

For internal circulation only

Volume 05/2014

The Vine Committee

Editor:

John Lee

jpbislee@gmail.com

Printer:

Nick Wong

digi_ics@yahoo.com

Writers this issue:

John Lee

Nick Wong

Ellesse Mah

Photos:

Martin Cheah

Nick Wong

HOM'S REFLECTIONS

This month the HOM takes a break because the rest of the team have provided sufficient material to fill up The Vine. There were so many activities in May that

there was no time for me to reflect on them. It started from the 1st May with an outing to Sembawang Park, followed by weekly Road Shows at the various Lutheran congregations to raise funds and will end on 31st May with a wedding.

Perhaps in all these rush of activities, we have forgotten to slow down and rely on Our Father in Heaven. There is no time we say, so few people doing so many things and so many more things to do in the upcoming months leading to the exodus to Eden school. Maybe we are being cleverly distracted using the same people to do so many activities. For example, Young Kwang is practically a stranger to JCC having spent all his Sundays at the various congregations sharing about the Rebuilding and then he is also taking care of the Church Retreat in June.

Probably you think you are unable to help in any way because you lack talents, I can't believe that but supposing it is true, then there is still one thing you are able to help – PRAY. While the workers are busy running around, you have the most important role, as a Prayer Supporter. Every event needs someone to pray that the people will respond.



We need people to respond to the Dialect Outreach on the 8th June, the Church Retreat from 12th to 15th June, the Golf Tournament on 24th October, the Gala Dinner on 29th November, and many other events. We need your prayers to turn the peoples' hearts.

Martin Cheah

Is Man Progressing or Regressing? (The Tragedy of Man)

“Singer Solange Knowles, Beyonce’s kid sister, apparently forgot her pants when she attended a film premiere in just an oversized shirt and jacket in February. So did Kate Moss, except that she also turned up the heat in a see-through body suit at a recent cocktail party in Paris. Or how about Heidi Klum, who happily let her ...” – Tee Hun Ching, Editor of Straits Times supplement, URBAN, Apr 5, 2013.

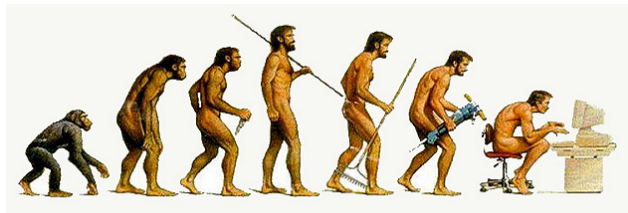


I leave the rest of the above quotation to your imagination; or maybe, no imagination is necessary by today's minimalist and exhibitionist fashion trends. Ms Tee was lamenting about the increasingly dare-to-bare addiction of women who constantly “make public what should remain private” by showing themselves in varying states of undress.

The Straits Times Stomp website some time last year published a photo of a woman sporting a top at Jurong Point which was awfully revealing especially when she was trying out a mop on demonstration. It was acceptable fashion, I suppose, to the male companion beside her. The “brazen show” certainly attracted lots of attention and likely caused lots of sore eyes!

I have more to say about the progression /regression of human attire later. Before I go further on this, let me digress with a look at the picture below,

which is a parody of man's advancement and decline in another sphere. Technology can be a bane instead of a boon. The regression of human



behaviour tied to the advent of gadget dependency and computer addiction

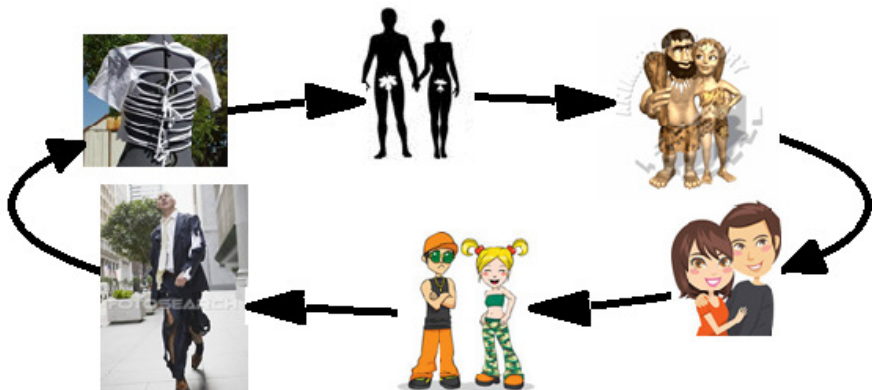
– with the rise of the technophiles and worshippers of electronic games – is very clear, but it seems that nobody has a good answer to it.

Cartoonists have come out with many variations to show human decline. Here is one example from The Economist many years ago:



The picture makes me think of watching the 1982's BBC film "The Face of Famine" to contemplate the stark contrast of hunger that still exists in parts of the world today while slavery to gluttony that food abundance encourages in some other parts of the world is causing a decline of man's health and mortality. Juxtapose a picture of food abundance against a picture of people suffering starvation, and then take a look at the bizarre scene of people queuing up for hours to buy McDonald's toys who then chuck into the dustbin the full packs of paid-for meals that come with the toys. The symptom of the regression of our morals is stark!

Now, I come back to look at the "evolution" or "regression" (depending on where the starting and ending points are) of clothes that people wear, observing the amount of body cover or exposure:



I had thought of putting on display here worse examples of avant-garde fashion seen in public places – poor-person's "minimalist" wear, overstated décolletage, low-rise waistbands with whale tails, and garments that seem to be precariously hanging by a thread, etc. On second thought, I decided

against it in anticipation of The Vine's censorship scissors. Talking about scissors, an idea comes to mind about setting up business with second-hand jeans bought over from the karang-guni man¹, have them cut up liberally (yes, very liberally!) with a pair of scissors and then put them on display in my shop windows as latter-day high fashion with a high price to match (higher price = greater demand).



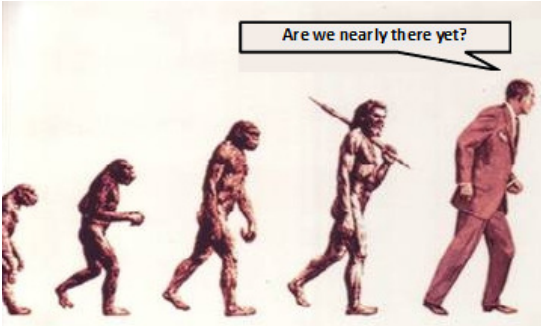
At times, I wonder what purpose clothes are supposed to serve.

In the beginning, when Adam and Eve found themselves naked, they were ashamed. So the desire for body covering made from leaves, animal skin and cloth developed. The fashion industry grew in complexity. Later, the complexity seemed to reverse course and people ventured into simplicity – wearing less and less. People pay good money to buy ripped jeans and denims. There are even youngsters who think they look cuter in cut-up “clothes” which can be more accurately described as rags. It has become harder for the conservatives to avert their eyes on the buses, trains and streets with the modern-day boldness of showing more and covering less. I am showing the less-bizarre examples here (the more-bizarre ones have to be concealed).

This idea of showing more skin is also in vogue among high fashionistas who can easily spend thousands of dollars for each set of dress to be worn only once, and such a dress is made up of but a few pieces of cloth sewn together to provide a semblance of covering to stay just within the law on decency, with or without insurance against wardrobe malfunctions. Some viewers think that talent shows are verging on fashion shows or flesh parades. To be fair, there are talents on show, but they are overwhelmed by the alternative attractions that are unleashed to catch the audience's eyes as if the talents on their own would not draw enough applause. It is

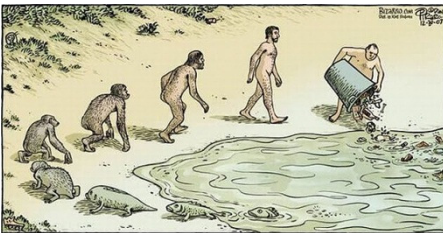
¹ Modern rag-and-bone man going door to door collecting used items for recycling.

unfair to the talents, isn't it? If the "look good with less and less covering" fashion sense grows, shall we one day be catching up with some other countries in the practice of having no-pants day, naked day and workers working nude as a requirement (even if it is in non-sexual sense)? Here is another cartoon:

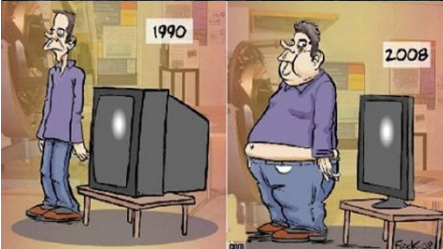


The modern man on the right asks, "Are we nearly there yet?" Apart from our physical progress as the human race, we may pose the same question regarding our progress in all spheres. Maybe the word "regress" is more appropriate. If regression is

the path of our habits, perhaps we will never be "there".

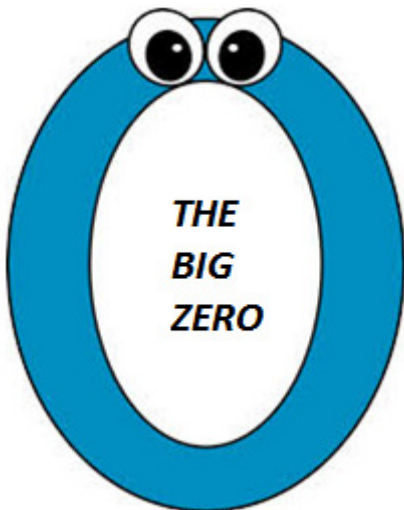


The technological explosion within just a decade is huge. We have reaped the gains, so we think; but we fail to take notice of our losses as we trade away our true well-being for indulgences and bad habits. Man thinks that he is the smartest creature on Earth, but his diehard habits, immoderate pleasure-seeking and indiscriminate pushing at the frontiers of science and technology are like ... well, let me think:



I thought to myself, "Look, I have grown and increased in wisdom more than anyone ...

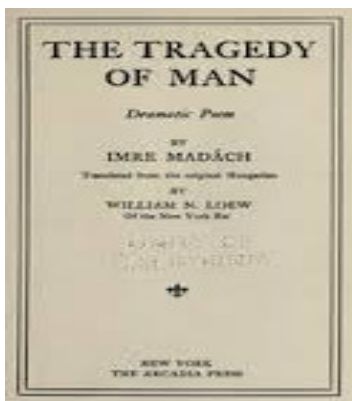
before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge." Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind. For with much wisdom comes much sorrow; the more knowledge, the more grief. – Ecc. 1:16-18



In Dec 2009, Paul Krugman (Nobel Laureate, economics professor) wrote in New York Times that the decade past was “the Big Zero — the decade in which we achieved nothing and learned nothing.”

He added, “Will the next decade be better? Stay tuned. Oh, and happy New Year.”

Today, have we begun to achieve anything and learn something? Are we still scoring a Big Zero as a reward for all the stresses that we put up with?



In 1861, Madach, a Hungarian playwright published his work “The Tragedy of Man”, parodying Adam, Eve, Lucifer and God. In that play, which is still staged today, Adam looks into a hopeless future for Man, and he questions the purpose of his existence. “God” responds to his despair with these words,

***"I have told you, Man:
strive on, and trust!"***

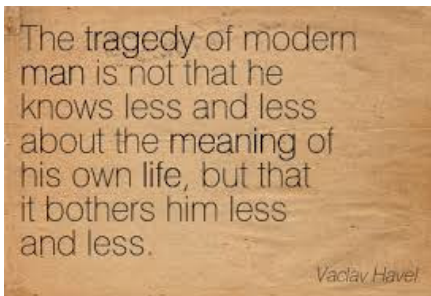
Here is a comment from an article in The Economist (17 Dec 2009):

“But Madach’s 19th-century verse contains an insight that belongs slap bang in the 21st. In the rich world the idea of progress has become impoverished. Through complacency and bitter experience, the scope of progress has narrowed. The popular view is that, although technology and GDP advance, morals and society are treading water or, depending on your choice of newspaper, sinking back into decadence and barbarism. On the left of politics these days, “progress”

comes with a pair of ironic quotation marks attached; on the right, “progressive” is a term of abuse.”

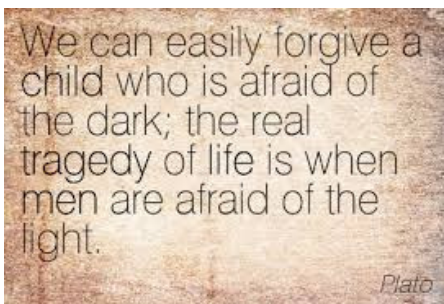
In Madach's play, what do the words of “God's response” to Adam mean? We may give them either of the following interpretations:

- **With cynicism** – “Man, haven't I told (warned) you. Strive on (in your meaningless chase), and trust in yourself. See what is going to happen.”
- **With encouragement** – “Man, keep on striving (for the better); don't lose hope. This I have told you. Trust me!”



These “words of God” (“***I have told you, Man: strive on, and trust!***”) are fully-charged and weighty – worthy to meditate on. What is the real message? Does Man still have hope by putting his trust right? Or is Man going to continue heeding the calls of the world and trusting in his own “striving”? Is Adam assuaged over his

questioning about the purpose of his existence and the futility of Man's struggle? Is it good to be relentless in aiming for the shifting peak in the world with everyone else doing the same and pushing the goal ever further and further out of reach?



Perhaps, God is speaking to us through “The Tragedy of Man” in which His words of advice to Adam may be received by us as “a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.” (1 Tim. 4:9-10).

JOHN LEE

COMING EVENTS

双亲感恩午宴

Parents' Appreciation Hi-Tea

Yunnan View Restaurant

@ Grand Ballroom

(Next to Jurong Japanese Garden)

6月8日 星期天

下午 2点 30 分至 5点

8 JUN 2014 (Sun)

2.30 pm to 5.00 pm

Admission by Ticket 票价: \$18.00

联络人: 耀彼得(Peter) 9816 3264

黄赛琴(Seline) 9658 7243

父亲
母亲



讲员: 陈赞美牧师

Rev

Emily Tan

- 入门礼 Door Gift
- 游戏 Table Game
- 说唱 Gospel Rap
- 诗歌献唱 Praise time
- 感恩时间 Appreciation



Organised by Jurong Christian Church Hokkien service

裕廊基督教会(方言)事工主办



Our Mission Trip to Tomorrow's Hope Orphanage from 17th to 22th April 2014

In February, Freddie and Lissa started planning for this trip to Nias. I decided to join them.

I had joined them previously with the Vocal Heart group that taught harmonica, guitar, electric piano, performing, and speech & sound to the children in 2012.

Young Kwang, Pei Shan, Ellesse with Wendy (her ex- colleague) and I had a brief meeting at Freddie's home to plan the activities for this trip. Freddie decided to teach the children to draw and paint with water-colour and also organized a mini marathon run (1.5km for younger boys and girls, 2.5km for older girls and 3.5km for older boys) for the children inside Tomorrow's Hope compound. Lissa planned to teach the children Arts and Crafts using laminating machines.

The team donated a laminator and a pack of A4 laminating pouches. We also gave each child an A6-size writing booklet.

I volunteered as cameraman and also to help out in some areas.

Young Kwang volunteered to cook a Hainanese chicken rice meal.

The trippers were Freddie, Lissa, Ellesse, Pei Shan, Young Kwang, Wendy, Marvin (LCOR), with Keng Shin and Annie Heng (both from Vocal Heart) and Frank (non-believer) and myself.

Some Taman Jurong CG members and tripper's friends donated some monies for new pairs of school shoes that the children needed.

We had a smooth check-in at Jet Star's counter for the 9.10am flight.

We arrived at Medan's airport at 10.15 am. Then we changed to domestic AirWing's 2.30pm flight to Nias Island (Gunung Sitoli airport).



Waiting to Check-in at Changi T1



Arrived at Gunung Sitoli Airport (Nias)

We were received by Pastor Michael and some children helpers. We headed to Tomorrow's Hope orphanage and arrived at around 4.30pm.



Children helps to carry our luggage

All our meals were prepared by Tomorrow's Hope staff and children for the whole trip. The children also helped in washing and cleaning up the canteen.



Michael & Sintha joins the Team



Social worker cooking with Sintha



Children waiting to give Thanks



Children waiting to give Thanks



Children helping to serve



Giving Thanks to Our God

Young Kwang cooked a very tasty Hainanese chicken rice for all of us plus a surprise Mud Crabs supper treat for the trippers, keepers and helpers in the orphanage. (The taste and freshness of the chicken and rice made me forget that pictures had to be taken.)

Wow! yummiie! Thank You, Bro. Young Kwang.



“Mud Crabs” for Supper



Yummie! Yummie



Yummie! Yummie!

The children had their nightly Devotion after dinner. Sunday Service at Tomorrow’s Hope orphanage was led by the older children who took turns to lead the service, and play the guitar and keyboard. Occasionally Pak Pari, an elderly volunteer from Jawa gave spiritual guidance to the children and shared a message.



Devotion or Worship Service are led by older children



Girls participating in the Worship Service



Lissa sharing a message during Devotion nite



Boys enjoying Worship Service

During our visit, we had joy seeing the senior children so interested and involved in the Ukulele & Guitar playing taught by Annie Heng.



Annie playing & teaching the senior children on the Ukulele



senior children practising with the Ukulele



Older boys practising with the Guitar



Children practising the Electric Organ that was previously donated by Vocal Heart

During the Arts & Crafts and Water Colouring programmes conducted by Freddie & Lissa, the children were obviously very interested and focussed. (They do not have Arts class in their school.)



Freddie conducting Painting lessons for the older children



Guiding the older children to draw before painting



Lissa teaches the younger children on Water Colouring

Freddie selected a few good paintings by the older children and we took a group photo for their remembrance of their efforts. As for the actual paintings, Freddie brought back to Singapore to sell to raise funds for the orphanage. Lissa chose some better coloured pictures, laminated them with help from Pei Shan, Wendy and Ellesse and gave them back to the younger children as a reward for their efforts.



Freddie with the older children & their selected pictures



Children diligently drawing. Selected works were laminated & given back to the children

Some Taman Jurong CG members and tripper's friends donated monies for the purchase of 48 new pairs of school shoes that the children need. Their school shoes were nearly worn out from their daily 20 to 30 minutes walk to and from school and need to be replaced half yearly. Thanks for blessing the children with the new school shoes .



New pairs of school shoes



Sintha and Clement sorting out the sizes & colours of shoes



Each child will receive his new pair of school shoes



Child received her new pair of shoes



Children trying out their new shoes



Children with their new shoes

The children have their routine compound cleaning and maintenance of the premises. They have their school work, they also have to take care of their vegetables and chicken farms which cover a wide area. Despite all the hard work, there is fellowship time when they learn useful lessons from God's Word. For recreation, the boys play football.



Chicks that are fully grown in their coop will either be sold or kept for own consumption



Clearing the land for the new "putchuri" planting



Pineapples Harvesting



Vegetables Farming



Gather for fellowship



Free time for soccer game

We had a beach outing with the whole orphanage at Hoya beach which was about 15-minute drive from the orphanage, There we had a chance to mingle. Young Kwang, Freddie and Frank went to soak in the water and play with the children. It was a fun and relaxation time for the children & the visitors.



Hoya Beach



Arrived in van & pickup



Pak Pari with the children



For a group picture talking



Ps Michael & Sintha



Pei Shan, Ellesse, Wendy & Lissa relaxing by the seaside



Having a good rest

At the mini-marathon, I saw the excitement on their faces and the hope to finish among the top three places. For the older boys and girls, they had a very exciting race.



Juniors girls at starting point



Juniors boys at starting point



Senior girls Group 1 at starting point



Senior girls Group 2 at starting point



Senior boys at starting point



Junior girl running towards finishing point



Junior boy running towards finishing point



Senior girl running towards finishing point



Senior boy running towards finishing point

And I saw some of the children doing trial runs in the compound before the race day to train up their stamina. I was encouraged that they took the effort without anyone telling them to do so. I am reminded that to be Christ-like, we must also make an effort without anyone telling us to do so.



Freddie sharing some tips on running skills at end of the mini - marathon

We also attended Good Friday service and joined the children in the Easter Nite Celebration.



Good Friday Service at Tomorrow's Hope Orphanage



Children giving a performance during Good Friday service



Trippers serving dinner on Easter Sunday Nite



Children receiving good food on Easter Sunday Nite



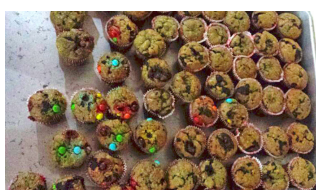
Children receiving good food on Easter Sunday Nite



Easter Nite Goodies



Banana Muffins



Chocolate Chips Muffins



Children preparing for the Easter Nite Celebration



Young Kwang helps to distribute water-melons to the children



Giving each child an A6 size writing booklet



Happy faces after receiving the booklet



Youth invites Ellesse to sing along with him



Children enjoying the Easter Nite celebration & Goodies

There was a mini-marathon prize presentation during the Easter Sunday Night service. The prize presentation was so real to the children that Freddie could feel their hands shiver during the top two trophy winners' photo taking.



Top 3 junior boys winners



Top 3 junior girls winners



Freddie could feel their hands shiver during the top two trophy winners' photo taking



Top 3 senior boys winners



Top 3 senior girls winners

The mission trippers also sang a farewell song during our last devotion night.



Keng Shin also shared on our last nite trip devotion as Clement helped to translate it into Indonesian.



Mission trippers sing (**I have decided to follow Jesus**) as a tribute song to the children during our last nite devotion



Singing (**I have decided to follow Jesus**) with Hand-Signals



Clement

During this trip, I witnessed how the Lord brought a non-believer to become a full-time volunteer at the orphanage. He had followed NTU's mission trips to Tomorrow's Hope a few times before deciding to volunteer himself. Even his parents came to Tomorrow's Hope to witness his work and give him their blessings. His name is Clement and he has been serving at Tomorrow's Hope for almost 1 1/2 years. He can communicate in fluent Indonesian language.

This trip also helps to encourage Pastor Michael Christian, his wife Sintha, and children Sarah and Hannah who had followed their parents into this ministry. They were especially happy to see some of us, JCC members, and to receive the financial contribution to the orphanage.



Frank, Young Kwang, Ps Michael, Sintha & Marvin having fellowship Sarah Hannah

Finally, on the journey back, Young Kwang and I made a 4-hour trip to the southern beach which is famous for surfing. We also had some sightseeing at a few other interesting places.



Having local hand-made Wanton Mee breakfast at the town. The stall owner claims that he is a Cantonese.



Sorake and Lagundri beaches are located in southern Nias about 12 km from Teluk Dalam, Traditional houses with tomb in their courtyard, Fish vendor doing business in Teluk Dalam.



Entrance to **Bawomataluo** which means "the Hill of the Sun" is 1313 feet above sea level. The famous stone jumping was intended to prepare young men to be ready for war. Nowadays, jumping over the stone (2 meters high) has become a cultural performance.

This is my third trip to Tomorrow's Hope and I want to thank our Lord Jesus who has guided me through my mission trips to Nias Island and to Phum Krus Centre in Cambodia to bring love, grace and hope to the under-privileged. **Amen!**

*Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.
Psalms 126:5*

Nick Wong

Below are some of the children currently staying at the Orphanage



My First Mission Trip

- to Nias

After hearing a lot about the experience of Freddie and Lissa in their mission trips, Pei Shan and I also felt inspired to go experience the work in the mission field. Thus we asked Freddie and Lissa to arrange this mission trip to Nias.

So, with the help of Freddie and Lissa making the arrangement, a group of us (11 persons) set off for Medan on 17th April. From Medan, we took an internal flight to Nias island to visit the children at Tomorrow's Hope – an orphanage headed by Pastor Michael Christian. It was a joy to see the cheerful faces of the children as they welcomed us warmly to be their guests.

We had the following activities over the few days:

- A Good Friday Service
- Art painting and a mini “cross-country race” for the children – guided by Freddie
- Learning music – taught by Annie
- Devotion time led by Lissa, Keng Shin and the older children
- Picnic at Hoya beach which is about 2 km away from Tomorrow's Hope
- A delicious chicken rice lunch prepared by Brother Young Kwang.
- A singing session with the children during the Easter celebration.

I relished the commitment everyone showed in all the activities. It held us so close together as one big Christian family. Thankful to God for giving Pastor Michael & his team wisdom, strength and patience to train and discipline the Nias children while letting them experience the joy of love too. I felt touched by the unconditional love that Pastor Michael and his team have for the children.

The children are taught to care for one another. The older children mentor the younger children, teaching them to wash their own clothes and their own dishes after each meal. Each child is taught to clean and take care of the premises. The children's eagerness and willingness to learn new things are the drive that motivated everyone to share blessings with them.

We also thank God for blessing us with the wonderful time we had on this trip. It has given me a lot of reassurance and inspiration in life.

We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. – Hebrews 3:14

I am looking forward to the next trip.

Ellesse Mah

