

The Vine Committee

Editors:

Martin Cheah

mart5003@yahoo.com

John Lee

jpbislee@gmail.com

Printer:

Nick Wong

digi_ics@yahoo.com

Writers this issue:

John Lee

Nicolette Neo

Photos:

Martin Cheah

Freddie Low

Zheng Lin



While editing for the March issue of The Vine, I came across one of our young writers quoting, “*God helps those who help themselves*” as if it was a Bible verse. Did you know that this is probably the most often quoted phrase that is not

found in the Bible. In fact this quotation in its English form may be attributed to Benjamin Franklin.

Is there any Biblical truth in this phrase? In relation to salvation – NO! Romans 5:6 states, “*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*” God provided the “help” that we need precisely

because we could not help ourselves.

Apart from salvation, there is perhaps a way that the concept “God helps those who help themselves” is correct. As an example, if you asked me to help you move a piece of furniture, but then just watched me as I moved the furniture for you, I was not actually helping you. I would be doing the work for you. Many Christians fall into the trap of inactivity. Many Christians ask God for help, but then expect God to do everything Himself. They excuse this by pointing to the fact that God will provide according to His will and in His timing. However, this is not a reason for inactivity. As a specific example, if you are in need of a job, ask the Lord to help you find a job - but then be active in actually looking for a job. While it is in His power to do so, it is highly unlikely that God will cause employers to come looking for you!

Extracted from this link:

<http://www.gotquestions.org/God-help-themselves.html#ixzz2PVL6qB26>

This leads me to the next point. Some of us may have concerns about the lack of funds for our rebuilding project. It brought to mind the lesson my Care Group members were learning from Philipians chapter 4. In verse 19, it says: “*And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*” This verse requires you to trust that God will meet all

our needs and that He is able to because He is extremely (gloriously) rich. Richer than Bill Gates because He is Jesus Christ, Creator of the world.

The question put forth was what the people wanted for the church, big (2.5) or smaller (1.8)? If the question was rephrased, what does God want for JCC, then I would have agreed because if God wants JCC to be 2.5, who can stop it? If God wants it to be 1.8 then all the money in the world could not build a church of 2.5 plot ratio. Remember the Tower of Babel, how God stopped it from being completed? He disunited the people.

As we read through Numbers 13 and 14, we come across the story of Joshua and Caleb. We always think of ourselves as a Joshua or a Caleb and that JCC had gone through the 40 years journey. Actually, the 40 years of wondering started in Numbers 14:33 when the people rebelled and listened to the 10 spies. So I ask all of us to seek God and know His Will for JCC. Does He truly want to rebuild JCC? He seemed to have taken away all our spare cash by sending our children overseas. He has moved some of our wealthiest members to other congregations. Did Gideon worry when God removed nearly 30,000 men from his army (Judges 7)? I am sure he did. So why did God do it? *"In order that Israel may not **boast against me** that her own strength has saved her."*

I don't know why I am quoting more from Old Testament now, blame it on DE classes. Let us be like Gideon to find out God's Will for JCC. Let us also be like Joshua or Caleb who said, *"the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid..."*

If you were to ask me twenty years ago whether JCC could raise nearly 2 million dollars, I would have said, No Way! Looking at the AGM Building Committee's report, we are sitting on 1.66 million in Fixed Deposits. Do we just sit still and wait? We go back to the start of this article – God helps those who help themselves. We will pray for God's supply and we will wait for His timing but we must not sit still and do nothing.

We are unable to do external fund raising till we get URA approval. Meanwhile, by faith, we can each contribute towards our internal fund raising. Consider prayerfully God's leading in giving to our rebuilding. Trusting in God should not lead us to inactivity. In fact, I think trusting in God actually means that we should start moving even before faith becomes sight. In Exodus 35:20-28, it was reported that the Israelites brought all the items required to build the Tabernacle. Have you wondered how these people who were slaves in Egypt managed to come up with all these treasures in the desert? You could answer that they plundered Egypt on their way out but unless and until you admit that it was God who provided, you still do not have the right answer.

I must admit that from an accountant's perspective, I too am worried we have insufficient funds to construct a 2.5 plot ratio building. Don't we sometimes wish that our fathers are as rich as Bill Gates? Even Bill Gates did not have 1.66 million to build his empire with. Try not to look at the waves like Peter the apostle but instead look to Jesus.

Let me finish up with an accounting model. Suppose we had to raise \$20 million for this rebuilding project but since we already have about \$2 million, then we need raise only \$18 million. Assuming we only have about 300 members. That means that each member must donate about \$60k. A princely sum you may say. However when I consider that this is about the amount I have to pay for 1 year of Debra's overseas education it means that I could have had sufficient to donate 4 times over if only God had kept her in Singapore. If you just bought a car, that is only the COE amount.

God has his own way of supplying our needs. We have a rebuilding fund raising committee. When URA gives approval, this committee will begin doing fund raising and we will see our funds rising. Then our present desperation and fear will slowly be removed and we see God bless us as we work for his glory. Remember the story of the fishermen who could not catch any fish (John 21:3). They just needed to throw their nets to the right side of the boat.

This is a quotation from a book I just read, "There's a great irony in the country where I live. Printed across the back of an American dollar bill are the words, 'In God We Trust'. Yet for most of us that motto is simply not true. We might say that we trust God, but our actions show what's really going on. We Christian Atheists often give lip service to God, but in our everyday lives, we're tempted to trust, serve, and worship the very money on which that slogan is printed."

The title of the book – The Christian Atheist by Craig Groeschel. It is a very interesting book which covers all aspects of Christian living not just about money. Interested to read, let me know and I will put it into the library. Only 12 chapters and I read 1 chapter a day.

Finally a closing thought. My generation will soon be retiring. Wouldn't it be great if we could get retirement jobs in the new church to manage all the services and building management issues. Work maybe 3 days a week at a cheap cost to JCC instead of idling in our retirement.

Martin Cheah

FAITH IS SPELLED R.I.S.K.

by Os Hillman

"Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!'" (Matt 14:29-30).

Jesus told Peter to get out of the boat. There is always a risk when we attempt something never done before. Naysayers seem to come out of the wood work. Why? Because it's not their vision, it's yours. Sometimes we fail the first time out. It's a fact that most entrepreneurs fail before they are really successful.

"Success," said Winston Churchill, "is going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm." Everybody fails. It's part of the process that leads us to maturity and success. Most successful entrepreneurs don't think of their failures as defeats. They think of them as lessons.



If you hope to succeed, learn everything you can from your failures. In *The Three Success Secrets of Shamgar*, Orlando Magic executive Pat Williams observed, "Our experiences may not all be triumphs and successes, but so what? Failure is usually a far better teacher than success - if we are willing to learn the lessons. As Houston Astros pitcher Larry Dierker observed, 'Experience is the best teacher, but a hard grader. She gives the test first, the lesson later.'"

God never gets mired in our past failures. He is constantly viewing our lives with future success in mind. "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland" (Isa. 43:19). Someone once said, "When your memories are bigger than your dreams, you're headed for the grave." God wants to give us new dreams that are bigger than anything that has ever happened to us in the past.

Don't let past failures keep you from future successes.

Gardens by the Bay Reflections

On 2nd March 2013, The Girls Brigade 51st Company went to Gardens by the Bay! I was very excited as it was my first time going there. When we reached the place, we went to the Flower Dome and the flowers there were very colourful and vibrant and my group members were busy taking pictures of the beautiful sight. Miss Zheng took a picture of me and Constance hugging an African Baobab tree! The place was wheelchair friendly as there are a lot of slopes and lifts.



stepped in the Cloud Forest dome, it was freezing cold but we got used to it and carried on.



After viewing the Flower Dome, we went to the cloud forest, when we



Next we went on the treetop walk and were amazed by the sight of the trees, we also took the cloud walk and saw breathtaking view of flowers. Finally we watched a video about global warming and it made me want to become more eco-friendly as I don't want global warming to affect our daily lives.

The trip was a very fun experience for me and I have learnt to appreciate nature more.

Nicolette Neo

THE LUTHERAN LITURGICAL CALENDAR

There are scores of calendars used in the world, many of them still in use while some have gone into history. You would have heard of the “Mayan Calendar” that put some people in a fit not so long ago worrying whether the world would be coming to an end. The calendar that we are most familiar with is the Gregorian Calendar which has 365 or 366 days in a year. This is an international reference calendar for civil purposes. Other calendars presently in use are the Armenian calendar, Bahá’í calendar, Buddhist calendar, Chinese calendar, Hindu calendar, Islamic calendar, Thai Calendar, etc. While all calendars have the common purpose of organizing time into periods of years, months and days; the events and seasons that the different calendars highlight are distinct for the different peoples they serve.

Obviously, each calendar type has its unique importance. For people who are steeped in Chinese culture, they will pay attention to the details (such as special dates and seasons) that only the Chinese calendar show but which are not found in the Gregorian calendar. However, most Chinese of the young generation in Singapore do not see the relevance of the Chinese calendar to them. There are elements in the Chinese calendar that I think are not useful. This does not mean that the Chinese calendar is totally devoid of usefulness.

Just like there are people who do not give a hoot to their ethnic culture-based calendar, there are also Christians who find it sufficient to keep their daily lives humming with the help of the Gregorian calendar alone to keep track of their activities and important dates. These Christians do not think it important to pay any attention to the Church’s liturgical calendar. Of course, if they don’t know or bother with the liturgical calendar, they won’t realize what they miss.

While the world’s standard (Gregorian) calendar keeps track of our civil activities, the Church’s liturgical calendar is specially structured so that a Church Year provides a comprehensive round-up of the wondrous acts of salvation that God purposed through His Son, Jesus Christ. The following are some highlights of the Lutheran liturgical calendar:

- Advent Season: 1st Sunday in Advent (2 Dec 2012), 4th Sunday in Advent (23 Dec 2012)
- Christmas Season: Christmas Eve (24 Dec 2012), 1st Sunday after Christmas (30 Dec 2012)

- Epiphany Season: The Epiphany of our Lord (6 Jan 2013), Transfiguration of our Lord (10 Feb 2013)
- Lent Season: Ash Wednesday (13 Feb 2013) to 5th Sunday in Lent (17 Mar 2013)
- Holy Week: Palm Sunday (24 Mar 2013), Maundy Thursday (28 Mar 2013), Good Friday (29 Mar 2013)
- Easter Season – Easter Day (Mar 31 2013), 7th Sunday of Easter (12 May 2013), Day of Pentecost (19 May 2013)
- Time of the Church (Season after Pentecost): 1st Sunday after Pentecost (26 May 2013), 26th Sunday after Pentecost (17 Nov 2013)
- Advent Season again: beginning 1st Dec 2013

At the start, God had His plan to send His Son. But before the Son came as a baby, there was already anticipation. It was already foretold. (Isa. 7:14; 11:2) When the Magi saw the Star over Bethlehem, they were excited – because they had been full of expectation; they were searching for the Holy Child. So it is apt that **we begin the liturgical year with the Advent Season**, spiritually preparing ourselves to be ready to receive the newborn King on Christmas Day.

The Holy Child arrives on Christmas Day. The angelic choir proclaims who He is. This is not going to be the first and last occasion for the world to hear the epiphany of Jesus. **The Epiphany Season** is not a day but a period of time that the revelation of Him as the Lord and Saviour of all nations unfolds at different junctures in His life and ministry to the Jews and Gentiles. Along the way, there were highs and lows in the moods of His disciples, with their experiences of beautiful things and depressing episodes. The epiphany of our Lord would not exclude the fact that the time must come for His Passion – the necessity (Mk 8:31), the certainty (Mk 9:31) and the details (Mk 10:32-34). The “high moment” of His Transfiguration would give way to the “low moment” of facing His own anguish as well as His followers’ anguish along Via Dolorosa.

- ❖ The **Advent Season** is a hopeful spiritual preparation period (to welcome Baby Jesus).
- ❖ From **Christmas**¹ through the **Epiphany Season**², we get to know about our Lord Jesus Christ and His mission.

¹ The Vine (Nov 2010): What is Christmas?

- ❖ The knowledge about Jesus and His mission leads us to a mournful spiritually reflective period of the **Lent Season**³:
- Beginning with **Ash Wednesday**⁴, a reminder to us of human mortality and our need to repent from sin;
- Through the joy and pain of **Palm Sunday** – witnessing a triumphant entry into Jerusalem, yet envisaging a heart-rending scene on Mount Calvary;
- Observing **Maundy Thursday** – to meditate on the spirit of Christian love, one for another with humble service as our Lord has set an example for us (John 13:15, 34-35), in the new covenant we have with God sealed by the body and blood of Jesus Christ (Lk 22:19-20) as we constantly remind ourselves of in our regular partaking of the Holy Communion;
- Culminating in the **Good Friday**, which is a day really good in the sense that our redemption has been won. How good God is! Yet, it pierces our heart to recognize the tremendous cost that the Son of God fully paid on our behalf. (Rom 5:8; 1 Pet 3:18) Jesus says, “It is finished.” (John 19:30) This is a great shout of triumph. The work for our redemption is complete.
- ❖ It is time for joyful spirit again as the **Easter Season** arrives for us to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*“It is the hour to rend thy chains,
The blossom time of souls.” – Katherine Lee Bates*

The Vine (Dec 2012): Celebrating Christmas; Watching, Praying for Second Advent

² The Vine (Jan 2013): Epiphany of our Lord – 6th January 2013

³ The Vine (Mar 2012 & Feb 2013) – Season of Lent

⁴ The Vine (Feb 2012): Ash Wednesday Service

The Easter Season⁵ is a supreme relief and joy to come after Good Friday. Christ is resurrected on Easter Sunday!

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (1 Cor. 15:54-55)

- ❖ With the passage of Easter, the Church is born – the **"Time of the Church"** begins strongly on the Day of Pentecost. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not the finale in God's plan to redeem mankind. After Christ was resurrected, He appeared to His disciples; then departed again. His departure was not an abandonment of His followers, but an opener of the way for The Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) that he would send to abide with the disciples forever. (John 14:16 KJV). In fact, the Holy Spirit descended on the twelve Apostles 10 days after Christ's ascension into heaven, on the 50th day after the Jewish Passover. Hence, the word "Pentecost" in Greek means "fiftieth" and it is regarded as marking the birth of the Christian Church by the power of the Holy Spirit whereby many were added to the Church (body of believers) daily. (Acts 2:1-31)

Do you see a storyline as you run your mind through the time and events in the Church's liturgical calendar? It is a continuous storyline, not merely a composition of random events that we choose to commemorate or don't bother. It is a narrative that reveals God's work of redemption unfolding in stages. Very significantly, just as the prophecies of Scripture that preceded the Advent Season see fulfillment in an orderly passage through the calendar, each specific event or season in the calendar carries some foresight of what is to come, which is then fulfilled. For the adventurous who want to dive deeper into the study of events and seasons in a timeline, they may wish to extend the liturgical calendar backward (to Genesis) and forward (to Revelation) and see a bigger picture, a long "Scarlet Thread of Redemption" – a storyline of biblical revelation weaving itself through a tapestry of intriguing happenings (through seasons, feasts and festivals) from the first Adam to the last Adam. Note, for example, that even the Jewish Passover (commemorating God's redemption of the Israelites by the blood of the lamb smeared on doorposts) is significantly recognized at Jesus' Last Supper with His disciples, and it is linked with

⁵ The Vine (Apr 2012): EASTER – CHRIST IS RISEN!

the Lord's institution of a new covenant sealed by His body and blood.
(Lk 22:19-20)

As we enter the Easter Season, our appreciation of it is richer if we see the resurrection of Christ not as an isolated event – *“Oh, Jesus died on the Cross and is resurrected, so we celebrate Easter”* – but as a substantial part of a whole and extensive tapestry of God's blueprint. As we move past Easter into the Time of the Church and recognizing and acknowledging the Holy Spirit (who bears Christ's name: John 14:26) dwelling with us, do we pick up an increased boldness and vigour as the Disciples of Christ on the first Pentecost Day?

Martin Luther once wrote these words in 1539 about Christian preachers: “They may be fine Easter preachers, but they are very poor Pentecost preachers, for they do not preach about sanctification and being made alive by the Holy Spirit.”

On the Day of Pentecost, the empowerment to preach the Gospel intensely and fearlessly was upon the disciples not at their behest but by the grace of God. Martin Luther's words might be dated 1539, but they remain fresh and relevant in reminding us of the important message about sanctification and being made alive by the Holy Spirit that our Lord Jesus Christ has sent to abide with us forever.

Peruse the links as we meditate on the details: Advent → Christmas → Epiphany → Lent → Holy Week → Easter → Pentecost → Time of the Church.

As we commemorate Easter, preach Pentecost or celebrate any other event in the Church calendar, let us be aware that none is a standalone event, but is part of a series. Do not focus on any particular favourite topic alone (in isolation). Do not undervalue the Lutheran liturgical calendar in guiding our spiritual formation based on an all-rounded appreciation of the overall tapestry of God's design from before the First Advent to beyond the Second Advent!

John Lee



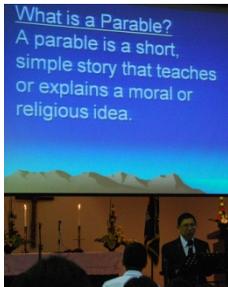


For this year's photography, I called on two new photography enthusiasts, Freddie and Mandy, to help me with the task of capturing all those moments which the boys may want to show to their parents who did not come by.

To many, photography may just be a hobby or at worse a distraction during the service. (I always remind my photo buddies to be discreet when taking photos during the service.) Photography can be used as a tool for evangelism. If we put in Christian songs as



background music and have some shots of the church, the cross, the message on the powerpoint in the DVD which can penetrate into non-Christian homes in a non-threatening way, then we have spread the message somewhat.



I hope that as more people start owning a digital camera, they will join me in taking photos of all church events and together we will reach into the many homes where we cannot go.



Martin Cheah





AN UNUSUAL WORD

Recently the Holy Spirit gave me an unusual word, one that I did not want to hear! He said, "You are bound to a very limited vision of the Lord's ocean of tender, loving mercies. You have endured much guilt, condemnation and fear because you have not allowed the Holy Spirit to reveal the vastness of My forgiving, healing, reconciling mercies. You do not know Me for My tenderness!"

God showed me that this is a root cause for many giving up and falling away. When sin strikes—when Satan comes in like a flood, when you fall into some old habit or sin—the devil creates a bondage. First, the guilt comes flooding in, then fear fills your heart. A sense of total failure and helplessness overwhelms your soul. At this point, most believers run out of grace—because their view of God's mercy is so limited.

Satan comes to you and says, "You've reached your limit. You've confessed your sin time after time. There is no way God will forgive you now, because you've sinned against the light. If you return and confess once more, you'll turn around and sin all over again. So quit now!"

The devil does not want you to see God's ocean of mercy; he wants you to see only a trickle! Because of our ignorance of the forgiving, restoring power of Christ's love, we are destroyed. We run out of mercy for ourselves because we are horribly bound by a limited vision. Our eyes have not yet been opened to the endless mercies of our tender Father! We are so bound by a false, limited view of His mercies, we find it almost impossible to believe or accept what James said: "[We] have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful (full of compassion), and of tender mercy" (James 5:11).

This verse means, "God is easily crushed by our troubles and hurts. He feels our pain and our failures, and He is kind and compassionate to us. He loved us even when we were His enemy. Even when we offend Him, He is quick to help, restore and forgive us."

The word mercy means "kind and compassionate treatment of an offender under one's power." God has the power to damn us to hell every time we

sin; He has us under His control and can do with us as He pleases. And it pleases His tender heart to be compassionate, loving and kind toward those who have failed Him the most.

PERVERTED PRIORITY

Christians who neglect prayer have perverted their priorities. Many believers pledge to pray if and when they can find the time. Yet each week, seeking Christ becomes less important to them than washing the car, cleaning the house, visiting friends, eating out, going shopping, watching sports events. They simply don't make time to pray.

People were no different in the days of Noah and Lot. Their top priorities were eating and drinking, buying and selling, marrying, and caring for their families. They had no time to listen to messages of God's coming judgment. And so no one was prepared when judgment fell!

Evidently, nothing has changed over the centuries. For many Christians today, God remains at the bottom of the priority list; at the top are income, security, pleasure, family.

Beloved, the Lord does not want your leftovers—those little bits and pieces of time when you have only a moment to toss up a quick prayer request. That isn't a sacrifice of prayer.

The prophet Malachi writes: "If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts" (Malachi 1:8).

Malachi is saying, "You're bringing just any old farm animals to sacrifice in God's presence—careless, thoughtless, secondhand gifts. Try giving those kinds of offerings to your governor and see what happens!"

God expected His people to go through their flocks carefully, examining every animal, and choosing the most perfect specimen for sacrifice to Him. Likewise today, God expects the same from us. He wants our quality time—unrushed. And we are to make that time a priority!

I once met with the pastor of one of America's largest churches. This man was one of the busiest ministers I had ever seen. He told me without apology, "I have no time to pray." Yet, what he really meant was, "I don't give any priority to prayer." When I visited his church, I sensed no moving of God's Spirit in the congregation. In fact, it was one of the deadest churches I had ever preached in. How could there be any life if the pastor didn't pray?

No Christian will set aside time to pray unless it becomes his first priority in life—above family, career, leisure time, everything. Otherwise, his sacrifice is perverted!

WHY IS IT HARD FOR CHRISTIANS TO PRAY?

Scripture makes it clear that the answer to everything in our lives is prayer mixed with faith. The apostle Paul writes, "Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6). Paul is telling us, "Seek the Lord about every area of your life and thank Him ahead of time for hearing you!"

Paul emphasizes that we are always to pray first and not as a last resort—going to our friends first, then to a pastor or counselor, and finally ending up on our knees. Jesus tells us, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). We are to go to the Lord first!

Our ministry receives heartrending letters from multitudes of broken Christians. Families are breaking up; people who walked faithfully with Christ for years are living in fear and defeat. Each of these people has been overcome by something—sin, depression, worldliness, covetousness—and year after year, their problems seem to get worse.

Yet, what shocks me most about their letters is that very few of these Christians ever mention prayer. They turn to tapes, books, counselors, call-in radio programs, therapies of all kinds, but rarely to prayer.

Why is it so hard for Christians to seek God for their desperate needs when they are in times of crisis? After all, the Bible stands as one long

testimony that God hears the cries of His children and answers them with tender love.

- *"The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry" (Psalms 34:15).*
- *"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles" (verse 17).*
- *"This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5:14-15).*
- *"All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22).*

These promises are overwhelming evidence of God's care.

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Philippians 4:6-7: ***"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."***

In our CG study on the Book of Philippians, we were asked to memorize the above verse. As is my bad habit, I forget soon after. Then a few weeks later, Joo See was required to undergo a colonoscopy and she became very anxious. She sent out a prayer request to the CG and back came this verse as a reminder from one of the CG members.



In my limited shepherding skills, I am glad that it is God's Word that the CG remembers and are able to apply to their lives. Joo See went through the procedure without any pain and the doctor gave her a good report.

Mad Magazine has this motto: "What, Me Worry?" Mad's motto is based on a care less attitude which is not what we are asked to do. This is completely different from our being not anxious because the foundation of our peace is God.

What, Me Worry?



*Martin Cheah*

*Friday, May 24*  
*JCC Family Day @*  
*Botanic Gardens.*

Picture yourselves on  
the grassy ground,  
With friends and  
family all around,  
Enjoying God's  
sunshine,  
Trusting the weather  
will be fine.

Fun and games for  
all ages we plan,  
Walk around survey  
the land,  
Find the answers to  
the contest,  
Nothing to lose give it  
your best.

No one is forgotten,  
young or old,  
We have two care  
groups so I'm told,  
To take care of all  
your fun needs,  
If only you will be  
there indeed.

So sign up this Sunday, do not delay,  
Pray about it, if you must say,  
Look at the fields, harvest is on the way,  
Are you ready, only \$5 you pay.



**JCC FAMILY DAY COMMITTEE**  
*WE SEEK YOUR SUPPORT. BE THERE FOR US.*



There is a series of 6 movies entitled Final Destination. The basic premise is that there is no escaping death.

However, when you put some thought to it, I think the title is wrong. Destination refers to the

place we are going and death is not the destination but the process or gateway to the final destination. So what is the final destination? Luke 12:5 tells us, *“Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into **hell**.”*

Sometimes when you talk to non-believers, they seem to look forward to death as the end of all suffering. My colleagues sometimes mention that they look forward to the Koreans starting a war or an asteroid will hit the earth so that the world will end and their misery will be over. I always try to tell them that they are not ready because I know the final destination of all who do not believe.

Why is it so difficult for people to believe in Hell? Jesus taught about it while He was on earth. He came to die to save us all from going there. Could it be that most people think they are good enough to make it to Heaven on the strength of the “good deeds” that they do so they do not fear Hell? What about Christians who seem to be in no rush to save souls that are heading for their final destination? Do they also think that somehow these family members, friends and neighbours can make their own way to Heaven? Worse still if you do not love these people enough to do your utmost to show them the way, the truth and the only path to life.

If there was an opportunity, would you bring your loved ones, friends and neighbours to church, to a church organized outing or event? Or do you think that they have been elected to Hell and there is nothing you can do about it? Remember, *“Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sin. .... and I will hold you accountable for his blood.”* (Ezekiel 3:20)

On a recent overseas trip with my boss, while on the flight to Bangkok, he turned to me and asked me how come I do not preach Christ like his classmate did when he was in school? Before I could give an excuse, he

continued about how Christians are required to give 10% to church which is quite a turnoff for most non-believers. That put me off completely as I did not want to argue with my boss on the tithe issue.

However, a thought came to my mind. Is God telling me that I have slacken in sharing the Good News of Salvation to my colleagues? Everytime I try to talk to them, the tithe issue comes up and it is a very difficult issue to discuss because even some Christians do not accept it. I guess they know this is the way to shut me up until the next opportunity I have to bring up Christianity.

A reason for not sharing taken from the book the Christian Atheist. “There are many possible answers, among them the strong desire not to be pushy or disliked. Also, many don’t feel they know enough. And the list could go on, but I believe one of the main reasons people don’t share their faith in Christ is that they don’t really believe in hell. Many of us are out of touch with the genuine urgency.”

The author shared an experience he had with a dying man who refused to listen to him at first. As he was walking away from the hospital ward, he was suddenly overwhelmed with spiritual courage and turn back to the room, with tears in his eyes, he blurted out, “You know what, Mark? That’s exactly what your family wants for you. They want you to rest in peace – eternally.” The man listened to him share the Gospel and a few days later when the author visited him, the man said, “You’ll never know what a difference you’ve made in my life.”

The chapter ended with these words.

When we are open to go wherever the Holy Spirit leads us, he will use us to share the greatest gift of all – eternal life through Christ. And when he does, we may never know on this side of eternity how much of a difference we made.

But someday – on the other side – we’ll know in full.

May I encourage all of us to be ready at all times to share our faith. You will never know how much a difference you can make in another’s life.

*Martin Cheah*

# HAPPENINGS

**Apr 6** – LCCS Flag Day. Some of us escorted the money collected to LCS HQ and helped to count it. The grin on the faces is due to the weight of the coins in the bins.



**Apr 28** – JCC AGM. The AGM went smoothly and was completed within 2 hours. Newly elected council members include Kim Keong and Se Ping. For the record this is the first time a husband and wife team is sitting in the council at the same time.



**Mar 24** – Girls' Brigade Enrolment Service.



**Apr 20** – Ladies Fellowship @ LCOR.

The Dialect Singers were in full force singing 3 songs for the service.

