

For internal circulation only

Volume 7/2016



**BB & Dialect Ministry
@ Bo Tien Home**

Articles inside this issue:



He has set the right time for
EVERYTHING.
Ecclesiastes 3:11



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Bo Tien Home Visit by BB and Dialect Ministry on 30th July



HOM'S Reflections

We have all heard of this term, “Jewel of the West” but I wonder how many know the significance of this title.

From an article in the Straits Times, I extracted some important insights. This area is made up of 3 zones, Jurong Gateway, Lakeside Precinct and Jurong Innovation District.

When the whole project is completed, the west will be one of the most sought-after addresses in Singapore with the largest commercial hub outside the city centre. It will have world-class healthcare hub and bustling shopping malls with 2,500 hotel rooms to be developed. The Singapore-Kuala Lumpur High Speed Rail Terminus will take people from KL to Singapore in 90 minutes.

For entertainment there will be alfresco dining, water sports, community gardening and cycling. The business sector is not forgotten when the Innovation District is developed into a hotbed of research, innovation and production. From a commercial perspective, property prices are expected to rise and so it is a good investment choice for forward-looking individuals.

From JCC’s perspective, we can see how blessed we are to be in this location at a time like this. There will be commercial hubs, healthcare hubs and ours will be a church hub. Many people will be flowing into the district and Malaysians can even come to church every Sunday with just a 90 minutes ride. Sometimes we cannot even imagine that God has a plan for a small church like JCC. Imagine holiday makers at the Lakeside Village dropping by to attend a church service just like we do when we are at Pasir Ris Resort. Instead of car parks, we might need to provide bicycle parking.

Perhaps since we do not enjoy doing outreach, God has to apply reverse methodology and force people to come to JCC. Here are some pointers I picked up from an Internet source:

Where nature meets technology



Cities around the world are striving up their efforts to reduce emissions, promote sustainable living and encourage engagement with nature. ...

13 Instagram-worthy places to cycle to in Jurong



So much more than just a residential town in the West, Jurong Lake District is home to delicious food, amazing nature, quiet lakes, ...



Jurong Innovation District will be Singapore's largest living lab for new technologies. ...

What's in store for Jurong Lake District



In the Draft Master Plan 2008, then Minister for National Development Mr. Sui Ewe Tan unveiled exciting plans to transform Jurong Lake District into a distinctive lakeside destination for business and leisure. ...

Jurong gardens take shape with public's ideas



17,700 suggestions offered: completion date of west side pushed to 2018 to work in residents' views and feedback. ...

Watch smart nation take off in Jurong Lake District



It will be largest commercial centre outside CBD and fast bed for innovative smart nation initiative. ...

People don't come to a small church expecting a scaled-down version of a megachurch experience. They expect a great small church experience.

A great small church is not a miniaturized version of a great megachurch. A great small church won't have parking lot attendants and professional signage leading families to hi-tech, age-segmented children's ministries. Mom and Dad aren't going to be handed a cup of finely roasted cappuccino from a smiling barista in the church lobby, before being led into a thoroughly post-modern worship space with form-fitting seats.

The worship team won't be playing original songs from their best-selling album to tightly choreographed lights and video. The pastor's message won't be backed by perfectly-timed, custom-made graphics and video clips.

There are a lot of great megachurches that have all that cool stuff. And if small church pastors try to duplicate that on a small church budget, you will fail. The saddest part is that the time and expense you'll waste trying to be something you're not great at will be taken from the things you can be great at.

Yes, keep the place clean and uncluttered. Make sure everything and everyone are well prepared. Put your main efforts into people, not programs. Friendliness, not facilities. Worship, not entertainment.

Give people the space and time to meet with Jesus.

Walking into church is likely a comfortable experience for you. Familiar faces greet you. You know exactly where to go. And when the service starts, you know precisely what will happen.

None of that is true for a visitor. When someone walks through the doors of your church for the first time, they're dealing with a host of uncertainties. Will I be welcome here? Where am I supposed to go? What will happen?

The point is, visitors take a huge gamble to come to church. The least we can do is make sure they feel welcomed.

Then do something small church pastors can do that megachurch pastors can't do – hang out in the lobby after the service. Build relationships. Pray with and for people. Tell dumb jokes. Hug, laugh and cry together. Be a church family.

“Why did Sarah laugh?” God asked with convicting insight. Then He added, “Is anything too difficult for the LORD?” (Genesis 18:14)

Only in a small church environment, it is news to report that the Fund Raising Chairman stressed himself so much that he landed in hospital. Thankfully, he stayed in only one day.

It is also news to report that his father-in-law also ended up in the same hospital a few weeks later and prayed to receive Christ, thank God for His Grace.

There is no link between the two pieces of news. God works in mysterious ways but man perceives it as meaningless ways because the end is still not in sight.

Martin Cheah

PS – almost the entire article was extracted from Internet sources or the newspapers.



Don't stress the Fund Raising Chairman, book your dinner tables early and relieve his stress.

It is stressful enough to do all the arrangements, liaising with all the relevant authorities, contractors and performers and still not know the end result of all the efforts.

The end results is in your hands or should I say, “pockets”.

Book early to avoid disappointment.

It's not I, but Christ

Apostle Paul said in Rom. 7:15-20 –

A: *“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.”*



What Apostle Paul described about himself is very much alive in everyone, in our struggle with sin, in the tussle between the Spirit and the flesh. In a sense, it is encouraging to note that we have the Holy Spirit in us so much so that we are not left alone to be devoured by the flesh. When we accept Christ, He sends us The Counsellor; i.e., the

Holy Spirit; who is our help in the battle between good and evil. Meanwhile, before the final and total victory, we feel the discomfort of the tussle, with our “spirit levels” rising and falling at different times. The positive aspect is that it keeps us awake to the reality of the life as we live it in this world as an “outsider” (being not of the world) with temptations every direction we turn.

There are many good Christians who serve the Church with dedication, but all good Christians (without exception) are still sinners. I don't know whether there is any difference between “a good Christian who is a sinner” and “a bad sinner who is a Christian”; and I don't know in which group I belong. Certainly, I do not belong to a group called “Good Christians who are non-sinners”.

To acknowledge that we are all sinners is not to condone sins; rather, it is to recognise the truth about our nature (ever since the fall of man). We therefore cannot arrogate ourselves to claim “It’s not Christ, but I.”

As sinners, we can do nothing without Christ. (John 15:5)

“It’s not possible for a person to succeed—I’m talking about *eternal* success—without heaven’s help.” (Jn 3:27 MSG)



In service to God, the talents (bestowed by God) we put to use and the accolades we draw (from men) may be ours to receive but not ours to project conceit.

There will come “the assigned moment for him [Christ] to move into the center, while I slip off to the sidelines.” (Jn 3:30 MSG) In KJV translation, “He must increase, but I *must* decrease.”

How often in our service to God do we realise that the good things we have done were not what we enjoyed or wanted to do? The following is like what Paul said but with a twist:

COOKIE CUTTER CHRISTIANS? A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. — ROMANS 15:7 NIV

B: “I do not understand what I do. For what I did not want to do (or did not see myself doing), I ended up doing with a beneficial outcome for the church, at least as we sing praise to God for it; but what I very much wanted to do that would not contribute to the church ended up on the side-lines.

Now if I do whatever is good that I did not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is the Holy Spirit living in me who leads me into it.”

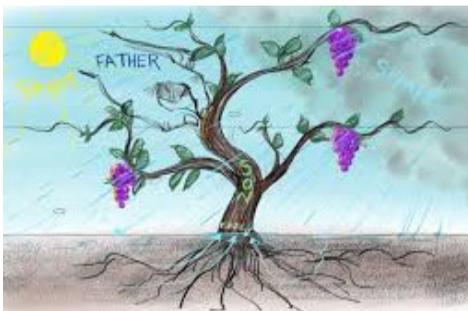
If you compare [A] with [B], you may notice that both say a similar truth with a difference. The similarity is in the sense that we are not in full control of what we do. The difference is that while Paul in Romans stressed the work of sin in what he was doing wrong, the point stressed at [B] (with a tinge less humility at the assertion of beneficial work done) is that the work of goodness (if any is observed) is not for us to take credit but for us to sing God's praise because it is really the Holy Spirit who contributes to it.

Here is a familiar hymn, which is nice and expressive, based on what Apostle Paul said in Gal. 2:20 –

*It's no longer I that liveth,
But Christ that liveth in me.
It's no longer I that liveth,
But Christ that liveth in me.
He lives, He lives,
Jesus is alive in me!
It's no longer I that liveth,
But Christ that liveth in me.*

Think of a branch that is grafted to a tree. If the branch were to be on its own independent of the tree, it would perish instead of growing to flowering and fruitfulness. The branch is alive because it is connected to the source of its life. It is not the branch that lives on its own, but the breath of the tree that dwells in it and gives it life. Yet, the branch in its individualistic and narrow perspective may still mistakenly see itself as a life wholly unto its own, having its own power to produce its flowers and fruits.

Jesus said:



"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch

can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." – Jn 15:1-4

How true it is with us that we can be fruitful if only we abide in the Vine. Understanding the truth regarding the real source of our breath and power, we have no excuse to be boastful about what we do in the Lord's service. When we, servants of God, see more of how we often fall short in the discharge of our duties and responsibilities (fudging a little here, taking short-cuts a little there, adding a dose of excuses where convenient), the more we will see the plough of the Holy Spirit facilitating us through the hard work of turning over the field and producing the harvest.

As for me – whether I am “a Christian who is a sinner” or “a sinner who is a Christian” – I am very much aware that it is not me but Christ to whom all glory is given.

John Lee

P.S.

Perhaps we can also see ourselves as vessels of God – vessels of clay blotted by stains and dented by stresses in the course of use (NOT lying idle). God, our owner, does not think of chucking us away to be replaced by brand new vessels. Instead, He still finds usefulness in the imperfect vessels; and we become useful because we do not hide away but allow ourselves to be used. Imperfect useless vessels as we think we are, we become useful when placed in God's hands. Praise Him who can make “useless” us becoming useful. NOT praise ourselves.



A prayer for Jurong Christian Church

Remembering God's blessings for the past 49 years

Dear Heavenly Father,



We celebrate the 49th Anniversary of Jurong Christian Church. Thank you so much for having brought us together as a community here in Jurong. Through thick and thin in these 49 years, your servants have marched on from generation to generation in your service. We would not have been able to do much without your blessings. We praise and magnify your holy name.



Thank you for the lessons that we have received through your Word. We seek your forgiveness for areas that we have failed you, and we supplicate to you for your continuing guidance and help as we move forward on our journey in your service. May you continue to infuse into our hearts the spirit of love so that we have the determination to love and forgive one another – casting aside all pettiness, fault-finding and hasty judgments – knowing that loving our neighbours as we love ourselves is founded on Christ's Commandment to us. May you enlarge our hearts to extend forgiveness to one another as you have extended your love and forgiveness to us who have all sinned and fallen short of your glory.



Grant us wisdom we pray, as we face the forthcoming year with new challenges in continuing unselfish service to you out of a new church building that you have blessed us with. We are grateful for your blessings of finance and talents in the rebuilding project; and we know that we can trust you for more in terms of rejuvenating Jurong Christian Church as ONE BODY in Christ, according to your riches in grace, as your people receive their blessings from you and become a blessing to the Church by their gifts and talents.



Jesus is our rock and foundation, and we seek your blessings to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as we walk together in spirit and truth, to grow in unity one with another. May we testify for your glory by our love and unity within the body.

Bless our church leaders at all levels in their respective positions of shepherding the flock under them. May your Holy Spirit empower them with strength and wisdom as they feel encouraged to be focussed in their service to you as humble servants, with gentleness and helpfulness towards one another for the edification of the body of Christ and to your praise and glory.

We beseech your blessings for Jurong Christian Church to grow in strength for the sake of your Kingdom's expansion.



Humbly praying in Jesus' name.



John Lee



The **Parents' Prayer Group** (PPG) of JCC held a parenting talk at the MPH on 30th July.

The speaker was Ms Evelyn Khong, a Family Life Consultant with Fei Yue Community Services.

Ms Khong, who is a grandmother herself, is also a trainer under the Triple-P (Positive Parenting Programme) which has been adopted by many schools in Singapore.

The communication gap between parents and children has been a perennial challenge, and a complex one especially in this age with technological gadgets and modern demands drastically changing the social landscape of the child.



In the talk lasting three full hours, Ms Khong delivered many valuable pointers to parents on bridging the communication gap and bonding with their children.

insights based on their personal experience as parents.

This parenting talk is the second one organised by the PPG. The first was in March this year.

The PPG will continue to organise useful programmes for parents. We welcome feedback from them on the issues that interest them. We also welcome them to join the PPG fellowship of parents where members meet regularly, share common concerns and encourage one another for the challenges of their parenting journey.

In the previous interview featured in our June issue, we had a worship leader and a musician to share some insights regarding the Worship Ministry. In this issue, we have a vocalist and an usher to tell us more about the other parts of this ministry.

Peh Ern (vocalist)

Alicia: Hello! What have you been up to recently?

Peh Ern: Mostly focused on being a wife, mother and daughter and some part-time work.

Alicia: So... how long have you been serving as a vocalist?

Peh Ern: I started when I was about 16 years old so that makes it about 21 years. The music ministry had just started then and since I enjoyed singing and wanted to begin serving in an area in church, I decided to join as a vocalist. It was a new ministry and we started off as just one band, serving every week.



Alicia: How is it having almost your entire family serve in the Worship Ministry all these years with your sister Peh Ping as a pianist (though she has recently stepped down from that role) and Joseph as a guitarist?

Peh Ern: It's great to serve together as a family as we feel connected. I really do miss singing while my sister plays for the service. Incidentally it was through this ministry that I met my husband and got to know him better. When Joseph was a worship leader, sometimes he would discuss with me regarding the selection of the worship songs and how the songs could flow together. I enjoyed serving as a worship leader too and my sister would help to correct the chords for some of the songs before I send it out to the musicians so it helps a lot for us to be serving together in the same ministry.

Alicia: I heard that you had composed worship songs and we had even sung them in church before. What inspired you to compose?

Peh Ern: You must be talking about the song "Love at it's highest". We were organising a church camp and needed a theme song for the camp theme. You could say it was God inspired since the lyrics were mostly taken from the bible verse *1 John 4:9-10*

Alicia: What motivates you to keep going in this ministry all these years?

Peh Ern: The love of singing and the joy of singing to and for God. I've sung some secular songs but nothing beats singing praises to God. God is lifted up and singing helps me to express my thanks, praise and my emotions and thoughts to Him. There have been a number of times during worship when God specifically spoke to me about my situation through the songs. Also during the tough times, God has brought His songs to my mind and help me through it. God has helped me through some battles in my life through worship.

Alicia: What advice would you have for an aspiring vocalist or someone who has just joined as one?

Peh Ern: Good to establish a personal time of worship with God. As a vocalist, our role is to support the worship leader in ushering God's people to worship Him. In order for us to be an instrument of God, we need to grow as a worshipper of God ourselves. I would like to add that we can pray to Him and surrender our instrument (our voices) for His use to be sharpened and to allow His Spirit to take over.

Alicia: What would you hope to see in this ministry 5 years from now?

Peh Ern: Those serving in the ministry to continue to have a fresh touch from God, passionate about God and to see fresh new faces that can continue to lead God's people in worshipping Him.

When our heart is in the right place, everything else will fall into His plan for the ministry.

Lim Meng Chye (usher)

Alicia: What have you been up to currently?

Meng Chye: Initially I joined a lot of ministries, serving concurrently in several areas such as vocalist, bible reading, Sunday school teaching ...etc... to find out where I could really be effective in. As time passed, I reflected on these areas I served and narrowed down to just a few. Currently I am taking a break from some ministries in church so as to spend time consolidating my involvement in church, to reflect on the purpose of my serving and how I should serve God. For work, I am busy in school with prepping my graduating classes for the upcoming 'O' Levels exams.



Alicia: How long have you been serving as an usher?

Meng Chye: I used to serve in this ministry when I first came to the church about 6 years ago. My main purpose for being an usher then was to get to know as many church members as possible.

Sometimes you would be invited to usher at other events other than Sunday services. One example of such events is weddings. It's a privilege being an usher at weddings, helping the to-be-wedded couples. Not to mention one of the perks is the sumptuous buffet provided after the wedding.

Due to my many commitments, there were often clashes and I had to swop duties. This made me feel bad. So I relinquished the role after 2

years or so to focus on other ministries. I only re-joined the ushering ministry this year.

Alicia: What motivates you to keep going in this ministry all these years?

Meng Chye: An opportunity to serve God and people, to get to know more people and to meet their needs. Ushering is how I get to know a lot of church members since I get to chat with them or introduce myself to them.

Alicia: What advice would you have for someone thinking of joining as an usher or someone who has just joined as one?

Meng Chye: Be friendly. Be warm. Be sincere. Don't treat this ministry simply as a duty to be clocked. I believe a sincere greeting and a warm handshake can be ministering to those entering the house of God to worship on Sundays. Serve with joy as to the Lord. Sometimes there may be misunderstanding or hiccups. People can be cold or forget to greet you back or say thank you. I think ultimately if we believe what we do is pleasing to God, that's enough. We have different teams of ushers so it's very difficult to recognise newcomers. Since the newcomers may have been now 'second comers' or like us the old timers, ushers must do their job to usher the regulars to the front so that the newcomers can sit at designated back rows. Ushers could then, be more effective in guiding them through the resources needed for the service like bringing them hymnal books, collect their personal data, direct befrienders to them or give directions to rest rooms, young children to cry room, older children to appropriate Sunday school...etc..etc..

Alicia: What would you hope to see in this ministry 5 years from now?

Meng Chye: I think we can be more active and be more visible in such a way that our presence can be felt more concretely. For example, ushers need be more spontaneous in ushering worshippers to the front or to empty seats and be more active in making newcomers feel welcomed.

Thank you Peh Ern and Meng Chye for participating in the interview. Upon the conclusion of this interview, I am suddenly reminded of Romans 12: 4-5, that just as each of us has one body made up of many parts, not all the parts share the same function so in Christ, we, who are many, are of one body and each member belongs to one another. I pray that this ministry, though made up of many parts, will continue to partake in the one loaf. That our church, which is made up of many members, will also be partakers of the same loaf.



Everything is meaningless

When I switched on the television, I hear news of gunmen shooting into a crowd; unsolved flight disasters with families and relatives seeking for closure in their lives; typhoon strikes across the land and earthquakes changing the lives of the people. With all these happening around us, “Is everything that we are doing meaningless, right now?” Let’s pause here as thoughts led me into the book of Ecclesiastes with the well-known phrase of, “Everything is meaningless”.

“... Meaningless! Meaningless! says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! everything is meaningless.” Eccl 1:2

So is everything meaningless? This was mentioned so many times in Ecclesiastes and reference was made to different aspects such as wisdom, pleasure, toil and righteousness. All these are meaningless. It is interesting that the approach to this book was written in such a way and usually people do not like to hear or talk about things that are not good.

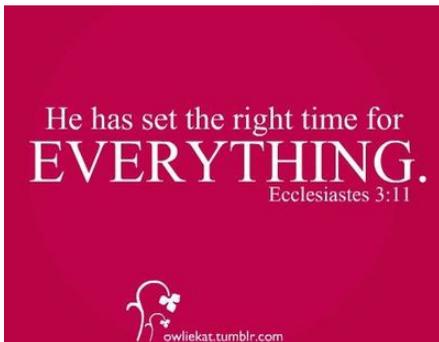
What was the author trying to portray in this context? He is merely sharing how things are in the world and not how it should be in the kingdom of God.

“...What does the man gain from all his labour at which he toils under the sun? Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises.” Eccl 1:3-5

Do we feel that we are at a crossroad sometimes, where we realize that what we do and what we say are just meaningless? Why do we want to work so hard at home and outside of the home? When things go wrong which they do sometimes or most of the time, what is the meaning of all that? Is it just life? It probably is. So?

We need to understand that the writing of Ecclesiastes is from a human point of view with illustrations made to what humans do in life. The author was trying to make a point using an approach contrary to what we should be doing i.e. we should depend on God and reach out to Him in

our search for answers and our reason for living. God understands that we will not be able to understand without His wisdom. He is trying to tell us that He is there for us to run to and lean on in life.



“The wind blows to the south and turns to the north, round and round it goes, ever returning to its course. All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again” Eccl 1:6-7

Even nature has its rhythm where no man can change its core of creation. No man can move the way the water flows and how the tide changes with time. Why is it sometimes that we try to make others think and feel like us? Why are we hard on ourselves as we try to figure things out just to discover that the truth is staring at us, waiting for us to believe?

Is the truth of God when Jesus died on the cross and resurrected with

testimonies spread throughout the Bible, so hard to believe and understand? He is the One who has conquered death and rose again to be our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ! He knows the meaning of life and beyond!

I have also learned why people work so hard to succeed: It is because they envy the things their neighbors have. But it is useless. It is like chasing the wind...It is better to have only a little, with peace of mind, than be busy all the time with both hands, trying to catch the wind.

Ecclesiastes

We need to learn to walk with Him through prayers and good faith because only His wisdom and love for men will help us find meaning to our toil, pleasure and self-righteousness. It will make what we know, see and do meaningful in the presence of God.

QuotePixel.com

“All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its filled with hearing. What has been will be again, what has been done, will be done again, there is nothing new under the sun.” Eccl 1:8-9

Nothing will last in this world. God will be there forever and ever. What we have will be gone and if we are still around, we have to work to get it back again. If not, we will just let live and move on. Treasure what we have that we have toiled for under the sun. Remember God’s love goes beyond being nice and kind. Love is the very essence of who God is i.e. He is always going to act toward us in love because He cannot do otherwise. Love is the way He is.

This article seems to be melancholic and reflective. Indeed, it is for me. There are just so much happening around us and within us, it is good that I paused and wonder, “Is everything meaningless?” I am sure I am not alone with many of you out there feeling the same. Please take heart that we will in our journey with God, pick up speed again and grow in our pace with God.



Don’t give up on God! He knows and understands us well. It will be a meaningful journey with the true meaning of life where everything is indeed not meaningless.

Joyce Tan

SNIPPETS

Monthly Bite-size News



30th July -
The Boys'
Brigade
(Junior)



visited the Bo Tien home, as is their annual practice, to bring cheer to the residents there. The Dialect team joined in to help build a bridge through Hokkien songs. Deacon Peter shared the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Hokkien with Cassidy Yam translating it into Cantonese.

Later the same day, Deacon Peter and some of the Dialect team with other JCCians joined in the food and fun at QLC's fund raising event.

Finally in the evening, Deacon Peter visited Bro Siew Theang Yin in NUH and prayed with him to receive Christ. A rewarding day for Deacon.

