

The Vine Committee

Editors:

Martin Cheah
mart5003@yahoo.com
John Lee
jpblee@gmail.com

Printer:

Nick Wong
digi_ics@yahoo.com

Writers this issue:

Caleb Lee
Joyce Tan
John Lee
Lissa Low
Martin Cheah

Photographers:

Martin Cheah



The AGM came around again on 29th April. It was quickly over without any question from the members. Is this a sign that we have grown to trust our leaders to do the right thing or that we have grown apathetic? I think it is because the pre-

AGM has done its job to handle all the questions so that the AGM will go on smoothly.

On the whole, most of the AGM was covered by the Chinese Section. The English Section was relatively silent as the Chairman, Treasurer, JCK and the Rebuilding Committee who presented their reports were all from the

Chinese section. Perhaps it was the prevailing spirit of unity which prevented us from quibbling with their reports.

The new councilmen for 2012 include Benedict Lee (English section) and Chee Haw and Fu Rong (Chinese section). May God guide them and the rest of the Leadership Team in leading JCC in the years ahead.

The next few years will be a challenging time for JCC as we await the approval for the

Rebuilding by the URA. Whatever is God's will for us, we will have to learn to trust in Him and lean not on our own understanding.

Martin Cheah



1. When excuses are made about the way things are instead of embracing a willingness to roll up the sleeves and fix the problem.
2. When the church becomes content with merely receiving people that come rather than actually going out and finding them...in other words, they lose their passion for evangelism!
3. The focus of the church is to build a great church (complete with the pastor's picture...and his wife's...on everything) and not the Kingdom of God.
4. The leadership begins to settle for the natural rather than rely on the supernatural.
5. The church begins to view success/failure in regards to how they are viewed in the church world rather than whether or not they are actually fulfilling the Great Commission!
6. The leaders within the church cease to be coachable.
7. There is a loss of a sense of urgency! (Hell is no longer hot, sin is no longer wrong, and the cross is no longer important!)
8. Scripture isn't central in every decision that is made!
9. The church is reactive rather than proactive.
10. The people in the church lose sight of the next generation and refuse to fund ministry simply because they don't understand "those young people."
11. The goal of the church is to simply maintain the way things are...to NOT rock the boat and/or upset anyone...especially the big givers!
12. The church is no longer willing to take steps of faith because "there is just too much to lose."
13. The church simply does not care about the obvious and immediate needs that exist in the community.
14. The people learn how to depend on one man to minister to everyone rather than everyone embracing their role in the body, thus allowing the body to care for itself.
15. When the leaders/staff refuse to go the extra mile in leading and serving because of how "inconvenient" doing so would be.

GAMBODIA MISSION TRIP

It is by God's divine grace that I have this rare opportunity to travel to Cambodia to serve and learn. I was hesitating, wondering whether I should go to Cambodia for a 1 month long mission trip. With never ending encouragements from the pastoral staffs, my cell leaders from Jurong Christian Church and also our Church's Vision, I decided to take this challenge to serve God and to serve men in Cambodia.

Staying there for one month was not easy. I was tasked to do many things in Cambodia. I started to doubt my capability, whether I can complete what I needed to do here in Cambodia. However, God gave me a verse - 1 Timothy 4:12, *don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.* There were many difficulties that we faced in Cambodia, but we knew that our God will never forsake us and He is always there for us. The pastors in Cambodia have a vision; it is to use the computer and English classes to reach out to the pre-believers. Let us continue to pray for them as they lead and serve. I would also like to take this opportunity to share a short testimony that built up my faith.

One day we went out to another village for visitation. In the afternoon, one of the interns, Raksmei, received a call from his mother saying that his sister is suffering from a severe heart attack. We immediately took the Tuk Tuk back to his house to visit her. When we reach, many villagers crowded around her, I really could feel the community spirit and they were really united as one. We started to pray for her, prayed that our God will heal and touch her. Miraculously, the next day, we received news that she was much better and she can even travel to the nearby market. Indeed our God answers all prayers. On Sunday, her mother came forward to share her thanksgiving message and I also saw Raksmei's sister walking in to the life centre. Indeed our God is amazing!



However, later I found out that she has gone back home with our Father in Heaven, I was rather sad and the only thing I can do for them in Singapore was to pray for them. I also spent some time to chat with Raksmei via Facebook chat to send words of comfort to him. I am glad that the family is doing well now.

I thank God for all the wonderful experiences that He gave me in the one month I was in Cambodia. I have also learnt something during the trip; it is to find Joy in doing everything that we are going to do. Knowing that behind it, there is a purpose that God wants us to fulfill and learn.

All in all, indeed God is good all the time, and all the time, God is good. He provided Tracy, Trina and I with everything that we needed. I am looking forward to return back to Cambodia to serve the Cambodians and to continue to learn even more from them. Let us pray for a great awakening and revival in Cambodia!

Caleb Lee

Cambodia Statistics:

- Only roughly 37% of the population is functionally literate.
- The United Nations reports only 16 physicians for every 100,000 people, which is one of the lowest ratios in the world.
- Buddhism is the dominant religion and is practiced by 96% of the population. Christians comprise roughly 1% of the population. Virtually all Christian leaders were killed in the genocide, and by 1979, only three known pastors and a few hundred Christians remained in Phnom Penh.



LCS MISSIONS CONFERENCE



Come & hear of God's Exciting Mission Work
(Mandarin Interpretation).

Speaker: Rev Dr Jukka Kaariainen, Missionary
Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission
Associate Professor of Systematic Theology,
China Lutheran Seminary, Taiwan
Venue: Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer
Date: 2 June 2012
Time: 2.30pm to 6.00pm

EASTER – CHRIST IS RISEN!

It may surprise you that there are Christians who do not celebrate Easter because, as they claim, the word “Easter” has pagan roots. They are quite misplaced in their focus. When we celebrate Easter, we celebrate the event of Christ’s resurrection. If you are English-speaking, you call the event Easter. The word is just a name to specify the event; it is not the word that we celebrate (for its beauty or what else) and worship, but the event we celebrate and the Christ we worship. If you are not English-speaking, you may call the event Uskrs or Vaskrs (Serbian), Fukkatsu-sai

復活祭 (Japanese kanji), 复活节 (Chinese) ..., your choice depending on your country and language. If you understand that the term you use refers to the same event (Christ’s resurrection) that I say in a different language, then we are on the same page. Those who do not like to celebrate Easter because of the word may simply change the word in their vocabulary to one pleasing to them and still celebrate the resurrection of Christ. If they still do not advocate the celebration with a word-change, then it is obvious that their reason lies elsewhere and not in etymology.



From the beginning of Lent (Ash Wednesday) to the day of Easter, we have travelled a passionate journey – from contemplating our sin to agonizing over the passion of Christ and finally the sweet relief of being forgiven and promised eternal life. (John 3:16). **Travelling the whole journey is thoroughly evocative of the breadth and depth of God’s intent.**

In joyful spirit, Christians around the world celebrating Easter do so in different ways. Decorating Easter eggs is one of the traditions. These colourful eggs can be a useful cue to the basis of our joy – may the egg as a sign of new life remind us of the new life we should delight in because of the hope we have in Christ who showed us that He had defeated death by His resurrection.

Traditions always have their place in human cultures. The same practice may be used differently by different people. For example, the Chinese used to follow the tradition of giving gifts of red-coloured eggs to friends and relatives upon a new birth. In ancient times, eggs had also been used in festivals. What is important is where our heart is for the particular tradition we follow and the purpose it serves in our current context. The crosses, fish symbol, wedding ring, candle, singing of Christmas carols ... all can be claimed to have pagan connections by anyone who wants to find a reason to oppose or be a wet blanket. To tarnish a very long list of things we do or celebrate with an effortless stroke of the pagan brush is so easy to the point of absurdity.

While respecting detractors for their free will to decline any tradition, I am personally satisfied there is nothing wrong in the practice of using Easter eggs as an easy memory-aid pointer to the central message of the festival. We may even have toy Easter eggs, because the eggs are meant to be a reminder of new life in Christ as we handle them thoughtfully and not primarily as food. We do not follow traditions blindly. If a tradition is usefully applied with its appropriate modern-contextual symbolism properly defined, and does not detract us from absorbing the truth in the Bible, there is nothing remiss.

I came across this piece of “news” (or “history”) on the Internet about what happened in a large Asian country last year:

“The site of a planned outdoor Easter service ... was eerily silent Sunday as police blocked more than 500 worshippers from leaving their homes and detained more than 36 ..., church officials said.”

I can neither attest to the veracity of the website story nor know the full reasons for whatever happened. However, this story does put across what is actually common knowledge that freedom to worship (and in our Easter context, the freedom to celebrate the resurrection of Christ) is not everywhere in the world. In Singapore, Good Friday is a public holiday. This followed by Saturday and Easter Sunday means that we enjoy a good long weekend, taking away our usual work stress. Is it open time to enjoy holidays or precious time to meditate on the holy days? We are indeed blessed that the holy days bring us holidays, and that we are spiritually free to celebrate Easter unencumbered by our usual nine-to-five “busyness” on a working day. 活在福中不知福 is a Chinese idiom that means “not to know when one is well off.” Are we guilty of what the idiom describes? Perhaps a

modification of the idiom to 活在福中—有福成为祝福 (Blessed to be a blessing!) would describe our Christian spirit better.

On Good Friday, Jesus died on the Cross. On Easter Day, Jesus was resurrected; He was the same person who was crucified, but now He lives. “He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised from the dead to make us right with God.” (Rom. 4:25 NLT)

There are people who do not believe in the resurrection. Whatever arguments they put forward – including both analytic and specious types – they are disputing the evidence and revelation of the Bible. However, we all know that the Bible has survived through the ages against all sorts of attacks and attempts at its destruction. So the opposition against resurrection has a gargantuan task to first challenge the validity and reliability of the Biblical documents (sacred Scripture) in order to have a foot to stand their arguments on. They won’t be able to succeed in such a challenge if they try, the reason being that the sacred truth in Scripture, being sacred truth, can never be toppled. If the validity and reliability of the Bible prevails, then how can anyone selectively pick its contents to accept or reject? Failing to shake the foundation of the Bible directly to invalidate the claim of Christ’s resurrection as a true incident, they try the indirect approach of finding supposed flaws here and there based on human reasoning that the resurrection cannot be true. There can never be any end to the debates between us Christians and them (non-believers) until the cows come home because we “speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. We speak not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. 2:6, 13-14) (See also 1 Cor. 1:18)

Spiritual truth speaks for itself in the faith experience of those who are in Christ. Our faith experience attests to the validity of Biblical claims, which are wholly true.

Josh McDowell (a Christian apologist, evangelist and writer who was once an agnostic) says to those who do not dispute that the Bible is valid historical literature but claim that Christ’s disciples made up the story of His resurrection,

“Here’s the simplest answer: Within weeks, the disciples proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

that He had been bodily raised from the dead and appeared to them. Where did they do that? Jerusalem. Where did the Resurrection allegedly take place? Jerusalem. If they had connived a scheme, and Christ had not been raised from the dead, where would have been the hardest place on the face of the earth to convince anyone? In Jerusalem. A 15-minute walk would have exposed the body in the tomb. They preached it in the hardest place in the world to convince anyone that Christ had been raised from the dead if it was a fraud.”¹

"Jesus said, I am the Resurrection & the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

Timothy Radcliffe (a Catholic priest) said, “I believe that his death and resurrection transformed humanity's relationship with God.

“Martin Luther said, “Our Lord has written the promise of resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime. “

Albert Einstein said, "The need of the World is to listen to God.”

But what about you? What do you have to say about the resurrection of Christ?

The resurrection of Christ is a spiritual blessing that should not be taken for granted. It is a blessing to be shared by Christians. **活在福中—有福成为祝福 Blessed to be a blessing!** We can share the most solemn Easter prayers, the most encouraging Easter best wishes, the most charming Easter poems and the most delicious Easter meal. Have I missed out anything? **The best of the best we can share must be a Christ-like life fulfilling the Great Commandment and the Great Commission** – This covers everything that would make our Christian testimony right!

John Lee

¹ http://pe.ag.org/conversations2001/4536_Mcdowell.cfm

WHY DO I GO TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY?

Pastor Andrew asked one Sunday: Why you do come to church on Sunday?

This question set me thinking: Yes, why do I go to church every Sunday? It reminded me of homecoming, the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-31.

Like the younger son, I have squandered away my gifts and time according to my heart's desire. It is so difficult to remember that I am no longer in charge but Christ, my master and Lord, is. Many a time I feel that God is absent but in fact God is always there. I am the one who is absent because I am in



my own thoughts and world and have not tuned into God's channel. As long as I live in this fallen world, I will forever struggle with this as after each Sunday, I am sent out to the world for the next six days. I understand now why God created the 7th day, a day of rest in Him. I need to come home each Sunday to hear my Father's voice inviting me in to celebrate, assuring me of his forgiveness, faithfulness and unfailing love.

At times, I esteem the older brother faithfully serving in ministries year in year out. Yet, for me, the joy and love sometimes run dry. All the more I need to hear My Father's voice calling me to come in and celebrate and be glad. I covet His assurance.

"Lissa," my Father said, "you are always with me, and everything I have is yours." I am assured once again of His rich promises and His resources that I can appropriate as Jesus said in Matthew 28:18-20: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Lissa Low

I believe that justification by faith is the foundational truth of Christianity. You cannot know true rest and peace until you are convinced you can never be made right in God's eyes by your own works of righteousness.

If you don't understand the perfect righteousness of Christ that is yours by faith, you will lead a life of toil and sweat. You'll spend your days trying to please God through legalistic, hopeless attempts to establish your own righteousness. But the truth is, you'll never have any righteousness to bring to the Lord!

No doubt you are familiar with the passage in Isaiah that says all our righteousness is as filthy rags in God's sight (see Isaiah 64:6). This does not mean God despises our good works — not at all. We should do good works, but if you think your good works merit your salvation, that they allow you to stand holy before God, then they are nothing but filthy rags!

You may feel good because of the good works you do and even enjoy a moment of victory whenever you resist temptation. You feel righteous, that God's favor is on you.

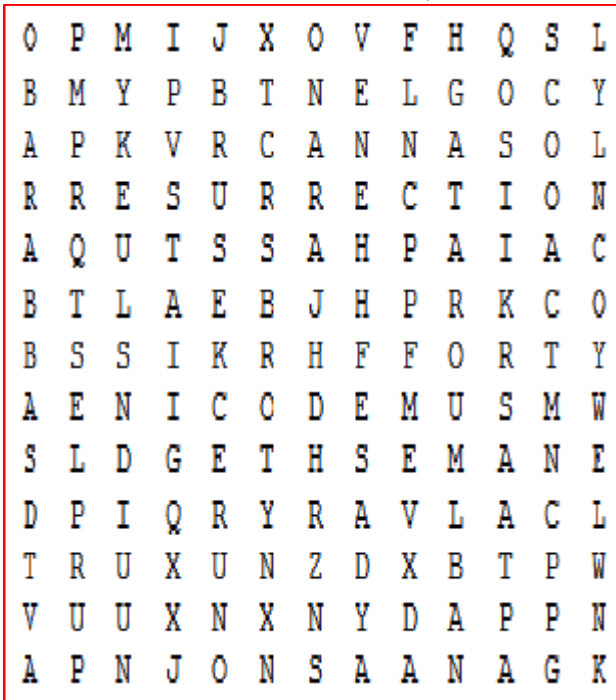
The next day, however, you fail. You fall back into a sin and suddenly you lose all your joy. You think the Lord is angry with you and wonder if you have lost your salvation.

It is a roller-coaster ride of emotional highs and lows — of up-and-down, hot-and-cold, sin-and-confess — according to how good or bad you think you have been on any given day. It's a life of misery because you are trying to please God in your flesh!

Beloved, no righteousness of the flesh will ever stand before God. Even the best people among us, the most moral, godly saints, have fallen short of God's glory. None of us can ever be accepted in the Father's eyes by our good works. We are accepted by Him only as we are in Christ!

"For ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). When we turn to Jesus with saving, self-emptying faith, we become one in Christ. Being "in Christ" means God credits Jesus' righteousness to us. All our sins are washed away because of His work, not ours!

Easter Quiz



In the grid(left), look in all possible directions (upward, downward, forward, backward, diagonally) to find words that will complete the following sentences:

1. Christmas is to the birth of Christ as Easter is to His _____.
2. Easter begins when the _____ season ends.
3. Jesus remained for _____ days after His resurrection.
4. The soldiers placed a _____ robe on Jesus after stripping Him.
5. Jesus and His disciples prayed in the garden of _____ before the crucifixion.
6. Judas gave Jesus a _____ to identify Him for the soldiers.
7. _____ drew his sword to protect Jesus from the soldiers.
8. _____ was the first high priest to whom Jesus was presented.
(John 18:24)
9. The first high priest sent Jesus to _____, but he had no power to inflict the punishment of death.
10. _____ was released instead of Jesus.
11. The Latin name of the place where the crucifixion took place is _____.
12. _____ helped Joseph prepare the body of Jesus for burial.

(answers in the next issue of The Vine)

BOYS' BRIGADE ENROLMENT

Sunday 22 April 2012 The Boys' Brigade had their enrolment service under fine weather conditions. Many of the boys received their awards and badges for their hard work and commitment to the BB. There was great celebrations after the ceremony.



This may be the first time some of the boys have ever been in a church service. However, they were very disciplined and did not make much noise.

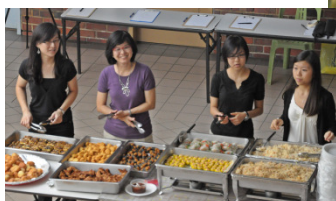


I understand this is also the first time a BB Captain has been commissioned.



The junior boys gave a performance which cheered everyone.

The day ended with a buffet for all.



We are Blessed! Give Thanks ... It's Not About ME...

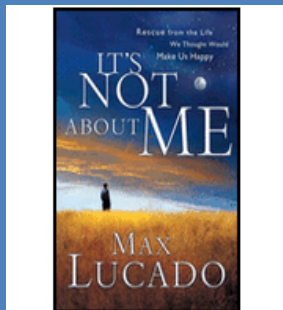
I was asked to support a working trip to Philippines lately. This is one of several work assignments overseas in the last two years. On this trip, besides the usual home sickness that will surface after the first two days, I felt a sense of sadness as I travelled on the roads in Philippines along the hustle and bustle of the city district.

The jeepneys (known as “tuk-tuk” in Thailand), were shining under the raging sun. This was a way of life and a means of affordable transportation by the Filipinos. It costs less than 10 pesos (less than 30 cents) for a trip. Walking alongside the vehicles were Filipinos selling food, goods and bottled water to drivers waiting for the traffic to move.

It is also a norm for children to sell food, goods and bottled water on the streets. Some of the children were barefooted and approaching vehicle to vehicle for the sale of their products. I know that a few of my colleagues' hearts sank when they witnessed the sight of young children risking their lives by moving in-between vehicles on the roads under a scorching sun to earn a living. Many Filipinos see it as a way of life. We know at the back of our minds that if these were our children, our hearts would break at the very sight.

In Singapore, we are blessed right? We give our children the best of education, livelihood, shelter, care and love. That is how God loves us too. We are Children of God. Our Father in Heaven has been blessing us in His Own Way.

It took me many years to realize that we missed the point when life is challenging and tough. We feel that God is not there for us. How true at



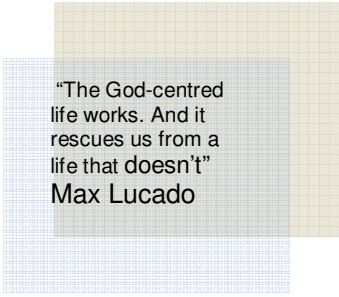
“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

Eph 5:1-2

that point in time when we feel the anger, frustration, sadness and pain. It is all about ME. Only me.

When we take a step back, rest our minds on Him, we see our state in a better light. Yes, it is in HIS Light that we will know, “HE is always there for us, HE will be”. We mix current state with eternal promise from God.

In Max Lucado’s book, “It’s Not About Me”, the author wrote about life and our lives as we live with God. This book reiterates the importance of God, “It’s all about HIM – His Present and future Glory”. God lets you excel so that you can make HIM known.



“The God-centred
life works. And it
rescues us from a
life that doesn’t”
Max Lucado

On the cover page, it states, “What would change if we finally found our place – and lived it? For our entire lives we’ve been urged to look out for number one. To find our place in the sun and soak in it for all it’s

worth. To make a name for ourselves as if we are headliners in life’s drama.

But what happens when the sweet life we imagined proves to be sour? When our expensive toys break and our work is no longer needed and our bodies grow soft?

What’s next when all our efforts to take care of number one leaves us feeling unsatisfied and the thrills we were promised turned out empty?...” Max Lucado encouraged us to turn the greatest lie we’ve believed on its head – the one that says, “It’s all about me” – and set our sights on a different goal.” He insisted that we were not made to live this way.

This book tells us to take our place and play our part. If our pursuit is a divine one and not based on performance, we will see our families differently; view our jobs differently; treat our bodies differently and respond to our problems differently. Max Lucado assures us that the God-centred life works and it rescues us from a life that doesn’t.

Quote from Max Lucado, “If it’s all about you, then it’s all up to you.” Don’t you think?

Take care, my brothers and sisters-in Christ.

Joyce Tan

Family Fun Day

JCC took a day off on 1st May to have fun and fellowship with old friends and new ones at



Pasir Ris Park. It was a hot and sunny day with clouds to provide us relieve at lunch time. The elderly had fun dancing and playing games while the younger ones really went all out with Captain's Ball. Some took leisurely strolls around the park's various attractions and others went fishing. Even a dog and cat managed to sit together in the sun. It was an idyllic day.

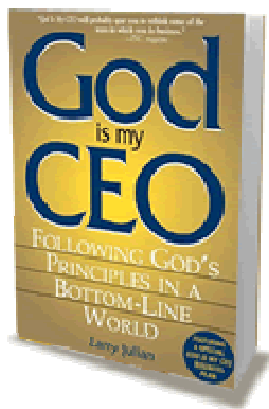


GOD OUR CEO!

Finding God in our work & life

This article has been sitting in my thumb-drive since the beginning of this year. Yes, I never finish this piece of writing as I was plagued with a busy work schedule and weekend studies. Recently, I picked up the book, “God is my CEO” and started reading again about following God’s principles in a bottom-line world. I realized that I have been tired and started losing focus on what’s important in work that was a gift by God from the beginning of His Creation.

The author, Larry Julian shared stories of many people who faced similar challenges about work and how they overcame their struggles through God and His Presence. If you are like me, working our hearts out and wondering what are we doing with our lives, grab this book and read about what work is doing to you or what are you doing about the work that has been given to you.



In Singapore, many of us spend at least 50% or more of our time working. Some people say that the workplace has become a second home in our lives. For others, work is their life. Have

God is leading us... God did not call us to work the majority of our lives just to survive, earning a paycheck and existing from weekend to weekend. God created each person for specific reasons, tasks, and purposes, and He equipped each one of us with the perfect combination of talents, skills, and abilities required to find fulfillment for our lives... Jesus provided a fundamental principle to help us find meaning and purpose in our work.

you ever asked, “Why do we work?” and “Why do we work so hard?”

In Eccl 5:19, it tells us that work is a gift from God. We need to work and work hard with our own hands (1 Co 4:12). So, if we have to work, how do we cope with the pressures of the world and from the people around you? ...“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Col 3:23)

What are some of the aspects we need to look out for in our working life? How do we find work meaningful and recognize that it is a gift from God? Work is a gift from God. "...If a man will not work, he shall not eat" (2 Th 3:10)

In this book, there are interesting examples of how we can manage our circumstances and situations when we rely on God. It also revealed real-life situations that we will and may face at work. The true stories are helpful as we read alongside with scriptures from the Bible about work.

What is work to you and what work is work for God? Yes, I did get my answers about work and what I should expect out from work. It is a journey with Jesus too, isn't it? Work is a part of life with God. Make God the life of our work.

Let's remember to work for the Lord Jesus. To many Brothers and Sisters-in-Christ, thank you for your service and work for God.

We will continue to pray. It is our work for God.

Joyce Tan

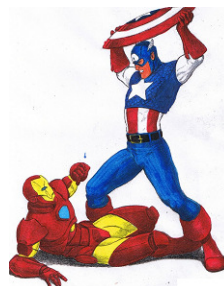




MOVIE REVIEW

7th May 2012 I took leave today and went to watch Marvel's The Avengers movie at the newly refurbished GV theatres at Jurong Point. Although I am a fan of all the superheroes, except the Hulk, it was quite sickening during the first half of the movie to watch the

heroes battle it out with each other for supremacy. I can't think of any reason for them to do that except, maybe, – ego.



In their in-fighting, they destroyed millions of dollars of property, the S.H.I.E.L.D. flying headquarters, while the evil Loki was probably laughing in the background.

It was only at the last part of the movie when the superheroes teamed up to battle the invading aliens did the movie really become interesting for me. Watch the movie for all the action but really it is no fun watching your heroes battling each other.



Another minus point is that after all the refurbishment, it is still a long 3 flights of stairway down to the ground floor after the show. It is really not elderly friendly.



My vote, watch the movie for all the fantastic special effects, destruction of millions of dollars of property by superheroes and villains alike. Park



your brains in the car, it is not logical for super intelligent superheroes to battle each other.

Martin Cheah



Baptism, Confirmation and Transfer of Membership

Sunday 8 Apr 2012

The church witnessed the baptism of Joash Liang, Dorian Fong and Koh Cheng Kiat.



This was followed by the confirmation of Matthias Lee, Clifford Lim, Salvatore Phang, Zachary Chan, Paul Tan, Koh Jian Rong, Hannah Lee and Alynah Khoo.

We also welcome the transfer of Frank and Preethi.

May God's Holy Spirit dwell with you and empower you for great works.

