

The Vine

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HOM'S Reflections

John mentioned that it was better to have travelled by coach rather than to drive in to Desaru. There were of course advantages to taking the coach and there were also adventures in driving through Malaysia.

We started off by heading towards the Woodlands Checkpoint. About 400m from seeing the sign, we were off course towards Tuas. At the second link, we had an easier time to get through customs but that was offset by the half an hour spent getting there. Once across the second link, we were actually lost because we had not

planned to go by this way and the maps we had did not cover the way in from Tuas.

The adventure began as we traversed the terrain looking for the road to Desaru. Eventually we did reach our destination, the last to arrive but still in time to eat lunch. A lesson to learn. Either patiently go through the planned route or be prepared to change route.

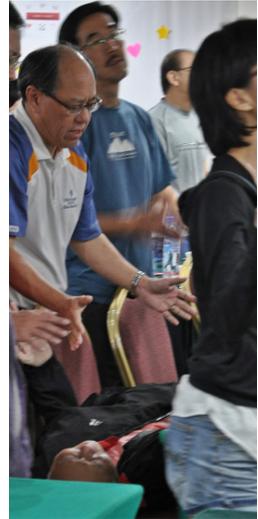
Talking about travelling on the roads, one day as I was driving towards Keppel Road from Tuas, I saw the message "Massive Jam after Clementi", so I took a detour and headed towards West Coast Highway instead of using the AYE. As I filtered off the AYE, I saw most cars heading towards Clementi, ignoring the warning message. It struck me that this was like people heading to Hell, ignoring the warning message and not changing route. Why was that so? Could it be that these drivers did not know how to change course or they were willing to enter into the massive jam or they did not see the message on the notice board above the highway?

Warnings are all over the news if we care to notice it. In the Straits Times on Wednesday, 25th June, there was an article mentioning that the H7N9 virus will spread through Asia and a few pages later there was another

article that mentioned the Ebola virus is spreading through Africa. With MERS in the Middle East and dengue on our own shores and now these epidemics expected to spread uncontrolled, is it a warning of things to come?

Besides the travelling, another lesson to learn is that in this digital age, one cannot travel without quite a number of chargers. For me, I had to bring chargers for my camera, video, rechargeable batteries and phone. Without links to a power source, all these equipment would be useless. Likewise, if we are not linked to our power source, we will soon fail to be effective. That is why we need to go for a retreat to get recharged and be refreshed so as to be effective for God again.

It was a time of fun, food, fellowship and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Some were literally floored by the Holy Spirit as they fell to the ground and others began to sing in tongues or cry. May this movement of the Holy Spirit in Desaru be brought back to JCC. As we return to our normal lives, I hope those who had received a special touch spearhead



a revival back home.



Did you get yourself into the group photo of about 500 people in front of JCC building? It was raining on Saturday until about 4.00 pm. We set up the chairs and tables at 4:30 pm on Saturday and it didn't rain

from then and the whole of Sunday. We had very fine weather for the photo shoot. Then on Monday, it started to rain very heavily from morning till about noon. Do you think it was coincidence or was God in the picture?

Martin Cheah

The JCC Family Camp 2014 at Desaru (12 – 15 June)



98 campers from JCC went for the camp. Those of us who travelled by bus arrived at the Lotus Desaru Beach Resort only minutes before the scheduled lunch time of 12.00 noon. Thankfully, the Chairman of the retreat was understanding of our famished state after the long



journey from Singapore and did not hold us up for more than a few minutes with his briefing. Quickly, we adjourned to the restaurant for a satisfying buffet meal. On hindsight, we who travelled by bus were “the smarter ones” relative to those who chose to drive and who were caught up by significant traffic jams at the Woodlands and Tuas checkpoints. They had to help themselves to the “leftovers” on the buffet table.



Rev. Anthony called this camp a “happening” camp. Lined up for the retreat were a Bible-reading competition, a singing competition, games time, free time to explore the water activities at the beach, family fun at the Water Theme Park, daily three buffet meals, several workshops with practical

topics (Bringing up Kids, Finding a Life Partner, Financial Planning, The Golden Years) ... It was indeed a happening time for us to unplug ourselves from the stressful life at home, to have unmolested time for fellowship and bonding, and to let our hair down in pleasant surroundings with comfortable accommodations.



For the record, Jennifer Chee won the top prize for the Bible reading and Chong Wong Mui was the champion



singer with his rendition of *Amazing Grace*. Congratulations to them!

The retreat was a time to share not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. (1 Thess. 2:8) No heavy schedules of burden, but a relaxed atmosphere, a relaxed body and a relaxed spirit were all the great ingredients that made the combination of sharing lives and sharing the solid teaching from the Word of God a cinch to get across. Our speaker, Rev. Keith Lai, delivered strong messages on the following themes:

- The authentic Christ-like disciples
- The Paradigm Shifts
- The impact of 21st Century Christ-like disciples
- The legacy of 21st Century Christ-like disciples



Preceding each message, he would show a short video clip portraying ordinary scenes in life that are actual or advertising depictions, and he would ask what message the video conveys to us. Obviously, different persons in the audience would visualize a different message. God can speak to us differently by the same means. In my mind, our lives are filled with different daily, hourly,

minute-by-minute and second-by-second scenes. I ask myself this question, "Does each scene carry an obvious message, or is there hidden in it one or more deeper lessons that can benefit us if we care to meditate on how the scenes individually as well as in combination have affected us presently and laid the ground to affect our lives by the path we choose to follow or amend?"

The Authentic Christ-like Disciples & The Paradigm Shifts

The authentic Christ-like disciples are not made in an instant. We learn from Rev. Keith the reality of training phases like how Jesus Himself made disciples. The message on Paradigm Shifts helps us to understand the existing patterns of discipleship-making or discipleship expectations

whereby we can recalibrate for greater effectiveness as we assimilate the unforced rhythms of grace:

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.” – Matt. 11:28-30 (MSG)

We learn not to follow the ways of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees in the Bible who “crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden.” (Matt. 23:1-4 NLT)

The Impact of 21st Century Christ-like Disciples

Rev. Keith gave us this statement to reflect on about the impact of 21st-Century Christ-like disciples: “The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.”

What the statement means is that fire does not exist if there is no burning act. Similarly, a church does not exist without mission, and mission entails 21st-Century Christ-like disciples making an impact on the world to bring in followers of Christ in obedience to the Great Commission. Christ-like disciples cannot behave like some ushers in a church in India who turned away Mahatma Gandhi because he was considered “not one of them” and not one among “permitted” attendees in the church. Rev. Keith quoted Mahatma Gandhi as saying: “When I meet a Christian who is a follower of Christ, I may consider it [i.e., becoming a Christian].”

The message on right attitude was succinctly put across to 21st-Century Christ-like disciples wannabes. The four irrefutable elements in the Great Commission are:

- It is intended to be a lifestyle for every Christian.
- It includes evangelism.
- It includes building Christians all the way to maturity.
- It includes reaching the entire world.

Yes, as the speaker said, discipleship as a journey has its seasons and stages of faith. We are on the journey, but in which season and at which stage of faith are we? Are we burning furiously so that the existence of the

fire is visible far and wide? The following are the questions and answers Rev. Keith presented to us:

- What is the best time to plant a tree? 20 years ago!
- What is the next best time to plant a tree? Now!
- When can JCC start becoming a disciple-making church, faithfully praying, giving, and sending?

He didn't provide the answer to the last of the above questions. We all know that it is the most important question for which we have to give our own answer, and we know what it should be to effectively impact lives as 21st-Century Christ-like disciples!

The Disciples' Legacy of the Holy Spirit

John 20:19-22 records that:

"On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

"After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

"And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Rev. Keith tells us that it was a time when the disciples were facing a major crisis. They were discouraged (hiding in fear), despaired (lost all hope) and disillusioned (sceptical and wounded). Like the OM ship *Logos* which was commissioned in 1970, shipwrecked in 1988, decommissioned as a result but later re-commissioned as *Logos Hope* (a replacement ship) sailing the world on its mission for Christ; the disciples shifted from commissioning (when first called) through decommissioning (fading off of zeal) to re-commissioning (restored by Christ)



– delivered from fear to joyful boldness, recovered from despair to hope, restored from woundedness to wholeness and transformed from scepticism to faith. (*“And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”- John 20:22*)

We need to rediscover the Trinity, Rev. Keith exhorts:

- Christ points to the Father’s promise of the Holy Spirit and what’s more to come.
 - a. Jesus promised the disciples much more! (John 16:12-13)
 - b. Jesus taught the disciples to ask for more! (Lk. 11:9-13; Matt. 7:10-11)
- Christ points to the Father’s promise of the Holy Spirit and what’s more to expect.
 - a. Jesus reminded the disciples to expect more! (Lk. 24:48)
 - b. Jesus commanded the disciples to wait for more! (Acts 1:4-5)
- The disciples received the promised gift of the Father!
 - a. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit ... (Acts 2:1-4, 33, 38)
 - b. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit ... (Acts 4:8)
 - c. When they had prayed ... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit ... (Acts 4:31)



Awakening to the Holy Spirit

In the hall of the Lotus Desaru Beach Resort, it was not just a speaker speaking and listeners listening. God the Father, God the Son and God



the Holy Spirit was in our midst, and the moment of awakening to the Holy Spirit was nigh. At the end of the final message by Rev. Keith, a prayer call was made. One by one, members in the audience stepped forward and the first to be prayed for was “slain in the Holy Spirit”. As the prayer session proceeded, the number stepping forward became a “deluge” and as the queue got longer, it was clear that Council members had to be called upon to lend their support to Rev. Keith to attend to the prayer needs. More members came under the power of the Holy Spirit and were “slain”, which means that they fell to the ground being completely overcome. There were some who were “not slain” but shared that they did feel the power of the Holy Spirit move in them.

A.W.Tozer said, “I want to boldly assert that it is my happy belief that every Christian can have a copious outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a measure far beyond that received at conversion, and I might also say, far beyond that enjoyed by the rank and file of orthodox believers.”

Benefits of Retreat

In conclusion, I share with you the following PowerPoint slides that Rev. Keith shared with us about a retreat:



I trust that the slides speak on behalf of most of the participants at the JCC Family Camp 2014.

JOHN LEE



A Retreat of Firsts

It was a church retreat of firsts for quite a few of us. For some, it was the first time attending a church retreat, the first time having a family-centred theme for a retreat, the first time having most of the 28th BB Company officers joining, and most importantly, the first time experiencing and seeing the Holy Spirit coming down upon us in a very tangible way.



This retreat has been a different one for me as I not only came as a church member, but also as a Primer in the Boys' Brigade. I used to attend church retreats as a young kid and would spend it playing with all the other children. But this time it was different as I am almost reaching adulthood. This means attending the adult sessions and not the children's one.



Summing up all I learnt from Rev Keith Lai's messages, I finally could relate my own experiences with the "wall". Previously I could not give a name for it, nor could I totally categorise it as backsliding. Seeing as to how everybody faces their own wall, I am more confident that I can overcome mine just as others have overcome theirs. The last message was also a powerful one for me as I could feel the Spirit in a tangible way. While the praying went on and the singing continued, I felt quiet and felt something I haven't felt for a long time. I felt as if I were floating in calm water and all I could see was blue. My breathing slowed and I began to sway as if I were moving with a gentle current. All that time I could hear everything going on around me, but I continued to stay in that state of peace. My personal troubles tried to invade my mind

again but they were fought off. I believe that was the Holy Spirit bringing me into the peace of God. Having had a stressful year of enlisting into National Service, my mind was constantly stressed. Yet it was all taken away in an instant by His power. I know that I can experience that peace again when I ask in His name.

On the BB side, we excused ourselves from the Gift Discovery sessions for our own “soul-searching”. As the company has been facing many problems of



late, we used this retreat as a means of evaluating our work so far. With sharings by Mr Chin and Captain Zewen based on the life of the Apostle Paul and the Great Commission, we were reminded again that our ministry



was not just about running Saturday programmes, but to touch the lives of individual Boys, just as Jesus had done. We also had a sharing session on why we were still serving in the BB for so long and each of us shared his own struggles and concerns. I pray that JCC will continue to pray for the 28th Company as we improve ourselves and our work in order to fulfil the mission set for us.

Yet the BB group also chose to join the retreat to show that we are also members of JCC foremost and BB members second. Church members may have seen us every Sunday, but we had little time to interact. With the exception of myself who grew up in JCC, most church members do not know the names of our younger officers and primers. Hence as we went into our various groups, some taking up leadership roles, we were given a great opportunity to interact with JCCians. We were also seen in action during the games and especially during the Funtastic Night. (Yes we can be crazy too, even for a quiet and reserved person like myself). The 28th Company is not a standalone ministry, and that is why we strive to connect with the rest of the church more often by attending church events whenever we can. I hope that we BB members will



not just be seen as ministry workers, but as fellow JCCians working together for His glory. Rest assured too that we will work hard in our own capacity for the building of NJCC.

All in all, this retreat has been a meaningful one and we all enjoyed it. May we be empowered to change using what we learnt and experienced to see JCC through the coming difficulties. In His name, anything is possible.



Samuel Chong



JCC Family Camp 2014

Essentially, this Family Camp is all about connectivity amidst the noise and hurriedness in our crowded life; it is really about how well we are connected to God and our fellow men.

The morning started with gloomy and stormy weather, but the rains stopped in time for us to make our way to the Camp Venue – Lotus Desaru – safely and on time. It is comforting to know that God is totally in control of everything and we can be sure that He will take care of this season of JCC as we prepare to move to the old Eden School in a few months' time and make way for the construction of the new JCC building at Tah Ching Road. His love and faithfulness endure forever.



FUN Creative Activities

We started off the Camp with fun creative Camp Hat making and Camp Poster coloring. I am always impressed by the creative fun filled leadership of Iris.



Come & See

Rev. Keith shared with campers the 3 areas that render Christians ineffective:

- 1) Being always in a hurry and hearing lots of unnecessary noises that hinder our Christian life. All have impact on our Christian walk and often take a toll on our spirituality.

- 2) We are not having enough quiet moments, but have too many distractions that cause us to be unable to discern the correct voice that is from God.
- 3) Our life is crowded with too many activities, making us easily lose our focus for Kingdom Living.

One of the Spiritual Formation exercises we did in this Camp was the practice of Lectio Divina, meditation, reading and digesting God's Word. This exercise certainly taught me to dig deep into the Word of God.

Come & Share

Along with the practice on meditating, reflecting and chewing on the Word of God, we were also to ask the Holy Spirit to richly manifest in our Spiritual Life.

We saw and bore testimony to the presence of the Holy Spirit when we witnessed some of us being slain by the Holy Spirit or singing in tongues.

Guardian Angel

All praise and thanks to our Creator God who send Guardian Angels into our life. And aptly, we practised the role-play of being "guardian angels", each looking out for someone whose name he/she was given. Each male camper would be a "guardian angel" to a brother; and each female camper, to a sister.

Let us be a blessing to someone in JCC whom we have not had the opportunity to show our care and concern before. Be a "guardian angel" to one or more persons you adopt (seek out) to care for, and bless them as God blesses you.

Tony Koh



JCC Dialect Ministry's

Parents Appreciation High Tea

In celebration of Mothers' Day (May) and Fathers' Day (June), the JCC Dialect Ministry organized a Parents' Appreciation High Tea session at Yunnan View Restaurant (within the Fairway Country Club) on Sunday, 8th June. Representatives from both the English and Chinese councils were also present in this event.

The turnout was huge. Thank God for everything. Praise our loving Lord. Before, during and after the event, we could see God's hand leading us all the way.



We started the program with a short worship time of praising God.

In total we had 289 participants (including Dialect Ministry members) plus 5 helpers from Taman Jurong CG (Kin Cheong, Poh Kiat, Yew Moi + 2 sons). Thanks to them for their helping hands during the makan time, with buffet food catered. Rev. Chung Tzu Lu led us in saying grace for the food.



Bro. Tan Kiat Soo (ft. of pic.) sharing a personal testimony.

Rev. Emily Tan making her prayer call.

There were many pre-Christians present and they had the opportunity to hear a good message delivered by our guest speaker Rev. Emily Tan and a personal testimony by brother Tan Kiat Soo from the Chinese section of JCC. Our dialect choir and musicians also did well to present some songs and music. There was also a lively interactive Hokkien

Rap reminding Christians in our midst to fulfill Christ's commission to be fishers of men. During the altar call, eight persons went on stage for prayers. There were others who raised up hands but did not go on stage. We will look into how we can continue serving them.

Everyone had the joy of taking home valuable goody items. Congratulations also to the prize-winners in the blessings draws. Many thanks to our sponsors for the cost of the high-tea tickets for our regular dialect worshippers and for the door gifts and prizes.



A few days before the event, both Deacon Peter and James Tan were already busily ferrying lots of stuff to church. On the Sunday morning itself, Cassidy and Esther had already downloaded most of the cartons of gifts and prizes into their car. The items were well-liked. Some participants did not hide their surprise at the quantity and quality of the items.

We also have some strong men to thank. Kin Siong was very creative and innovative to devise a “bridal sedan” for the handicapped. I could sense their gallantry for the Lord when Kin Siong with Patrick, Roger and Lian Kup skillfully lifted Uncle Chua from the ground floor to the ballroom at the second level.



Many thanks to all the helpers without whom it would have been impossible to pull off such a memorable event with such a strong participation. Yes, we received many compliments and encouraging feedback from participants.



When I reached home, I reflected on the whole event. I was so energetic, and could not sleep, as I

pondered God’s leading hand upon our Dialect Ministry Team. Delightful WhatsApp messages were pouring in late into the night, musing over the blessed event. I agree with what Deacon Peter said, that God is preparing us for bigger events in NJCC.

Hallelujah!





June 10 – The Straits Times reports that at least five primary

schools have scrapped the parent volunteer scheme.

The reasons given by the schools are that they don't have enough volunteer opportunities. I see it as not necessarily a bad decision, instead of simply reducing the intakes of volunteers to fit the few volunteer opportunities, to can the scheme (in these schools) which has been criticized from time to time by people who prefer to add quotation marks to the word "volunteers" as a sneering at the so-called volunteering for rewards. Volunteering for rewards is not pure kindness from the heart, the critics claim.

Please
and
thank
you
are still
magic words!

In an effort to promote courtesy, the Singapore Kindness Movement set up a pop-up Kindness café at One Raffles Place (June 9). The idea is to encourage customers to say "Please" and "Thank you" whereby their cuppa would cost \$2 instead of \$5, a saving of more than 50%. Wow! Anyway, as to be expected, there would be mocking by some at this effort at promoting courtesy, with one pointing out that no one would pay \$5 for a cup of coffee at a pop-up stand anyway and another saying that the "Please" and "Thank you" would sound very unnatural. Would someone who "forgets" to be "courteous" and is asked to pay \$5 for a coffee quickly redeem the promised discount by immediately spurting out the magic words of courtesy? Despite the criticisms from others, I appreciate the good intention of the Kindness Movement. Even if there is any area to be improved on, the café project ought to be valued for prompting our thoughts about kindness.

It is right to practise courtesy. I try hard although, admittedly, I do have moments of failings (on a bad day, perhaps; pardon me for being just human). However, it is not uncommon for me to be misunderstood as being rude because of my loud voice. Much as I try to tone down my voice to a dulcet quality, I do not always succeed in being aware of my disconcerting voice level to the hearer. Hearing professionals tell me that people (like me) with hearing loss tend to speak loudly without knowing. Once, I spoke on the phone and the other party courteously ☺ told me there was no need for shouting. ☹ Instantly, I became aware of my

“discourtesy” in my tone and quickly apologized with explanation why I was loud but did not mean to shout. (I have to work harder at my problem.)

Now, if I do pass by the courtesy café with a longing for a caffeine fix, I wouldn't mind saying “Please” and “Thank you” audibly. Nevertheless, I have to be careful in case my voice (unintentionally or carelessly) plays me out and I am heard as saying “PLEASE!” and “THANK YOU!!” Would it help if I use “May I ...” as a polite expression of a request for service instead of using “Please” to be appreciated for my courtesy with a return smile from the service staff even if I dispense with the reward of a \$3 discount? If I cannot trust my voice and tone 100% even if I take care to be attentive, I must necessarily pray the kind people I meet would be kind enough to discount my verbal “exclamation” and give courtesy credit to the gentle countenance on my face and the pleasing smile on my lips.

If kindness has
falseness at its base,
it is no longer
kindness. It is labored
courtesy.
Piero Ferrucci

It is fine by me if people show courtesy or perform charity out of the kindness of their hearts and they see the rewards as an incidental response of appreciation. Hopefully, the rewards do not become the deciding factor for kindness or diminish the character of volunteerism. **God's people should stand out to proclaim His praise**

by their testimony of genuine (NOT artificial) courtesy. (Isa. 43:21)

Honestly, who among us do not wish to be treated with courtesy, whether we are service members or clients?

In the church, many volunteers serve faithfully and willingly, sacrificing time, sleep and personal money at times. Things don't always work out 100% well and there is always plenty of room for critics among the beneficiaries of the volunteer effort to pick faults.



It is courteous (considerate) to note that what would cheer up and encourage the volunteers who give selflessly out of love for God to do more in the service of others is a

THE GOLDEN RULE
Do unto others as you would
have them do unto you
Matthew 7:12

pleasant smile or a sincere word of appreciation from those whom they serve, even if there is no reward of a discounted participation ticket for the next event in return for a “Please” or a “Thank you”.

Most among us are service members on one occasion and service clients on another. We all fully appreciate the enlarging effect of mutual courtesy as we apply the sound advice of the Golden Rule in Matt. 7:12, whenever we provide service or receive service.

It is acceptable if someone decides to *belanja*¹ you a cup of coffee for being so kind and courteous with your words; but ... but never expect the cuppa as a “must have” reward for your kindness or courtesy.

Thank you for reading. **Please** enjoy a cuppa.



John Lee

Some photos from 47th Anniversary



¹ Malay word meaning “give someone a treat”, sometimes written and spoken as “blanjah” in Singlish.

God loves a CHEERFUL Giver

Many times I hear people explain this portion of scripture with an emphasis on the word CHEERFUL. I wonder what is the opposite of it. God hates a GRUDGING Giver?

There is an emphasis on CHEERFUL because each man should give. Therefore it is not a question of should I give or not but whether I give it cheerfully or not. Sometimes I think when we emphasize CHEERFUL, we are forgetting that we are required to give. Some think that if they don't feel cheerful then they are not required to give. Some feel how much they give is dependent on how cheerful they remain. They do not believe in giving until it hurts.

I think the emphasis on CHEERFUL is wrongly placed. We are supposed to give and we should not give it reluctantly or feel forced to do so. We have to learn to give until it hurts and yet we feel cheerful about it. At this point, I believe that God loves the cheerful giver because he gives willingly, sacrificing his own needs for the sake of others.

Like I always say, I could buy a better DSLR camera, many times over, maybe one as good as Nick's, if I reduce my giving to the Lord's work. However, I give and I don't feel reluctant about it. In fact, I want you all to give too and feel cheerful about it. Maybe I can't take that once in a lifetime wide-angle shot but thank God, He provides someone else who can.



*Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for **God loves a cheerful giver.** And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 2Corinthians 9:7-8*

And when you give, God is able to provide for all your needs so that you can continue to give more. That is my understanding of 2Corinthians 9:7-8

Martin Cheah

May 1st

Many families, mostly from the JCKK joined us for a fun time at Sembawang Park.

There were many team games to help the people who started out as strangers to end up as friends. To build up on the new friendships, we will be organizing another event on 6th Sep with a mid-autumn

theme, like green lantern making using recycled materials, mooncake making and lots of fun and games.

We will be inviting all these families back for this event and even for our Christmas party at the year end. Pray that they will all come.

Martin Cheah

