

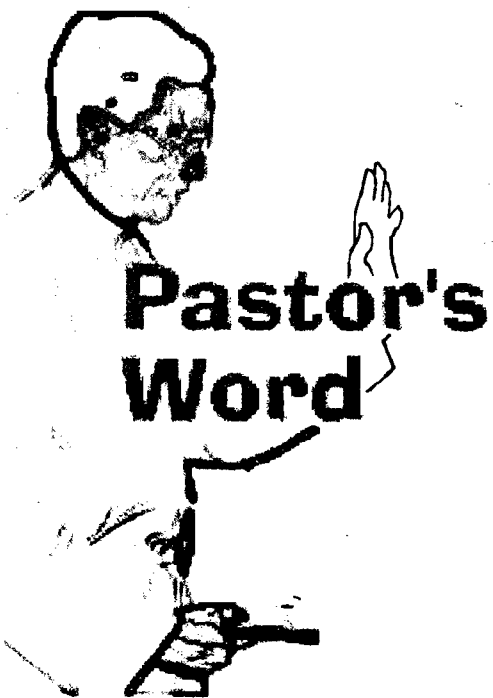


THE

VINE

for internal circulation only

Vol 797 July 1997



Pastor's Word

“Reverend, how are things now that you’re ordained?” A popular question posed to me for the past 3 weeks. Externally, things are about the same - you are the same people I serve, the number & kinds of meetings I attend are the same. Except for

an extra piece of clergy dress piece - the stole, things seemed the same. The stole represents the yoke of Christ. It is rather light. It also fits comfortably just as the Lord promises those who would come to him to find rest. *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 (Mt 11:28-30).* It is a yoke of learning from Jesus to serve.

You too can accept Christ’s invitation to cast off your painful yoke of Self, people’s pressure and expectation, and the Devil’s bondage. Carrying the burden of the world’s value system will weigh you down from becoming who you can be in God’s wonderful plan for you. Indeed, whether we are aware of the fact or not, we are all

servants of either the Devil, Self or God. *Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey - whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? (Rom 6:16) Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness (Rom 6:13).* Christ invites you to exchange your wearisome yoke for his easy yoke and the burden you pull will be light.

What does it mean in practical terms? It demands a radical evaluation of our priorities. One issue to consider is how we spend our time. What are the things you are investing your time to obtain? Work status? Your car? Your home? Money? Money itself is neutral. However, beware of falling in love with money. A simple indication of spending more time than necessary on these things is a lack of attention for the other areas of your life so that there is an imbalance, such as a lack of time with your children, your spouse, your God.

What about giving more time serving in the Church? Or putting aside time to grow in the Word of God by attending a Bible Study? Or committing yourself to grow in the nurture and fellowship of a care group? Everyone has 24 hours a day. We can make time for what we consider is important to us. Is having more money more important than your spiritual life? Is watching TV, and consequently imbibing its values, a higher priority than reading the Bible and prayer? You need to hear the Lord's calling for your life.

August 9th is DAY TO CHANGE OUR WORLD. The Concert of Prayer is from 8 am to 12 noon to be held at the Singapore Indoor Stadium. This is hosted by the AD2000 in cooperation with the Festival of Praise. The theme this year is **Heal Our Land**. Lawrence Khong writing on behalf of the AD2000 & Beyond Movement, United Prayer Resource Network: "The Lord is prompting us to deal with our historic relationship with foreign powers such as **Britain** (colonialism) and **Japan** (aggression). This is important because a nation's history often colours the way she interprets her past, present and future. The Church has a responsibility to understand God's

perspective on the **past** so that we may take steps of obedience **today** for the sake of the **future**. On the Church front, we will repent where we have fallen short in being good stewards of His gifts and Kingdom resources. We will also look to the Lord of the Harvest to help us recover the apostolic vision and function of the Singapore Church, releasing a future generation for His purpose!"

I encourage you to join the JCC contingent to participate in the Concert of Prayer to unite our hearts in prayer with the thousands of prayer warriors for our nation. Those who have participated the last 2 years can testify to its powerful impact on their lives to pray in unity, to humbly intercede for the lost in this island destined to be the Antioch of Asia.

Also on August 9th:

- **CITYWALK** is prayerwalking from 1 pm to 3 pm. It will begin with a meeting at St Andrew's Cathedral before intercessors proceed to "tread" the civic and financial districts as a united prayer-force.
- **CITYLIGHT** is a prayer plan to involve every care group to pray for at least 1 hour following

a common prayer focus beginning at the strike of the anthem.

For more information watchout for the brochures coming out.

If our nation is to be won for Christ, it will be through the work of prayer. If your loved ones are to come to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, we need to use the key of prayer. If we are to become a mission sending Church, we need to grow up to become God's house of prayer.

Through prayer nothing is impossible. Even the most resistant places in the 10/40 window will experience the powerful visitation of God! Yes, God is already performing miraculous signs among the unreached people groups, turning thousands to Jesus Christ as their Saviour. You and I have the privilege to participate in the greatest revival and harvest in the end times. Let's not think that the harvest is in the future. It is ripe for harvest today! Open your spiritual eyes to catch the vision and may a fiery passion of God's mission to reconcile the world to himself through the Cross burn in your soul.

For the sake of God's Kingdom.

Pastor Fredric Lee

B N I B T E

The date was Saturday, 7 June and the time was 3.45 p.m. The day's weather was wonderfully fine and the climate was just about right for a good outdoor BBQ/Fellowship at JCC. We had anticipated a good turn-out and every member in the befrienders team was much excited about that night's program, looking forward to the fellowship time.

Both my wife and I were busily preparing the ingredients for the Hokkien Fried Mifen when suddenly the sky turned grey and without much warning, the rain started to pour. I began to feel uneasy when the rain continued to get heavier. Although getting a little anxious as the time neared 5 o'clock, I never

gave up hope in the Lord. I had faith in the Lord and believed He would set apart a time for our purpose of caring for and encouraging our new members and visitors through the BBQ/Fellowship activity.



Eat all you cant! All you can eat!

I had found assurance in Romans 8:28 which said "In all things God work for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose"

and without hesitation, I looked to God and prayed.

Just as Jessie finished cutting the watermelon and packing them into the plastic container, the rain suddenly weakened into a drizzle. We reached the church



"It's mine! Cannot eat!"

at 6.00 p.m. and were all praise for God. For in His time, God put a timely stop to the rain. Indeed God is to be praised for He is faithful and good.

We had a joyful time during the singspiration session, and everybody got to know everybody through the introduction and games. The food though simple was well seasoned, and there was plenty to fill the hungry ones. With such a good mixture and stirring of new and old members

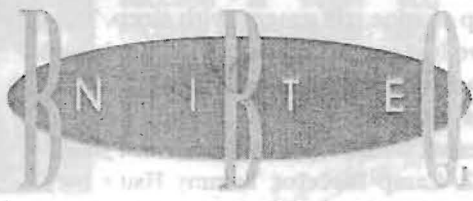


of the Body, the food tasted really good and deliciously yummy after being barbecued.

Those who participated included some friends from China, a brother returning from an Australian job assignment, a sister on home leave from her mission in India, a visitor from the States who was on an internship attachment in Singapore and some new members. There were altogether



48 participants. Everyone enjoyed that night, and we certainly look forward to the next BBQ/Fellowship event in September 1997.



BY Peter Cheong

YOUTH CAMP

BB & GB Sembawang Campsite

31 May to 3 June 97



These words printed on the mug given to each participant at the camp clearly reminded us about the nature of God's love. God regarded us so

highly that He sent His only begotten Son to die on the cross for our sin.

Upon setting foot on the campsite, we spent some time getting to know one another. We really had to take a while because of the large number of us who came in the two buses, including members of the Boys' and Girls' Brigades, and non-members as well. Of course, we were further aided along in getting to know one another through the Mini Olympic Relay and the Treasure Hunt on the first day.

It wasn't all play without quiet moments with God. Group Quiet Time was set for 8 o'clock the next day after about half an hour of morning exercise to prep up anyone still groggy with sleep. Then we had our breakfast before moving on to singspiration and devotion. "Love at its Highest" was the theme song we learnt, with its lyrics taken from 1 Jn 4:9-12. Camp Director Tommy Hsu's message about the word "magnificence" was very encouraging too.

With our youthful energy, we really had a whale of a time playing water games, with water bombs for added excitement. Game time seemed to pass by rather fast. Soon, it was nightfall and we had another sing-along and devotion. The devotion leader shared with us the touching story of John Newton who wrote the song "Amazing Grace".

A highlight of the third day was a talk by a special guest, Police Sgt Jeffrey Ong, about the risks of joining gangs. Sgt Ong had been to many schools with the same message against gangsterism. The pictures he showed us were very frightening indeed- people with their necks gashed and heads almost decapitated. Eeeek... and at that time we had not even had our lunch yet!



Love

at its

Highest!



There was no doubt that Sgt Ong's message had hit home among the youths. By afternoon though, the thought of joining gangs must certainly have been far, far away from their minds. They had lost themselves in the joy and excitement of canoeing. There was an instructor to teach us how to paddle and handle the canoe. We even paddled to an island a few kilometres away from the campsite. It was great fun in the sea.



Then, it was the final night of the camp. We had our precious "last moments" of laughter together, thanks to "acting time"! The sketches put up by different groups were all of high entertainment value. Bedtime arrived promptly, right after we had enough of the entertainment,

When dawn broke, we had our usual morning routine before packing for home. I believe that this camp must have benefited the youths as much as it has profited me. Fun and excitement of fellowship aside, the quiet times with God, the devotion sessions and the messages have all added up to a meaningful experience.

BY Yap Wee Hin
28th Boys' Brigade Coy

C H U R C H Retreat

A TIME OF REFRESHING

As with the past retreats, I enjoyed this year's retreat very much. Especially so as we did not have to meet in church early in the morning on the day of departure. (This means longer sleep for me!) We were also spared the agony of having to travel long distances in the coach to reach our destination.

It seems that the highlight of each retreat is the "Talent Time" when each group is expected to present a skit, song or dance or a combination of all three on one of the nights. However, this year's retreat was unique. We had a campfire at the beach instead. Our Camp Commandant, Roy Ang, was given the honour of lighting the fire to kick off the event. Ting Ching led us in the singspiration before the groups made their presentation.



Fire! Camera! Action!

Despite the fact that we had less than a day to come up with ideas for the presentation on how we might be blessed to be a blessing to others, all the six groups were very sporting and provided much fun and laughter at the campfire night. Edmund and Willie looked very much like the *pai giab* (bad guys) who lost in the horse racing bets, while Swee Leong's voice as God's voice calling Betsy from afar had everybody guessing whether it was a local or long distance call. (Too bad only those who were there at the retreat know what I am writing about.) Personally, I thought that James Tan's group was most creative, shining their torchlights as they sang "This Little Light of Mine" with a Singaporean flavour.

We had fun but there was also a serious side to the retreat. I believe that God spoke to each one of us individually; be it during the lighter moments at the campfire, through the earnest messages of the theme talks, or when we were in reflective spirit during commitment time. Although it has been weeks since our return from the retreat, let us put into practice what we have learnt. We have all been blessed to be a blessing to others.

BY Christina Ang

HOLIDAY TREAT/RETREAT

I had eagerly looked forward to the retreat as it was my first ferry trip to Desaru. I was not to be disappointed. It turned out to be more than the holiday treat of an enjoyable retreat. Well, I had the chance to play arcade games on board the ferry. Before checking into the hotel, I even visited the Fisherman Museum in Johor Bahru where models of ancient fishing vessels, primitive fishing equipment and fishing methods were exhibited. It was certainly very educational.

After the museum tour, we proceeded to the Desaru Golden Beach Hotel. The villas we stayed in were like the holiday chalets in Singapore, but much more spacious and with better bathroom facilities. It was a relief to step into the air-conditioned room, away from the warm weather outside.

After the buffet dinner, our activities commenced with the adults using the conference room while the children gathered in a large room across the corridor. I had my grandmother, two brothers, three cousins and other children for company. As my grandmother could not speak and understand English, she spent most of her time with us. She clearly enjoyed herself, as much as we did.

Throughout the retreat, we were well occupied with all sorts of activities under the guidance of Aunty Phyllis and Uncles Michael, Yeow San and Anthony. Their friendliness put us at ease so much so that we did not miss our parents, who were separated from us, too much.

We were divided into four groups—Indonesia, Tibet, Myammar and Sengoi. (I was placed in the Myammar Group.) On different days, we watched slides



Extra! Extra! See all about it!

about these places and prayed for the people there to come to know Jesus Christ. We also sang songs, played games, and had a fancy dress competition with the children being dressed up as warriors, queens and brides. All participants put up such a good showing that the judges must have felt some difficulty deciding the winning team. In the end, every group was a winner.

The same thing happened again on the last day when we had a sandcastle building competition at the beach. The sandcastles were all so good that the judges declared that each group got 10 marks for their efforts. Of course, winning or losing wasn't really important; it was the fun and excitement that counted most of all.

Apart from the activities specially for the children, I also had enough free time at the swimming pool. There were fun games organized for adults and children as well.

To me, the highlight of the retreat was a campfire at the beach. Most of us sat on the bare sands as different groups performed different skits on the retreat's theme "BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING". The fire sparks brightened the night sky as our laughter filled the air. It was my first experience of a campfire, and a very memorable one at that.

BY Benedict Lee

Notre-Dame

DID I SEE YOU THERE?



Saturday Night Fever!



When Cinderella's feel fits...



the crowd cheers on!



Milk Feeding Time!



SEE YOU AT THE NEXT

NOIROI



Hands up, anyone who'll join the next retreat!

TO BE A BLESSING

Blessed

*"God has blessed His nation
He has touched us with his hand
The promise of His faithfulness
Can be seen across the land"*

As I reflect on the words of this opening stanza from the theme song we sang at the retreat, I find a familiar ring of truth in them. God has indeed blessed us in Singapore:

*"We've been blessed to be a blessing
We've been loved to give His love
Made mighty so we can fulfill His call
We've been blessed to be a blessing
With enough to give enough
For the greatest in His Kingdom
Is the servant of us all"*

How the chorus of the song echoes true! The words are pregnant with meaning and resolve. The challenge is laid before us to fulfill His call. The clarion call is for us to give, to be a servant, be a blessing. How great a privilege to be called by the almighty to fulfill this; we have been made mighty so we can fulfill His call.

Are we aroused to meet this challenge to answer His call?

Or has the comfort of the blessings that we have received from God lulled us into complacency, dulled our minds to inaction and also doused the desire for spirituality?

The retreat has been a blessed time. The presence of God was evident in His works. The messages were direct and incisive, touching hearts and minds. The fire of God is burning the corruptible, cleansing lives of sinfulness, selfishness and self-centredness. God wants to do the work in us, but are we ready to undergo that purging, that cleansing process, so that we can be refined? Can our works and our characters stand the test of fire?

Our God is a zealous God who is never half-hearted about what He does. He is uncompromising and resolute in fulfilling His will. In contrast, superficiality- the curse of the age- often besets us, leading us to mediocrity. Our zealous God desires His people to have the

love and passion for Him, and for His Commission. Do we measure up?

The fire, the zeal- wherein lies the source? The Holy Spirit is able to engulf us and empower us. Wherein lies the means to obtain this power? Prayer- earnest, seeking prayer- is the answer. We need to ask; and beyond asking, to seek; and going further than seeking, to knock, to come face to face with God, to draw so near to Him that the Holy Spirit can indeed come forth and speak directly and clearly, that we can so clearly hear Him and discern His call.

The empowering, the infilling, is not just an experiential encounter, but has to do God's work. Isaiah saith, "How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings." (Isa. 52:7) Ours are to be the feet that carry forth the Good News, to be beautiful feet bearing the Gospels. The work of the Spirit is to fulfill the true calling of the church, building up the Body in unity and shepherding the flock holistically. What a great fulfilment it would be, the communion of heavenly

citizens in accordance with God's design!

Who would not run, who would not serve in such a cause; to publish the good tidings of peace, peace between God and man, peace, where men have toiled not, but where God hath wrought all? It is high calling because our calling comes from the Highest. How and what is our response as His citizen and as His body - the church?

Let's not preempt what the Holy Spirit wants to do- a great work. Let's earnestly seek Him with all our hearts, with earnestness, with zeal for Him who calls. He will not fail us. Let's put aside our pettiness, the sin which so easily entangles us, the shackles of worldliness the world has enslaved us in, and the lure of selfish lust. Let us look to Him, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, and discern His calling and His plan for us to bless Him and to be a blessing to others as we are blessed by Him.

BY Tan Swee Leong

Blessed

Sunday School Children's Camp — 21st to 23rd June



Two retreats in succession is a very tiring rest. There are two loads of clothings to wash and two rounds of packing and unpacking to do. Four days after returning from the Church Retreat at Desaru, we were off again to the Sunday School Children's Camp at Sentosa. The Church Retreat was quite good, with good messages, good food and accommodations and a lot of fun which can be testified to by the other stories appearing in this issue of The Vine. The Sunday School Children's Camp was just as good.

We reached the church at about 7.40am and there we waited for the parents to bring their children for the camp. The bus left JCC at 8.10 am with the parents standing around waving good-bye to their children. There was some mix-up at the Sentosa causeway and we missed picking up one child. However thanks to the handphone, we were able to establish contact with the missing child's parents who then brought him all the way to the campsite.

Our campsite is the SU Campsite in Sentosa. It is an old barracks converted into dormitories with a large multipurpose hall, standing on a hill facing the Central Beach. There is no air-conditioning and we were worried about mosquitoes since we had to leave all the doors open wide to receive the sea breeze. Thank God there were hardly any mosquitoes, at least, I did not experience any. The main problem turned out to be the warmness of the rooms. Many of our children are so used to air-conditioning that they were unable to sleep. However, given the tiring schedule, even the most irritated children were able to fall asleep.



The lessons were well designed for the young, with a lot of puppets and live-action sequences to bring across the message. We had two guest speakers from Singapore, Wong Mui and Ewe Ewe. Having seen their serious side, I am quite amaze to see their lighter side.

Despite our reservations, the children had a lot of fun doing the chores which they don't usually do at home. To my surprise, cleaning



toilets was the top favourite chore. They were all eager to wait on the tables and to wash up after the meals. Have you ever asked them to do it at home? Maybe it is the peer pressure which made the task seem enjoyable.

The games was fun but the children



enjoyed most the dip in the lagoon - fully clothed because we did not plan for it and it was a last minute decision. Wilfred was the safety officer as he went in with the children fully clothed.

On the last night, the skits presented by the



children were TCS material. However it was observed that the children were quite adapt at playing gangsters and loan sharks and other bad elements in society. TV has a great influence on their little minds. Be warned!

What about the miracles? There was the time when we were playing games at the beach and it started to rain. However it lasted only a while and then we had cool weather to continue our games to the end. Another time, we had a boy who had an asthma attack at around 11.30pm in the night and we had to rush him to the SGH. But by the time he reached the hospital, he was well and they sent him back even without medication.

The camp was a success thanks to the efforts of Lissa Low and her Sunday School teachers. The true measure of success is when you receive your children back and notice the difference in them. Let Lissa and her team know

Martin Cheah



"SuperPower Kids" Camp at Sentosa 21st to 23rd June 1997

*Report by SuperPower Kid
Brandist Lee*



It was camp (at school), camp again (Desaru Retreat) and camp once more (this SuperPower Kids camp) for me to put my June School Holidays to good use. Oh, how I have enjoyed myself to the fullest as a SuperPower Kid!

This camp was held at the Sentosa Scripture Union campsite. A busload of excited children left the church for Sentosa on the morning of 21st June. These were what we did at the camp:

After settling down, we sang some songs. We sang them merrily with our beautiful voices so that the whole room was filled with joyous music. This was followed by lesson time with Uncle Wong Mui who taught us that we were very special because God made us in His own image. Next, we had a treasure hunt. We went to every part of Sentosa to find clues that would lead us to the hidden treasure. It was very interesting. We either travelled by bus or monorail to search for the clues. Some were easy to find, while others took us quite a lot of time. The treasure hunt lasted for a few



hours. At the end of it, everyone was exhausted.

We had a quick bath before group discussions on what to do during the Talent Night the next day. Many interesting ideas came up. It was fun hearing the different ideas of group members. After dinner, we spent time at the musical fountain. It was nice watching the jets of water swaying to music.

The next morning, we were refreshed after a good night sleep. After singing some hymns, it was group Quiet Time. During this period of time, I came to know more about God.

Later, we went to clean up the campsite. Some groups went to clean the dormitories while others tidied the dining room, swept the corridors, disposed of the garbage and cleaned the toilets. Everyone cooperated and many hands made work light; so after half an hour, the place looked spick and span.

The lesson which followed was quite funny. Uncle Peter Cheong used a puppet to perform a skit. The skit carried the message that God made each of us for a different purpose.

Soon, we had a Bible quiz. Many teams managed to perform well in the quiz. During the art and craft session after the quiz, the teachers taught us how to use a towel to make a dog. When it was finished, the dog looked very cute.



Then we had group preparations for the Talent Night before adjourning to the beach for some games. Every group tried their best to get more points.

Dinner time came and went. At last, after another enjoyable Bible lesson, the Talent Night arrived with each team putting their acting talents to good entertainment use. All the sketches were hilarious, so everybody had a good laugh.



On the third and final day of the camp, we went on a monorail ride sightseeing. On the monorail, we used our voices for good measure singing, chatting and laughing along the way.

The prize presentation time was what everyone had been eagerly awaiting. My group turned out to be the champion. Group members were so elated that they could not restrain themselves from jumping with joy.



As usual, for anything delightful, time would seem to fly. Soon, it was time to bid farewell to the campsite we had come to like with its warm atmosphere of fellowship, camaraderie, sounds of

music and laughter. As we finally broke camp, the sweet memory of a camp thoroughly enjoyed made me yearn for the next one next year.

Many thanks to the camp organizers, the friendly uncles and aunties, for their hard work in making the camp a success just for the sake of us the little SuperPower kids.



FAX
03-735 1159

UNITY LUTHERAN CHURCH BALAKONG

無拉港信義會合一堂

301, Balakong New Village,
Sungei Besi,
57000 Kuala Lumpur.

致 马新信义会各教区堂牧师,传道及执事部主内平安:

敬启者:

本堂会友李慧娟姐妹年卅九岁,患肾病经有两年之久,她每周三次要到洗肾中心洗肾及换血,受尽了肉体及精神上之折磨甚是痛苦,每个月之医药费需要两千多元。

其丈夫刘约翰弟兄是一名罗厘司机,每月收入微薄,无法应付妻子长期之医药费,加上他们有三个儿女要抚养,真是百上加斤。

慧娟姐妹也打算今年能赴中国大陆换肾,其医药及旅费大约要马币六万大元。

鉴于本堂之经济能力有限,因此向执行委员会申请,且已获得总会批准。

兹特来函,向马新信义会各堂会请求以爱心帮助李慧娟姐妹之医药费。

集腋成裘,协助她完成换肾之心愿。

你们的爱心捐款愿主报答,谢谢。

谨此顺祝

以马内利

LCMS: BALAKONG CONGREGATION
301, BALAKONG N.V.,
43300 SERI KEMBANGAN,
SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN.
TEL: 9611595

无拉港信义会合一堂
执事部 敬启

一九九七年五月廿六日

注: 各堂会之捐款请注明李慧娟医药基金

支票请写给 LCMS - BALAKONG CONGREGATION

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE LETTER OF APPEAL ON THE LEFT:

To the pastors, evangelists and Councils of all LCMS congregations, may the peace of our Lord be with you all.

Dear Sir/Mdm,

Our Church member, Sis. Li Huijuan, who is 39 years old, has been suffering from Kidney disease for two years. Having to go for thrice weekly dialysis, with a monthly medical bill of RM2000 odd, she is facing tremendous physical and mental anguish.

Sis. Li's husband, Bro. John Liu, is a lorry driver. Earning a small monthly income, he is unable to meet his wife's medical expenses indefinitely. Add to this the need to support three children, the financial burden mounts.

Sis. Huijuan plans to have a kidney transplant in China at an estimated cost of RM60 000.

In view of our church's limited financial resources, we made an application to the Executive Committee and also obtained the approval of the LCMS headquarters.

In this regard, we are writing to appeal to all LCMS congregations for their loving assistance to meet Sis. Li Huijuan's medical expenses.

Many a little makes a mickle, assisting her to fulfill her wish of a kidney transplant.

May the Lord bless you for your loving care and donations. Thank you.

Wishing you,

Immanuel.

(signed)

Council of the Unity Lutheran Church of Balakong

26th May 1997

P.S. For all donations, please specify "Li Huijuan Medical Fund". Cheques should be payable to LCMS - BALAKONG CONGREGATION.

-----end of translation-----

Ed. This is a request received by fax. If you wish to give a love offering to Sis. Li, you may purchase a bankdraft (in favour of LCMS - BALAKONG CONGREGATION). If you pass the bankdraft to Bro. Martin Cheah or drop it into the normal offering bag not later than mid August (17/8/97), we will forward it to Sis. Li c/o Balakong Church on your behalf. For information on alternative forms of payment, please refer to Bro. Martin Cheah.

May the Lord Bless You

ON YOUR ORDINATION



Reverend Lee
Tiong Chen was
ordained on 29
June 1997.

