

The Vine Committee

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As I contemplate on the purpose of life, having spent 85% of it already, Biblically counting (refer to Psalm 90:10), I wonder if I have done all that the Lord had purposed for me? Now on my 60th birthday, I have developed a trigger finger on my right middle finger. No it doesn't mean that I shoot off the stories for The Vine at machine gun speed but conversely, it could mean the end of my writing as my finger is unable to bend easily. I will be seeing a hand specialist one day before I jet off to Cambodia with Yew Moi and the team.

The day after my birthday, I received news that Uncle George had been call home to be with the Lord. He had lived a long and fruitful life. He was among the founding fathers of JCC 46 years ago. The cross hanging in the Sanctuary is his legacy to us. He told me the story of how he picked up two pieces of wood from the swamp that surrounded the church site in those days and tied it together to form the cross.



Now we are all standing at the edge of history. We have the same opportunity as Uncle George to build a new JCC. What legacy would we want to leave for the generations to come? Are you here in JCC at this time by accident? *And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?* (Esther 4:14b) There is a purpose for your life after all.

Now let me sing a song to my dear friend Uncle George whose life of service should be an inspiration to us all at this time – a dawn of a new era for JCC. If Frank Sinatra were here he would have sang it as “My Way” but for us it's always, “God's Way”.

And now, the end is here
Uncle George faces the final curtain
My friend, I'll say it clear
I'll state his case, of which I'm certain
He lived a life that's full
He traveled each and ev'ry highway
And more, much more than this, he did it God's way



Regrets, I'm sure he had
But then again, he didn't mention
He did what he had to do and saw it through without exception
George planned each charted course, each careful step along the byway
And more, much more than this, he did it God's way

Yes, there were times, I'm sure you knew
When he bit off more than he could chew
But through it all, when there was fear
He cast his cares to God who's near
He faced it all and he stood tall and did it God's way



He loved, he laughed and cried
He had his fill, his share of losing
And now, as tears subside, I find it all so amusing
To think he did all that
And may I say, not in a shy way,
"Oh, no, oh, no, not him, he did it God's way"

For what is a man, what has he got?
If not Jesus, then he has naught
To pray the things he truly feels
and God listens to one who kneels
The record shows he took the blows and did it God's way!

Frank Sinatra made "My Way" his theme song. What will your theme song be when you look back on your life? Here are a few suggestions:

God will make a way
Be Thou my vision
Amazing Grace
Just as I am
I'll follow Him

Martin Cheah

In Memory of Panthrabil Samuel George

P.S. George (affectionately addressed as “Uncle George” by many in JCC) was called home by the Lord on 6th of June. It was a sad moment to many of us who knew him well and would be missing his warm presence and fellowship. However, it is comfort for us too to know that he has just gone to live on the heavenly side, next to our Lord Jesus Christ. In memory of Uncle George, I would like to share the following excerpt of an interview that he gave several years ago on the occasion of JCC’s 40th anniversary:



Interviewer: Can you describe how you first came to join Jurong Christian Church?

*George: It's a long story, that Jurong Christian Church... there was a very strong saying that **the government will give only one plot of land in Jurong for a church. So the National Council of Churches, they decided that they shouldn't have a number of churches competing with one another.** One church who can afford to put up the church and buy the land can go ahead and do the job but they have to offer the membership to all members of the National Council of Churches. At that time the Mar Thoma's priest was the chairman of the National Council of Churches and Pastor Daniel Nelsson, an Evangelical Lutheran pastor, he was the Treasurer, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church, they appointed Pastor Daniel Nelsson as a project manager. He asked whether there are any Mar Thomite staying in Jurong and after he got my name and address, he came to the house two, three times. **I was not very keen to come to the Jurong Church because ever since I was born I was a member of the Mar Thoma Church, I was baptised there and I was.... so ...even membership of the church never came into my mind and I was not happy about it.** After the third visit my wife told me that Pastor Daniel Nelsson was a very old man and I think at that time he was in his eighties or something like that. So my wife told me that er this old man*

had been coming to my house very often and you should go ahead and give him whatever help you can. That's how I agreed with him and I came to the church and I started helping him with the construction of the church and generally forming the congregation. I used to visit him in the flat and to do everything in the flat and things...looking for members, and that's how my life started and when the church was formed, it was agreed that all those who are members, all the members of the National Council of Churches could be members of Jurong Lutheran Church. The name "Lutheran" did not come in at that time, just Jurong Christian Church and Civic Centre; because at that time in Germany they gave money for the construction of the church for one condition that there should be a civic centre for the people to come to exercise and study and all these things.

Interviewer: Who were the first leaders of the church at the first time that you gathered together and do ministry work?

George: There were only three Christians in Jurong (Church) at that time. I was one of them, and there was one, Robinson from Mobile Construction Project, he was the second one; and then there was one more, I forgot his name. He was a policeman in the port, PSA. The three of us formed the committee and then Daniel Christian also came in and we were also staying in the same compound.

I note that Uncle George came to JCC "by accident" and unwillingly. At that time, there was no church building and JCC was JCCCC (Jurong Christian Church and Civic Centre). It became JCC only in 1971. How often do we find ourselves in certain positions in life, in certain places or in certain events and circumstances "by accident" rather than by deliberate choice? Uncle was not happy about it, but he nevertheless came and faithfully served God's calling. JCCCC underwent instances of human-created turmoil, but Uncle stayed firmly on track in His service to God here in Jurong concurrently with His devotion to God's service with his brothers and sisters in Christ at Mar Thoma Church. It must have kept him very busy with his work of service to God in two places. For the years that I knew him, he was also dedicated in his involvement with the Bible Society of Singapore. At the interview, he further said:

*"It must be somewhere in 19...er... early 1968 when there was no church building. Opposite the [location at 2 Tah Ching Road] there was a shophouse ... and that one was the church office and we use the premises for worship on Sunday evening, there was an evening worship there until the church dedication that was in 1968, June 28. Just outside the main door, there is a plaque that will give you the date. [And then when the building came up] **And then when the worship service became very regular, few other Christians started coming for the evening service. But they were not baptised, they just came for the prayer meeting.**"*

Uncle George was one of the Scripture readers at the dedication of JCC building on 28th July 1968, which was attended by representatives from various denominations. It is clear from the interview that the JCC building was a collaborative effort between various denominations. It was a thoughtful and unselfish act, chiefly also necessitated by the circumstances. As decades went by, membership grew; and members came and left. Still, it is significant that the church played a spiritual role in the sowing of seeds and the dispersion of God's servants in missions beyond the walls. Whereas some individuals might be prone to murmurings of disaffection with their experiences or tempted to church hop without good reason, Uncle George lived through the highs and lows, the ups and downs, and the unfolding developments in the interesting, boring, exciting and mundane life and events of JCC without wavering in his devotion. From being someone who was unhappy to come to the Jurong Church, he became a committed encourager to younger Christians who came through the doors after him.

Now, after 40+ years, history is repeating itself. JCC is reaching another phase. We are facing a similar situation of planning to erect a new church building on the same piece of land bearing the address No. 2 Tah Ching Road. Interest is rife from various denominations to have a piece of the action, for collaboration in the use of limited space in Jurong and sharing of resources for this new church building to be a dynamic symbol of Christian cooperation for the shared goal of expanding God's Kingdom across denominational distinctives. There will be issues of divergent human views to smoothen out, like 40+ years ago. New pioneers will be raised – second-generation pioneers of JCC as an epitome of denominational equability for the sake having less wasted energy and

more focussed real attention to the Biblical Great Commandment and Great Commission on the foundation of Christian peace, love and unity.



The cross in the picture is the cross we see in our Sanctuary. It reminds me of a line in the hymn *"The Old Rugged Cross"*:

"I love that old cross where the dearest and best for a world of lost sinners was slain."



Our late and beloved brother Uncle George showed his love for the Cross by his faithfulness in the Lord's service in his 8+ decades of fruitful life. It was he who picked up two pieces of wood to tie together to form the cross that is hung on the wall of the Sanctuary. This cross has stayed firm and secure as a visual reminder of the first love in our life – Jesus, the Christ. As we adore our Lord Jesus, we can also take a leaf from the example of faithful Christian service that Uncle George has testified before us.

JOHN LEE

"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him." – James 1:12

Prayer is not a "spare wheel"
that you pull out when in trouble,
but it is a "steering wheel" that directs the right
path throughout.

禱告不是一個“備胎”，
讓你在遇到麻煩時拉出來用，
禱告實在是一個“方向盤”，指示你正確的道路。

I SURVIVED CAMBODIA

Cambodia Mission Trip

The Mission Team comprising of Yew Moi (HOM), Zewen and myself (Martin) together with CS Kong and Nick Wong spent a few days in Cambodia to understand the situation at Kampong Chhnang where JCC is supporting its Livelihood Project.

Zewen went ahead of us to meet up with his BB counterpart in Phnom Penh while the rest of us made our way by MRT to Terminal 1 on Saturday morning. Thank goodness the flight was only 1½ hours or else I may have had to fork out another \$20 to get a wider seat on the Jetstar airbus 330. I must admit that I am a little claustrophobic.

Zewen was at the Cambodia International Airport to pick us up. From the airport, we headed straight to a restaurant for lunch as there is no free lunch on board Jetstar. After lunch, we headed to the Central Market for a short shopping spree. The place is similar to Chak Tu Chak Market in Bangkok. There were lots of T-shirts and some of them with the phrase, "I survived Cambodia" emblazoned on it. Nick jokingly told me not to buy it until the last day.

It took another 1½ hours by minivan to travel from Phnom Penh to Kampong Chhnang. We stayed in the best hotel in Kampong Chhnang, Sovannphum Hotel. It is a budget hotel with bedbugs and gecko. Thank God we were not bitten by either creature.



The next day, Sunday, we were fetched from the hotel to attend church service in the village.....

Here us the rest of the report by **Yew Moi**:

It has been more than 5 years since I last visited Cambodia for a mission exposure trip. I see the changes between then and now. Cambodia has prospered over the years. Phnom Penh is more congested and new buildings have popped up. Streets are jammed with cars and motor bikes.



Kampong Chnnang also has prospered. The road leading to Krum Krus village is in the process of being widened and paved with tarmac. Villagers are wealthier than before. Some church members even have motor bikes and bicycles. Some houses are even re-developed to brick and mortar structures.

Church members of Good Shepherd Church are mainly children, youth and women. The attendance on 9th June worship service was about 50. The estimated population of Krum Krus village is about 2,400. That means many more villagers need to be evangelized.



Observation of livelihood projects in Krum Krus village

Fish farming

The first fish pond the mission committee visited was a large pond which the owner had invested USD1,200 to dig. Lutheran World Missions has donated 1,500 Tilapia fish fries to this villager. It's been about a year since the operation of this fish pond and the fish only grew



to about 300g. The marketable size should be about 500g to 600g. This means that the owner has to wait for many more months before she is able to reap the reward of her labour and investment.

I asked her why it took so much time to grow the fish. She replied that she had no more money for fish food as all her money was invested in digging the pond. All she could do was to fix a lamp at the center of the pond so that flies will be attracted by the light at night and hopefully some flies would fall into the pond and be eaten by the fishes.

We visited another fish pond of another villager who is also a Good Shepherd Church member. It was left dry for some time now, waiting for the rainy season to fill the pond again. We asked him about the previous fish harvest before he released the pond water. He told us the sales

proceed was only USD60. With the yield so low, he probably would not want to invest into this venture anymore.

We visited a third fish pond. Pastor Daniel told us that it is a pilot project done by a NGO. It is a small pond dug out from a villager's vegetable plot. This fish pond is used to rear catfish. In this small pond, there are about 150 catfish fries.

The pond was filled with water hyacinth that acts as food for the catfish as well as shelter from the blazing sun. The catfishes also feed on dried insects mixed with other agricultural by-products which the owner prepared. The feed is practically no cost to the owner. Furthermore, the pond water does not need to be changed because catfish can survive in filthy and stale water. This pilot fish pond seems to be more promising than the first two we visited. But there is a drawback. The catfish does not fetch a good selling price as only the locals would purchase them.



The catfish farming looks like a viable venture but it is not highly priced. So it is not lucrative. Maybe eel farming which is a Japanese delicacy can be more profitable. I have little knowledge in agriculture. So I can only offer ideas to improve or ensure success of the livelihood project.

Chicken Rearing

We only visited one villager who has a chicken coop and is sponsored under the livelihood project. When we visited this villager (who is the owner of the dried fish pond) there were only a few chickens roaming the household compound and few chicks followed closely behind. The villager had just sold off almost all his chickens. I am told that chicken can fetch a better price than fish as the locals prefer to consume chicken and beef rather than fish.

I wonder why this villager chose to sell off most of his chickens rather than to keep some to expand his stocks.

Vegetable plots

We visited a couple of vegetable plots cultivated within the villagers' residential properties. The villagers have to grow various types of vegetables periodically. With their toil, they can earn USD2 per day.

That income is deemed decent considering the fact that an average factory worker only earns USD50 per month.

Their family plots are the limiting factor for the expansion of these vegetable farms.

My mission committee and Pastor Daniel spent the Sunday afternoon discussing about the livelihood project. I made an observation that the rice fields are left un-cultivated and used as pastures for cows. Pastor Daniel said that it is the only time the cows can roam freely in the fields. When the rainy season arrives, they are used to plough the land. Another reason for not utilizing the field during the dry season is because there is not enough water for the rice to grow. So such rice fields can only have one harvest per year. Some fields which are nearer the water sources can have two harvests per year. Fields surrounding Krum Krus village do not have this luxury. I feel that rice fields used as pasture is under-utilizing resources. They can be put to better use during the dry season. Why not cultivate some crop that does not require much water and can be harvested within half a year?



I suggested cultivating peanuts. I am told that peanuts can be harvested within 4 – 5 months. Peanuts do not need as much water as paddy. Pastor Daniel also added that the peanut price is higher compared to other produce like sweet potato. We can persuade villagers to make better use of their rice field to alleviate their poverty. That is the primary purpose of the livelihood project.



Chong Yew Moi
EOM MISSIONS

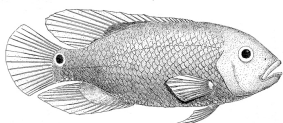
ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS BY NICK WONG

I agree with what Bro. Yew Moi has said that the Cambodians have prospered over the years since I first went there with Rev. William Chang, Bro. Jim Lee, Bro. Freddie Low, Bro. James Tan, Sis. Susan, our late Sis. Dorothy and also some JCC youths doing the fish-farming project & personal-health project. I have forgotten the name of the location but it was not at the Krum Krus village.

My view is that its owner of the 1st fish pond that we visited, though trusting LWM's purpose in helping to set it up, did not have a clear idea of the budgeting necessary to ensure success in the fish rearing. With the lack of appreciation of the financial and practical realities, it would be tough to hope for the Tilapia to grow to mature sizes for selling. I remember that during my first trip there, I saw the children having lunch consisting of only plain rice with some vegetables and fried flies and insects like crickets, grasshoppers or maggots. Such edible creatures met their daily needs for proteins. I think that to the poor Cambodians, feeding their stomachs is the first priority when they catch the flies and insects. Therefore they did not see the importance of feeding flies and insects to the fish and patiently waiting for the fish to grow up to make the fish farming successful. In their innocent thoughts, it is more meaningful to depend on the immediately available creatures for food than to "waste" the food on the fish.

I also feel that the Cambodians do not have a proper grasp of the life-cycle approach to sustainable cultivation of fish or chicken. For example, the idea of selling some (but not all) eggs and chickens for income, retaining some eggs for hatching to chicks and growing to hens and roosters and retaining enough hens and roosters to produce more eggs ... gradually multiplying the chicken population to have more growth in the farm production of eggs. Regarding the fish farming, they should build one pond for fish fries to become small fish and then grow into adult fish for sale; then build another pond for a fresh supply of fish fries to grow up before the last batch of adult fish is completely sold. Having two to three ponds would be sufficient for a family to survive.

I also agree with Bro. Yew Moi that the Catfish farming has no market value. I think it is because the Cambodians do not have the culinary knowledge like the Malaysians to cook the fish in assam or curry spices, or perhaps they cannot afford to buy the spices to cover up the unpleasant smell/taste of the fish that they usually cook by deep frying.



Whether Tilapia, Catfish or eel, it is the same in my view – that the villagers need to up their knowledge and patience for farming success.

They need the ability to handle setbacks and to have the financial aptitude to suitably invest their savings in a promising farming project with whatever help the NGOs or LWM can offer. As the situation stands now, when they dump their savings into the project and see only small gains and have no confidence to test out experimental ideas, they would rather take comfort in what they have been familiar with for many generations; i.e., wait for rainy seasons to plant padi and vegetables.

I agree with the Missions Committee that it is better for the staff of Krum Krus Church to take the initiatives on the ground to develop the Livelihood Project. They have better understanding of their survival needs and how best to work things out according to their capabilities with backing by LWM and by the grace of our God. Missions Committee members and supporters, staff and church members, are all potentially willing participants in the Livelihood Project. We need to respect one another in the team, each with his/her own ideas and decision on the extent of involvement. As Bro. Yew Moi has said, we don't need a Yes-man to be part of the team

I have the idea that a good way to help is to buy a used small mobile excavator from Cambodia or imported from nearby ASEAN region to be put in the Krum Krus church premises for the benefits of the church or villagers. This may be a great help for the locals to set up their own Livelihood Project operation. I am looking at USD 2000 max with delivery, provided that the staff there is able to handle it.

For the joint project with villagers, Krum Krus Church can propose to provide the raw materials and the villagers provide the land space of any size they can afford. As for harvesting time, they can sell their produce to Krum Krus Church for their own feeding programme at a standard market rate or they can sell elsewhere at their own better rate.

For any venture by Krum Krus church, we can put up with 1 to 3 tries for success. If a project fails by nature's cause or by villagers' lack of interest, we can look for other collaborators among the volunteer pool. If the project is successful by the Krum Krus church, then the church staff can decide whether to keep funding the raw material and share the success knowledge with others who are keen to copy the project. Sharing our success is blessing others by what our Lord has invested in us.

Please forgive me for missing out on some thoughts in these suggestions.

Nick Wong

A HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

In the run-up to Father's Day, the newspapers carried numerous stories of Superdads. In the Bible, there is a story of a Super-Duper Dad, a more excellent example than just a super dad. The story is often referred to by the title "The Prodigal Son". In my humble opinion, I think we should not only focus on the prodigal son but also think about the amazing grace of the father.

The poem in the box was written by John Newton (1725-1807), who was also the author of the hymn "Amazing Grace":

Amazing grace! (How sweet the sound)
That sav'd a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

There are three characters in the story: The prodigal son, the elder brother and the father. Do you not realise that the father is the central figure? The younger son abandoned his elder brother and his father after taking his inheritance; now that he returned after suffering outside, it was very reasonable for the elder brother to detest his homecoming. The pain of starvation the prodigal suffered was little compared to the agony of the father's long wait for the homecoming of a son lost to sin. After having expensed the agony and regained the joy of having the younger son back into his loving embrace (never mind

the son being unworthy of any mercy for his abject condition), the father was placed in the middle between two sons for whose reconciliation with

THE PRODIGAL SON

Afflictions, though they seem severe;
In mercy oft are sent;
They stopped the prodigal's career,
And forced him to repent.

Although he no relents felt
Till he had spent his store;
His stubborn heart began to melt
When famine pinched him sore.

What have I gained by sin, he said,
But hunger, shame, and fear;
My father's house abounds with bread,
While I am starving here.

I'll go, and tell him all I've done,
And fall before his face
Unworthy to be called his son,
I'll seek a servant's place.

His father saw him coming back,
He saw, and ran, and smiled;
And threw his arms around the neck
Of his rebellious child.

Father, I've sinned — but O forgive!
I've heard enough, he said,
Rejoice my house, my son's alive,
For whom I mourned as dead.

Now let the fatted calf be slain,
And spread the news around;
My son was dead, but lives again,
Was lost, but now is found.

'Tis thus the Lord his love reveals,
To call poor sinners home;
More than a father's love he feels,
And welcomes all that come.

each other he had to expend further effort with showing the fairness of his love.

Must it be that every sinner comes to his senses only upon suffering? Must it be that every son thinks of his father's grace to seek only in time of need, while every father thinks of his sons through winter chill or summer heat, concerned over their welfare (at times unappreciated), whether they are cold or sick, whether they are hungry or fed, or whether they are buoyant in their jobs or insecure in their hopes?

The story can be titled "The Super Dad and his Prodigal Son" or "The Super Parent and his Prodigal Child". The central character in the story can well be changed to a Super Mom who abounds in grace and mercy towards her child who strays, a child whose homecoming she waits patiently and ever so patiently in silent agony – the mental anguish surpassing the physical pain at childbirth and far surpassing the torments that children like to grumble they suffer from the "pesky" nagging, poking and nudging they receive. There is a key similarity between parent and child:

- To parents, the nagging, poking and nudging are centred on the children's interest, even if there is mistake in the approach or a mistaken grasp of the interest.

- To children, the grumbles are also centred on their own interest to break free, to be free to be what they want to be and to do what they want to do, even if there is a mistaken grasp of the interest.

Freedom has a positive desirable side and negative underside. The case of the prodigal son is that the freedom he wrenched out of his father – whereby he got money to spend, independence to do anything and everything unrestrained – turned out to be the cause of his woe.

As children of God, we have a Father in heaven looking over and after us. He has laid down great guidance in His Word for our lives. Are we often found wanting in obedience? Are we at times rebellious in seeking to have unrestrained freedom based on our self-centred set of "wisdom"?

June is the month in which Father's Day falls. It is a month for our reflection on the meaning of Father's Day. In the Bible story, the day when the prodigal son turned his back on his waywardness must have made the day a happy one for the father. Call it a happy-father's day or a happy Father's-Day – do you see the double joyful meaning when you remember and celebrate Father's Day? Do not forget the (Heavenly) Father above all fathers!

JOHN LEE

I GATECRASHED THE DIALECT LEADERSHIP TEAM RETREAT

14-15 June @ Tanjong Puteri Golf Resort, Johor



A man impersonating as Psy (the Korean singer of Gangnam Style fame) crashed the Cannes Film Festival in May. When the real Psy, who was in Singapore, heard about it, he was gracious and magnanimous not to be angry. He tweeted, “Seems like there's another ME at Cannes...say Hi to him.”

Puteri (Johor Baru) Golf Resort from 14th to 15th June (Friday & Saturday). The whole team comprised Deacon Peter Cheong & Jessie, Martin Cheah & Joo See, Alice, Lucy, James & Susan Tan, Kin Siong & Seline, Wilfred & Julie, Peggy, Thomas and Cassidy. (See: My name is not in the list.) They had worked hard in the dialect ministry for years, serving the Lord faithfully, without a break. Therefore, they very much deserved this their first retreat to enjoy a break from the toil of ministry and reinvigorate themselves. I came to know about it and believed that it would be a great party, especially being a maiden retreat in years.



It was great that the whole team went along, except for one (Thomas) who did not make it. Not being a part of the DLT, I did not deserve to be there. Since Thomas stayed in Singapore, my imagination got wild in my head to pretend to be Thomas to gatecrash the party at Tanjong Puteri where I had never been to. (If you look at Thomas and me together, you will surely see our good resemblance to each other, if you would simply stretch your imagination a little. 😊)



Alas! Members of the DLT were too sharp-eyed to be fooled, and they caught me out in no time. A fast and furious interrogation ensued, and I sweated to offer up my mitigations: I meant no harm, just some fun. I had lots of idle time in my

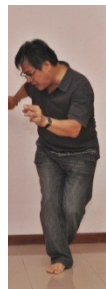
hands, so my imagination got too fertile and I was tempted too much by the tantalizing prospect of a great treat awaiting. Also, I wouldn't want to miss out on the Fathers' Day celebration I knew they were going to have. Oh yeah ... the story of Psy and his imposter at Cannes inflated my imagination that I could pull off the same stunt easily ...”

All my mitigations went into the dustbin straightaway, and a quick tweet by the team's deacon was sent to Thomas, their Chairman who was in Singapore, to seek instruction on what they should do with me. Thankfully, Thomas (the real one) was gracious and magnanimous. He tweeted back, “Seems like there's another ME at Tanjong Puteri ... say Hi to him.”

When the Chairman said so, what could the others say? This was how, by a stroke of opportunity (not luck, which I don't believe in), I was able to enjoy myself tremendously at the party I gatecrashed (not being a deserving part of the DLT). Thanks to the DLT for their benevolence for accepting my presence as a “pretended part of them.” ☺



Forgive me for being much absorbed in the fun at the retreat that I now seem to be still in fun-induced delirium and unable to get into the serious business of reporting seriously the great retreat that the DLT had. While fun and food was all I had in mind, the organiser of the retreat actually had other ideas. The fun and food was just a means to lull all into a relaxed mood for the serious business of team-building and cultivating bonds to brace the DLT for the mission ahead to grow and glow the dialect ministry. You may choose not to believe some of the things I have said above in my fun-sloshed state, but a picture speaks a thousand words. So I shall invite you to look at the pictures that would save me thousands of words to detail the whole package of real fun, food and (not forgetting) the serious business we had at Tanjong Puteri.



Our deacon, Peter (the rock) can really rock to Hokkien hymns and rap lyrics, games and food. He is such an affable person to be around for a party; yet, he is truly a weighty one among

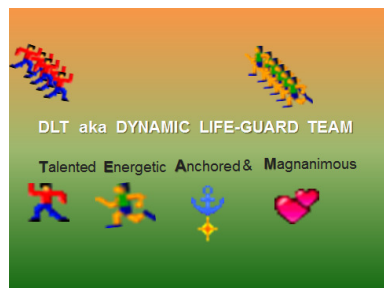


the rocks in the team that holds up the dialect ministry through both trying and happy times. At the retreat, he grabbed the opportunity well to share a thoughtful message from Col. 3:1-4, 12-17. This he did with a serious mien. How easy it seemed for him to switch from an easy-going fun channel to a no-nonsense business channel. He exhorted, “The Christian leaders in Colossae were like us, having their problems and concerns. Apostle Paul encouraged them - sharing with them the gems of spiritual insights, teaching them about the right Christian conduct and attitude in work of service. Likewise, leaders in the DLT are faithful in people-centred service with Christ as the focal point.”

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”
(Col. 3:1-4)

Deacon told the **T.E.A.M.** that the retreat was a time for reflection and impression. At the reflection session, which was a time for sharing, discussion and learning, we dealt with questions of common human tendencies – feeling hurt or hurting others, murmuring unhappiness, etc. We shared on managing situations with biblical truths as our guide to keep us going. I realised that the issues of human tendencies encumbering the Christian impression we give to the world is common to all Christians in their works of service sharing God’s love. The DLT (Dialect Leadership Team) has an appropriate nickname – **Dynamic Lifeguard Team** – for its mission in saving lives for eternity. It is impressive indeed that:

- The **T.E.A.M.** members are blessed with multiple **T**alents that they share collaboratively and selflessly for the mission.
- The **T.E.A.M.** members are no longer young, yet they possess so much **E**nergy that they put to use glorifying God in their work of service. Being “not young” also means that they possess much wisdom.



- The **T.E.A.M.** members are able to gel together, finding **A**nchor from God’s love and their love for Christ to put aside individual quirks and foibles with a **M**agnanimous spirit.

It was a privilege for me to sit in on their official meeting conducted at the retreat, whereby I got to appreciate better the challenging tasks of our “Dialect Ministers”. A 3-member committee (comprising Peggy, Lucy and Julie) was elected at the DLT meeting. They have got work cut out for them.

So much that our affable and serious Deacon shared from the message of Paul to the Colossians was like the

substantial nourishing food we ate – it needed time for us to gradually digest. In the case of spiritual food, it is good spiritual nutriment that will sustain the leaders of the Dialect Ministry as they continue their dedicated service in Christ through the thick and thin of ministry issues and interpersonal relationship. **So far, the Dialect Ministry has seen progress through the years past to become a recognizable contributor to the life of JCC and a builder of the spiritual lives of those who serve and those who are served. No doubt the ministry will continue to grow and glow, going forward in accord with its mission to proclaim the Gospel of Christ Jesus to the dialect-speaking group of pre-believers and be a blessing to the community.**

DLT RETREAT SHARING 14/6/13

**MY
SUMMARY
IMPRESSION**
 SCRIPTURE PASSAGE:
 COLOSSIANS 3:1-4, 12-17
**I'M GOD'S CHOSEN VESSEL
I CAN BEAR FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT
CHRIST IS MY MENTOR & PARTNER
CHRIST'S GIVEN PEACE RULE MY HEART
ST PAUL'S INSTRUCTION MANUAL FOR SERVICE
LOVE IS VITAL KEY FOR BINDING ALL THINGS IN UNITY
I CAN DO EVERYTHING IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS**



God had His way with this gatecrasher. As a member of the hoi polloi in church, it was a blessing to mingle with the glitterati (the distinguished members of the DLT team) and get myself quickened not just by the Scripture reference but also by the lessons on cooperation, mutual help and trust, and expectations. These lessons were cleverly woven into the games with

balloons and “crossing the river”. The lesson must have been driven home, when one team member volunteered a smiling “confession” for not doing well enough in helpfulness in one of the games – a point was certainly well made for everyone to reflect on what we may actually fall short inadvertently in real settings of co-operative endeavours in ministry.

Well, there was a little slack in the bonding in a sense. The team travelled to Tanjong Puteri in a convoy of 4 cars (total of 18 persons, including myself, Esther and Seline’s children). On the way, the cars did not bond well as they wandered off on different routes. On two other occasions of going shopping, again the cars lost sight of one another and ended up in different places. Of course, we could simply self-soothingly pass it over as a bit of enjoyable adventure as part of the retreat experience.

All in all, the retreat was an enjoyable and enlightening experience for me; I believe it was for all the other participants too. It was relatively easy for me to be a gatecrasher, compared to the hard work put in by the whole DLT in organising the retreat. The car-owners who made their cars available, the members who took care of the logistics, those who handled the resort booking, the time-planners who ensured that the full team would be able to make it to the retreat and be back in Church for the dialect Sunday Service, the personal sacrifices that were many ... - each and every team member took the retreat earnestly. Thomas also made the effort to drive in on the first day after his work, but unfortunately he was thwarted by the overwhelming kilometres-long traffic jam at the checkpoint.

I thank the DLT for their kindness in welcoming me, and I salute them for their selfless service in reaching out to the dialect community. May God bless them to be a greater blessing.

JOHN LEE



A Short Story

To my surprise, many are unaware of the medical condition called Trigger Finger. According to the doctor who treated me, this is a very common condition that affects people over forty. I know that Beng Lay and Wilfred had this condition before me.

Probably due to heavy usage of the mouse over the last few years, I developed this condition.

The doctor gave me three options to treat the condition. Do nothing about it since it is not critical; take a steroid injection or go for surgery.

I did not think it wise to bear with the pain when there are possible treatments which can alleviate it but surgery seems too drastic as a first choice. So I settled to have the steroid injection.

The doctor warned me that the injection would be very painful and people I know who had taken the jab also confirmed it. However because I was going to Cambodia, the doctor recommended that I delay the treatment until I return for fear of infection. Meanwhile, I had time to think about the pain and my mind became troubled.

We sent out prayer requests to our CG members and others. On the day of the treatment, Joo See accompanied me, she probably thought I would faint from the pain. Anyway as I lay my hand on the table and waited on the doctor, I tried to gird my mind. He began to apply iodine over my whole hand and then he took the needle and jab me at the base of my right middle finger. No Pain! I thought this must be the local anesthetic but the doctor said it was all done.

Thank God for His Grace and Mercy. Now I wonder if everyone was pulling my legs about the pain.



Trigger finger is a painful condition that causes the fingers or thumb to catch or lock when bent. Trigger finger happens when tendons in the finger or thumb become inflamed. Tendons are tough bands of tissue that connect muscles and bones. Together, the tendons and muscles in the hands and arms bend and straighten the fingers and thumbs.

A tendon usually glides easily through the tissue that covers it (called a sheath) because of a lubricating membrane surrounding the joint called the synovium. Sometimes a tendon may become inflamed and swollen. When this happens, bending the finger or thumb can pull the inflamed tendon through a narrowed tendon sheath, making it snap or pop.

Source: WebMD website



Martin Cheah