meaning to wear your best clothes to church. Sometimes you may hear a preacher amplify this by comparing what you would wear to meet the Prime Minister, and isn't God greater?

However, it still is not clear what we should wear to church. Sometimes your best (or most expensive clothes) are not suitable for church. If you watch the Academy Awards and all those stars who wear their best clothes costing thousands of dollars, yet most of these clothes would not be suitable for church, in my opinion. This is where the second article from the Straits Times about Jakarta ban on skimpy clothes come to mind.

In that article, it states, "Women wearing inappropriate clothes arouse men, so it needs to be stopped." I cannot fully agree with that statement.



It all depends on who the woman was. If an old lady of eighty years old were to wear Angelina Jolie's dress in the picture above, it may not have the same effect on most men. (There are exceptions, of course.) However, generally, if a young pretty lady wears that dress, it will have that impact. What does the Bible advise? *"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble..."* 1 Corinthians 10:31 – 32.

You may ask, "What should I wear then?" Here are some pointers I got from the Internet to guide when selecting clothes:

Modesty reflects an understanding of who a woman truly is. Modesty starts inside a person's heart and mind. Who am I? Why do I exist? If a woman answers she is a beautiful daughter of God, then modesty will naturally follow.

Modesty isn't about dressing in unattractive clothes as some think it is. There are too many options in clothing to not give modesty a try. It is worth finding clothing that brings out a woman's beauty without revealing too much.

Modesty attracts the kind of guys you ought to want to attract. If a woman is afraid that she must turn a man's eye by dressing immodestly, then she should ask herself just what kind of guy does she want to attract?

It sets a good example for others. Young girls and teens need good examples of beautiful women who are modest.

Women are worthy of respect. Respect can be easily lost when a woman tries to promote herself by being immodest.

## Outrage as Jakarta drafts 'skimpy attire' ban for female MPs

**JAKARTA:** Women's groups in Indonesia have expressed outrage after the country's Parliament said it would draft rules banning female lawmakers from wearing so-called "provocative" clothing such as miniskirts to work, claiming that such dress invited rape.

"We know there have been a lot of rape cases and other immoral acts recently, and this is because women aren't wearing appropriate clothes," House of Representatives Speaker Marzuki Ali said.

"Women wearing inappropriate clothes arouse men, so it needs to be stopped. You know what men are like - provocative clothing will make them do things."

Mr Refrizal, deputy head of committee spearheading the new regulations, said "miniskirts and skimpy clothes are an invitation to male lawmakers".

Indonesian women's rights groups have lashed out at the comments and called for a stop to what they termed the demonisation of rape victims. They also said the proposals by Parliament do not address the root cause of the crime.

Ms Yuniyanti Chuzafah, chairman of the National Commission on Violence

against Women, said: "It should be about changing the mindset of society against treating women as objects that can be ogled at or violated."

Said Action for Women Against Rape founder Chika Noya: "It's ridiculous that this is again coming from the mouths of prominent people with influence. We expect them to make regulations to protect women from violence, not condemn them for the way they dress."

The controversial comments come just six months after Jakarta governor Fauzi Bowo made similar remarks, saying that a spate of rape cases on the city's public minibuses were triggered by miniskirts worn by victims.

He had urged Indonesian women to refrain from wearing miniskirts on public transport to prevent being attacked.

His remarks prompted a protest in which women yelled the slogan "My miniskirt, my right."

The protest was inspired by the global "ShutWalk" phenomenon, which began in Toronto last year, as hundreds protested against a comment made by a police constable that "women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimised".

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

It helps your brothers to avoid lust. This isn't to blame an immodestly dressed woman for a man's sin of lust. But, men today need all the help they can get to fight lust and sin. Won't you help them?

Steven Furtick:

As preachers, our job is to challenge people, yes, but not to burden them.

When describing the Pharisees and what they did to the people through their teaching, Jesus said: *They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders* (Matthew 23:4).

What's interesting is that when we read that, we automatically despise the Pharisees and assume they had bad motives. But if you study their history, their motives were actually very good.

I hope I don't end up sounding like a Pharisee regarding how a woman should be dressed. You may even say that I am a chauvinist because I did not mention anything about men's dressing. Well until a Scotsman comes to church in a kilt, I reserve my comments.



I started off by asking, "What would Jesus expect you to wear?" Frankly, I don't know because the Bible does not talk much about fashion. However some artists have imagined how the people dressed during those days. By dressing likewise, it does not make you holier, *"In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."* (Matthew 23:28) My suggestion is that we clean the inside first and then we will automatically know how to dress ourselves.

*Martin Cheah*

## Court to decide if Christians can wear a cross openly at work

**LONDON:** The British government is set to argue that Christians do not have the right to wear a cross or crucifix openly at work, in a landmark court case which will be heard by the European Court of Human Rights.

The case will seek to establish the human rights of two British women to display the cross, while the government will argue that because the Christian faith does not "require" them to wear the cross, it does not fall under the remit of human rights.

The two women took their fight to the European Court last year after both faced disciplinary action for wearing a cross at work. One of them had lost an earlier em-

ployment tribunal decision at the Court of Appeal and was also refused permission to go to the Supreme Court.

This is the first time that the British government has been forced to state whether it backs the rights of Christians to wear the symbol at work, the Sunday Telegraph reported. It comes soon after it was criticised for plans to legalise same-sex marriages.

Ms Nadia Eweida and Mrs Shirley Chaplin claim that they were discriminated against when their employers barred them from wearing the symbol.

Ms Eweida, 61, a check-in worker at London's Heathrow Airport, said she was suspended in 2006 for refusing to take

off the cross, which her employers claimed breached British Airways' (BA) uniform code.

According to BA, items such as Sikh turbans, Muslim hijabs (headscarves) and bangles can be worn "as it is not practical for staff to conceal them beneath their uniforms".

The other woman, Mrs Chaplin, 56, was barred from working on hospital wards by the Royal Devon and Exeter national hospital Trust after she refused to hide the cross she wore on a necklaces chain, ending 31 years of nursing.

Lawyers for the two women claim that the government is setting the bar too high. They say that Christians are given less protection than members of other re-

ligions who have been granted special status for their religious garments or symbols.

The government's position received an angry response from Christian groups who called it "extraordinary".

Lord George Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, accused ministers and the courts of "dictating" to Christians and said it was another example of Christianity becoming sidelined in official life.

"The reasoning is based on a wholly inappropriate judgment of matters of theology and worship about which they can claim no expertise," he said.

Ms Andrea Williams, director of the Christian Legal Centre, said it is extraordi-

nary that a Conservative government should argue that the wearing of a cross is not a generally recognised practice of the Christian faith.

"In recent months the courts have refused to recognise the wearing of a cross, belief in marriage between a man and a woman, and Sundays as a day of worship, as core expressions of the Christian faith. What next? Will our courts overrule the Ten Commandments?" Ms Williams said.

The European court judges will next decide whether the cases will progress to full hearings. If they do, the cases will test how religious rights are balanced against equality laws designed to prohibit discrimination, the Sunday Telegraph said.

*Dialect Visitation Team*

## **JOURNEY TO CHINA**

12th – 17th March

The March school holiday period was a good opportunity for several of us from the dialect ministry to have our small-group retreat to China. It was a thrilling experience for us to ride the super high speed Maglev (Magnetic Levitation) train first time from Shanghai Pudong International Airport to Longyang Road Station, a journey of 30 km completed in a mere 8 minutes with the train speed reaching a high of 430 km/h. At Longyang Road Station, it was about 5 p.m. when we boarded our tour coach to start off the day's program.



We visited Shanghai, Hangzhou and Suzhou on a travel package but extended our stay till the weekend to visit Ronnie and Nancy Lim, our beloved JCC brother and sister in Christ who had invited the group to bunk in at their place for 2 nights. We were very much blessed by their hospitality and generosity; their warm and Christ-like love shown to us. We had a really wonderful and memorable time, especially the worship and fellowship time spent together. It was much like being at home yet away from home. The temperature was hovering between 4 and 10 degrees Celsius most time as it was the winter season.



You can say that it was the dialect visitation team's attempt to go beyond the shores of Singapore to catch up with Ronnie and Nancy, both very strong supporters and encouragers of the dialect ministry. It was also a deserving break for the visitation team to refresh and

recharge themselves in the company of their dear spouses. For Kin Siong and Seline, especially, it was truly a family affair as their children were able to take advantage of the school holiday to join the trip.

While in China, we were saddened to learn that our dear sister Dorothy Yeo had passed on. Though far away, our group took time during the family worship session at Ronnie and Nancy’s home to remember our beloved late sister Dorothy Yeo and also pray for her family members. Some of us shared testimonies about how Dorothy had blessed us with her life, not forgetting her ministry in the dialect service. Although we miss her much, we know that our Lord Jesus is holding her in His arms and He will continue to bless her family and keep them in His care.

We had the joy of befriending and reaching out to our China tour guide and a young Singaporean couple who had joined us for a short period of the tour. Our consistent thanksgiving prayers at meal time and joyful hallelujah chorus onboard the coach caught the attention and interest of the tour guide too. He wanted to know more about our faith and the difference between Catholics and Protestants. Pray that the seed we sowed would ripen.



Thank God for journey mercy and good weather during our tour, and for the good time shared together with one another. Glory be to God!

*Peter Cheong*

# 活像 基督

Living a Christ-like life

## CHURCH RETREAT JUNE 13-16 LATEST UPDATE

*More than 122 people have signed up for the coming Combined Church Retreat, will we see you there also?*

More photos of GB Enrolment Service.....



.....on the last page.

# GB ENROLMENT 2012

25 March 2012 - The Girls' Brigade had their enrolment service on a nice cloudy day. The GB Commander (Chong Ming Hui) bravely stood in attention throughout the parade even though she was in pain. This was evident after the parade when she had to be helped onto a chair.



However, at the end of the day, Ming Hui was in good

spirits after a job well done.

More photos on the inside....

