



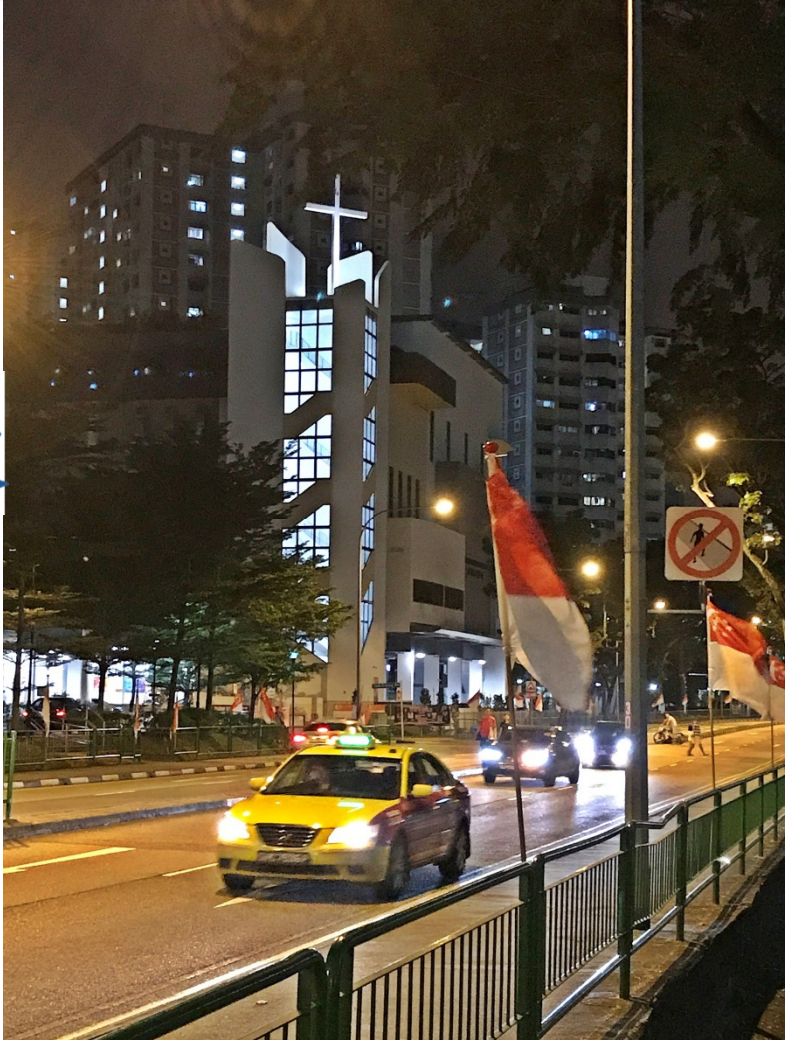
The Bible in 365 days
By Alicia Wong



Servant Leadership
By John Lee



A G M
By Joyce Tan



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Singapore flags around JCC as the nation celebrates its 52nd birthday.



Brother Martin Writes

I can't help but wonder, is it a self-fulfilling prophesy? Did you read about an advertising gaffe by a sushi restaurant which introduced a sushi, "Maki Kita" which means "Curse Us" in Malay?



Chinese are very superstitious and do not like to talk of death. However, death is an event that truly is "Not If, But When". Regardless, everyone will surely die because ... *it is appointed for men to die once* – Hebrews 9:27.

From the very second that we came into this world, we have an appointment with death, only we don't know when. A few days back, we attended the wake service of Joo See's sister-in-law's father. The doctor told him he had about a week to live and it turned out to be so. However, before he died, he requested for baptism. If only the rest of the people in this world realize that they have a limited time here and request for baptism before they leave this world for an eternal life with Jesus, in the next.

There are not many sure things in this world, but death is a sure thing and we should be concerned about it. To Christians, the other sure thing is what Jesus said, "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*" – John 14:6 Since it is a sure thing, we should not play, play but be prepared. We should not avoid the topic of death as if it is never going to happen. To the worldly-wise, they will make a will early and not leave their children in confusion. To the spiritually enlightened, they should decide to accept the grace of God through Jesus Christ now and not at the hour of their death.

Have you ever considered why every country celebrates its birthday with a



show of weaponry, the tanks, fighter planes, warships and soldiers? Someone in the Internet says that it is a morale boost. Having a big demonstration gets the people all riled up, gets them feeling patriotic and nationalistic even if the living conditions are destitute. Secondly, it is used as a show of force. Finally, they become an annual tradition to distract people from the real world for a little bit. Patriotism and nationalism can be a way to unite the people under a single cause and a single flag.

Basically, it is because they do not depend on God but in their own strength of arms. However, we should trust God for His protection.

If God is for us, who can be against us? – Romans 8:31

I was enjoying the National Day Parade from the Mandarin Oriental last week. Joo See's whole family were there in one room with a wonderful view of the entire parade. After the parade ended, I looked down at the crowd leaving the parade grounds towards the public transport and I was very concerned that the MRT would be too packed for Joo See and I to go home.



However around 9:45 pm we decided to leave as we saw that the crowd in the streets below had cleared. My brothers-in-law followed suit but they were all driving. I thought how nice to have a car at a time like this. When we reached the MRT, it was quite clear and we were able to get on board the train without squeezing. We reached home around 10:45 pm and went to sleep. The next day we found out that the rest of the family reached home around 12:00 am because of the traffic jam after the parade.

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

Finally, years ago when I was still driving, I always prayed that I would never get into an accident which would cause someone their life. Now that my driving days are over, I can say that God had answered that prayer. In the news lately, driving a vehicle has become a weapon of choice for some.

Martin Cheah

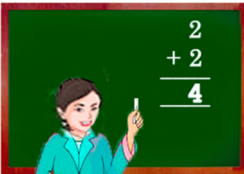
Leadership with “Leadership (servanthood) Spirit”



In mentorship programs, it is common to see participants being addressed as “Leaders of Tomorrow”, alluding to their promising potential not just to be followers but be leaders of men in whatever their future vocation.

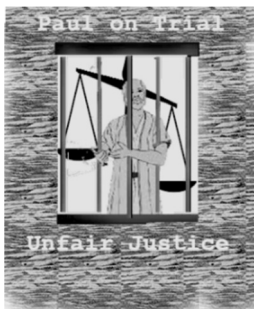
There is nothing wrong to aspire to be leaders; but aspiration is one thing, and fulfilment is another. Leadership carries with it power. The higher the level of leadership, the greater the power and hence the responsibilities. Whether in secular or spiritual vocations, God holds leaders to a high standard. Leadership is not an entitlement. The statement “I am a leader” implies “I am prepared for a lot of hard work” to gain recognition and respect. It is not a supercilious badge in shiny gold to draw envy and for the wearer to walk with a swagger.

If you are not already a teacher, do you want to be one? It is a leadership position that is supposed to command respect from your pupils, but it carries heavy responsibilities. The following verse from the Bible is instructive:



“Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” – James 3:1

If being a teacher does not enthruse you, because you aspire to a higher leadership level, the position you aspire to must still involve hard work to earn respect from your charges. If you are not confident or have a lot of grievances hampering your performance, then you may be at the wrong place of leadership?



Now, I would like to take a look at an example of a type of leadership in the Bible – the leaders of the Jews. (Acts 25) Were those leaders at their right place of leadership, or would they be better somewhere else?

Apostle Paul was put on trial. We see the leaders of the Jews trying every means to accuse him of wrongs

he did not commit. It would be alright for Paul to be charged as a suspect if the Jewish leaders were to lay out their evidence with Paul properly heard on his defence, after which the judge (a leader in his own right) would rule independently. Unfortunately, a fair judgment was not in the minds of the Jews. The leaders of the Jews were unscrupulously trying every means to accuse Paul with no evidence and gave the accused no opportunity to defend himself. Woefully, Pontius Pilate (the judge) was put under unwelcome pressure.

The trial of Paul by the leaders of the Jews put on display a leadership of abuse by wielding the power of authority to break down the will of the accused and get the penalty the leaders wanted to appease their own zeal against the innocent. However, Paul knew that the miracles and hopes of Jesus' death and resurrection were true, and such a truth directly challenged the faith of the traditional Jews. Therefore, despite being battered by his accusers, he stood firm on the truth.

The Pharisees wielded tremendous political power. In spite of this, how would God look upon and deal with such a type of leadership represented by the Pharisees? It was a leadership in name for misuse for personal interests rather than a leadership discharging responsible dutiful service and care to the charges.

Self-centered leaders manipulate when they move people for personal benefit. Mature leaders motivate by moving people for mutual benefit.

John C Maxwell

Whether in secular or spiritual realms, whole communities can become led astray and into bad endings by leaders who “just do their job” or, in fact, “fail to do their job” because authority is taken for granted or applied only

with personal-gains calculations.

In the time of Zechariah (Zech. 10:1 – 11:17), bad leadership led the people to shirk their reliance on Yahweh. They turned to idols and forgot the source of their blessings. (Zech. 10:1-2). It was one thing for God to be hurt by His people, but it was more serious for the wrath of God to descend upon the leaders whom He would chastise with full force of His displeasure:



“My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders; for the LORD Almighty will care for his flock, the people of Judah, and make them like a proud horse in battle.” – Zech. 10:3

Whether you admit or not, you are a leader insofar as you carry out actions that have the effect of leading or guiding the actions of one or more persons in your home, workplace, church or any group. Yours may just be a “humble position” that you don’t wear a badge proclaiming yourself as a leader, or it may be that those who serve directly address you as “Manager”, “CEO”, directly responsible (like the Jewish community of Jews, like Zechariah to the people who teacher who is responsible for a whole community of Jews, like the Israelite leaders in Zechariah lived under them, or like a teacher who is responsible for a whole community of pupils), you carry responsibilities as a leader to the extent which God will deliver His blessings or deal out His disapprobation according to how you discharge your duties.



Leaders who dutifully recognise their special leadership positions with people under them or people who look to them for their actions for guidance or facilitation should recognize that true leadership responsibilities go beyond artificially prescribed delineations of job responsibilities. Poor attitudes – “I have done my job, that is not in my job scope” – may have the effect of scuttling otherwise positive outcomes from a “whole mission” perspective.



For illustration, let’s say Jane was directed by her boss to book a tour bus from XYZ company for a staff excursion. The bus was booked, but for some reason at short notice the company could not provide a bus. Everybody looked to Jane for a solution, but she turned back and said:

“Sorry, I have done my job of booking the bus from XYZ company as directed and now I don’t know what I can do next and I am busy with other things. It is not my job to make any other arrangement.”

No one would disagree that Jane had “done her job” and was not obliged by the scope of the directive to extend her effort “beyond call of duty”. However, I would doubt that Jane had properly grasped the true meaning of leadership. What we do out of the authority of leadership that we possess goes beyond performing within well-defined job scopes to be able to say “I have done my part”, but should be guided by an attitude of **service with servanthood spirit** so that we consciously encourage a positive and selfless chain action that provides a fresh breath of energy that permeates the environment and contributes to the success of the “whole mission” of the body. In the example above, a plain “tidak apa” (apathy) led to a failed excursion, a failed respect for Jane as a leader and a miscarried mission objective (of the tour).

What our Lord says: “Here I am among you as one who serves” (Luke 22:27)



In the church, we have committees, sub-committees and groups called by many names manned by hardworking God-loving brothers and sisters in Christ. Most of the members are in leadership positions in one form or another in God’s service and it has always been encourag-

ing whenever they bear positive witness for Christ in rendering help to one another wherever they can, beyond “job scope” even though they have to squeeze time from important things outside of their full-time regular jobs.

Leaders with “leadership (servanthood) spirit” (Luke 22:27) are the kind of leaders that God calls out from among professing Christians. They are not conceited, because they know that God is the source of all blessings. (Zech. 10:1-2) The source of power is not in themselves!

Leaders (even if they do not wear badges with the big and bold letters **L.E.A.D.E.R**) in their respective positions are serving under others to them. If we know at the same time who are shepherds by personal experience how hard it is to be good leaders to those who serve under us, we should appreciate more the shepherds whom we serve under. As much as we desire those who serve under us to



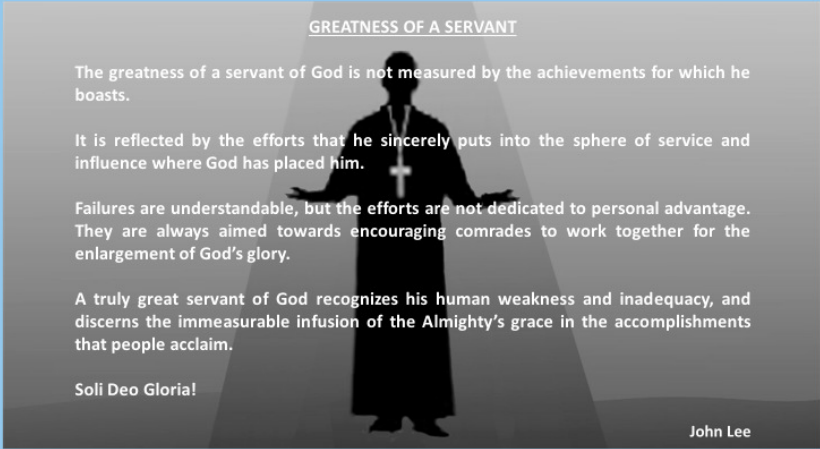
be magnanimous in forbearance where we fall short, we ourselves must also not let our shepherds' shortcomings make us lose confidence in them who serve with love.

Here is the biblical advice:

“Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.” – Heb. 13:17

Each one among us who is a leader (as well as each one who serves under a leader) will give an account of ourselves to God. (Rom. 14:12)

John Lee



GREATNESS OF A SERVANT

The greatness of a servant of God is not measured by the achievements for which he boasts.

It is reflected by the efforts that he sincerely puts into the sphere of service and influence where God has placed him.

Failures are understandable, but the efforts are not dedicated to personal advantage. They are always aimed towards encouraging comrades to work together for the enlargement of God's glory.

A truly great servant of God recognizes his human weakness and inadequacy, and discerns the immeasurable infusion of the Almighty's grace in the accomplishments that people acclaim.

Soli Deo Gloria!

John Lee

FINISHING THE BIBLE IN 365 DAYS

Have you heard of this plan of finishing the Bible in 365 days? Sounds awesome, isn't it?

As a child, I could do that easily using the Good News Bible. Those easy-to-understand English and those drawings! That Bible enthralled me as a kid. Now that I am an adult and have graduated from using a kid's Bible, completing the reading of the Bible in the New International Version within a year is something I always plan to do. Imagine starting the beginning of the year with Genesis and ending the year with Revelation! However, throughout the years, I found it difficult to keep up with the reading plan and would fail in my new year resolutions. I don't have any problems with daily devotions though. Just the part of reading books of the Bible systematically from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Once, I even confessed to my care group that I never seem to be able to walk out of Exodus the way the Israelites were able to walk out of Egypt!



Photo taken from one of the pages of the Good News Bible

How about this year?

Yay! A marked improvement! I've finally gotten out of Deuteronomy and into Joshua! What a marked improvement! However, I must make a disclaimer. The progress is made over a period of two years.

Shocking, huh?

Actually, I figured out the reason why I never seem to be able to finish the Bible in one year is that sometimes, a certain verse or chapter is so arresting that I can meditate on it for as long as a week. I remember sharing Deuteronomy 10:12-13 to my WhatsApp care group earlier this year on Mon, 27 March.

Fear the Lord

12 And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the Lord your

God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to observe the Lord's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

The entire chapter arrested my attention. I COULD NOT MOVE AWAY FROM IT even though my plan for the day was to finish reading at least 3 chapters. As I reread the chapter over and over again, the words from Proverbs 9:10 came to mind: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."

In the Bible, the word translated as 'fear' can mean several things. It can refer to the terror one feels in a frightening situation (Deuteronomy 2:25). It can mean 'respect' in the way a servant fears his master and serves him faithfully (Joshua 24:14). Fear can also denote the reverence or awe a person feels in the presence of greatness (Isaiah 6:5). The fear of the Lord is a combination of all of these.

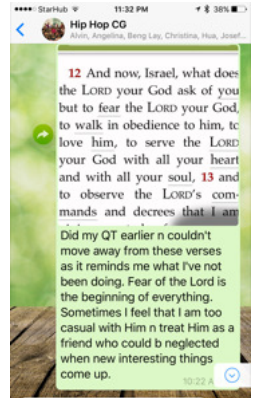
The link between the fear of God and wisdom means we cannot possess wisdom if we decide to recreate God in our own image, putting Him into the role of a non-threatening nobody or simply, just a 'friend'.

God Has 3,243,158,604 New Friend Requests

The word 'friend' used to mean something really specific. It was more than an acquaintance. They are people who have important things in common with you.

However, in our Facebook/social media world, the word 'friend' suddenly means a lot more. A 'friend' doesn't really need to have a relationship with you at all. The most remote, six-degrees-of-separation-relationships can now easily be promoted to 'friends.' All it takes to be someone's 'friend' is to 'friend' them. And to think that the word 'friend' was never a verb before.

If we redefine our Lord as a god that makes us feel comfortable, a permissive 'buddy/friend' who exists simply to bless us and give us what we want, we will not fear Him in the way He deserves to be feared. Without fear, we run the risk of treating His Commandments as a buffet where we can pick and choose according to our personal preferences.



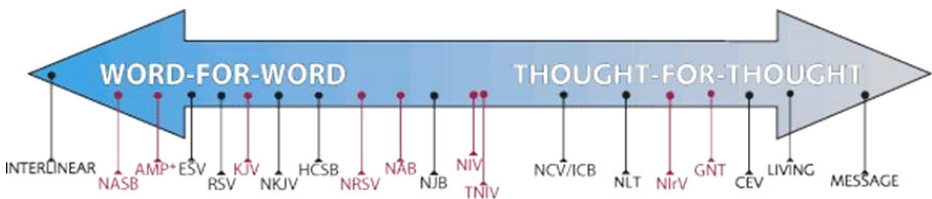
Screenshot of the sharing of my reading that day

I come to the realisation that without the fear of the Lord, I may gain knowledge of earthly things and proceed to making some practical choices based on my faulty human understanding. The question that follows is this: Am I wise?

Pray for our hearts to be in a right relationship with God. Else, we will be unable to have the wisdom that the Bible says:

“the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.” (James 3:17).

Alicia Wong



It is widely known that the Bible’s original Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic manuscripts have words and phrases for which there is no English equivalent. Translating these texts into the English language is a painstaking process of rendering the intended meaning with a balance of accuracy and ease of understanding.

An important distinction between modern Bibles has to do with the translation philosophy chosen by their team of scholars. Traditionally, some have placed a higher value on word-for-word accuracy (Formal Equivalence) and others have emphasized a thought-for-thought approach—striving for a greater level of readability (Dynamic Equivalence). But as the scholars who have worked on Bibles using different approaches have said, no English translation can be fully Formal or fully Dynamic. All translations are a balance of both.

Source:

<https://www.quora.com/Which-English-language-Bible-translation-is-most-true-to-the-Hebrew-Old-Testament-text-and-Greek-New-Testament-text-respectively>

Praise and Worship Morning Exercise



赞美操

Does anyone have an idea what this is? Is it a one-off event that took place in church but was never advertised? No, it is not. In case you are wondering, it is a weekly morning exercise that takes place every Saturday in JCC on the 5th floor (multi-purpose hall). This exercise is organised by the Chinese Congregation from 730am to 830am. Rev Anthony briefly shared about this during one of the meet ups with the leaders and it piqued the interest of my boss, who told me to go dig this up.

Actually, I was aware of this morning exercise for quite a while as my mother-in-law is from the Chinese congregation and she had shared about it. There was a period she attended this regularly while she was staying with us (our home then was just 5 mins walk from church).



Why is it called 赞美操 (roughly translated as Praise and Worship Morning exercise)?



This exercise is based on Chinese songs of praise. It first originated from Taiwan and around 4 years ago, the members in the Chinese congregation choir got their hands on the VCD and started this morning exercise activity, following the instructions being played in the VCD. The weekly exercises quickly gained popularity.

However, this activity was halted during the period when our church was in the rebuilding process and we temporary resided in 101 Yuan Ching Road. Fortunately, the activity was resumed once we shifted back to the new building. Now they have around 10 regulars, with some non-Christians attending. Anyone can join up so if you are an early riser and keen in some exercises in an air-conditioned room, go take a look. In fact, take this opportunity to evangelise by approaching some of your non-Christian friends to join you in it!

Alicia Wong

Recently, I attended a pledge ceremony and that led me to come up with some acronyms for these words:

Share the Word of God
Hold meetings regularly
Encourage members to attend
Pray for members
Help members to grow
Equip them with God's Word
Reach out to the lost sheep
Direct them back to the group

Pray,
Administer
Sacraments,
Teach,
Outreach and
Reconcile

Ensure
Details
In
The Vine
Original and
Refreshing

Ask God Mah

Too tired? Yes, I believe sometimes we are just exhausted from work, our health, our family and things that are happening around us. Due to the hum-drum that we got so used to through the circumstances day by day, we have not been thinking much. We do not stop and pray much. As a result, we forget to “Ask God Mah”!

The title of this article came to mind when the Church had the Annual General Meeting (AGM) this year. You would have thought that I was going to write about the AGM, my reflection on this event, and share learnings from the episodes we had. Well, that did cross my mind. 😊

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11: 28 – 30)

I thought that the Church has been handling the AGM well, at least from what I observed, through prayers so far. Together

as a body of Christ as we continue to rely on God and pray for wisdom that brothers and sisters-in-Christ work well together during AGM periods, I believe we are in the good hands of God. God will be with us every time as we go through it. Amen.

I pray that God will continue to guide the Church and provide as He did in providing the funding for our Church building. Amen.

So, remember to “Ask God Mah”!

I discovered some truths when I was reading this article from Kay Arther titled “Come to Me All Who Are Weary and Heavy-Laden” under the bible study programme, “Precepts for Life”, that teaches practical Bible study tools on God’s Word. The section headers said it all. I will reflect in my own words, giving thanks as I stumbled onto this article by chance.

“For I satisfy the weary ones and refresh everyone who languishes” Jeremiah 31:25



This reading left me realising that I am not alone in this world where no one understands what I am going through. Well, let me stop being melodramatic here.

Stress is indeed one of the aspects that take us down daily. A little stress is good – better than being passive and lazy in our daily lives. Then again, too much stress can cause medical problems in the long run although tension can be constructive as long as it does not break us into

despair and dejection. So, ask God for?

Kay Arthur shared that it is how we react to the situations through God that matters. In my interpretation and understanding, we fight “fires” and only start thinking when the “fires” burn in our lives. Pray for guidance as God knows us and our pressure in battling these conflicts every day.

How true? Ask God Mah!

Kay Arthur highlighted a deeper insight when we are faced with stress. She said that meekness is born out of stress and trials with afflictions. Meekness keeps us humble that we learn to rely on God.

Remember that when we are weak, it will make us stronger in the Lord. We need God no matter how strong we think we are. We need God no matter how smart and logical we think we are. We need God when all things seem to be alright as well as when we cannot fathom why things are alright just to be surprised by sudden afflictions of conflicts and difficulties. God knows. He knows you.

We should just “Ask God Mah”!

As the article ends here, join me in praying and looking up to God again, knowing that He is there and he will give you rest.

I did not know that there was such a song, “I Will Give You Rest”. Do look out for this heart-warming song.



*"Come ye who are weak and weary, I will give you rest
Ye who bear a heavy burden, I will give you rest*

*Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me
I am meek and lowly and I will give you rest*

Let not your heart be troubled, come unto Me

*Ye whose hearts are gently troubled, by your fears distressed
Lean upon My steady shoulder, I will give you rest*

*For My yoke is easy, my burden light
Cast your cares upon Me, and I will give you rest*

Come ye who are weak and weary, I will give you rest

Joyce Tan

Started writing for The Vine in Apr 2011 issue and continued intermittently to submit articles. She came on board as a full-time writer in the beginning of 2016, together with Alicia Wong. Both ladies have been writing articles every issue since and may they continue to do so into the next generation.



7TH MONTH

It always seems to me that devotees of other beliefs are more fervent than us. As the Chinese 7th Month (or Hungry Ghost Festival) comes along, you will see all the devotees in various public places performing their rites without any embarrassment or fear.

A Christian in a hawker center will probably be very shy to say Grace before meals but these devotees even kneel before their makeshift altars in front of everyone in the hawker center.



Asking a Christian to do street evangelism is like asking for his life but again these devotees will kneel or stand and burn joss paper all along the public streets.



What gives these people the courage to do what they do? Is it because they are like the Pharisees who like to make a show of everything they do? Most likely not but I think it is because there is strength in numbers. Since many people are doing it, then there is no embarrassment for them to join in. It is similar to a National Day celebration, a shy person may even stand up and dance because everyone is doing it and sitting down will make you the odd one out.

One Friday night when our CG met at church, I saw a group of green t-shirted people from our tenant church going out to the neighbouring blocks. There is strength in unity. If we just ask one or two CGs to go out, they may feel quite embarrassed to do so but if the entire church goes out in their maroon t-shirts, maybe we will go out with joy.

For those of us who want an excuse, here it is:

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full." Matthew 6:5

We are all praying in our closets.

Martin Cheah

Capturing History with Passion

If I had to give a mission or vision statement for The Vine, I would copy a caption which I read in the newspapers recently. It goes something like this: Capturing History with Passion. I believe that is what The Vine has been doing since our beginning in November 1989.

In the various issues of The Vine over the years, there are records of baptisms and confirmations, weddings, BB and GB enrollments, outings, retreats and other events. Six years ago, the US Library of Congress decided to archive every single tweet, which can come up to 500 million tweets per day. The Vine is more selective in its recording of history.

If every JCC member writes something for The Vine, we may be able to keep a full history of JCC. As it is, we are only capturing the history of JCC from the perspective of a few people. For example my daughter's study path is recorded in The Vine. It all began in the Jan 2011 issue of The Vine when we sent Debra off to Brisbane, Australia to study in the University of Queensland. In



the Jun 2011 issue, I wrote about her trip back to Singapore for a semester break. Then in the Dec 2014 issue I wrote from Brisbane about our trip there to witness her graduation. Lastly, in the Jan 2015 issue, I shared some more about our Brisbane trip. Finally, this issue, I can say it is finished when she collected her license on 22nd August 2017.

Perhaps The Vine will follow the biggest library in the world and just collect tweets, Whatsapp, sms and other similar types of stories instead of properly spelt words in full grammatically correct sentences. Everyone knows that ending text messages with a full stop is unnecessarily harsh. And research now confirms it. 'No.' shuts down the conversation; 'No ... ' allows it to continue."

Maybe that is why I seldom respond to Whatsapp, etc because I may sound harsh. LOL.

Martin Cheah

Aug News in brief



6 Aug 2017 - The Vine (Multi-Media Ministry) Team met for the 1st time after more than 25 years of ministry.

The main item on the table was how to mentor and equip the new team (Alicia and Joyce), who will be released to take The Vine into a new era of excellence. At the

end of the meeting, we agreed to meet more regularly and not once in 25 years.

13 Aug 2017 - The Mission Committee met with the Mission Team going to Cambodia Trip 0117 to Kampong Cham, which will be in October for a Children's Camp.



The team was quite excited to know how Cambodia is like and what they will be doing there. They will organise some games, sing and teach a song, help the children in the performance of some skits, and play whatever other roles that will be useful as and when needed."

The council would like the team to explore what JCC can do to help the Cambodians. For the October trip, council has agreed to sponsor 50 sets of stationery (pencils, pen, sharpener, eraser and pencil case) for the Cambodian kids.

10 Aug 2017 – Jerrica, daughter of Lian Kup and Judy, celebrated her 1st birthday in grand style at JCC's MPH1.



It was like a mini-Open House with balloons, cakes, buffet, movie, photo booth and about 100 family and friends to add to the atmosphere. Little Jerrica may not know what is going on but one day she will read The Vine and recall this event happened.

WEDDINGS



Hui Wen & Terrence
8th July 2017



Khan Lian & Adrian
29th July 2017