

**The Vine Committee**

Editor:

John Lee  
[jpbislee@gmail.com](mailto:jpbislee@gmail.com)

Printer:

Nick Wong  
[digi\\_ics@yahoo.com](mailto:digi_ics@yahoo.com)

Writers this issue:

John Lee  
Yap Xiu Feng  
Winston Neo  
Chong Yew Moi  
Yap Xiu Zhen  
Tan Wing Ter  
Lisa Foo

Photos:

Cecilia Wang  
Amanda Goh

# HOM'S Reflections

In the May issue of The Vine I asked those who were at the Church Retreat to write about their experiences because I was not able to be there. The response was so great that this issue of The Vine is a collection of articles from those who were at the Retreat. Let us start off with the youngest writer of the lot.

*Martin Cheah*

## How much did I enjoy the Church Retreat!

I did not expect this year's retreat to be such a blast! I thought that we would just be learning God's Word and nothing else, but I was indeed very wrong.

We worshipped God, played games, memorized Bible verses and had much fun together. The Kids' Programme was nicely packaged and separate from the adults' activities.

Two verses that I learnt were:

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures  
He leads me beside quiet waters." – Psalm 23: 1-2*

The main point of these verses is that the Lord cares for me. He gives me what I need and I will lack nothing.

Another reason why I liked the retreat was because I played water polo. It was so fun that even a stranger who was not from the Church came to join us.

I really look forward to next year's retreat and I hope that I can go!



Tan Wing Ter

## **My rumination at the Church Retreat**

*Venue: Batam / Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> day of retreat*

*Time: The morning message session by Pastor Benny Ho*

Pastor Benny Ho asks, "Do you think God is pleased with you?"

My mind suddenly wakes up and starts thinking hard, though not fast enough to come up with the answer when Pastor Benny asks again, "Do you think God is pleased with you this morning?"

Good, easier to answer as the scope is narrowed down to this morning only. So my mind starts running here and there thinking hard again if I did something good that pleased the Lord this morning:

- Did I pray this morning?
- Did I read my bible this morning?
- Was I kind and patient and loving and forgiving this morning? Etc.

Very often we try to perform to please God and might forget the fundamental thing that without faith, it is impossible to please our God.

Wingter (my daughter) helps me to relate to and understand our Father's heart in many areas or situations and occasions, including this time. Am I pleased with Wingter if she talks to me every day; studies hard every day; is kind, patient, loving and having all the good character traits but has no trust in me or does not hold me dear as her parent? Isn't this the same picture of a Christian without faith or of an unbeliever in our Father's eyes?

Don't get me wrong. I am not saying that I will be a happy parent with only Wingter's trust and faith in me; and there is no need for her to work hard and to perform. Quite the contrary, I always tell her that she needs to be diligent and try her best in everything that she does. However, all the good performances and results cannot make me 100% pleased with her (though I love her 100%) without her trusting me and recognizing me as her mother.

Ultimately, it is the trust and faith besides love that bring pleasure and fulfillment in a relationship, including the relationship with my Father in Heaven.

Many times I thank my Father for He so loves me that He gives me a gift (Wingter) to teach me.

And today, as I reflect on the question Pastor Benny Ho asks, I thank God again for the same reason.

Lisa Foo





# The Retreat

## at Harris Resort, Batam

11 - 13 June

This retreat has impacted me a great deal. The bonds built, the conversations exchanged and the messages delivered were all way above my expectations.

The messages by Pastor Benny Ho were so impactful. Previously, I had



*Xiu Feng with her sister and mother at the Ferry Terminal*

heard about Pastor Benny Ho and how his sermons were really good and powerful. I was excited to meet him in person and honestly, I have to say, I underestimated the power of his messages. His messages were relevant, down-to-earth, practical and relatable!



*Who says that the retreat is boring?*

That tinge of humour kept people awake but that didn't take away the seriousness of what he had to deliver. Each message lasted for about close to 2h. I never imagined I could pay attention to a message for so long but I did (without even checking the time at all, as most would do to see when the message would end). I am sure almost everyone (young and old) did as well. With many members receiving fresh anointing during this retreat,



*Participants in rapt attention*

I believe JCC is on the way to greater things.

For the benefit of those who weren't able to attend the retreat and as a reminder to those who went, here are a few of my takeaways from this retreat:

- 1) When the conditions of our hearts are right, when the timing is right, God may just manifest Himself in tangible ways. Pastor Benny compared this to vapour in the air. There's always vapour in the air but we cannot see it. Only when the conditions are right (i.e., an appropriate change in temperature) will it reveal itself in a process called condensation.
- 2) We are blessed to be a blessing. This is a consistent "top-line and bottom-line" theology throughout the bible. When God gives us something, the purpose is for us to use it to do something for His purpose – not to keep it to ourselves.
- 3) Praying is not about how we pray or what we pray, it is about who we are praying to. Prayers are powerful but it has to come with faith. In the realm of the natural, seeing is believing; but in the realm of the spiritual, believing is seeing. Pastor Benny used another analogy to demonstrate this. For example, when your phone runs out of battery and you connect it to a charger, everything seems calm, nothing is moving. However, inside the wires, currents are passing through, the phone is being charged. Just like when we pray, on earth it may seem like nothing is happening but in heaven there may be great goings-on because God is listening to all our prayers and sending out answers to us.
- 4) The wind of revival can bring a lot of people back to church but only the Word of God can sustain this revival. Depend on the Holy Spirit, not on our own strengths.
- 5) 4 qualities of a soul-winner: Compassion, Creativity, Cooperation and Commitment. We who are 'rescued' can be the 'rescuers'.

WE ARE BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING!

In all honesty, the short overview above does no justice to what was being delivered by Pastor Benny Ho at the retreat; but I hope it does make some sense to you.

Last but not least, I've got to take my hats off to the organising committee. They really did a great job in ensuring a smooth flow of programs throughout the whole 3 days. We even had enough free time to make use of the recreational facilities at the resort. I enjoyed myself very much. Well done and thank you, committee! 😊



*Yap Xiu Feng*



# Enjoying His Presence

The retreat gave me a chance to enjoy and experience the presence of the Holy Spirit. With the burden of projects and monotony of school life, the retreat truly gave me a chance to not only find rest physically, but also spiritually.



The speaker for this retreat was Pastor Benny Ho and he talked about having the passion for four areas: His Presence, Prayer, Power and the Perishing.

Through his first session, I was able to learn about the three dimensions of His presence (omnipresence, practiced presence and manifested presence). “When the condition of our hearts are right, when the timing is right, God may just manifest Himself in tangible ways.” Furthermore, the top-line and bottom-line theology made me understand how blessed we are to be a blessing to others.

The second session touched on the three common hindrances to prayer: the bed of laziness, valley of doubt and the absence of passion. I suffer from the absence of passion in my prayer life, praying constantly but without the zeal for serving the Lord. I learnt to tap onto the power of the Holy Spirit.

The third session titled *Passion for Power* reminded me of the importance of staying united as God’s people, as one Church. As Pastor Benny put it “The banana that leaves the bunch gets eaten.” We need to be in the presence of fiery Christians that their enthusiasm for God may be contagious and affect us. After that session, many went forward to be anointed by oil, a representation of the fresh oil that we require to renew our spirits, removing the weariness and tiredness, having given our all to the Lord throughout our lives. That day I felt a jolt of electricity as the Holy Spirit entered me and I experienced a sense of empowerment to be able to bless others through the Holy Spirit.

The last session ended the retreat with a bang, reminding us to be clothed with the 4 qualities of a soul-winner, redeeming the souls of the perishing. With compassion, creativity, cooperation and commitment, we are called to

build the church with the faith like the four men in Mark 2:1-5 who went through the roof just so that their paralyzed friend could be saved.

Of course, there was the well-deserved free and easy time. The pool was filled with church members of all ages both young and those younger, enjoying a time of water polo and pool basketball. It was great fun and an amazing bonding opportunity.

All in all, this retreat allowed me to become closer to God and also take time away from the busy and crammed lifestyle back in Singapore. I look forward to spreading the love of Christ with the others in our community.

Winston Neo



# Passion for the Perishing

Pastor Benny Ho has delivered wonderful messages during the retreat. The 4 messages were inspiring and touched our hearts. But to me, he had saved the best for the last. The first 3 messages were more for personal empowerment of the Holy Spirit in us. But the 4th message was about empowering the church. It was entitled "Passion for the Perishing". He based his message on Mark 2:1-5.

Pastor Benny noted that to be a soul-winner, we need to have 4 qualities in us. These qualities start with the letter "C".

(1) **Compassion.** The paralytic's four friends had the compassion for their friend to be healed. Knowing that Jesus had healing powers, they carried their disabled friend to Jesus. Do we have such passion for the lost among us?

(2) **Creativity.** When the crowd was too large for them to carry their friend near to Jesus, they would not give up. They had to think of a way to reach Jesus. Bypassing the crowd, they made a hole in the roof and lowered their friend in front of Jesus. Not stated in the Gospel, the hole in the roof had to be large enough for the paralytic, possibly using a stretcher. And also possibly, the house was not theirs, meaning they had to pay for the damages and rectification. When we meet with obstacles and difficulties while doing evangelism, can we not think of creative and alternative ways to reach out to the pre-believers?

(3) **Cooperation.** A church with every member doing their own things in their own way, lobbying for their own agenda, will be directionless and will not progress. Pastor Benny Ho used the 4 friends to illustrate cooperation. Imagine if there was no teamwork among the friends. How would the paralytic be lowered in front of Jesus? How would they carry their paralytic friend up the roof without cooperation? Only when we have every church member aiming at the same direction, pursuing a common purpose will the church progress. Are we cooperating among ourselves? Are we upholding our church's vision?

(4) **Commitment.** Faith that comes with commitment is what it takes to build the church. Pastor Benny Ho narrated a true story. A 70 year old went to her pastor and asked him what she could do to evangelise. Not knowing how to answer her, the pastor asked her to pray for this matter. She did and 2 weeks later replied her pastor. She would reach out to foreign students who were home sick by lending them a listening ear. She



would paste notices for whoever wanted a tea session with her at an appointed time at her house. Initially, there was no response to her invitation. But she was not discouraged. She continued to prepare for the tea session and wait for visitors. After a period of time, a student saw the notice and being home sick, went to the tea session. The old lady welcomed the student and ministered to him. Soon, word spread about the old lady's ministry and a continuous stream of students over the years attended the tea session and were ministered to by the old lady. When the old lady returned-to-her-Lord in her eighties, there were hundreds of former students returning to attend her funeral. The sheer number of people at the wake coming from various parts of the world was a testimony of one elderly woman who had the commitment to press on in what she wanted to do. Do we have the commitment to persevere in our ministries despite facing difficulties? Do we have the endurance to see through what we set out to do initially?

In conclusion, we need to have the 4 'C' that Pastor Benny Ho preached to reach out to the perishing. Do we have the passion for the lost? Have we forgotten the Great Commission? Let us live out our church vision as an individual and as a community.



Chong Yew Moi



## Bilingual Retreat 2015 (11 – 13 June)



We had a combined English-Chinese retreat at Harris Resort, Batam. In such a retreat when English-speaking members with “half-past-six” proficiency in Mandarin meet Chinese-speaking members with “half-past-six” knowledge of English, would it be a case of chickens clucking and ducks quacking when they attempt speaking with one another (鸡同鸭讲) ?

### An “expensive” retreat with no language barrier

A faithful Chinese-educated Christian extended an invitation to an English-educated senior to join the retreat. Due to an issue with the language, a humorous misunderstanding arose. For readers who can't understand Chinese, please pardon me that there will be no translation. (Once translated, the joke will be lost.☺)

退修营将来临。一位年轻的华文部忠诚信徒想邀请一位受英文教育的长辈来参加。

信徒：裕廊基督教会在六月十一日在巴淡岛举办退修营 (tuì xiū yíng) ， 我将会参加。教会的牧师与很多同工 (tóng gōng) 都会去。也欢迎您参加。

长辈听了莫名其妙：什么退休营 (tuì xiū yíng) ？你年纪轻轻就想到退休？还有你的教会真奇怪，聘用了这么多童工 (tóng gōng) 。这不是违法的吗？

话是口说的，没有白纸黑字写下，所以信徒对长辈的问话也摸不着头脑。

过了许久信徒与长辈才恍然醒悟，原来双方互相误解了同音词。好结果，长辈接受了邀请，最后也享受了退修营的乐趣。☺

The above is just a little humour for entertainment. (It is not a real incident.)  
© Thank God for His blessings that when the English-speaking members of the Church met their Chinese-speaking brethren, they had enough commands of languages to communicate with each other, listen to the bilingual messages and play games together happily. Hallelujah!

To put it simply, the retreat was wonderful. Being an “expensive” retreat, it had to be so. By “expensive”, I mean that it incurred a lot of expense of time, energy and enterprise of hardworking co-labourers from both “Channel 5” (English section) and “Channel 8” (Chinese section) who demonstrated all their love for God and for fellow brethren to put in the sweat to plan, organize and run the show – and what a great show of empowerment by God that language was no barrier not only in the retreat committee but also in the retreat experience of camaraderie between members of the Church and their families.

### **We enjoyed, and we do not forget the passionate workers**

The retreat committee comprised of (1) Derrick Lee, Peggy Lee and Tan Lam Bee from the English section; and (2) Choong Kai En, Elizabeth Tan, Tan Hock Ing and Yong Yoon Chong from the Chinese section. Derrick and Kai En, together with Tan Hock Ing, were also our retreat commandants.

While boarding the ferry at Harbourfront, I noticed our able brethren managing the worship logistics (transporting musical instruments, sound equipment, etc.), with Nathanael in charge.

At the retreat itself, I paid attention to the two teams of youth/young adults taking turns to lead four sessions of worship. They comprised: (Team 1) Tsu Ern, Amanda, Jabez, Nathanael, Elaine, Diana, Yu Xuan and Cassandra; and (Team 2) Jonathan Jnr, Xiang Ling, Min Hui, Chih Chiang, Zi Fang and Wei Wei. Both teams performed very well in lifting the spiritual

mood of the 150-strong gathering to get everyone ready for the messages to follow. Many thanks to Hui Ling and Min Hui for an entertaining “Mystery Nite” of fun that went past midnight. Many thanks too to Hannah and Yu Xuan for helping to break the ice with the ice-breaking games.



Benedict Lee also did a commendable job of rendering Mandarin interpretations of the messages in the four sessions. We saw that he displayed aplomb as he delivered his interpretations at a brisk pace, his ears were fully pricked to catch every word, phrase and sentence that the retreat speaker spoke fast, and his mind was at full throttle. All four messages by the speaker were about Passions:

- Passion for the Presence of God
- Passion for Prayer
- Passion for Power and
- Passion for the Perishing.

It was with a sure PASSION for the Lord's service that the retreat committee and their co-labourers outside the committee strove to bring the spiritual and recreational benefits of the retreat in a very well-balanced manner to all participants, regardless of whether they hailed "from England" (the English section) or "from China" (the Chinese section). ☺ Having enjoyed the retreat, we do not overlook the many humble servants of God who worked towards our blessings, not forgetting our photographers (Amanda and Cecilia) and First Aiders (Poh Kiat, Ruth and Kivan) as well. All the workers in the Lord's service worked in different departments of the retreat operation; some of them were more visible, but those among the less visible ones were no less faithful servants of God contributing their PASSION in their roles to make the retreat the success it was.

### **PASSION – sweet and sour**

Our PASSION for the Lord's service can only grow stronger if we have the fervour to seek the Passions that Pastor Benny Ho (our retreat speaker) shared. Seeking these Passions in our Christian walk is not all a bed of roses. There are sweet moments when we smile and sour moments when we knit our brows. Musing about all these Passions reminds me of the mix of sweet and sour tastes of the ripe Passion Fruit:



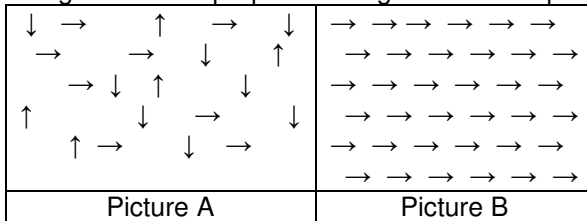
*"The fruit grows on the passion flower vine, which has a story behind its name. In the 16th century, when Christian missionaries landed in South America, the passion flower was the plant that signified their success. They believed that the flower symbolized the death of Christ;*

*the five petals represented the disciples (minus Peter and Judas), the corona symbolizes the crown of thorns around Christ's head, and other features were a symbol of the wounds, nails and whips used on Christ.” – Internet source*

In human experience, despite the sour element of disaffection in the Lord's service when things do not flow along smoothly according to our idealism, or when pressures rise with the proximity to deadlines as supportive hands do not show up as much as we like, there is still the inexplicable joy of serving that keeps the humble servants going, and the sweetness of relief at the final success.

**Team Alignment supporting Church Alignment**

In one of the sessions, Pastor Benny Ho shared about a church without alignment looking like Picture A with members shooting all over the shop; the church may be busy but not productive. On the other hand, a church with alignment looks like Picture B; every member is shooting in the same direction, pursuing a common purpose through a common process.



In the planning and running of the retreat, the team set out with a common passion for Christ to accomplish the purpose of the retreat – rejuvenation in body and spirit for all seekers of it. The team members were “marching to the same drumbeat with the same heart, same mind, same love, same spirit and same purpose; not competing with one another but completing one another!” I am borrowing the words of Pastor Benny Ho from his exhortation about alignment in the Church. I am applying these words to the alignment of members seen in the team working and accomplishing the common purpose of the retreat. The retreat team is a microcosm of the church. The alignment of members within this team exemplifies the alignments that are clearly possible in all the functional groups (teams) within the Church, and our hope is therefore that all alignments at the smaller-scale levels will always merge into the overall alignment that we wish to see in the whole Church with all groups and members pursuing a common PASSION for Christ.

Any aching in our PASSION FOR CHRIST is nothing compared to the PASSION OF CHRIST (on the Cross). The mordant harshness of the PASSION (of Christ) was superseded by the sweet gentleness of His resurrection. From the struggle in our PASSION (for Christ) in all the aspects will rise the sweetness when the Master's acknowledgement comes. (Matt. 25:21)

### **A brief synopsis of what Pastor Benny Ho shared about four passions**

- ***Passion for the presence of God:***

“Don't tell me you are passionate about God until you live a life that pursues after Him.”

“Don't tell me you are passionate about the Word of God until you read your Bible.”

“The proof of the passion is in the pursuit!”

Pastor Benny Ho said that we need proof of our passion for the presence of God by our pursuit of it in order to turn our ordinary place (wherever we are) into an awesome place – a sanctuary of God. He cited the example of Jacob in Genesis as a man who was passionate in everything he did, among which was his passion for God's blessings.

Jacob proved his passion for God's blessings and was granted a personal encounter with God.

When Jacob was in the place called **Luz**, it was just an ordinary Canaanite city. He had a dream in which he saw a ladder with the top going into the heavens and angels descending and ascending on it. Right at the top, the Lord revealed Himself to Jacob, declaring: “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and God of Isaac.”

Pastor Benny Ho called this the “manifested presence of God” that Jacob experienced. This “manifested presence” is distinctly different from the presence of God we know by the very fact of His omnipresence and the “practiced presence of God” that the pastor mentioned as what we “resolutely acknowledge every time we pray or raise our voice in worship.”

Pastor Benny Ho added, “There are times and places where God choose to manifest Himself in a tangible manner like He did in the burning bush of Moses. He manifested as the *Shekinah* glory in the Tabernacle or the pillar of *cloud* by day and the pillar of *fire* by night in the wilderness.”

It was not the omnipresence of God or the “practiced presence of God”, but the awesome life-transforming encounter with God, that turned Jacob’s life around. In the aftermath, Jacob renamed the ordinary city of **Luz** (which means “almond tree”) as **Bethel** (which means “House of God”) and erected two altars there.

Pastor Benny Ho shared that if we have the passion for the presence of God, God will manifest Himself in our midst at the right timing. Regardless of whether we are new or old Christians, we can have a personal encounter with God and this will be a life-transforming experience which will turn our ordinary place (wherever we are) into an awesome place, a sanctuary of God!

“It doesn’t matter if you are new or old Christian. Your fire and desire will attract the Lord’s manifested presence! Where there is corporate hunger for His Presence, God has found a landing place for His Glory.”

“And I know that one encounter with God is worth years of church attendance!”

“People – God always respond to the hunger of His people!”

Do we have the passion for the presence of God?

- ***Passion for Prayer:***

The “bed of laziness”, the “valley of doubt” and the “absence of passion” are the hindrances Christians encounter in prayer. Pastor Benny Ho said that all these hindrances can be resolved with this key: A RIGHT VIEW OF GOD.

Because of our wrong view of God, we make prayers complicated with unnecessary rules or prescriptions. We mistakenly attempt special tones, slangs, impressive language, etc. The result is that prayers become a chore and our laziness sets in.

In reality, prayer is not an art that we have to polish, but it is simply a cry from the heart. An effective prayer is not wholly dependent on a formula or methodology, but on its theological basis. Ours is not a reluctant God whom we need to pester into responding to us. Quoting Scripture passages (including Luke 11:11-13), Pastor Benny Ho stated that our God is more than willing to hear our uncomplicated prayers and answer our needs without any necessity for us to attempt “spiritual calisthenics” to get His attention.

Just like in an electrical cable, power is moving and things are happening because of this even though the power is unseen. Our failure to have the right view of God and of how He works His power to flow in an invisible manner through our prayers makes us lose faith and hence descend into the valley of doubt. If we have the right view of God, we will appreciate that in the realm of the spiritual, faith comes first (we must believe in order to see) as contrast the idea of “seeing is believing” (expecting results before we believe) in the realm of the natural. We will then rise above the valley of doubt and be motivated to pray seriously.

“No time to pray” is often an excuse for a lack of spiritual passion.

Rom.12:11 says, “Never be lacking in zeal but keep your spiritual fervor serving the Lord.”

Pastor Benny Ho explained that the word “zeal” means “to boil up”, “to be hot”, “to be on fire”; to have the enthusiasm that irresistibly bubbles up in the heart. He further instructed:

“If a lack of desire is keeping us from developing a consistent prayer life, ask God to fill you with the power and passion of the Holy Spirit! I want you to know that we need not struggle in our own strength because we have the power of the Holy Spirit resident within us!”

- ***Passion for Power:***

A church with a massive infrastructure and system is not a great church if there is a spiritual vacuum among the people. We need a



revival of which the following are the three signs suggested by Pastor Benny Ho:

- 1) *A return to the assembling of God's people* – Lost sheep returning to the fold.

Pastor Benny Ho spoke with appreciation of these revivals in church history:

- † “I think about the Reformation under Martin Luther where we see the people coming back to a Church alive with truth.”
- † “I remember the Wesley brothers' Methodist Revival where we see the people gathered in class meetings, seeking to live sanctified lives.”
- † “I have personally gone through the Charismatic Renewal where we see people returning back to a Church alive in the Spirit.

- 2) *A restoration of the Word of God* – People eager to hear the Word afresh and repent of their sins.

Significantly, the pastor pointed out that for a revival to be sustained, **biblical teaching must be at the centre of it**. He cited these examples:

- ✘ “The revival in Wales under Evan Roberts started very powerfully but there was also a greater number who fell away after the peak of the revival in 1904. This was because the centrality of preaching the Word gave way to unusual events and supernatural manifestations like angelic sightings, dreams, visions, etc. After a while, the Word of God was neglected. And the winds of revival began to die down. Today, if you return to Wales, the Church is only a shadow of what it was during the revival.”
- ✓ “Contrary to the preceding, the revivals under Whitfield, Wesley and Spurgeon continued longer because biblical preaching was at the centre of the revival.”

- 3) *A rediscovery of the Feast of the Tabernacles* – This Feast is recorded in detail in Leviticus 23. It holds a deep meaning, and an awareness of it can help us rediscover the Person and Power of the Holy Spirit.

Pastor Benny Ho discussed the spiritual meaning of “former rain” and “latter rain” in the prophetic message of Joel 2:23 – the “former rain” referring to the first Pentecost and the “latter rain” referring to the future Pentecost when the Holy Spirit will be poured out abundantly upon all flesh, with which outpouring (Joel 2:28):

- † Our sons and daughters will prophesy;
- † Young men will see visions;
- † Old men will dream dreams.

The pastor reminded us that we are living in these days of the latter rain. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to be poured out for a mighty harvest of souls. We need the passion of a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit.

- **Passion for the perishing:**

Compassion, Creativity, Cooperation and Commitment are the 4 Cs we need to be a soul-winner.

In Mark 2:1-5, four men went to great lengths to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus. Their compassion prevailed against any thought of it being too difficult. If we cannot feel compassion for the lost, “it is difficult” will be our excuse to stay put in our comfort instead of going out to fetch the lost to Jesus. Colossians 23:12 – “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion ...”

When the four men were blocked at the door, they showed creativity in opening up the roof of the house to get their friend in. It was a radical idea to break through the roof of a house that was not theirs. We need the same spirit of creativity to overcome the obstacles between us and the perishing as we “build the spiritual highways that will link the harvest force in here to the harvest field out there.”

Cooperation among the four enabled the success of their effort. When we cooperate, we do not compete with one another but we must complete one another. In the church, let us (1) complement one another, (2) stand by one another, (3) trust one another and (4) love one another. In this way, when the devil comes against us, he will have to come against all of us!

It was dangerous to get a paralyzed man up the roof, especially with a support for him to lie on, but the four faithful friends did not give up – that was no ordinary commitment, but a deep one! The four men were deeply committed to the welfare of their paralyzed friend.

Pastor Benny Ho said, “Notice that at the end of the day, it wasn’t the faith of the crowd that moved Jesus. It was the radical faith of these four men! Faith that comes with commitment!”

This is what it takes to build the church – with our passion for the perishing!

## **Conclusion**

The retreat was both spiritually and physically refreshing. Free time was adequate (with one full afternoon plus other time slots interspersed throughout the programmes). Games time enjoyed good participation and the Mystery Nite of fun on the second night of the retreat was exciting, and participants were happy to have it go past midnight.

Now it is back to our jobs and to the church, to serve the Lord in our various secular and Christian duties – until the next retreat!

## **Acknowledgement**

The above brief synopsis of Pastor Benny Ho’s messages is based on my perceptions of his sharing at the retreat and on the notes he provided.

John Lee



# Passion for Prayer



This retreat was a relaxing yet fulfilling one. It was a combined retreat with the Chinese section. Through this retreat, I have gotten a better understanding of the people around me and of course, God.

This year, we were much honored to have a very experienced and inspirational guest speaker, Pastor Benny Ho. Despite his busy schedule, he took the time out to share with JCC the importance of Passion. His 4 main focuses were: *Passion for His Presence*, *Passion for Prayer*, *Passion for Power* and *Passion for the Perishing*. His sermons were interesting and very practical.

One of the important things that I have taken home from Pastor Benny Ho's sharing was in his second session; where he mentioned about Passion for Prayer. Three of the most common hindrances to prayer are '*The Bed of Laziness*', '*The Valley of Doubt*' and '*The Absence of Passion*'. It is by nature that we lack the discipline to keep a consistent prayer life. But by remembering the *Practical Remedy* from Pastor Benny, to '*Watch and Pray*' or to '*Walk and Pray*', I hope to be able to keep up and maintain a consistent prayer life with God and I hope you will too! ☺

Other than sessions of spiritual food, there were fun icebreakers, team-building games and also a mystery night. The food for the stomach (breakfast, lunch, dinner, tea-breaks) was simple yet delicious, with a slight taste of home. The worship teams also did a wonderful job in leading us to praise Him.

I would like to express my gratitude towards the JCC 2015 Combined Retreat Committee and all the other young adults and youths who helped out in various areas and participated actively. Without your constant contribution, this Combined Retreat would not have been made possible. A big Thank You and here's to many more wonderful retreats in the next years. See you next year! ☺



Xiu Zhen

In the meantime, God bless you with many good days ahead,