



The Blessings of the New Year
by John Lee



Cell Groups of JCC
by Alicia Wong



Giving Thanks for JCC Pastors
by Joyce Tan



Thanksgiving Service
25th February 2017

The Vine Committee

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Unveiling the Plaque
during Thanksgiving
Service 25/2/17



**Brother
Martin
Writes**

On 5th February 2017, we went out to the neighbourhood to distribute the flyers to invite the people to come for the Open House on 4th March 2017. To many it may seem like a simple task but to me and my CG, we were under great spiritual attack.

Suddenly, I had an intense gout attack two days earlier and I wasn't even sure I could make the distribution. Many of my CG members were also having physical ailments and could not come to help. Even those who were willing to help faced attacks in one way or another which prevented them from carrying out the mission. In the end, only five of us managed to go door to door. However, God did



intervene and provided us Rev Martin Yee and Betsy to help out.

As I pondered over this issue, I wondered why the devil would even bother to hinder us from going door to door if the people were not going to come. If God had helped us to build new JCC, would He not also help us to grow JCC? Yes the people will be coming, we must pray that they will find the presence of our Lord in JCC. How can they feel God's presence but through us, His people, His ambassadors. I pray that indeed we will not be hindered from being there to welcome the neighbours with the Great Commandment – to love our neighbour.



I also cannot understand why on 13th February 2017 sister Janet Cher from our Chinese Section was seriously injured by a falling tree. She was actively involved in the Thanksgiving Service event on the 25th February. She is still in the hospital. JCC held a synchronized prayer for her healing. I believe this tragedy was a unifying factor for JCC, when the Chinese and English, Youth and Adults and even some LCS congregations came together to pray as one people to the Lord. It may sound cliché but we are not changing God, He is changing us, making us a united people. "All for one, and one for all."

I was in Cambodia on a mission trip with Yew Moi from 1-3 February. While there, I managed to ask the 2 pastors of LCC Krus how they came to Christ and the answer was simply, they came to church.

Pastor Mose said that a friend brought him to church. He attended a few times and eventually it dawned on him that he was a sinner and he accepted Christ.



Pastor Sopheoun came to church when she heard there was a Sunday School and she joined the children although she was much older. When she heard the story of creation, she came to accept Christ.

Their testimonies reveal something - that all we need to do is to invite our friends to church and let God do the rest. Of course we need to have some evangelistic sermons once a while. What better opportunity than now when the church building is new and people are curious about what is inside and we are having an Open House.

Let me conclude with a side story. A few Sundays ago, I asked Wong Mui why our Sanctuary had such odd looking walls and ceilings. He explained to me that the wavy forms of the walls and ceilings were specifically designed to enhance the acoustics of the hall. So if you were to talk in the Sanctuary, the sound will be increased and carried further by the design of the hall. So a careless whisper may be heard by everyone. Isn't it interesting, well it is good to know.



I picked up a section of the papers on Sunday 19th February and the caption was "Envisioning the Future". As I turn the pages, it was all about what the future holds for us until I came to the Obituaries pages nearing the end. Indeed this is our ultimate future. It is sad for those who do not have the long term plan but only all the short term plans.

Martin Cheah

Cambodia Trip

1 – 3 Feb 2017

When HOM (Missions), Yew Moi, found out that I was on forced leave, he immediately decided to visit Cambodia with me tagging along. In my mind, I was thinking that maybe God did not want me to waste 3 days sitting at home, so I agreed.

I don't know if he had planned this trip for a long time but it was a surprise to me. We had less than 3 days to visit three locations in Cambodia, starting from Phnom Penh to Kampong Chhnang and then to Kampong Cham and finally back to Phnom Penh.

We landed at Cambodia International Airport in the afternoon of 1st Feb just as Pastor Daniel was leaving for Indonesia. We had a hello and goodbye meeting with him at the Departure Gate. His wife then gave us a lift to the hotel. After we dropped off our luggage, we proceeded by foot, to the Rainbow Hostel where we met up with two of the students staying there. We had a long talk with them as Yew Moi tried to find out what JCC can do to help them.



As it was getting late, Zewen came by to bring us out for dinner. We had Vietnamese food.

Early in the morning of the next day, we travelled by taxi from Phnom Penh to Kampong Chhnang. The trip took about 2 hours. At Kampong Chhnang we had a discussion with Pastor Mose on what JCC can do to help his ministry. He then took us around on motorbikes to show us some of the work he is doing.



Mushroom



Chicken egg hatching



Mango tree

After that we had lunch at the church, a sardine dish with rice.



We then proceeded to Kampong Cham, which is another 1½ hours drive away. We met up with Pastor Vibol who showed us the goat farm project in his village.



We left shortly to beat the traffic back to Phnom Penh. That night we had a Korean dinner.



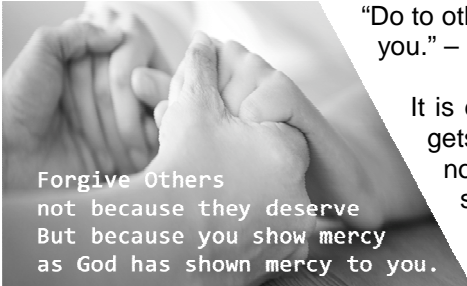
Back in the hotel room, I felt pain in my right foot. It was so intense that I could only hobble around. I kept wondering what could have caused the pain. Finally I decided that it must be gout but I could not figure out what caused it. The next day, I stayed in the hotel room, not able to walk. I asked Zewen to get me some medicine. (Surprisingly, medicine is cheap there). I had to hobble in great pain to the Departure Hall and also painfully walk to the Arrival Hall in Changi. It was in the taxi on the way home that I realized it must have been the sardines I had for lunch that triggered the gout attack. The spirit was willing but the flesh is no longer up to it. I guess I have passed my prime for mission trips and must call it a day.

Martin Cheah

**As you celebrate the New Year,
May your future be as bright as
the promises of God!**

(continued from January issue of The Vine)

5. May the supreme blessedness of mercy be upon the merciful!



“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” – Luke 6:31

It is easy to understand that mercy begets mercy. Conversely, if you show no mercy to others, then you deserve no mercy, like what the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. 18:21-35) illustrates.

However, the “merciful” in this Beatitude is not simply referring to those who perform compassionate acts from occasion to occasion. Rather, it refers to faithful Christians who live holy lives displaying charity as a constant testimony of God’s grace in them and through them, a constant testimony of Christ-likeness in being “merciful” (Heb. 2:17) and faithful in service to God.

The Hebrew verse speaks of Christ being “fully human ... that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.” The “merciful” in the Beatitude and the “merciful” in Heb. 2:17 are the same word that appears nowhere else in the NT.

The supreme blessedness of mercy is shown, on the last day, to believers who have mercifulness grounded in God himself and made manifest in the life and ministry of Christ.

6. May the supreme blessedness of seeing God be upon the pure in heart!

How many people like to wear white and think that they can show off as without stains on their



clothes, oblivious to the fact that they badly need a scrubbing brush to get their whites whiter than white? It is not easy to be pure white; even the white paper on which The Vine is printed is not pure white.

In a moral sense, being white is not good enough; but can anyone be whiter than white – completely pure in heart without evil? As Jesus said, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.” (Matt. 15:19)

A school examination is very difficult. Those who manage to get by will merit an award of a pass to get going for the next target in their endeavour. However, those who exert exceptional effort to conquer the hurdle to high achievement is blessed by his examiner with a grade of distinction. The student of distinction sees his performance achievability in a way that his peers with casual attitudes never get.

Similarly, the attainment of purity in the heart comes in grades and God is the examiner who makes His award of supreme blessedness to the ones with the purity to be worthy:

“I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.” – Jer. 17:10

As we take God's examination of our heart, do we aim for distinction and the concomitant Beatitude of seeing God, or do we just satisfy ourselves with a passing grade?

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” – Ps. 139:23-24

Along our journey as pilgrims in this world, we struggle to pass God's examination of our heart; but with dedicated effort, the full consummation of the beauty of purity in our eschatological vision, with the Beatitude of seeing God, will come to pass.

7. May the supreme blessedness of being called children of God be upon the peacemakers!

The world is not at peace, with intractable conflicts between nations. Workplaces are not peaceful places, with bad attitudes among colleagues. Home is supposed to



be a place where love abounds; but sadly, frequent news of conflicts in families seems to suggest that peace is not in rich supply. How about in the church? Bickering, intolerance and the presence of toxic habits have the potential of breeding disharmony. Peace – the precious commodity – where art thou?

If there is peace, we need peacekeepers to keep it intact. If there is a lack of peace, we need peacemakers to make more of it. Peacemakers – where art thou?

The Beatitude of being called children of God is not referring to peacekeepers at centres of strife. Peacemakers don't wade into discords, but bring men into harmony with one another and with God. We may all be children of God through our faith in Christ, but being called out pointedly (given outright affirmation) as "children of God" – truly, not just in name – is a badge of honour, of esteemed recognition as Christ's ambassador of *shālôm*.

For us who are peacemakers, it is good to know the Father's appreciation, to have the confidence that we are led by the Spirit of God and "we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." (Read Rom. 8:14-17)

8. May the supreme blessedness of the kingdom of heaven be upon those who are persecuted because of righteousness!



You may be persecuted because of unrighteous things you do. But if you are persecuted because of righteousness, heaven is on your side. Instead of hating your enemy, "pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven." (Matt. 5:43-44)

What a blessedness to be children of the Father (as in Beatitude #7 above)! The reward of "the kingdom of heaven" is also the same as for the poor in spirit. (Beatitude #1 above) Matt. 5:11-12 re-state and flesh out the Beatitude in v.10 by using the 2nd person "you" in place of the 3rd person references.


"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so

*that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” –
James 1:2-4*

Unpleasant experiences “now” are often treated with negativity, but those who are persecuted can extend their vision horizon to see the pleasures saved for them in the kingdom of heaven when the Son of Man comes in his glory. Then the King will say to them, “Come, you are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you ...” (see *Matt. 25:34*)

Time passes by fast. In the blink of an eye, one New Year becomes old and another New Year begins. Small kids soon become grown adults as young adults mellow into their sunset years. Everyone loves lasting blessings. May the Lord shine down his eternal Beatitudes on you from New Year to New Year!

John Lee



When you pray for the rain to stop, God knows your need.

He may stop the rain, make available an umbrella or raincoat, or grant you the patience to wait out the rain.

The sunshine and rainbow will come after the rain and is worth trusting God for.

John Lee

Do you know

...how many CGs (care groups) we have in JCC? Are you in any of them? If you are, take pride in that! If you aren't, here are 5 reasons you should join one.

1. Jesus' Way of Life Cannot Be Learned Alone.

Developing yourself spiritually and serving others are things that cannot be learned alone. They require practice partners who can provide insight, advice and encouragement. CGs are tried-and-true places to find such support.

2. Support Encourages Change.

All of us have hurtful, immature and even dangerous behaviours that we need to change. Change comes as we practice the teachings of Jesus. It is hard work and nearly impossible to do it alone.



By confessing our sins to each other and praying for one another, we can be healed. Confession is the act of articulating what is wrong. A CG is a safe place to confess and receive encouragement. We come to know the hope, dreams and struggles of the other group members. With their support, we can grow into

healthier behaviours that are more in sync with the teachings of Jesus.

3. Relationships Lead to Sharing.

When we share, we are trusting that God will continue to provide for us. When we receive what others have shared with us, we recognize that we have been given an unearned gift from God. Slowly but surely, sharing helps us to move beyond our self-focused obsession with our stuff. CGs provide a place to make meaningful relationships where such sharing can take place.

4. Mission Happens in Cell Groups.

What if Frodo had gone to Mordor without the Fellowship(Lord of The Rings)? Or Luke Skywalker had



tried to rescue Leia without Obi-Wan, Han Solo and Chewbacca (Star Wars)? These stories are great because they demonstrate the relationships that develop when groups go on mission together.

One powerful way that Christians grow from CGs is by working toward shared goals and common causes. A CG might work together to provide aid to a new mother or meals for the new parents. Or band together to serve a fellow group member with a serious health issue or bond over pursuing similar goals, like developing a spiritual discipline.

When small groups unite to accomplish a meaningful mission, growth is the unavoidable result.

5. Cell Groups Take Church Beyond Sunday.

Imagine you go to the gym just for an hour a week. While it is better than nothing, you would probably just end up sore, tired, and sweaty without enjoying many long-term effects. Losing weight and gaining muscle require a good diet and regular exercise to work effectively.

If a person's spirituality is limited to one hour a week, it will be difficult for them to grow. A cell group leads to growth by creating more opportunities to come to know God, to practice the teachings of Jesus and to grow spiritually.

Perhaps now you want to grow as a person and are intrigued by the idea of sharing or confessing. Are you hungry for the potential of deep relationships that grow out of a shared mission? Join one now.

Below are the list of CGs you can visit. As we have many cell/care groups, for this issue, we will focus on the Adult Cell Groups.

Abundance Care Group

We are thankful to God that we can form up as a CG to fellowship, care, share, grow together in our journey of faith - *Iron Sharpen Iron*. We comprise of families that have been in JCC for a long time while faithfully worshipping and serving in church with a mixture of grown up kids and younger ones. Our cell fellowship includes: Bible Studies Topical, Prayer Fellowship, Recreational, Bonding, Retreats...



CG leader: Tony

Timing: Twice a month, Thursdays 8 -10pm

Venue: JCC Room3-5/ Rotate among homes of members

HIPHOP (Harvesters In Practice, Harvesters of People)

We are a bunch of young-at-hearts, from 30s to 50s, gathering fortnightly in Jurong for prayer, worship, fellowship & more. Meet us singles, couples and a couple of tiny ones in a cosy place.



CG leader: Peh Ping

Timing: Saturdays, 730pm

Venue: Pleasant abode located in Jurong East

Taman Jurong Care Group

We are a group of late Baby Boomers and early Generation Xs, mainly parents of late teens or early 20s. Our usual hangouts are at food places and needless to say, 2 Tah Ching Road. We are food lovers but we rather be lovers of man and fellowship over meals and celebrations. Many JCCians address us as aunties and uncles but we preferred to be called by our names... or man/woman in red... haha... no lah, joking only...



Indian chief: Yew Moi

Village: 2 Tah Ching Road, #03-06

Frequency: 1st and 3rd

Fridays, 8:30pm – 10pm



Bethel Care Group

We are a dynamic group in our late 30s to early 60s that meets fortnightly for worship, prayer, accountability and fellowship through God's word. We support and encourage one another in our walk with God, and to serve.

CG leader: Frank
Timing: 1st and 3rd Fridays, 8pm
Venue: Rotation in CG members' homes



Jurong West Care Group

We are Jurong WEST, a **W**ized **E**stablished **S**exagenarian **T**eam, old but not necessarily wiser. We may sound wise with John and I churning articles for The Vine every month and we may seem active with Peggy and Alan practically running every event for the church but actually, we are no different from all the other CGs. We are made up of ordinary people meeting together to study God's Word.

CG leader: Martin Cheah
Timing: 1st and 3rd Fridays, 8pm
Venue: Rotation in CG members' homes in Jurong West area



As we mingle with our brethren in church, may we also be observant and extend invitation to anyone to join our CG if they are not already in any. If you know anyone who wants to join a CG, kindly refer the person to an existing member of a CG, the CG shepherd or the pastor.

Alicia Wong

Giving Thanks to God for our Pastors and Deacon

Lights, camera and action! It was a time of Cell Group fellow-ship with food, songs and sharing. I would never imagine that a Saturday night on 18 February 2017 at the function room would turn out like this.

Take #1: As We Gather Together

We thank God for the hospitality of Roy and Juria to book their function room for the



Appreciation Night for our Pastors, Deacon and their family. As the people gathered and the food arranged on the tables, we knew that the Abundance Cell Group members have spent their day buying, cooking and preparing the sumptuous spread of home-cooked delicacies for this dinner event. I counted and there were more than 10 courses ranging from appetizers, entrees, main course and desserts. What a mouth-watering sight!



Glorious food! We give thanks to you, Jesus.

Take #2: Questions & Answers

Knowing you and you alone! What would you like to know about your Pastors and Deacon? Do you have any burning questions to ask and get to know them better? This is the moment of truth revealed. Yes, no sermons that day!

Some of the questions included: “What are the difficulties that you faced as a Pastor or Deacon?”, “What do you do when you and your wife quarrel?” and “What are some of the bucket list items that you have?”



As Tony led the session with ground rules that all Pastors and the Deacon must answer the questions, he started the session with a prayer. Reverend Anthony, Reverend Martin Yee, Pastor Andrew and Deacon Peter took turns to share. Here are some highlights that you should not miss.



Differences in parenting style of bringing up our children even as pastors is challenging among our families. Leaving it to God through prayers is a must and working through the situations are unavoidable with God’s help. Overcoming language differences to forge a depth of understanding requires patience, apart from the gift of parenting, as Reverend Anthony shared his story with love.

Reverend Martin Yee spoke of an occasion when he stayed with his wife when she was hospitalized and in ICU. A heartfelt sharing of the situation and realization of how much his wife meant to him through the love of God. There was a heart-warming silence as Reverend Martin continued his story of struggles, pains and joys as a husband, father and servant for God. What a sharing for the night!



Pastor Andrew reminisced the moments of how he and his wife handled their young children. He is fully aware of the cultural differences and knowing each other’s perceptions and reactions through daily communication are important. There were candid and frustrating moments in their lives. One example included, “Why you never clean the house and take so long then you will clean the house?” The level of threshold and differences between men and women were expounded with care on the different approaches to handling of family, household chores and parenting situations in life. Some of you with children would have nodded in agreement at this point.



Pastors and Deacons also have to go through life to be able to understand life situations to better their work in counselling, praying and reaching out to people. Do you know that they can struggle even more because of the work that they do and the perception of people around them as servants for God? Let’s continue to pray for them.

As Deacon Peter recalled the moments when he chose to sleep through situations in his married life, he was mindful that his wife was supportive of his work especially in the Dialect ministry. He shared challenges of his ministry. The giving of time from his working schedule and sacrifices made of his family, friends and himself,



opened the hearts of respect and also laughter from the crowd. Yes, his wife was present as he shared. He was also reminded that matters should be handled before the dawn

of the next day. What humorous sparring moments between Deacon Peter and his wife as they listened and shared their views. Thank you for moments like this!

We were reminded that “In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.” Eph 4:26

Yes, men are from Mars and women are from Venus! It was an interesting and humorous sharing by our key-note speakers. For the married couples, young or old, I could see husbands and wives grinning at each other, acknowledging the realities of married life and parenthood. For the singles, there are learning points from these experiences too!

Take #3: We Sing Out a Song



The live music started and we sang. Strum, hum, strum...

“God sent His Son, they called Him Jesus. He came to love, heal and forgive. He lived and died to buy my pardon, an empty grave is there to prove my Saviour lives. Because He lives, we can face tomorrow because He lives all fear is gone; because we know He holds the future and life is worth the living just because He lives...”

The day turned to night and the music faded. A prayer was uttered as the group packed and cleaned the place. The event ended on a heart-warming note of “Thank you” and “Goodbye”.

We give thanks to God for our Pastors and Deacon!

Praise God from whom all blessings flow...

Joyce Tan

Thanksgiving Service

You may hear many JCC members say, “One done, one more to come”. These are either the committee or the helpers for the back-to-back events of Thanksgiving Service and Open House. The Thanksgiving Service ran smoothly, almost like clockwork. Even the weather waited until everyone was home before it started raining.

Most of the guests arrived early and had a short time of fellowship in MPH1 before being ushered into the Sanctuary for the Thanksgiving



Service. The service was spectacular with well-coordinated performances by the Worship Team, Flag Dancers and Combined Choir bringing a crescendo of worship.



Then we had the unveiling of the Plaque followed by a buffet and more fellowship. However I didn't see many people going for the tour of the building. Perhaps it is because they came for a Thanksgiving Service and not for a tour of the building. I am sure the crowds for the Open House will be more interested in the tour than anything else because there is no worship service in that day's program.

The back story to this event was in December 2016 when the Fund Raising



dinner had just completed and the team that organized that event was reformed to plan the Thanksgiving Event. So many of the committee were from the old team. Along the way at the penultimate moment, an important person in the team, the vice-chairperson, Janet Cher, was taken out by a falling tree. There was no time to fill the gap, so chairman, Alan Soh, with Peggy's help had to run the whole show. We managed to pull through with flying colors, for one thing, I liked the Laksa but connoisseurs didn't. There may be some discordant voices but that is to be expected. You can't please everyone. Even Jesus could not please everyone, *"To what, then, can I compare the men of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to one another: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep."* Luke 7:31-32



Finally the end of our term is in sight, one last event to complete, and then we can call it a day, until JCC calls us up again.



Photographers for this event: Cecilia Wang, Nick Wong, Freddie Low and Martin Cheah.



Sunday 26th February, a fiery preacher, Rev Moses Tok from USA was apparently surprised by JCC's cool members. A number of times he stopped to ask if we were following him because of our unresponsiveness to his AMENs and Hallelujahs.



His message "Enter Your Promised Land" was a wake up call for JCC to be Renewed and Transformed.

Saturday, 11th February, the youths organized an extended time of prayer and worship for Fires of Revival.

Pray that God will raise up our young people as what Rev Moses Tok mentioned in his message.



Sunday, 12th February, the youths went out to the blocks around JCC.

Friday, 24th February, the youths came for the Prayer Walk.

They must increase and I must decrease.

Thanksgiving Service

