



Abundance of Love

PHILOSOPHIA

GOD
ANSWERS PRAYERS
IN SOME OF THE MOST
UNEXPECTED WAYS

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Fund Raising Dinner

19th Nov 2016



**Brother
Martin
Writes**

I woke up at 4:00 am to the sound of thunder. I did not get off the bed but laid there and uttered a prayer for the rain to stop. I am sure many of you did too because we were going to have the Fund Raising Dinner that very evening. Finally

when I did get up, the weather was fine throughout the day. There was a disturbing sound of thunder at around 4:00 pm but there was no rain throughout the evening. This made the logistics of parking and dropping off passengers much easier. The next Saturday, it was raining almost the whole day. Thank God for the rain at the right time because we need the water as our water resources in Johor is running low.

Speaking of logistics, in the place where I work, we use a methodology called RCFA, acronym for Root Cause Failure Analysis to determine the cause of the problem. We started using this methodology about 3 to 4 years ago, so is it a new

methodology?

In Genesis 4:7, *“The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you **angry**, and why has your face fallen? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”* Sin was the root cause that caused Cain to murder Abel. In fact all our problems can be traced back to Adam & Eve’s sin. Our perfect world started breaking down since that day.

For example the root cause of murder is hate. 1John 3:15 states: *“Anyone who **hates** a brother or sister is a murderer”* and in Matthew 5:20-22 Jesus said, *“For I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to the ancients, ‘Do not murder,’ and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is **angry** with his brother will be subject to judgment.”*

I spoke to someone and she was incredulous that a simple thing like anger can be equated to murder. I am sure that we have all felt anger about someone but we do not believe ourselves to be murderers. The FBI BAU will profile a suspect whether the motivation for the crime was that of power reassurance or assertiveness or **anger** in a retaliatory or excitational way. That is to say, the observations raised will look to answer whether the offender

could be a serial psychosexual sadistic killer or if the crime was one of passion or revenge.

How does anger make you a murderer? *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.* Ephesians 4:26-27. It gives the devil an opportunity to turn anger into hate and hate to revenge and then finally murder. Anger also becomes sin when the angry one refuses to be pacified, holds a grudge, or keeps it all inside. However the verse also gives advise on how to deal with anger. It says, “do not let the sun go down on your anger” which I take to mean let go of your anger before the end of the day. But Jesus says, “*Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you*” Matthew 5:44. As my care group member would say, “It is all about Love. If you have love you would not do evil to anyone.”

Indeed when we read the news of children playing and telling each other if you want to be my friend, you cannot be his friend or else I melt down your toys. If this anger is not pacified, it can lead to serious consequences.

I hope my friends that you will not harbour your anger and force people to take sides and split the fellowship asunder.

Here is my RCFA table of the 10 Commandments and the 7 Deadly Sins:

Commandment	7 Deadly Sins
Honor your father and your mother	Pride
You shall not murder	Wrath
You shall not commit adultery	Lust
You shall not steal	Greed; Sloth
You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor	Envy
You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.	Gluttony

I may be wrong in my Root Cause Failure Analysis but I suggest we avoid the 7 deadly sins which can lead to breaking the 10 Commandments.

*“Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that **the fear of God** will be with you to keep you from sinning.”* Exodus 20:20

Martin Cheah

RESTITUTION

At the recent fundraising dinner in church, my family members met up with a lot of friends - some of them whom they had not seen over the years. As my mother-in-law remarked, such reunions happen only in two situations - a happy event such as a wedding or a somber event like a funeral.



My husband whispered to me that he was not even close to any of them in the first place as he was never one of the popular kids (with his quiet nature, I can see why). I laughed in response but at that point, a thought came to my mind. There are various reasons behind why people grow apart. Busy lives, overseas work commitment...etc... and sometimes, we even allow certain friendships to unravel over time. How and why did we even allow that to happen?

Let us examine this hypothetical case.

Sara loved her new bag. She could not wait to show it off to her friend Liba. The two decided to meet for lunch. Both cooed and ahhed over the new bag. Liba asked to borrow it for her upcoming party. Sara hesitated but agreed since she decided that a friend should be more valuable than a favoured object of hers. However, her heart sunk when she saw the state of her bag when it was returned to her. There was a stain on it! Liba shrugged and apologised. Sara nodded her head but things were never the same between them. Sara felt Liba had *taken advantage* of her. Liba thought Sara had *over-reacted* over a bag. After all, she HAD apologised so Sara should have just forgiven her.



What would have happened if Liba had offered to replace the bag...or even add in a little gift to apologise? Would Sara be appeased?



What does the Bible say?

When God gave Moses the Law, he instituted a system of restitution:

Numbers 5:5-7

5 The Lord said to Moses, 6 "Say to the Israelites: 'Any man or woman who wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the Lord is guilty 7 and must confess the sin they have committed. They must make full restitution for the wrong they have done, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the person they have wronged.

Anyone who injured another paid the price for what was stolen or destroyed and added 20% to the value. Restitution is making amends for wrongs done against our fellowmen, paying debts, making confessions to the offended and apologising to those slandered so as to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man. It is the act of putting right what has been wrongly done. It is returning what has been forcefully or deceitfully acquired. It is giving equivalent compensation for loss or pains inflicted on others.

We may think of restitution as justice for the wronged party and punishment for the offender but do you know that restitution offers more? It builds a bridge



between two parties, paving the way for relationships to be restored. Forgiveness coupled with responsibility towards the other person are keys to restoring relationships. Restitution was practiced in the days of our Lord Jesus and that of the Apostles. It is required to be observed in our days too. After all, in Matthew 5:23-24 *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."*

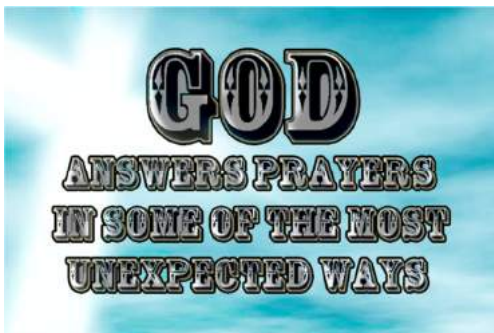
Restitution is not always comfortable but it is the right thing to do.

I am sure that something of a similar context has happened to anyone of us at some point of our lives. If you have felt taken advantage of, maybe it is time to engage someone in conversation instead of detaching from that relationship. If you have unintentionally mistreated a friend, consider what needs to be done and take action to restore the relationship. Do it because it pleases God and also, your relationships will be much richer for it.

Alicia Wong

Dear Lord,

Thank you for not giving up on me. Since 8 years ago, from my first episode of psychosis till now, though the process of healing may seem long in the eyes of man but You have eternity in mind. After the 2nd episode of my illness, I've realised that I cannot rush your process of healing, that I need to wait for your timing. Thank you for giving me the sign of the butterfly. After which, you blessed me with the gift of Joash, a new life.



As much as Joash, from a baby, needed me to love and care for his daily needs, I've come to realise that through this act of loving and caring, You are also doing Your work of healing. I used to look at psychosis with fear and avoidance but Lord you have turned something bad into good for your purposes

and intentions. Thank You for this revelation that with each psychosis episode, just like the transformation of a butterfly, You are doing a deep work of transformation in my life. You have unearthed the hidden sins of my pride, my desires and my will. Now I can begin to look at psychosis as a teacher. Your healing process is more than just healing the illness but also healing the inner being.

Through psychosis, You have taught me to slow down, to take things a day at a time, to be thankful for the many days that You have gifted me with a sound mind. To be grateful for the time I have with my loved ones. To be more dependent on You as You show me what I need to do when each psychosis episode comes, so that I can overcome it with Your power. To remind me that I have the mind of Christ.

Though sometimes I do feel lonely in this journey that I have to take, but it is this loneliness that draws me to solitude with You. Only You can understand and reveal to me what Your will is for me.

I do not know what the future holds for me, my family, my friends and the world. But I can rest in Knowing that You hold the future in Your hands, You know the hearts and thoughts of your people and You love the world with Your outstretched hands.

My prayer, Lord, is that in sharing this, people will know how much You love and care for them, that especially in trials, You will never leave them or forsake them. That You are doing a deep work in their hearts and their life that is sometimes hidden. That You are a God of revelation, who reveals Himself to His people. That You have eternity in mind in the work that You are doing in our lives and those around us. That we do not need to fear, because You are near.

In Jesus Name we pray,

Amen.

Saw Peh Ern



In November, there were 2 dinner parties for JCC. One was a Thank You Dinner for the men who built the new church building. They were invited to a buffet at the new building.

The other was the Fund Raising Dinner at the temporary building at 101. It was a grand dinner with professional singers and a guest dignitary.



A RETREAT FULL OF LOVE



Abundance Cell Group - 22 & 23 October 2016

In the weeks before the Abundance Cell Group went for our first retreat in 2016, our family fell sick one after another. As a counsellor, I grappled with the issue of finding it easier to help ourselves than asking for help from others. Hence, we only prayed within our own family that we would be well before the retreat. However, Lucas's fever lasted for five days and we started to worry.

I shared with our cell group members on our concern over the family's health problems and they started to pray for us. Two days before the retreat, a miracle happened and we recovered. This experience allowed us to see the importance and power of praying together with our brothers and sisters-in-Christ. Also, the importance for others to pray for us!

The experience of the cell group retreat was memorable. Other than exploring new activities and sports that we had never tried before, we connected and bonded with our own family members, as well as the brothers and sisters-in-Christ in the cell group. Through everyone's sharing, we got to know more about GOD.



Celebrating Danny's Birthday



Our cell group member, Ewe Ewe, shared with us the 3 Ps i.e. Pray continually, Plan for the prayers and Power in prayers. The 3Ps reminded us on the importance of praying and communicating with GOD diligently.

During prayer times, we gathered into male and female prayer groups for sharing as well. I was touched by the prayers, sharing and support in our group. Tears just rolled down my cheeks naturally, giving thanks

to God!



Though the retreat was just a two days' event, we were well-fed, physically charged, emotionally lifted and spiritually healed. Other than giving thanks to our GOD for such a fulfilling and joyful time, I appreciated all the brothers and sisters-in-Christ who contributed to the success of the retreat.



Special thanks to our cell group leader, Tony, who has the heart of flexibility to cater for our different needs. Many thanks to Uncle Roy and Aunt Juria for all the arrangements for the retreat and coaching of living the life in God!

*On behalf of Abundance Cell Group
with Love!*

Hung Mong Ping



Philosophobia

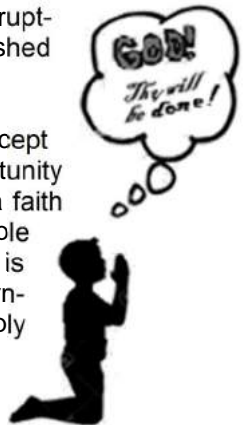
Do you have a fear of philosophy or philosophers?

How many of you have a phobia of one kind or another – from Ablutophobia (fear of washing) to Zoophobia (fear of animals)? The list of phobias is quite long from A to Z. Let me venture a suggestion that a good number of Christians have a type of fear called Philosophobia¹. They fear that people who take an interest in philosophy would be inclined to swell their heads with arguments against the existence of God, making it more difficult to engage them with the Gospel.

A dictionary definition of Philosophy is “the use of reason in understanding such things as the nature of the existence, the use and limits of knowledge, and the principles of moral judgment.”

People who are called or nicknamed “philosophers” are not unlike ordinary folks who use reason to contemplate truths, except that the “philosophers” involve themselves more energetically with their thought from many angles and therefore tend to appear as difficult to satisfy or be convinced by the Christian worldview. There is nothing intrinsically wrong to engage in a critical inquiry into the basic questions of life. In fact, the deeper the penetration into Philosophy, the deeper may the despondency build upon the serious searcher of truth as he discovers the hopelessness of reason alone to answer questions of life. The validation of faith (borne out of a bankruptcy of reason to grasp the divine truth) may become established with deeper roots.

In some religions, people may be habitually coerced to accept the status of being a follower. They are not given the opportunity to use their reason to make an intentional choice. To me, a faith that is professed out of “no choice” or compulsion by people around does not carry meaningfulness because the faith is neither true from the heart nor a decision based on a discernment of truth. The people professing such a “faith” is simply going along with the pressure that prevails on them.



¹ Don't confuse this with Philophobia, which is a fear of falling in love or being in love. ☺

We should be thankful to God for the gift of reason. With this gift of reason, we use it to explore the realms of His visible creation and the realms of the truths that eyes cannot see. The reason that man possesses is like a sharp knife that can cut both ways. God bestows on man the gift of reason packaged with the free will of choice. **Whatever the decision by man for or against the Christian faith, it is the outcome of applying the reason and the free will that:**

- **One may say to God “Thy will be done,”**

or

- **wait for God to say to him “Thy will be done.”**



In meetings with pre-believers, we cannot always avoid situations when philosophical views about God, religion or the Christian faith are brought out. At times it is to the consternation of the Christians who are put on the defensive but unprepared to provide a robust response. In such a situation, it may not be uncommon for some Christians to wish under their breath that the unsettling experience would get over quickly and hope for no

more encounters of this sort. Actually, the gift of reason being from God, every circumstance is in God's sight and within His control.

In the Bible, the word “philosophy” appears only once (1 Cor. 2:8)²:

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.” – NIV

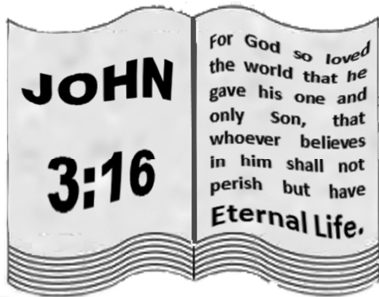
“Don’t let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.” - NLT

Christians, with spiritual armour secure³, will not to be deceived and led by the grandiloquent but hollow arguments of falsehood. However, this is not the same as saying that we should frown on, and have fear of, the philosophers and their philosophies. Meetings can actually be for us to render pre-believers

² However, two specific types of philosophers are mentioned in Acts 17:18.

³ See Eph. 6:11-18

a measured space to vent their views (even if misguided the views are) whereby, with correct cognizance of their reasoning, we may share with them pertinently some germinal seeds of truth in Christ in the spirit of an amicable exchange of views sans aggression.



Christians see themselves as sinners, and therefore they need Christ. Non-believers who criticise Christians over the latter's sins are missing the point. The Bible says that all have sinned. (Rom. 3:23) The more we (including the criticisers) recognise our sinfulness the more we ought to cherish the grace that is available to all who believe in Christ. This does not mean that we are released from our responsibility to lead a holy life; rather, the more we receive the unmerited

love and grace from God, the more we build up strength in our sense of righteousness imbued by the Holy Spirit in us to make unceasing effort in the right direction consistent with salvation's purpose. God's sanctification is progressive, not stopping at salvation but continuing throughout life.

(An illustration: If a child keeps receiving pardon after pardon from his father for his mistakes, the ceaseless love of his father should be cherished and be the motivator for him to reciprocate with effort to change to good behaviour and not to hurt his father further, even though the child may still succumb to mistakes from time to time. The ceaseless love of the father is not licence for the child to continue in wrongdoing with abandon.)

Rom. 6:1-14 is a sort of philosophical approach by Apostle Paul in refuting any notion that Christians should continue sinning so that God's grace might increase.

If you ever come across anyone who does not see himself/herself as a sinner, but as saint above all others, that person is perhaps someone who would not accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ because a non-sinner has no need for the saving grace of Jesus Christ. (The important question is: Is there any non-sinner in the world?)

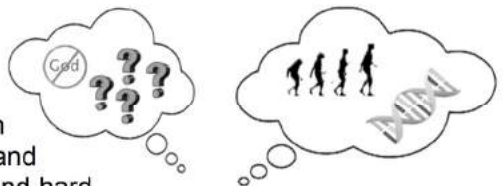
My name is John which means “God is gracious” and, indeed, I can thank God for his gift of reason packaged with the free will of choice plus more – His amazing grace:

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretched like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see ...”

This famous hymn is my favourite. I wrote quite a bit with atheistic flavour in my pre-believing days. The hour I believed, I moved swiftly to writing for Christ. I started writing for Christ before I joined JCC.

I see writing, in part, as an exercise of immersing thought into the topics that one contemplates to write about. The use of reason is to be expected. Yet, it was by the very use of reason in the course of probing issues such as the nature of existence, the use and limits of knowledge and the principles of moral judgment that God revealed to me the truth that the power of human reason has its limits. Reason cannot stand alone. As a purposeful gift from God, it is also not for us to cast into the dustbin out of fear. **Both reason and faith work together**, as St. Augustine said.

It is good that atheists are free to enjoy their own adventure of philosophical inquiry. Given the freedom to contemplate the truth about faith and finally make a decision that can withstand hard knocks is certainly much better than being compelled to profess a faith that may become regarded as blind. When facing atheists, it is fine by me to let them continue with their reason in-



stead of fighting with them until the cows come home. Prayerfully, if they are willing to explore beyond the scope of what reason can avail, God will make His entrance into their consciousness. Hopefully, they explore with an open mind and a receptive heart too – not a mind closed to views outside their comfort zone or a heart sealed by prejudice. **God has given them free will.**

In interactions with people who have a rich mind for philosophical thought, it is not necessary for us to be always possessing of a ready answer to every question. **Who says that we are omniscient like God?** Who says that we must be all-knowing by our human faculty in order for us to embrace the Gospel? Faith is never to be founded on 100% knowledge. There were philosophers in history who came to know Jesus Christ not because robust answers to their queries were ready-made for them, but it was through their strenuous personal search for the truth that revelation came upon them through their faith. Consequently, they became defenders of the faith. The usefulness of philosophy is well-expressed in the following quotation:

Philosophy can be an effective tool if properly used as a means of understanding pre-theological questions, but not as a method of supplanting the revelation already made available by faith through God's Scriptures. The limitations of human reason, especially in light of the moral degeneracy in humans, requires God's help in resolving philosophical questions.

WALTER A. ELWELL (EVANGELICAL DICTIONARY OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY)

Philosophy is not to be feared. Let's discard philosophobia and seek God's help for philosophers and all to grow their faith in Christ Jesus. †

John Lee

Bless Israel -
The Bible Lands (Study Tour)
from 16 – 25 Sept 2016

Following the brief on our visit to Mt Nebo and Petra City which are located in the Jordanian kingdom in the last issue of the Vine, below is some more brief about the other sites and pics taken from our journey into the Bible Land.

ISRAEL/JORDAN FAMILIARISATION TOUR

It was the 4th day and after a satisfying Israeli breakfast, we boarded the coach inscribed with the words “Galilee Travel”, a comfortable 40-seater and Wi-Fi enabled, for our journey into the Promised Land. Bro. Gershon Nerel, our 60-year-old Messianic Jewish guide (a former professor of the Hebrew University in Israel) warmly greeted us “shalom” and then another Hebrew phrase “*kulam po*” – meaning “is everyone here?” before the coach would move on.



“Kulam po” would be said and repeated each time the group had to board the coach to be transported to another scheduled site in the tour program. This was to ensure everybody in the group was safe and accounted for and not left behind unwittingly. Each day’s program was like a different lesson in a new setting. It was an awesome experience for the group as we walked and climbed the various terrains and pathways in each location, filled with reverence and emotion as we began to realise and understand how our Lord Jesus Christ had himself also walked and climbed these places without the modern means of transportation and shelters. There were emotional moments and tearing eyes when scripture references were highlighted and relevant passages read on site, connecting the past, present and future regarding the prophecies and promises of God to His beloved children, the nation of Israel.

BETH SHEAN (TIBERIUS - ISRAEL)



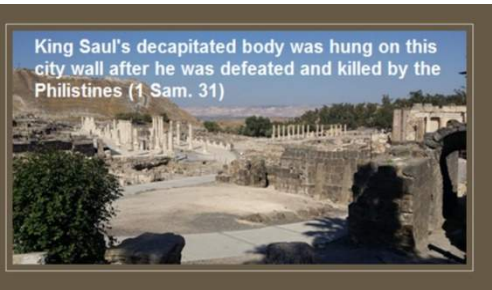
Beth-Shan (or Bet She’an) on the west of Jordan was an important city in Biblical times. Beth-Shan means house of security or rest. It is right at the edge of Mt Gilboa where the men of Israel fought the Philistines army and were defeated. King Saul and his 3 sons including Jona-

than were killed during the battle, and Saul's decapitated body and those of his sons were all hung on this city wall (1 Sam 31).



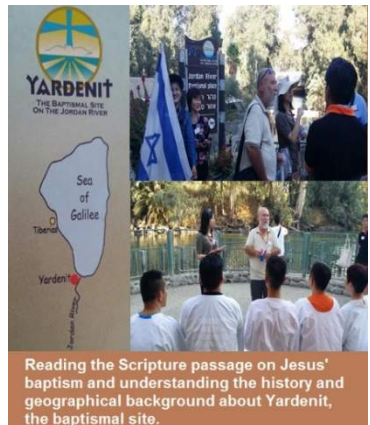
Some time later, King David defeated the Philistines (2 Sam 8:1) and his son Solomon turned Beth Shan into a busy capital city, during the Byzantine period. It was an important gateway from Damascus to Jordan, and about 14 miles away from Lake Ganaseret or Sea of Galilee. In 8th century AD, this city was destroyed by a powerful earthquake. Today, it is one of Israel's most prominent archaeological sites. The remains of a 6,000-year history of settlement were discovered at the site, including a Byzantine amphitheatre and a church with impressive designs featuring black & white stones, marble columns and a colourful mosaic floor.

tre and a church with impressive designs featuring black & white stones, marble columns and a colourful mosaic floor.



THE BAPTISMAL SITE - YARDENIT (TIBERIUS - ISRAEL)

Israel's most important river, the Jordan River, is situated in the Galilee district, between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. It is 251 kilometres long and flows roughly north to south, through the Sea of Galilee and into the Dead Sea. The water from Jordan River is the second largest water resource of Israel, desalination of sea water from the Mediterranean Sea being the first. Conflicts over the waters of the Jordan River was a contributing factor to the 6-day war when Syria attempted to divert some of its headwaters in collaboration



with Lebanon and Jordan in 1965 (ref Wikipedia.org).

Jesus was baptised in the river by John the Baptist nearer to Jericho area, as He began His ministry (Mk 1:0-11). It was also the river that the Israelites crossed to enter the Promised Land. We managed to reach Yardenit (Hebrew name of the baptismal site) early and were able to enjoy a great devotion moment amidst the beauty and serenity of the place without encountering much noise and disturbances around us. As 1 sister and 7 brothers in our group – trainers and theological students from Charis Mission (a Christian half way house for ex-



Brothers and a sister from Charis Mission being baptised in the Jordan River.

convicts and drug addicts) took their turns to be baptised in the river and shared personal testimonies with thanksgiving to God Yahweh, the rest of us broke into Hokkien chorus of “chin chia ho” as well as songs of praises in Chinese to share in their joy. It was a historical and memorable moment for them; some were visibly wiping away tears of joy and relief, including those standing on dry ground.

We will continue to share pictures and short briefs of other significant sites visited in the coming issues of the Vine. It has been an enriching and awesome experience for me, a journey that draws us even closer into God’s embrace as we revisited the Bible sites and saw how real and accurate the scriptures are. Our Heavenly Father through His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, had revealed His great love and as promised will continue to protect and preserve His children, the nation of Israel, till His coming again. Hallelujah and Amen!

Jessie Lim



Baptism & Transfers



13 Nov 2016

Five elderly were baptised. You may not know them but one is Freddie's ex-colleague, one is Karen's father, one

is Tony's father-in-law and of course one is our very own Uncle Ling.

Martin Luther affirmed that Baptism is no human trifle, but that it was established by God Himself. Moreover, He earnestly and solemnly commanded that we must be baptised or we shall not be saved. No one is to think that it is an optional matter like putting on a red coat. - Large Catechism



Five persons transferred membership. One was transferred by Rev Anthony, the others by Rev David Ng.





The Vine Recruitment Ad

Writers & Contributors Needed!

The harvest is plenteous but labourers are few



The Vine has been in publication for decades. It has edified many readers in ways we know or don't know. The existing team of writers certainly welcome you with open arms so that The Vine as a ministry can move forward more powerfully.

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Pet. 4:10

Remuneration:

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. (Matthew 16:27)

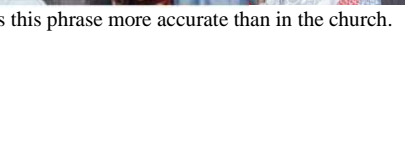
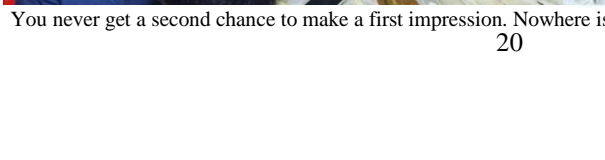
What can you write about:

- A short personal testimony of few words
- A long, impressive and creative prose
- Some quick comments accompanying great photos that tell stories on their own
- An activity report in Queen’s (King’s) English or colourful Singlish

Interested? Apply by contacting us now at alicia.hweili@gmail.com



Fund Raising Dinner 2016 Smile



You never get a second chance to make a first impression. Nowhere is this phrase more accurate than in the church.