

The Vine Committee

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What are some of the most talked-about topics in recent weeks? Well one topic of ongoing interest is the Olympic Games and the other is about the sale of APB by F&N to Heineken.

What is so interesting about this Olympic Games is that Singapore finally won an individual Olympics medal after 52 years. However there are some unappreciative people who say that it was China that won the bronze medal for table tennis. Why do these people say so? Are they unable or unwilling to distinguish the Singaporean Chinese (ethnicity) winner from a Chinese Chinese (ethnicity and nationality)? This question is like another: Why do some people (esp. in the West) think that Singapore is part of China while they think that Hong Kong is a distinct country although it is in fact part of China?

There was no controversy over Malaysian Lee Chong Wei's silver Olympics medal win. For one thing, Lee Chong Wei was born in Perak, Malaysia. Being Chinese does not make him less a Malaysian. His place of birth also gave no handle for people to hold against him regarding medal honour vs. national honour even if they had personal parochial opinions to esteem the player's prize-winning performance or to condescend it. Our table tennis players are just unfortunate that for their backgrounds, not their fault, critics find a handle on excuses to question their loyalty even though they did play their hearts out to fly the Singapore flag at the Olympics.

Apparently, the Jews, who are regarded as God's chosen people in the Bible, were always highly attached emotionally to Israel no matter where in the world they were scattered. In the early years of Singapore, the Chinese immigrants were of similar mindset. They would send money back to China to help their Chinese relatives, and regard China as the land where

they were born and therefore where they would die. Presently, the Chinese Singaporeans are generally not so emotionally tied to China (their country of ancestry) as their citizen forefathers' generations. They have moved from being more Chinese to become more Singaporean. Similarly, many former citizens of countries other than China who have chosen to sink roots in Singapore are now comfortably settled down with their children being raised as Singaporeans. It took time for them to acclimatise themselves to Singaporean culture and live congenially with all fellow citizens regardless of race, language or religion. In this connection, I feel a tinge of dismay that there are a vociferous minority who show no patience for the Chinese table tennis players to prove their full worth as citizens. The medals won show the new citizens' first best effort to contribute to Singapore by their talent while in their process of assimilation. The critics pour cold water on fellow Singaporeans' winning performance at the Olympics. They say that the medals were not won by true-blue Singaporeans.

What makes a person a true-blue Singaporean? Does it have anything to do with race, language, religion, culture or birth right (something inherited at birth)? Singapore being multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-religious makes all who are regarded as Singaporeans a potpourri of diversity. The word "potpourri" also means an air freshener. All Singaporeans with their unique backgrounds together contributing the miscellany of spices, fragrant leaves and flowers, essential oils, etc. should therefore be equally recognized and respected for each playing an important part (small or big) to make possible the potpourri that is Singapore. Take away an essential constituent that we scorn, the unified fragrance of the potpourri may be totally altered.

A true-blue Singaporean, by the simple dictionary definition of the adjective, does not have to be one born in Singapore. There are people born in Singapore who emigrate; on the other hand, there are people born in other countries who immigrate here to sink their roots and prove their loyalty with time. Whether the roots sunk will remain firmly held by hard soil or prove to be weak and easily dislodged is for us to see in the future. Recently, Martin mentioned that his daughter, after almost two years in Brisbane, commented in Facebook that she missed Singapore after watching the NDP. Why would she miss Singapore? Why doesn't she feel any urge to sink roots in Australia? Hopefully because her mom and dad are still here and she reminisces all the good things she has treasured as a Singaporean; not because of all the fireworks, impressive drills,

nationalistic songs and the assuring sight of a healthy-looking ex-Minister Mentor. Nevertheless, the pomp and pageantry in celebration of our National Day still does good to evoke our innate feelings of pride and joy of being called Singaporeans. Singapore is our proud home. Here is an extract from 2 NDP songs:

This is home truly, where I know I must be
Where my dreams wait for me, where the river always flows
This is home surely, as my senses tell me
This is where I won't be alone, for this is where I know it's home

My island home
Home of my family
This is my future
Where I want to be

When someone called me before National Day with the rumour that some important person was going to die, I knew at once that it was just that – a rumour, an unverified account (of anything) that we have become too familiar and bored with in the wild, wild world-wide-web. Anyway, the rumour reminds me of the brevity of our life; even if we live to a hundred years, it is so brief compared to eternity. Every piece of announcement in the obituary page of the newspaper is no surprise because we are all going to die; it's only a matter of time. We are all going home one day – our Home of eternity. Where do we call this Home of eternity? We must consider our stay in this world just a sojourn (a temporary stay). We must all leave this world. As a Christian, where do you call Home where you are going to be and never leave?

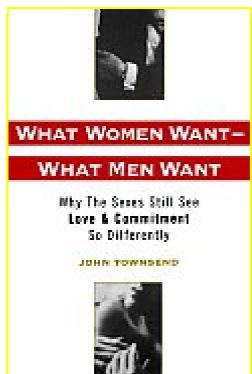
Heineken is trying to buy back for a very high price what it originally created 81 years ago with partner F&N. If Martin had known this 31 years ago when he joined APB, he should have bought some 20 lots of APB's shares and would be a millionaire now. He did not have the foresight, so he does not have the blessing of a windfall. No point regretting over the past, but make sure that we now have the right foresight to the future. So how do you invest now to reap a reward in the future? Are you only thinking of rewards from stocks and shares? Think about investing your life. "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven." (Luke 6:23)



JOHN LEE
(helping out Martin Cheah who is having writer's block)

Sorry for the late issue.
I'll be back!

FINDING A LIFE PARTNER



In April, the New Paper carried a story on “What women want: To Marry Up.”

There is also a book (**WHAT WOMEN WANT – WHAT MEN WANT**) by John Townsend, published by Oxford University Press (USA) on the differing male and female psychologies in choosing a life partner.

Such topics are cool to read, and they may have a tacit effect of prompting us to reflect on our expectations. Sometimes, we do not really know

what our expectations are because we just plod along with preconceptions but are actually quite unsure of ourselves with regards to what we should actually look for in a prospective partner to ensure a blissful life together. After reflecting, a familiarity may surface in our mind, or some clarity may form whereby we are able to make appropriate adjustments for level-headedness to reach for a realizable goal.

When I was a child, I had lots of opportunities to accompany my parents to wedding dinners. At such Chinese wedding dinners, I would hear the usual refrain from the dinner emcee in welcoming the arrival of the newly-weds, “请大家起立，让我们欢迎一对新人_____，可说是**男才女貌**… …”

The phrase “**男才女貌**” seemed to be a constant favourite to commend the newly-weds. I always had the problem of distinguishing between **男才女貌** and **男財女貌**, since both sound alike. The first means “talented (or accomplished) man meets pretty woman” while the second phrase means “rich man meets pretty woman”. It seems that the wedding emcees were very good in typecasting for the guests’ consumption what the pair of indispensable qualities should be to make an ideal couple who would then walk hand in hand into the sunset happily forever.

When I was old enough for courtship, God found a girlfriend for me. I looked into a big mirror in my house and asked, “Mirror, mirror on the wall, is she the prettiest of them all?”

The mirror was not very encouraging in its reply, “No, Sir, she is pretty, but she is not the prettiest of them all.”

One day, I had a dream that my girlfriend was standing in front of the mirror in her house and asking, “Mirror, mirror on the wall, is he the most talented or well-heeled of them all?” and she too got a negative answer that I was not one with the most of the “desirable” qualities. To boot, the mirror tried to be clever to volunteer the additional opinion of better suitors for her selection!

It came to pass (by the will of God) that a guy who was neither most talented nor well-heeled got hitched in holy matrimony with a gal who would not at least provide some lift to the union by contributing fully her half of the pair of qualities of 男才(財)女貌 to make up for my lack. When the emcee at the wedding dinner spoke the customary phrase, guests must be wondering whether he did his homework. ☺

Ok, my dear readers, you know that I am joking above. My wife and I, though not blessed with 100% of the qualities of 才 (財) and 貌 have been married for more than 30 years. We are too shy a couple to openly divulge to you what we think positively of the percentage of the qualities that we possess, but I can at least tell you that my wife has the beauty in her heart that she doesn't show on her face; herein is the reason why I think that I made no mistake in choosing her from among many women who no doubt had their own qualities that would be great for their princes charming. (Alternatively, it may be said that God made no mistake in pairing us together; so that what I lacked, she complemented and vice versa.)

Nowadays, the phrase 男才 (財) 女貌 seems to have gone out of popular use as young people (male or female) are more educated and cleverer. They are different from our grandparents who cherished hope of 永结同心, 白头偕老 (*Hearts always united, remain happily married to a ripe old*

age) based on matchmakers' wisdom. They should know that 才 (財) and 貌 (talent/wealth and looks) are not definitive of a "happily ever after" wedding dream. In my own marriage, I possessed no quality in great quantity; yet, I had the distinguishing mark of non-attractiveness to other women. I am contented to have only one spouse. ☺

The right complementary qualities that contribute to a lasting marriage should never be circumscribed by traditions, stereotypes or outsiders' opinions. Opinions that have merit for consideration are of some value but they do not determine the relationship of a couple. Expressions like the following that we do come across in 八卦 (gossipy) social media are all irrelevant and irreverent. The qualities that bind a couple for good can at best be amorphous that defy bystanders' conceptions:

- "I can't believe that Tom and Jane could be together, so different are their characters,"
- "The actress is going steady with a man who is much older than her – a case of 老牛吃嫩草。 ("Old cow eats tender grass.")"
- "The actor is so handsome. Why is his girlfriend so ugly?"

In social media, opinionated chatters about public personalities in relationships are unmistakably from people who think they know better than the persons involved. Actually, the commentators are not necessarily personally experienced in love to qualify themselves as experts to dish out courtship advice.

In the New Paper story, the opening line says, "There are graduate women in Singapore who are willing to date and eventually marry blue-collar workers."

A co-founder of a dating agency "was sceptical that such matches would last because of the difference in their background. She said she has had women clients who married less-educated men while they were in their 20s only to become unhappy a decade later."

It shocked me that such an opinion came from a dating expert. Can it not also be said that there had been women who married equally-educated or more-educated men while they were in their romantic high only to become unhappy later – even ending in broken marriages? Putting it another way, there are many cases of couples with contrasting backgrounds who married against the grain of popular notions and stay happy and faithful – 永结同心，白头偕老。

It is observable that more and more youngsters in Singapore choose to remain single. If it is their choice based on their understanding of themselves, others would not understand better. They can have our best wishes for their choice. However, if it is because there are not enough quality women around for the men, or not enough quality men for the women, what can be the reason? (By “quality”, I mean “meeting expectations”.)

Due to a perceived shortage at home, some men and women look overseas for prospects. Couples who are successfully matched across oceans, or within the little red dot, are all deserving of congratulations. Cheerless would be singles who want to find a partner but fail to find a match within their expectations whether across the oceans or within the same little red dot. Ironically, “ill-qualified” men who can’t find life partners in Singapore become amply qualified for foreign women, while “ill-qualified” women who do not catch the favour of local men become quality women for foreign men. Isn’t “quality” subjective? It seems very hard to match a “quality man” with a “quality woman” in Singapore. Whose fault – man or woman? Has it got to do with idealistic expectations?

Marriage in modern times is no longer just about love, but also about expectations. Setting expectations to marry up, marry down or marry sideways is always a personal thing that bystanders should respect. It is preposterous to pass negative comments that a woman who marries down has a higher probability of future unhappiness, or that a man who tries to marry up is痴蛤蟆想吃天鹅肉 – 痴心妄想 (a toad lustng for a swan’s flesh—a daydream). **Women who marry up, or men who marry down, for true love should also be worthy of our felicitations.**

Some women have a long list of expectations – man must be talented, wealthy, romantic and much more.

Some men have a long list to match – woman must have good looks, be demure, thrifty, good with housework, and much more.

Sometimes, well-intentioned parents contribute extras to the lists. It is common sense that the longer the list, the harder it would be to find a match. There can be trade-offs, with mutual complementation – if the woman is not a good cook but the man is, it is fine (many great cooks are men); if the man is not as talented as the woman, the latter can lend her talents to build a happy home. **Crucially, one condition that is untradeable is to be equally yoked. (2 Cor. 6:14)**

Stories about “what men want and what women want” often have portions that betray romantic dreams with unrealistic wish-lists. When they (men or women) are disappointed by the long wish-lists that are hard to fulfill, they may conclude that there are no good men /women left – all the good ones already taken up. When they are contented in walking down the aisle with all expectations fulfilled, that is only the beginning. After the honeymoon period, they may realize that they had left out many more items of greater importance from their wish-lists.

Bertrand Russell once said, “Marriages may be made in heaven, but man is responsible for the maintenance work.”

When thinking of finding a life partner, the marriage vow “To have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part” should provide some inspiration on the essentials to go into the expectation list. They should include love, faithfulness and being equally yoked at the top of the list. Talents (accomplishments), wealth and looks may be included, but should be among the least important that can be given up if one cannot have everything in the whole list.

“But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And the twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.” (Mark 10:6-8)

May God bless all bachelors and bachelorettes who pray to get hitched according to His will or choose to enjoy their singlehood with its own set of ups and downs. May God also bless all couples joined in holy matrimony to grow in joy and love as they keep true to their vows.

JOHN LEE

In this issue John talks about finding a partner, in the coming issue he will talk about sex and the city.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY IN ACTION

My father-in-law had always wished to take a good picture of the surroundings from a high ground.

One day, I shared the wish with Esther. To my gladness, Cassidy & Esther Yam kindly invited us to their home at Duxton Apartment. It was just the perfect place for my father-in-law's wish to be granted.

If people do not meet and talk, how can they ever get to know one another? The meeting between the Yams and my in-laws brought out a pleasant surprise. My father-in-law discovered that he came from the same village, Kinmen, as Esther's mother and family in Taiwan.



My mother-in-law was also particularly impressed by Esther's hospitality, and has now become a member of the JCC Dialect Group. There, she testifies about the love of JCC with her fellow seniors.

It was delightful to experience the generous Christian hospitality of the Yams who lived out their faith in doing good to all people, as Gal. 6:9-10 encourages, "especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

Here, I share a short extract from Barnes' Exposition Notes on Gal. 6:10:

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men - This is the true rule about doing good. It is not that we are to do it when it is convenient; or when it will advance the interest of a party; or when it may contribute to our fame; the rule is, that we are to do it when we have the opportunity. No matter how often that occurs; no matter how many objects of benevolence are presented -

the more the better; no matter how much self-denial it may cost us; no matter how little fame we may get by it; still, if we have the opportunity to do good, we are to do it, and should be thankful for the privilege. And it is to be done to all people. Not to our family only; not to our party; not to our neighbors; not to those of our own color; not to those who live in the same land with us, but to all mankind. If we can reach and benefit a man who lives on the other side of the globe, whom we have never seen, and shall never see in this world or in the world to come, still we are to do him good. Such is Christianity. And in this, as in all other respects, it differs from the narrow and selfish spirit of clanship which prevails all over the world.

“Of the household of faith - Christians are distinguished from other people primarily by their believing the gospel, and by its influence on their lives.”

Keep up the good works, fellow labourers of the JCC Dialect Ministry!

Tony Koh



At a recent Mission Conference in June 2012, Rev Rickson Leong suggested that we could help raise funds for Thai Good News Centre by purchasing the Thai shirt he is wearing for S\$30 per piece (if I remember correctly).

Besides red, there are other colors of the same design. If anyone is interested to purchase, you can let me know or contact Rev Rickson directly.

Martin Cheah

DIALECT MINISTRY

working with Boys' and Girls' Brigade

14 July 2012

It was a rainy day as the Dialect Ministry singers joined the Girls' Brigade 51st coy at Shuqun Primary School to board the bus to GB HQ at Serangoon.

At the venue, the Dialect singers quickly got into rehearsal mode to perfect their delivery of the songs. This was the first time they were singing with the GB girls. The two groups did not find any problems interfacing.

Their singing brought the audience into a clapping frenzy. As no preaching was allowed, their rendition of *Chin Chia Ho* was the nearest thing to evangelism.



http://youtu.be/KG3h97p_cn0

28 July 2012

Two weeks later with the same songs in hand, the Dialect Ministry singers joined the BB Junior boys at Bo Tien Home to entertain the elderly staying there.

There was much camaraderie as the elderly and the young boys took part in fun games while the Dialect singers helped out also.

As this is a Buddhist home, outright evangelism may be inappropriate so it was done through the songs which the BB and the Dialect Ministry sang.

The reality to note, as Wilfred commented, "Many of the old people we met previously are no longer here." How many more opportunities do we have to meet with them?

Martin Cheah

<http://youtu.be/H8vyG2nz4ic>



<http://youtu.be/qp4hYbsQ6Is>

IT'S TOUGH BEING A MISSIONARY

At the recent LCS Missions Committee meeting on 30th July, I found out more of what the ILSM (International Lutheran Seafarers Missions) do on a daily basis.

They visit the ship's crew and do simple things like buying them a pizza, or helping them to post a letter, perform a ship blessing ceremony, provide reading materials (especially Bibles) and fetching the seamen to town for shopping. Being based in Singapore, we tend to think that these missionaries must have an easy life compared to those in some god forsaken land. That is until I saw these two photos of how they carry out their work.



The picture above shows Pastor Wilson Wong delivering some stuff to the crew. On the right is a picture of Rev Christian Schmidt climbing up the pilot's ladder to get onboard the ship.

It may look simple but I think bro Alan Soh can vouch that this is dangerous stuff. The vessels are rolling with the waves and should either of our missionaries fall, they could drown or get crush between the vessel and the wharf.

Indeed mission work is tough no matter where it is. Pastor Jimmy Khoo in Mongolia faces tough restrictions to preaching; Sally in Cambodia face health risks and others face loneliness. Pray for our missionaries.

Martin Cheah

HAPPENINGS

4 Aug 2012 The GB 51st coy spent a fun-filled time in Sentosa enjoying the sunny weather as they played their outdoor games. Afterwards when they were having their lunch at the MacDonalds, there was a heavy downpour.

Indeed God did not promise skies always blue but sometimes He does arrange the rains to fall when we are indoors.



Poh Kiat



18 Jul 2012 The Dialect Ministry organized an outing to visit the Yakult factory, a soy sauce factory and also the old Ford factory, where the British surrendered to the Japanese during WWII.

The people had a fun time together especially at the Yakult plant where they were entertained by the manager, who was very humorous.

Peggy Lee



4 Aug 2012 In our extremely hot and dry weather in recent times, it unexpectedly rained very heavily the night before. However when Saturday came around, the weather was sunny again. Justin and Serene enjoyed the sunshine during the part of their wedding ceremony which was held outdoors.



During the church part of the ceremony, again the rains fell, this must have coincided with the rains experience by the GB at Sentosa. However, by the time the people were dismissed for the buffet lunch, it was sunny again. Indeed, someone asked me, "Did it rain just now?"



May Justin and Serene enjoy God's sunshine throughout their married life.



Martin Cheah



<http://youtu.be/zgakMXapbdk>

CHEEMNOLOGY

Be forewarned that this is a cheem topic. You may skip it if cheemnology is not your cup of coffee, but you would miss something if you do.

Here is a glossary of terms to ease your digestion:

Cheem – A word derived from Hokkien, meaning “very deep, difficult to understand”. (*Alt. sp.:* Chim) (*Comparative & superlative:* cheemer, cheemest)

Caution: Don’t confuse *chim* with *Chimp*, the chimpanzee.

Cheemnology – Anything to do with anything that is cheem. (Var.: Cheemology, Chimology, Chiminology, etc.)

Cheem-ness – 1) The quality of being cheem. 2) Great depth.

Rojak – May be used as a noun or adjective for something akin to a salad mix that is created anyhow but still tastes sweet and palatable on the lingual (as well as linguistic) sensory organs.

Yes, the word “cheem” exists in the English Language, not Queen’s English but in the rojak version frequently used by netizens as well as practitioners of Singlish. Proof can be found effortlessly by googling the word. How times change, and language changes with the times! Readers and writers ought to always update themselves lest they become left behind by the fast-and-furious language evolution (or revolution).

Just as there are people who love tough physical challenges and others who make do to keep fit by simple activities, readers and writers who love mental exercises with words also have their preferences ranging from the simple to the cheem. If cheem is not good enough, one may still seek out the super-cheem.

What do you think of *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*, a word with more letters in it than the number of letters in the English alphabet? (Thank goodness it is not quite a tongue-twister.)

Am I talking nonsense? Yes, maybe. The super-long word is, according to my old and trusty unabridged 1976 Random House Dictionary, used as a nonsense word by children to represent the longest word in English.

If zero is nothing, and nothing is still something; or if the vast expanse of expanding space in the universe and the void that lies beyond are given

proper names called nouns, whereby they are certainly things that exist within human perspicacity; then by similar logic, nonsense (or the so-called nonsense word) is also something there that has a sense.

Am I still talking nonsense? No, maybe not. Though defined as a nonsense word in my dictionary, this super-cheem word actually had its origin from a song in a 1964 Walt Disney theatrical musical "Mary Poppins", which had earned a "Best Musical award", so it cannot be straightforwardly dismissed as unworthy of our interest.

On further research on the Internet, I became wiser with the discovery that my trusty Random House Dictionary is somehow not quite right. This word *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious* actually has a respectable meaning. I quote¹:

super- "above", cali- "beauty", fragilistic- "delicate", expiali- "to atone", and docious- "educable" with the sum of these parts signifying roughly "Atoning for educability through delicate beauty." According to the 1964 Walt Disney film, it is defined as "what you say when you don't know what to say".

There is noticeable sense in non-sense. If you do not know what to say, you can just shout out the word to tell your listeners that you do not know what to say.

The word has been in my mind since my youth when I came across it in the dictionary while reading it (yes, reading it) and I have not forgotten about it; instead, I can spell it easily from memory just as I am able to recite the value of π to more than 10 decimal places.

Surprisingly, my memory is still in shape despite my age. ☺ Physical exercise is to physical fitness in the body as mental exercise with thoughts and words is to mental fitness that can delay the onset of dementia or slow down its progress. My advice is for people not to be too quick to rubbish cheemnology as unworthy of pleasure that comes with positive mental stimulation. To disdain beneficial challenge for the mind is similar to disdaining beneficial challenge for the physical body. **Read more, think more, write more, share more with others, and gain more from the**

¹ From <http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20090227081732AAr2iun>

attendant blessings. If you are parents, encourage your children to do so.

Good knowledge acquired from reading material ranging from simple cartoons to moderate fiction novels to serious literature (factual content or otherwise) coupled with a love for the language is the key that unlocks writing skill. The earlier we use the key, the better it is. Children who are thus widely exposed grow to love both reading and writing. Great essay writers in schools and junior colleges do not inherit their abilities from teachers, and never from the genes of their parents.

Truth be told, I want to lead you to the fact that people do not grow up to robustness by feeding on milk and soft food alone; they need a good mix of varied fare comprising liquids and solids for complete nourishment. Physical, mental and spiritual nourishments all abide by the same tenet. I shall now proceed to talk about the spiritual.

Cheemnology also exists in the Bible. In this article, I would just cite two examples from the New Testament out of the innumerable occurrences from Genesis to Revelation:

1) The story of Nicodemus

John 3 records that when Nicodemus went to see Jesus one night, the Lord told him, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”

“How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!”

Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.”

“How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

“You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things?”

If you were the one whom Jesus spoke to, I am quite sure you would be dumbfounded by the statement about second

birth when even “Israel’s teacher” (i.e., Nicodemus) could not comprehend. Wasn’t Jesus’ message super-cheem?

2) “Jesus wept” (John 11:35)

This is a very short verse that tells us Jesus wept. Very simple, not cheem. Really? Looks can deceive. If you ask, “The Lord cried, so what?” you would have missed out on something significant. This is cheemnology in a different way; it is not something you immediately perceive as cheem (deep) whereby you give up; but it is cheem in the sense that a significant truth is lodged in its depth whereby if you just skim through, you would not even realize its cheemness. Jesus is the Son of God. He knew fully what was happening when Lazarus’ sisters approached him in sorrow. The message to us that Jesus wept is a message to us about His humanity. And as we read the story about Lazarus’ death and being raised to life, we sense both the divine power of Jesus as well as His human emotion of love. “Jesus wept.” This short verse is not short on cheem-ness in the conveyance of truth.

Every time when you study the Word of God, hear a sermon or read a book and find something cheem, do you just give up because cheemnology is anathema to you? Do you satisfy yourself with missing out on good spiritual morsels as a result? For me, I don’t give up; rather, I take it as a challenge to venture into the cheem-ness of it to discover treasure. Material that is simple to understand attracts me equally as material that is cheem. For the former, I know where to go – such as our pastors’ sermons which are often very digestible, with doses of humour that pump spiritual nutriments slickly. On the other hand, if I am in the mood to try something of cheemer quality, I sometimes surf to this secret source:

<http://lutherantheologystudygroup.blogspot.com/>

Oops! I have let the cat out of the bag.

JOHN LEE

News From Nias

TOMORROW'S HOPE



Seven children, from the various parts of Nias, with the exception of the orphan Daniel Gusti, are now part of the big family at the Children's Home.

Daniel, a Javanese, was from a town in North Sumatra and he is now in Senior High School. Markus is only four years old. His widowed mother left him under the care of a relative who eventually did not return. It is the same sad story for Imer and Meize. Ifan and Linus are now both in Junior High School. When they were much younger, their fathers passed away, leaving them with little means for a hope of a brighter future. Eight year old Fedina is an orphan who still believes that her father is alive. Prior to her stay at the center, she was assisting her grandmother who is a housekeeper. Now this bubbly girl is in Primary One.

Together with Ester, Desi, Anima, Erni, Yusri, Akhimi, Massa, Sidar and Gauden, all nine children from the center had passed their PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examination).

Tears of joy and anxiety were shed when the results were announced and they are all truly thankful to their faithful sponsors who have given them a hope of a future. Yuliaman Ziliwu and Murlina Gulo, our two senior high school students have, in June 2012, also passed their final examinations.



For the fourth consecutive year, the OCIP (Overseas Community Involvement Project) team comprising 26 students from Hall 9 of the Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), visited the Tomorrow's Hope Children's Home. We continue to thank our Lord for these young and loving young adults, who throughout their three weeks stay at the center, had brought much happiness to the underprivileged children.

Sintha was admitted for a week and had two operations. We were also told that she had eight broken teeth. By granting us His wisdom to make the right decisions and providing a medical team, Sintha's recovery has been remarkably steady. We thank our relatives and friends for their love, generosity, encouragement and prayers throughout the ordeal.

As we continue to persevere to be His faithful servants, we thank all our supporters for the love shown to the underprivileged people in Nias.

Michael Christian