

Jurong Christian Church

The Vine



For Internal Circulation Only



THE REFORMATION
by John Lee



REMEMBER
by Alicia Wong



FAITHFUL MISSIONARIES
by Ewe Ewe & Pearl



You are Invited
Exploratory Meeting

JOSHUA CULTURE 23

Date: 20 Sept (Sun)
Time: 3pm to 6.30pm
Venue: MPH 1
Things to bring: Mask, sweated, writing materials

The Vine This Month
Editor:
Alicia Wong

Writers this issue:
John Lee
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Rev Anthony Loh
Martin Cheah

Cover Photo:
JC 23 Exploratory
Meeting – 20th Sep



HOM Editorial

Matthew 4:19 (ESV) - *And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."* In the NIV it is translated as: *"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."* The New Living Translation states: *Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!"*

If you have read this verse, you will find the constant is "Follow Me" but the rest of the verse have different translations. Either Jesus is going to "make you", "show you" or "send you" to fish for men. Depending on which translation you read, you could be in one of 2 states – waiting for Jesus to make/show you how to fish for men or Jesus has sent you to fish for men.

Many of us think that we are not ready to be fishers of men. Could it be because we do not follow Jesus? If you follow Him, He will show you how and send you out. Can we truly say we are following Jesus and still don't know how to be fishers of men?

I am no fisherman but I guess if you want to catch fish, you have to have the right bait and to go to where the fish are. If you have the bait but choose a spot where there are no fishes, do you expect to catch any? Maybe we are selective of the types of fishes we want to catch. We don't want the small fish.

Like the marriage joke, first the engagement ring, then the wedding ring and then the suffer ring, we tell people that being a Christian we have to give up everything and carry our cross. My colleagues always asked me if to be a Christian they have to give 10% to the church. I always tell them the suffering part, if you don't be a Christian you will go to Hell. Doesn't scare them at all because they believe in reincarnation.

So either you go out to fish and don't have the right bait or you don't go out to fish because you are not trained, the result is no fishes. As someone mentioned to me, "NO" is also an answer to prayer but Rev Philip Huan has a positive answer: *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.* James 5:16

Martin Cheah

REMEMBER

You have forgotten God your Saviour;
you have not remembered the Rock,
your fortress.

Therefore, though you set out the finest
plants

and plant imported vines,
though on the day you set them out,
you make them grow,
and on the morning when you plant
them, you bring them to bud,
yet the harvest will be as nothing
in the day of disease and incurable
pain.

Isaiah 17:10-11



It is amazing how we are surrounded by natural wonders every day and yet not always be aware of our Creator. For me, the momentum of life picks up after the Circuit Breaker, the 'to-do-lists' lengthen...the needs around me screaming for attention (my father was hospitalised for a month and for most days, I was exhausted-physically and mentally).

I am very thankful I am tethered to a Care Group, Abundance 1, who kept my father and me in prayers. There were times I was extremely stressed and I just vented it all out in WhatsApp group. Yet when each new day came, I was able to cope with prayers lifting me up. I believe my father is given some more time on this earth despite being terminally ill...because of the prayers interceding on his behalf. Now that my father has been discharged from the hospital, I am adjusting to the normalcy of life I was living previously. I feel confused as I go about my ways. Then I realise why I feel so lost and discouraged. I have forgotten

what is most important. I start and end my days without God. I can't remember the last time I meditated on His Word or basked in His presence. In a sense I am grateful I'm still serving as a writer in The Vine because as I write, I reflect. As I reflect, I am reminded to practise daily and weekly habits to remain in God's presence, to consult Him in all that I do. In my time of hardship, the Care Group has helped connect me with God. Now it's my turn to make a conscious effort on my part to re-connect with Him.

Alicia Wong

**I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener....
I am the vine; you are the branches.
If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit;
Apart from me you can do nothing.
John 15:1,5**



503 YEARS OF THE REFORMATION

Whenever the Protestant Reformation is mentioned, we recall the person Martin Luther who posted his famous 95 Theses on a church's door in Wittenberg, expressing his views against the sale of indulgences by the RC Church on 31st Oct 1517.



In fact, in the late 14th Century and early 15th Century (i.e., before Luther was even born), John Wycliffe (an English theologian) and Jan Hus (a Czech theologian) had already spoken against the absolute authority of the Pope and the abuses in the RC Church of the day. Both were condemned as

heretics. Wycliffe died of a stroke and Hus was executed.

While no Protestant Reformation arose out of the reformist preachings of Wycliffe and Hus, it was apparent that there was already prevailing and simmering discontent with the RC Church from before the time of Martin Luther.

Martin Luther did not suffer the consequence of having his protest vanishing into oblivion. This was because a few opportune factors worked in his favour:

- It was Halloween on 31st Oct 1517, a day that would draw people far and near to view the church's relics being listed and to make their donations. So, the 95 Theses on the church's door readily captured the attention of many who then spread the stirring message to others like wildfire.
- The printing press was already invented and available in cities throughout Europe. This greatly facilitated rapid printing and dissemination of the message far and wide out of Germany, with translations into various languages.

In Zürich (Switzerland), a prominent theologian named Huldrych Zwingli shared Luther's reformist zeal to underscore the supreme authority of

the Scriptures over the authority of the Pope. The Swiss Reformed Church was founded in 1519 by Zwingli.



Protestant ideas also fermented in France, and a young man named John Calvin (who studied theology and law) was caught up with it. In 1534 when he was just a young man, he left France and settled down

in Germany. He is now a well-known name associated with Calvinism.

Luther (1483-1546), Zwingli (1484-1531) and Calvin (1509-1564) were contemporaries in the 16th Century. While there were distinctives in their thoughts, credits were also due to them for what we know as The Protestant Reformation that led the church to break free from the abuses of the Catholic Church.

Yet, it is reasonable to say that the Protestant Reformation started with Martin Luther, because it was his 95 Theses that lit the flame of widespread excitement and debates, with the RC Church put on the spot to respond to the spreading fire.

Although the 95 Theses had its original title as “Disputation of Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences”, we can easily notice ideas of church errors beyond the mere selling of indulgences.

For examples:¹

- Theses 1&2/95 (regarding the sacrament of penance)

When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said “Repent,” He called for the entire life of believers to be one of penitence. The word cannot be properly understood as referring the sacrament of penance, i.e., confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy.

¹ English translation @ <https://carm.org/luthers-95-theses>

- Theses 79&80 (church's assertion that may be tantamount to blasphemy)

It is blasphemy to say that the insignia of the cross with the papal arms are of equal value to the cross on which Christ died. The bishops, curates, and theologians, who permit assertions of that kind to be made to the people without let or hindrance, will have to answer for it.

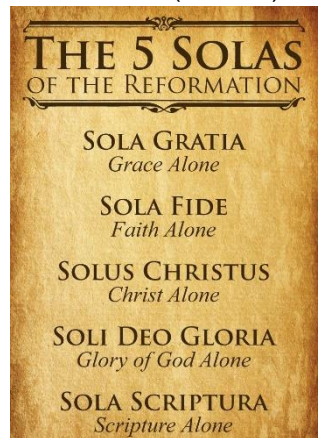
Luther hit two vital points of the RC church: The Pope's authority and the church's finance. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the wrong Catholic teachings and practices that the reformers were against covered many other aspects – images, sainthood, clerical celibacy, etc. Obviously, many of disputations against the church's teachings and practices were fleshed out in greater extent in the course of the Reformation debates that became unstoppable.

Lutherans & The Lutheran Church

The name “Christians” was originally not what followers of Christ called themselves. They would call themselves believers (1 Tim 4:12), brethren (Philippians 4:8), saints (Eph 4:12 NKJV), those of “the Way” (Ac 9:2) ... while the Jews would use the terms “Galileans” (Ac 2:7) or “Nazarenes” (Ac 24:5).

When the disciples at Antioch were first called Christians (Acts 11:26), it was pejorative name-calling by the heathen in contempt of “these people who are associated with Christ.” Nevertheless, the name “Christians” got stuck as a badge of honour whereby believers today joyfully sing the worship hymn “They’ll know we are Christians by our love” which was inspired by John 13:35.

Similarly, Christians who followed the reformist teachings of Martin Luther were scorned as “Lutherans” – a title of ridicule foisted on the Christians by their antagonists. Despite strong



disapproval by Luther himself, the title got stuck and then came the name “The Lutheran Church”.

Today, we are honoured to be called “Lutherans” not because we are out to glorify Martin Luther. Rather, we are proud to be associated with “The Lutheran Church”, being minded to contemplate the Reformation legacy and to uphold our faith and practice guided by the Five Solas of the Reformation.

We mull over the “falling away” of the Catholic Church, a spiritual degeneration that had been festering for a long period well before Martin Luther came onto the scene. The “falling away” can be likened to the “lawlessness” (2 Thess 2:7) that was already at work in the time of the apostles.

“Many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1); this warning is relevant to us today as well.

The Reformation history cautions us to be vigilant against purveyors of doctrines that bend towards populism or expediency instead of abiding in the purity of Scripture.

With spiritual traps aplenty in the world, it is good to be reminded of what Martin Luther said in the Large Catechism:

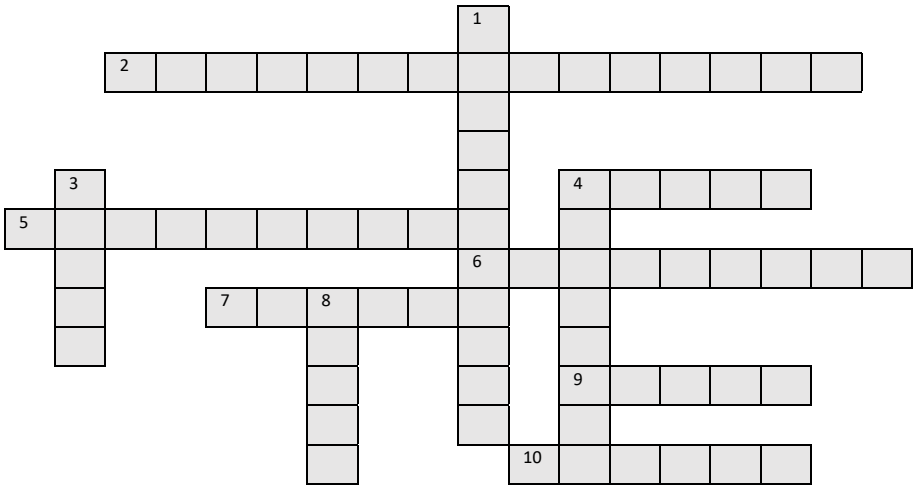


“You must always have God’s Word in your heart, upon your lips, and in your ears. But where the heart is idle and the Word does not sound, the devil breaks in and has done the damage before we are aware [Matthew 13:24–30]. On the other hand, the Word is so effective that whenever it is seriously contemplated, heard, and used, it is bound never to be without fruit [Isaiah 55:11; Mark 4:20]. It always awakens new understanding, pleasure, and devoutness and produces a pure heart and pure thoughts [Philippians 4:8]. For these words are not lazy or dead, but are creative, living words [Hebrews 4:12].”²

John Lee

² Foreword. *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

REFORMATION PUZZLE



Make use of the scrambled words below as clues to complete the above puzzle.

Down:

1. LCNDESIGUEN – Luther was against the Catholic Church selling these “tickets to heaven”.
3. LIBBE – one positive result of the Reformation is that more people read this.
4. LWFFEIYC – a reformer in England.
8. ILTAN – the language of sermons during the Reformation

Across:

2. ACXINIOOUMNTMCE – the practice of kicking a person out of the church.
4. MORWS – city in Germany where Luther declared, “*Here I stand, I can do no other.*”
5. TBNREEGWTI – place where Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the door of a church
6. IRSUTHCAE – one of the two true sacraments that Luther believed as biblical.
7. ILCANV – a French reformer in Geneva in 1538.
9. HFTIA – a gift from God that is freely given and not earned.
10. EHEYRS – Luther was charged with this offence.

GOING INTO SOCIAL MEDIA

Definition of Social Media

Social media is understood as the different forms of online communication used by people to create networks, communities, and collectives to share information, ideas, messages, and other content, such as videos.



When did it all begin?

It probably began when the first person shared a juicy bit of gossip to another and it spread into the neighbourhood or office network. However, the Social Media we refer to today had its official beginning on **May 24, 1844**, with a series of electronic dots and dashes tapped out by hand on a telegraph machine. The first electronic message proved Samuel Morse understood the historic ramifications of his scientific achievement: "What hath God wrought?" he wrote.



What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.
Ecclesiastes 1:9

The Negatives of Social Media

Research shows that there is a strong association between social-media use and depression, so that those who use social media more are more likely to suffer from depression. Similarly, increased social-media use is also associated with other negative factors, such as low self-esteem.

Using social media can

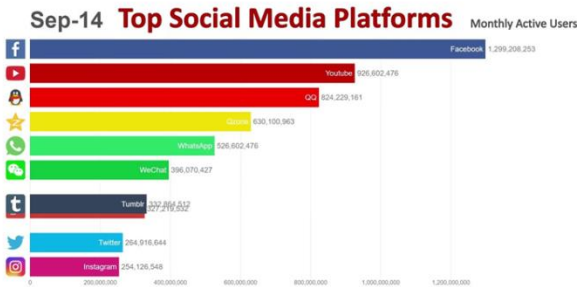
- increase feelings of anxiety.
- increase feelings of envy.
- cause emotional exhaustion.
- increase stress levels.
- cause sleep issues and reduce sleep quality.
- get in the way of important obligations, such as schoolwork.

Experts have suggested that using social media exposes kids to cyberbullying, soaring standards of beauty and performance, and peer pressure possibly leading to suicide.

So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! James 3:5

The reach of Social Media

Social media reach refers to the number of users who have come across a particular content on a social platform. From the chart below, it can be seen that Facebook is on the top of the list.



Today, social media have become primary sources of information. (They are also vehicles for fake news and disinformation.) In this COVID situation the many funny videos about how people creatively deal with the circuit breaker, the live

streaming of church services which keep the people connected to JCC and ZOOM which allow for live CG sessions is social media in its core and at its best.

For God does speak--now one way, now another-- though no one perceives it. Job 33:14

Why go into the Social Media?

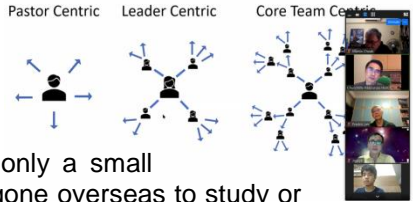
The question often comes up, why didn't Jesus come at a time that perhaps could have been better suited to spread the message, like now when there is widespread Social Media?

Our current situation due to COVID-19 opened our eyes to the need of the hour, ZOOM, YouTube, WhatsApp and other media to keep JCC connected to its members and the world. Many activities will now happen on Live Streaming rather than being physically present at the event. Flights to many countries have been suspended and for us to fulfil the Great Commission, we need to travel through the airwaves or microwaves via Social Media.

Church Services or Weddings by Live



Streaming and meetings with Zewen in Cambodia and CGs by ZOOM are the norm. There is no denying that JCC needs to get on the bandwidth wagon to reach out to the people in our neighbourhoods and the world.



When The Vine went out by email, it was only a small attempt to reach out to members who have gone overseas to study or work. Later we had the JCC website which led a number of people to Tah Ching Road. As we progress with the times, The Vine will undergo another transformation. It will be turned into The WinePress very soon. Look out for it.

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. Galatians 4:4

MMM needs you get into Social Media

When the church decided to get into Social Media, the Multi-Media Ministry is the team to take up this challenge.

Anyway, if you are reading this article, we need the following people to help the team bring JCC into the Social Media world:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writers/Editors | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo/Videographers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Editorial layout designer | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Artist/Illustrator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voice-over talent | <input type="checkbox"/> Live Streaming technicians |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Web Master/Designer | <input type="checkbox"/> 2D Digital Animator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Narrative Script Writers | |

Sign up in the Stewardship Form for 2021 and beyond to bring JCC forward into the realm of Social Media, where we have never been before. Just as God provided Moses with the skilled workers to build the tabernacle and the tent of meeting, I pray that God will provide IT trained members to support the MMM in this Social Media thrust.

And behold, I Myself have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all who are skillful I have put skill, that they may make all that I have commanded you. Exodus 31:6

COVID-19 locks you in your house but Social Media opens the whole world to you.

Martin Cheah

All Glory to God for our *FAITHFUL MISSIONARIES*

On a typical Sunday morning worship, as I sit on the pew listening to Pastor Fredric praying, I already know part of his prayer. Whenever he prays, he will always remember to pray for our missionaries Romans and Ivy, Rosanna, Pastor Michael, Ze Wen and Chih Chiang. Do our JCC members know who are these people and their work?

Therefore, I thought what better time to talk about our missionaries on Mission Month and JCC members can pray for them as they sacrifice themselves to be away from their loved ones and from the comfort of their homes in Singapore. They are the ones at the forefront bringing the gospel to some foreign land. Pearl and I will share some updates from the different mission fields.

Thailand

Romans is our LCS missionary sent to Thailand six years ago together with his wife Ivy. They are members of Bedok Lutheran Church and have a son, Kevin. They have been involved in the **Afternoon Activity Ministry** in a slum area on the outskirts of Bangkok, reaching out to slum kids. The children will come in to join this Afternoon Activity after their school hour, as most



Romans, Ivy and son, Kevin

do not have any adult supervision after school. Recently, they have been relocated to a church building, and it turned out to be a blessing as the youths of the church started helping out. This also gave Romans the opportunity to minister to the youths, encouraging them to grow spiritually.

Romans, together with a local pastor and a Finnish missionary, is planning a combined youth camp for the six districts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Thailand in Oct 2022. Pray for God's wisdom as they guide the youth council and train youth leaders to be ready and committed. Pray also that God may spur the hearts of the youth

campers, as they are the ones who will be the foundation of the future next generation of Christians in Thailand.

God has been faithful in so many ways, and even as the fund runs dry in these uncertain times, God's providence through generous giving came in at the right time. It is a great affirmation and encouragement for Romans in his ministry. Pray for wisdom, strength and good health for him and his family to reach out to the slum kids and to minister to the youths.

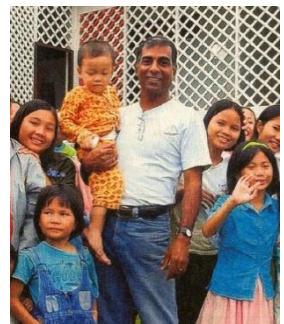
Rosanna, our LCS missionary is also from Bedok Lutheran Church. Her mission field is in the Northern Thailand and she shares the gospel in the market place in those districts. She came back to Singapore for a break before the Covid19 situation started and now she is unable to go back to Thailand as the borders are closed. Pray she will be able to get her visa to Thailand to continue her work when borders reopen.

Chih Chiang and Bee (his Thai wife), our own JCC members serves full time in Campus Crusade for Christ. In July, Chih Chiang was officially transferred to Campus Crusade in Thailand to serve in university campuses in Bangkok for a year. However, with the Covid19 situation he is not able to go yet as borders are closed. This did not stop him from working with his Thai colleagues. In fact, they are currently doing online ministry and discipleship with the undergraduates. They have explored various social media platforms and apps to connect and build relationships with the university students. Pray for Chih Chiang and Bee's ministry to be fruitful as they await the opening of the borders, trusting in God's timing and empowering.



Nias, Indonesia

Pastor Michael was our JCC former pastor many years ago. He felt the calling to go to the island of Nias in Indonesia to start work there. He established **Tomorrow's Hope** which is a home for children whose parents are unable to care and provide for them because of family problems and



finances. Generous supporters fund the expenses of the children's home. In the morning, the children will go to school and when they return home, they will take care of their own washing with the older children helping the younger ones. Pastor Michael nurtures them spiritually leading them in daily devotion and bible study. He is assisted by other staff members to run the logistics of the home.

Recently, with the Covid19 situation, prices of food have shot up and the Home looked into producing their own vegetables. As the Home sits on ten hectares of land, they started their own farming and they have been successful, harvesting the fruits of their labor. They have successfully grown different kinds of vegetables and fruits and continue to experiment with new ones. Harvest has been so plentiful that they were able to sell their produce at the market, share with their neighbors and have many meals of the same vegetables. Initially they started animal farming with three goats and now have ten! With the encouraging results and excitement, they are thinking of the next project, rearing chickens. Indeed God's blessing is overflowing and His Grace sufficient through these difficult times. Pray for good health for Pastor Michael and the children and God's grace to continue to sustain them through this Covid19 situation.



Cambodia



Another milestone for the Lutheran Church in Cambodia: Ordination of Ps. Tuch Sreyliak in Nov 2019 and also as Chairperson for Executive

Committee of Lutheran Church in Cambodia

COVID-19 took the world to a standstill. The missions' plan of many churches fell through as overseas partnering churches could no longer send short term mission teams to Cambodia. Yet in this season, the Lutheran Church in Cambodia (LCC) continues to see God move in their communities.

September saw the opening of a new outreach community center in Kandal Province anchored by Ps. Vannak. A few days before the opening day, they received news that churches may now resume with worship services after being closed for six months. How timely it is!



Opening of Kandal Outreach Community Center on 12 September 2020

In the same month, Rev. Berta and Sis. Sreyyeh, a final year Bible School student took over the work at Tang Krang Community Centre (TKCC). They will be ministering to the youth and the elderly in the area. City Church also welcomed Ps. Thy KimMeng on board as a new part-time pastor.

Please keep the new leaders and workers serving at the respective outreach points in prayer as they serve and reach out to the various communities.

Over at Krous Church, besides not being able to host overseas team, they also had instructions that non-Cambodians were not allowed to enter the village as part of safety measures. Despite it all, Krous Church continues to grow and mature in the Lord.

On 16 August, 15 youths and adults got baptized! What a joy it is to see the Krous family grow. With young people aged 1 and 25 representing 50% of the total Cambodian population, the church continues in their efforts to reach out to the youths and mentor them. A sports ministry has even been initiated to reach out to the boys in the village.



What a day to rejoice as Krous Church baptizes 15 new members into the family of God! Hallelujah!

While remembering the youths, they did not forget the elderly, too. Proposed by Chak Mun (ZeWen) and led by Sis. Saran (a pastoral staff at City Church), a group of interns got together and planned for home visitation to families who were part of the eye surgery mission the past two years from Tang Krang Community Centre and Krous Church. Some of these beneficiaries have suffered loss of income during the pandemic and were struggling to make ends meet. The team identified the families to visit and made plans for 3 visits over a period of 2 months. Each time they go, they would bring a food pack, minister Christ to them and pray with them. This was an opportunity not only to bless the villagers but also gave the interns from the city a chance to be exposed to ministry in the rural areas.

Jurong Christian Church was privileged to partner with them on this occasion by providing monetary support for the purchase of food packs.



Thank you Jurong Christian Church for partnering with LCC for this visitation project! Please continue to pray that God moves in the hearts of these villagers. If anyone would like a copy of the visitation report, please send the request to jccemissions@gmail.com with subject header, "Eye Surgery Mission Visitation Report"

COVID-19 deterred the missions plans of many churches, but God is not deterred. As this article shares, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/from-killing-fields-to-harvest-fields-why-christianity-is-growing-in-cambodia/>, GOD IS MOVING. Let us continue to partner in prayers and support. For prayer resources for the land Cambodia, you may visit <https://omf.org/resources-for-mission/the-task-unfinished/cambodia-prayer-resources/>

"As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work." ~ John 9:4

by Ewe Ewe and Pearl
Mission Ministry

The Hidden Places

Have you walked around the JCC Kindergarten before? Locked behind those cloistered doors you can find a gym, playground, art room, store room, tiny toilets and of course classrooms and offices.

Let me give you a short tour of the place which is right next to the Sanctuary on the 2nd floor.



Classrooms – the place where young minds are taught and trained.



Art room developing their creativity by just playing around with the myriads of things there.



The Playground and the Gym room for young muscles to develop. Due to Covid, these places are temporary closed until cleaning equipment are purchased.



Then there is the store room which also doubles up as the teachers' resource room. Now you know what's behind those

doors.



Martin Cheah



Blessed with a Mentor...

... One Call Away!

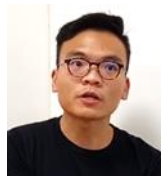
XXXX 3590 is always on the move to pray and walk life alongside me. He is a prayer warrior and a change agent. He never fails to encourage me to carry the cross and follow Jesus.

If you are still trying to figure out who is my mentor, he is Reverend Anthony. We will usually meet up at the Chapel to share life and pray for each other. During those sessions, we invite the Holy Spirit to lead us. These include singing praise songs and reading a bible chapter. I recalled singing “Our God is an Awesome God” for more than 20 times. Therefore, in the process, I learnt how to explore different postures in communicating with God.

Mentoring entails more than just passing of knowledge about God; it involves showing people how to love and serve God. Back when our church was hosting S3P (Safe Sound Sleeping Places), a shelter for the rough sleepers, my mentor visited them daily. Even though some of them appeared to be slightly resistant to Christianity, my mentor continued to ask them for their prayer requests and actively prayed for them. These actions softened their hardened hearts and tickled their curiosity about Christianity. Therefore, his resilient spirit taught me how to love and serve God.

Reverend Anthony is a prominent figure in Jurong Christian Church and is no stranger to my parents. Recognising that he could possibly leak out some of my secrets to my mother, there were moments of fears and doubts. However, with his assurance and his willingness to share struggles with me, I know that I can update him comfortably as well. Therefore, mutual sharing and trust are critical in a mentor-mentee relationship.

My mentor is a man after God’s heart who relies on the Holy Spirit to provide insights, build lives and journey through the modelling process. I am blessed and grateful to be given the opportunity to learn, serve and grow with my mentor.



https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zQMK_NzP_OmK4B9yIbSuQw280D20Paww/view?usp=sharing

Caleb Lee

*Caleb Lee is serving God as a member of the Missions Leadership Team. He also uses his talent as a musician in the Dialect Ministry.