

The Vine Committee

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One

Wednesday night during the break at the DE class, Justin asked me what I planned to do when I retire. This is a question that has passed through my mind a number of times but with no answers or plans, so Justin's question just added another unknown to my already unknown future. Justin suggested that statistically we could live longer, maybe to 90 even.

The next morning, as I went through the obituaries in the Straits Times, I was so surprised to find an ex-colleague of mine whom I have lost touch with for more than 30 years since I left PSA. He was only 1 year older than me. That gave my retirement plans a rethink. Maybe I don't have a long retirement ahead of me. Not long after, the big news was that actor Robin Williams had passed away at age 63. Does it all sound very dark and morbid?

Life - long or short, it really does not matter. The oldest man recorded in the Bible is Methuselah, who lived 969 years. Yet if long life was a requirement for great achievements, then why did Jesus live only about 33 years to achieve his purpose and mission? If Jesus had lived longer, wouldn't he have achieved more? What about you and me? How long will it take for us to complete serving our purpose for this life, if there is indeed purpose in life?

Psalm 138:8

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

My friend must have been a very high achiever because he had many obituaries covering a full page. When we were working together, we were just Audit Assistants working and studying together. He successfully completed his ACCA and must have moved up the ladder from there. In a comic I drew 30 years ago, he was the Queen's Knight, Lance.



Obviously Robin Williams was also a very high achiever during his lifetime. He brought much laughter and joy to the world through the wacky characters he played marvelously on TV and the movies. Why is it that he was able to bring joy to others but not to himself? Did he lack something?

When the thought of suicide pops into your head, it is planted there by the Evil one. It is not your own idea.

The hymn, Abide with me, written by Henry Francis Lyte reveals the struggles of the writer who suffered from TB. Yet because of his trust in God, he was able to persevere to the end. Besides being a funeral song, it is also sung during the FA cup finals.

So living a full life is not dependent on its length but on how you have lived it with God. Have you thought about how long you hope to live to achieve the maximum for your life? If you believe in the purpose driven life then fulfilling God's purpose for your life will be a life worth living. Is rebuilding NJCC God's purpose for your life?

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
 The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
 When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
 Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
 Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
 Change and decay in all around I see;
 O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour.
 What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
 Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
 Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
 Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
 Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
 I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
 Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
 Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
 In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Martin Cheah

Walking in God's grace, bonding through recreation and service in Christ



It was a rewarding fun-filled outing time with Peggy, who has a bubbly outgoing personality and is currently the Chairperson of our Church's Outreach and Evangelism Committee. All four of us – Peggy and her husband John, my wife and I – kicked off the Hari Raya Puasa public holiday on 28th July with a meet-up at Jurong East Bus Interchange early in the morning. We then proceeded to Jem Mall for some amusing photo-taking.

It was the first time we had such an interesting outing. After the photo-taking, we went to McDonald's @ Great World City for breakfast. Then we watched a movie together at the Golden Village Grand. Thank God we were on time for the movie "Touched by Grace." This movie event was hosted by LCCS for all church supporters and potential supporters of the LCCS services to the community.



The movie is about a group of High School teenagers bullying a schoolmate, named Grace, who had Down's Syndrome and a deadly heart condition. The bullying with humiliation resulted in her death.

Despite being bullied and dying, the Down's Syndrome girl, Grace, was full of grace in forgiving her friends. She held no ill feelings against them.

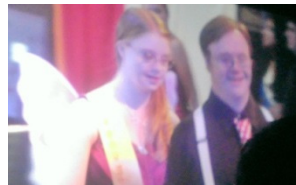
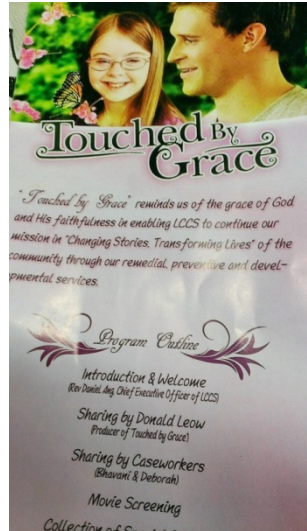
Despite her medical conditions, she was a loving and lovely girl, full of innocence, sweetness and beauty.

In the beginning, the Down's Syndrome girl was disliked by her schoolmates. In the end, the schoolmates repented for treating her badly. Grace was like a butterfly that started out awkward, rejected, but later showed off much beauty and grace to win over hearts.

Grace, by her gracious character, changed the attitudes of her friends. In this era, people tend to worship superficiality. They are swayed by external beauty. The innate beauty of Grace was the all-powerful factor that transformed her friends. To Grace, they were friends indeed, for she did not see them as her enemies.

Let us prayerfully walk the talk in living out our Christian preaching. Let us accept every person no matter how they look on the outside, to see their beauty inside (in their heart and soul). I believe that everyone in the cinema was deeply touched by Grace and awakened to think through our blessedness by God's amazing grace.

We walk in God's grace and demonstrate our grace by our attitudes to others. We work harmoniously with one another, and encourage one another by our fellowshiping and bonding activities.



The picture shows co-labourers in the outreach activities having a joyous time together in a pre-Autumn program making mooncakes and plastic flowers.

We are blessed to be a blessing. Together we serve a risen savior. We are stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1 Peter 4:10)

Tony Koh

CELEBRATE NATIONAL DAY, BUY TOTO, SUPPORT JCC REBUILDING

Yes, I know. The title of this article is not quite right. Thank you that I have got your attention. Please read on to understand what I want to share with you. ☺

How did you celebrate National Day?

One Way

You bought Toto. Singapore Pools came out with the \$5m “National Day Draw” held on 1st August. That sure was a tantalizing sum of money. It was called “National Day Draw” for good measure. If you had hesitated to gamble, you would have eased your mind with the idea it was not gambling you sought, but celebrating



National Day by participating in the National Day Draw. You would be contributing revenue to Singapore Pools which would channel its operating surpluses to charity. You celebrated National Day by doing your small part for charity, didn't you?

Hey, I believe you did dream beyond doing charity through Singapore Pools. You imagined what you could do with a jackpot win! The Fundraising Committee of the JCC Rebuilding Project would be much lightened in their toil if you were to be so blessed to be a blessing by drawing a cheque in good favour of the JCC Rebuilding Fund, generously sharing half of your National Day Celebration prize. Maybe a special donor's plaque would be put up in a prominent location in the New JCC building to memorialize this great blessing to the church.

Oh wait! Actually two persons won the jackpot prize in that gambling celebration Toto draw. They shared the \$5m prize, so each received a handsome sum of \$2.5m. Were you one of the winners? Maybe you are too shy to admit; but I guess that you are most likely someone who lives in Choa Chu Kang or works near Suntec City for the winning tickets were sold at these two places.

According to public information, the prize pool for each Toto draw comes from 54% of sales. This means that 46% of sales are gains by Singapore Pools after deducting the prize monies. For the “National Day Draw”, a sum of about \$11m was given out as prizes for the six prize groups. If this represents 54% of sales, then the actual sales must have amounted to \$20m. With each board of 6 numbers for a draw costing \$0.50, the total number of bets sold (each bet = a combination of 6 numbers) must be 40m. Hence, out of 40 million bets, only 2 persons came out to be able to turn their Toto millionaire dream into reality. That is theoretically a 0.000005% chance, even less than the Mathematical odds of 1 in 8145060 for winning the jackpot. The 40m figure also suggests that many bettors placed multiple bets with hope.

Mathematically, for a 1% chance to win, it is only on average, not absolute that you will win in one out of 100 tries. The fact is that if you try 1000 times, 1 million times, 10 million times ..., the more times you try, the closer will the number of wins be to 1%. So with the Mathematical odds of winning the Toto jackpot at 1 in 8145060 (${}^{45}C_6$), you have to bet in multiples of 8145060 for a jackpot win closer to the Mathematical probability.

It is obvious, but I say it anyway. Singapore Pools would not be so foolish to offer the millions of dollars in prize money to entice foolish bettors who pour in their ~~gambling~~ celebration funds to satisfy their ~~gambling~~ celebration itch on such a wonderful occasion as Singapore National Day if it was not assured of reaping multiples of that in sales.

Now, I am on the lookout for you the winner, especially among those living in Choa Chu Kang or working near Suntec City. As a member of the Rebuilding Fundraising Committee, my intent should be clear. ☺

Keeping Godly wisdom firmly with you

Oh, actually, if you didn't play the National Day Celebration Toto game, I must congratulate you for your wisdom not to have risked your monies despite the tantalizing promotion by Singapore Pools. Looking at the abysmal winning odds, you must have saved quite a bit compared to those bettors who betted big sums in the hope of improving their chances only to be disappointed. (Be mesmerized by the snaking queues at Pools' outlets every time a special big prize money is on offer!) You are blessed indeed with Godly wisdom, and I urge you to be a blessing to the church in your ways.



Obviously, JCC Rebuild needs a lot of church members' generosity in order to have the "New JCC" project take off. God can just wave His hand and money will pour down from the skies. But would that be encouraging His children to be hands-off in rebuilding God's house? Would that be God's will?

Someone had a dream that God wanted her to have a windfall and be a blessing to JCC Rebuild. In the dream, God said, "Go ye TOMORROW to Singapore Pools headquarters (only the headquarters and not any other outlet) and place a bet on Toto System 12."

A System 12 bet costs \$462 (being for ${}^{12}C_6 = 924$ ordinary bets). Obediently, the dreamer did as she fantasized the hope of striking it rich with so many bets. In prayerful hope, she told God, "If you really make me win the jackpot prize in tomorrow's draw, I will surely donate at least half the sum to build your new house at 2 Tah Ching Road."

When the Toto result was announced, she found out that she had won. No, not the jackpot, but a Group 6 prize of \$20. What a consolation! ☹️ (She lost \$442.)

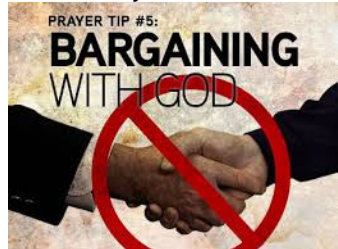
The story is just fiction, but we know that human ambition does at times sink people into despair over unfulfilled hopes that were unfitting to begin with.

Who in the Bible were bold enough to bargain with God? I think of Abraham who bargained with God with regards to Sodom, but the city was destroyed (probably because the condition of having 10 righteous in the city (Gen. 18:32) was not fulfilled. Moses bargained with God who then relented and did not bring on His people the disaster he had threatened (Ex 32:14). Jacob bargained with God with a vow (Genesis 28:20-22) and God blessed him, with a number of hard lessons added.

Should we bargain with God? One opinion is that we shouldn't, because God is not a genie but is sovereign to bless as He pleases. The Message Bible says:

“Don't bargain with God. Be direct. Ask for what you need.

This isn't a cat-and-mouse, hide-and-seek game we're in. If your child asks for bread, do you trick him with sawdust? If he asks for fish, do you scare him with a live snake on his plate? As bad as you are, you wouldn't think of such a thing. You're at least decent to your own children. So don't you think the God who conceived you in love will be even better?” – Matt. 7:7-11



In the biblical cases, the bargainings were communications with which men made known their wishes and it was up to God in His sovereignty to bless as He pleased. It was not the bargainings that persuaded, but the nature of the pleadings that was pleasing enough or not to elicit the (positive or negative) response from God. Thus, as The Message Bible conveys, there is really no need to bargain – you just need to be direct with God.



If you are wrenching your heart in deciding to give or not to give, or what amount out of your financial abundance or lack, tell it directly to God. You give to please God and not to impress men. If you give according to your capacity, whether yours is a wealthy's munificence or a widow's mite, consider yourself having been blessed to be a blessing, and reckon that you are more blessed in giving than receiving. God is aware even if men are unaware.



The Right Way

If we consider it worthy to celebrate National Day 2014 for our achievement of nationhood and our impressive development over all of the 49 years of nation-building, then we ought to celebrate it worthily. In praising the hard work of the pioneer generation, we are indirectly acknowledging the role of a people working under the strong leadership of the government in enabling stable political, economic and social progress. We cannot take this for granted. As leadership renewal takes place in politics and

government, we need to play our role to ensure that we continue to raise and support worthy leaders for national wellness.

In celebration mood, let's reflect: What is our Christian call as a church and what roles can individual Christians play?

Apostle Paul urged, "first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." (1 Tim. 2:1-2)

It is our bounden duty as Christians to pray for national leaders, seeking God's grace upon them, so that they have the wisdom, integrity and compassion to govern with a selfless spirit in service to nation in all godliness and holiness. Singapore as a nation is not just an economic entity, not just a collection of diverse individuals seeking wealth and personal interests, but a body of citizens united by a common Singaporean culture, working cohesively to seek a progress that is shared and enjoyed by all.

I would like to imagine that Singapore is already a nation. However, our former Prime Minister, Mr Goh Chok Tong, said in 1999 that Singapore was "not yet a nation. We do not all speak the same language. Nor do we share the same religion and customs. We have different ancestors."¹

In 2011, MM Lee Kuan Yew reiterated that Singapore was not yet a nation, but a nation in the making.²

We are now celebrating Singapore 49th National Day in 2014. What is your view? Is Singapore a nation yet? The word "nation" is in the phrase "National Day". Whatever your perspective and view, what do we in celebration, as a nation or not as a nation, have to pray for?

As Christians, we love God and we love our neighbours; and we witness for Christ as good citizens when we celebrate our National Day. As a church, we maintain close ties with the community through community engagement. This we have done in various ways – through the pre-school

¹ <http://www.singapore-window.org/sw99/90506sc.htm>

² http://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/ips/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/04/ST_Singapore-still-a-work-in-progress_220111.pdf

ministry of JCK, in our outreach activities, by our support of the LCCS for charitable services, with our collaborations with other churches, etc.



A significant element of celebration is to have a good time. It is parochial if our understanding of a good time is restricted to just a moment of enjoying the rousing pageantry and thrilling fireworks display at Marina Bay, and absorbing the stirring message by the PM at the National Day Rally. It is wholesome to join the fun and excitement of a traditional celebration, but not to stop at it – to have a good time not just for a day, but for all the time down the road,

for more good and safe years with continuing progress, peace and harmony among all who call Singapore their home.

Alas, evil permeates the world and Singapore is not immune to the wicked forces. Reading the local and world news every day is an uncomfortable experience, what with all the conflicts, massacres, killer-diseases, man-made and natural calamities, threats from ideological extremists, immorality, etc. Whether it is evil against others (e.g. murder) or evil against oneself (e.g., sins of moral reprehensibility) or evil against God (e.g. idolatry), even Christians have struggled with them. We cannot help being concerned as Christians, because evil does impact lives and hence affects the continuing good time that we wish for as a nation.

Putting aside parochialism, Christians should have a broad agenda to reach out to change things for the better – not by might alone but by God’s power. We can’t serve this agenda if we can’t take care of ourselves. To build up others, we must build up ourselves as a body united in strength. In this regard, the JCC Rebuilding Project is not simply about erecting a new concrete building. It is also not simply something for which we have our eyes towards the future (a few years from now according to some construction schedule). The project is about rebuilding the church as a body of Christ – stronger and better equipped – to do greater work for Kingdom’s glory.

Unity is a key attribute of a body of Christ. It is NOW (not a few years later) that the project team wishes to see achievement by the unitedness of us all (members of JCC) in a rebuilt body – REBUILT

and stronger than before today – with a single-mindedness to rally for the cause with our blessed talents and funds. Are we ready (no matter how little blessed we think we are)? Are we willing (no matter how burdened we think we are with so many other demands on us)?



If we can't or are not willing to express our buying into the project (i.e., participating in it enthusiastically), building up this our body of Christ in our steps forward, what is there for us to see greater gains in our effort to place NJCC as a spiritual jewel sparkling in the vicinity of the anticipated new Jurong Lake Gardens District?

Celebrating National Day is an indication that we rejoice with this 49-year-old young nation on the rise. From the standpoint of our spiritual mandate as disciples of Christ, are we eager to rebuild the body, the new JCC, to become the spiritual jewel of the west in this little red dot?

Pray that through our efforts in celebrating National Day 2014 and rebuilding JCC, we in the new body of Christ called NJCC will be God's jewels:

"They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will



spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.”

Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him.

– Malachi 3:17-18 (NKJV)

May NJCC shine as lights in the world! (Philippians 2:15 NKJV)

John Lee

From Angry to Calm

Kivan Lee Guo Rui's personal testimony

Before I knew Christ, I was a hot tempered boy, who got angry very easily. Because I was anti-social and not humble, I had no friends and no one to share my problems with.



After I started coming to church and knowing Christ, I was changed and became more calm and humble. Through God's Word, I learnt how to interact with people and God gave me many brothers and sisters to talk to me and give me guidance.

Even though I sometimes still get angry and no one comes by my side, I know that I have God who is always beside me. I pray and just surrender all my troubles to God.

I Want to Serve God faithfully



by Shermaine Lim

I grew up in a Taoist family, where my family worshipped idols and statues. Frankly, I had no idea what a real god is, and whether god really exists..

I got married into a Christian family, but my hubby wasn't a staunch believer and so he didn't visit church at all. I was lucky that friends and relatives around me are Christians. Not long after my marriage, my sister was converted to be a Christian. She invited me to join her for Sunday church services and slowly I started to grow interested in knowing more about God.

My mum was a kidney transplant patient. Once she got infected by an unknown bacteria and the doctor had no idea why she kept having extremely high fever. We were devastated and very afraid that my mum couldn't make it. As my mom was almost getting into unconsciousness due to the high fever, both my sister and I cried and started praying to God.

After the prayers, the doctor came back with some report saying that her life was not in danger yet but there was still a need for further investigations. Although the diagnosis was pending, we thanked God for the assurance that my mum would recover. He had heard our prayers.

Right beside my mum's bed was a kind auntie who was a Christian. She started a conversation with my mum and showing concern on her illness. She was really kind, and decided to say a prayer for my mum. My mum, who was a non-believer, was well taken aback with her kindness and accepted this kind gesture. She closed her eyes and let the auntie lead her into prayers. God's grace! Miracle happened, my mum's fever subsided the next day, and doctor came with another kind of antibiotics to treat her, and she got well and very soon was discharged.

I believe God is kind and He loves us. He will never forsake us in any circumstances, so we put our trust in Him.

I believe that God is always around us. Without God's grace, I might have lost my mum. Therefore I want to serve God faithfully.

Religion getting in the way of filial piety

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FROM EVELYN TAN

PUBLISHED: MARCH 22, 4:13 PM

My husband's grandmother died recently at the age of 91. The last couple of years were difficult as she was bedridden and fading day by day.

Certainly, she lived a fruitful life, with five children, multiple grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

According to her wishes, the funeral arrangements followed Taoist tradition. This involved elaborate prayers, processions and folding thousands of paper ingots to send her on a comfortable journey to the afterlife. With that many offspring, one would have expected all hands on deck.

What materialised seemed to be a reflection of changing times and narrow beliefs. Several of her offspring have adopted other religions and refused to participate in any of the Taoist ceremonies, including the folding of paper ingots.

I find this a strange phenomenon. Surely, what matters must be the wishes of the deceased, rather than the beliefs of the living?

As more Singaporeans become well-travelled, no one has qualms about visiting religious landmarks, such as the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, St Peter's Basilica at the Vatican and the Tiger's Nest monastery in Bhutan. In fact, many plan to visit these landmarks.

As we progress in this society, we must remain tolerant of all beliefs.

Using religion as an excuse to distance oneself from religious ceremonies for a loved one seems to be a practice of double standards and the start of an intolerant approach.

IS RELIGION GETTING IN THE WAY OF FILIAL PIETY?

Someone named Ms Evelyn Tan thought so. In a letter to TODAY (March 22), she complained about her relative's refusal to participate in her husband's grandmother's Taoist funeral on account of the relatives' religions. A few points were mentioned in her complaint:

- The funeral according to Taoist tradition was the wishes of the deceased.
- It involved elaborate prayers, processions and folding of paper ingots to send off the deceased.
- She found it "a strange phenomenon" that some of the relatives refused to participate. She proffered that "what matters must be the wishes of the deceased, rather than the beliefs of the living."
- She attributed this phenomenon to intolerance and non-accommodation of different religious beliefs.
- She claimed that religion is getting in the way of filial piety.

Not surprisingly, the letter attracted a lot of criticisms online. A blogger³ wrote this:

³ <http://ionsg.blogspot.sg/2014/03/religious-freedom-filial-piety-and.html#!2014/03/religious-freedom-filial-piety-and.html>

“Refusal to participate in funeral ceremonies of a religion other than one’s own is not an act of “intolerance” or “extremism”. On the contrary, it is the coercion and derision poured on those who follow their consciences that is the true intolerance and extremism.”

Has filial piety sometimes been misunderstood?

As a parent, I would appreciate my children showing their filial piety while I am living to experience the joy of it, not when I am no longer around.

There might be others who think differently, and they desire their offspring to make a public display of their filial piety by all means – including, if they can afford, the hiring of professional mourners to wail and howl on



command in a public show of their grief, like what some Taiwanese people do. There is nothing to stop them from personally following a culture to their comfort, and for like-minded friends and relatives to join the ritual.

Professional mourners (in Taiwan), with mike in hand

Even if they and I think differently, I respect them for their cultural preference and for not imposing it on me. Likewise, I do take cognizance that I should never impose mine on them. As example, when the time arrives that I am called home by my Lord Jesus, I shall not want my Christian friends and relatives to impose on others to join in any of the Christian rites that they may feel uncomfortable about.

I live by the maxim “Avoid doing what you would blame others for doing.” – Thales (c. 624 BC – c. 546 BC)

I would be disrespectful of others’ (non-Christian) feelings if I insist (even after I have breathed my last breath in this world) that they should show their respect to me by partaking all aspects of the Christian rites in

“sending me off”. If I don’t have respect for their wishes to be excused in some way (due to their religious sensitivities and aversions), how is it proper for me to insist not to be imposed on by others to do anything against my comfort?



While Ms Evelyn Tan found it “a strange phenomenon” the non-participation of relatives in the funeral rites, I don’t find it strange at all in multi-religious Singapore where there is a lot of mutual respect, accommodation and tolerance in favour of inter-religious harmony. Therefore, she might feel less upset if

she would see the “phenomenon” in a more positive light – that the non-participation of some of the younger relatives and the understanding regard by the elders not to press the issue is testimony of an enlightened wisdom to boost harmony among kinfolk. I believe that even the dearly departed would appreciate the resilience of familial ties despite religious differences. Every religion teaches respect for one’s elders. The best respect is one that comes from the heart rather than one that is compelled.

Just like welcome between living persons is shown in different ways in different cultures (by handshakes, hugging, bowing, etc.), respect to a dearly departed person is also shown in different ways by people of different faiths. A westerner who is comfortable with hugging as a welcome sign cannot force the practice on another who is uncomfortable about it. Likewise, a Christian who is comfortable with the sign of the Cross in his religious culture cannot demand another who is of another faith to follow suit.



Remember
To **Love** your parents.
We are so busy growing up
We often forget they are also
Growing Old.

Though I am a Christian, I do understand that many non-Christian Chinese treat the performance of the final rites according to Buddhist, Confucianist or Taoist traditions as very important in sending off their dearly departed. Certainly, Christians have to be careful not to offend sensitivities by a cavalier

attitude. Many non-Christian Chinese who have interactions with Christians among friends, relatives or family members no doubt also appreciate the sensitivities of Christians towards acts that are viewed as abomination to God from the biblical standpoint. Filial piety is a virtue. Being at funeral wakes with the bereaved who are friends or relatives is also a good gesture of commiseration on the sad occasion. Whether it is filial piety or sincere commiseration with friends or relatives, sensible people will recognize that respect for religious sensitivities is mutual. The most meaningful of respect shown is one that is spontaneous out of one's heart and conveyed in a style without discomfort, and this kind of meaningful respect should be received well and reciprocated with a similar respectful appreciation, and with forbearance for any perceived deficiency.

Religion is not and should not be in the way to obstruct filial piety. The most important expression of filial piety is what we do to benefit our elders, with them seeing and enjoying our love and care while alive.

John Lee

Proverbs 23:22, 25

Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

May your father and mother rejoice; may she who gave you birth be joyful!

If you ask accountants to make a choice, they use money as a basis to make decisions because only transactions quantifiable/ expressed in monetary terms are recorded. This is a basic accounting concept like going-concern, prudence and consistency.

Here is a sample of a way of calculating which option is more costly:

COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS	HDB Flat 101 Hub	
Assume we have to spend to benefit no of persons	\$ 400,000 4	\$ 400,000 500
Cost per head	\$ 100,000	\$ 800
Unfair - must compare by years used	99	2
Cost per year per head	\$ 1,010	\$ 400

Accountants cannot measure the intangible benefits like salvation, spiritual growth and hope yet we know it is all there.

There are always choices to be made because we all have limited means. If you choose a holiday, an expensive dress or watch then you will have

less options left open. Calculate the costs and choose wisely.

Outreach – Mid-Autumn Celebrations

Why we celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival

The Mid-Autumn Festival is a traditional Chinese festival since the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th to 10th century BCE). It had its origin as a festival celebrating good harvest which is in September or early October.

In modern times, when we celebrate the occasion, it is mostly an act of remembering our Chinese tradition and making use of the opportunity for a get-together of friends or relatives, to enjoy a good time building friendly relationship or familial bonds.

It is not dissimilar in point that the Chinese among Christians do celebrate Chinese New Year as a Chinese tradition, and the non-Chinese Christians also can be seen celebrating the New Year on 1st of January.

In the celebration, we treasure the reunion opportunity or friendship building but, as Christians, we do not subscribe to the superstitious elements that have been included into the festival story by some people.



While we respect other people's freedom to celebrate the festival according to their preferences, here in Jurong Christian Church, we celebrate the festival to build friendship ties while keeping ourselves informed of this Chinese tradition.

Based on a legend about the mooncakes being a gift by a businessman to his Emperor during the Tang Dynasty in celebration of a victory taking place during the Mid-Autumn day when the traditional harvest festival was being commemorated, we know



that the eating of mooncakes began not at the origin of the Mid-Autumn Festival but much later.

To us, the mooncake is round like the beautiful full moon of God's creation. It is nice to eat among friends as conversations take place in pleasant companionships, and nice to share among relatives like in ordinary gift-giving to family members to maintain familial ties.

There is another popular legend of the mooncake concerning its creative use as an object to hide secret messages to help the Han Chinese win victory in their uprising against the Mongols at the end of the Yuan Dynasty (1280–1368 CE). This has nothing to do with moon worship.



We can apprise our children of the Chinese traditions and their stories, teaching them to wise up to the fact that legends are what the legends are supposed to be, which have to be received with circumspection to distinguish facts from fiction.

We celebrate the festival with sensibility and enjoy eating the mooncakes with the joy of building friendship and bonds.

The children will enjoy the lanterns as toys that brighten up the surroundings and, if they are into the educational pursuit of cracking their minds over traditional lantern riddles (灯谜), why not let them?

The team organizing this event on 6th September comprise of the Outreach Team, Abundance and Jurong West Cell Groups. In the next issue of The Vine, we will have a full report with photos of this event.

John Lee

Riddle:

It is a comfortable bus that you take on a holiday trip.
It is also a person who trains you in a particular sport.
What is it?

Answer:

Coach

Rebuilding Fund Update – Photoshoot

The idea for a Photoshoot Fund raiser came from Karen. There were many photography fund raising projects proposed but this one took off. The committee felt that members would have nostalgic memories of JCC and be willing to donate to the rebuilding by buying a photo keepsake of the church (members) in front of the building.

Of the 500 people who posed in front of the building, about 20% bought a copy of the photo. Is this the 80/20 rule in action? Nevertheless, we managed to achieve our target of raising \$5,000. In fact, we exceeded the target by \$1,100.



It was tough work for Karen and Nick week after week arranging, posing and taking photos of families and groups, then printing the photos for collection later on. We appreciate and thank them for their efforts.



Other photography ideas that have been tossed around include creating a Photobook of JCC or even a calendar comprising of 12 photos of JCC. We hope photographers in our midst will take up this challenge to put JCC into a

photo archive for the generations to come.

What will we do with the “negatives”? Probably we will keep it until the building goes down in 2015 and then perhaps there will be another round of demand to have a copy of the photo. Something like a piece of art having greater value once the artist passes away.



Martin Cheah