

Dear brothers & sisters in Christ.

The situations in two countries gripped my heart this week.

1st, North Korea has an "Invisible" famine, according to World Vision International Asia-Pacific vice president Watt Santatiwat. The world is able to see only the tip of the current famine and drought in North Korea because the news media have not been allowed into the country to document the effects of the famine on film, video and photographs. As a result, Mr Santatiwat, who made his second visit to North

Korea on July 29, said that the world does not yet. believe that people are starving to death in North Korea. It is wrong to assume that if there are "no picture, there is no starvation," he added.

Voi 10/97 October 1997

The Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America International
Disaster Response reports that
with food stocks depleted,
people are eating grass, tree
bark and roots. It has allocated
US\$50,000 for food shipments,
including 500 metric tons of barley
seed to arrive in time for spring
planting through Lutheran World
Federation and Lutheran World Relief.

You and I cannot change this dying world (Rom 8:20-21). Only God can, when Jesus returns as King of kings to bring justice, peace and renewal. But right now, you and I can do something to bring relief to at least some people with the means we have. In Mt 25:31-46, Jesus calls us to clothe the naked and feed the hungry. Let us rise up to the need of the hour. You can speak to our Treasurer, brother Martin Cheah if you wish to give a contribution or

you can designate your offering to "Lutheran World Relief".

2nd, in mainland <u>China</u>, these are the real life stories of what is happening to followers of Jesus Christ:

"Hui Zhang lives in Heilongjiang, far to the north of China. When she became a Christian, she told her farmer husband immediately. His response was to whip her with a bamboo stick, then tie her to a cart and parade her around the village. He left her out in a hailstorm, and went home. (China Development Brief)"

"A letter from a Chinese believer to the Far East Broadcasting Company earlier this year says: I am writing to tell you that I stopped listening to your programmes one month ago. My radio was destroyed by my husband who is against Christianity. He has tried to stop me from believing in Jesus by burning my hymn books and Bible."

Ross Paterson of Derek Prince
Ministries - China reports: "There are
regular reports coming out of China of
Christians being persecuted for their
faith. Christians and particularly
pastors, are fined or imprisoned for
such activities as holding house
church meetings, actively sharing their
faith or preaching the Gospel to those
under 18 years of age."

The simple yet tenacious faith of these Christians put many of us to shame. Do you feel embarrass to thank God for your meal in a public place? Do you compromise your integrity for a

little more profit, or to be popular with your friends and colleagues? When personal spirituality is concern, do you have a commitment to set times of prayer, worship, and Bible reading?

As a Lutheran Church, we are privilege to have the model of Dr Martin Luther whose relationship with God continues to inspire us. He sought God without ceasing. Luther would not be satisfied with the ceremonles and rituals of the Church. These could not get rid of his desire to experience a personal and intimate relationship with his God. His pursuit for God, drawn by the Spirit and fired by the Bible, brought him to a spiritual revival which shook the foundation of the Church. So powerful was it that nothing short of a reformation of the teachings and traditions of the Church took place. The Church of God was forever changed by a man who sought to know his God and to serve Him.

Let us celebrate Reformation this year by seeking a personal revival. "For I know the pians I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me will all your heart." Let us seek after Jesus our Saviour. Let us ask Him to revive us again so that we may be a people ready to serve Him in this last years of the millennium.

Pastor Fredric Lee

By Amy Saw

When I decided to join the 7th mission trip to Sengoi in September 1997, I did not anticipate the close fellowship and the spiritual 'refreshment' that would come my way. I went because I was curious to find out what attracted the Orang Asli to accept Christ, how teachable they are and also I had wanted to visit the Sins and to witness how they served the Lord in that area.

Apparently, they were in need of encouragement to remind them of how extremely important their mission is in bringing the Gospel to a cross-cultural group.

The Sengoi villagers worshipped in a simple yet earnest manner. Most of them were children and teen girls and they participated actively in the presentations prepared for us. They sang with obvious enjoyment, unselfconsciously acting out (with actions and hand gestures) the lines, so that a visitor, though not comprehending the language, would generally understand them. Looking at them (approximately 40 children) gathered in all the 3 villages we visited, I imagined the seeds that



will be taking root in the long run. If they could bring the love of God into their respective homes - just estimate the potential numbers that would be touched by Christ, through the young worshippers at Sengoi and also through Pastor Sin's continued ministry.

It was indeed gratifying to learn that JCC plans for 2 trips per year to Sengoi. This would definitely make the villagers realise that we do not take them for granted and hopefully create a linkage where they could identify with a larger community of fellow worshippers from a different country. Our concern and interest in their welfare would sustain and encourage the Orang Asli in their walk with God.

In fact, it would be good for members of JCC to visit Sengoi, especially those who have yet to experience worshipping (as a cultural minority), in a new and unfamiliar environment. Just to hear Pastor Sin rattling away in the Sengoi dialect as he prayed, was in itself quite worth the trip.

During the commissioning of the 7th Sengoi mission team on Sunday, before we made the journey, something unusual happened to me. I felt as if I've become 'clay' and there was a

strange feeling of exhilaration and light-headedness. This same feeling occurred again whilst I was at the 24th Sengoi village (except that there was an extra sensation of not being able to breathe freely).

The stay at the Sin's bungalow was cosy (and quite cold in the mornings). Shirley and I had some good woman-to-woman talks and we go to know each other much better that we possibly would have had even after 26 Sundays of "Hellos" and "See you"s in Singapore. I opened up to her and she prayed for me. Her son Arnold was a joy to have around. He provided us with welcomed distraction and many light-hearted moment with his pranks. He teased Michael; locked me in the bedroom and many a times acted as our alarm clock for meals. In fact. Arnold endued himself to the little children in the 19th, 20th and 24th mile villages, who must be thinking, "Ah, this boy is just as normally naughty as all of us here!" They could relate to him in an intangible way.

To sum up the success of our trip, let me us Arnold's answer to his parents' question, "Would you like to come back again?" He nodded his head vehemently!

Letters from Pastor Li Jian Ping - summarized by Martin Cheah

29 May 1997

Dear Sponsor,

Peace to you in Jesus' name.

Thank you for visiting me so frequently. I cannot visit you because I do not have an identity card. Your care and concern warms me.

There are many difficult paths to go through in serving the Lord. Some people get discouraged but thank God for your prayer that strengthens me in my service to the Lord. Please pray for the village head also. Initially, he believed but now, due to his previous opposition of Christians, he is too embarrassed to continue believing. He is now looking for other religions. Pray that God will open his eyes.

Pray that people will support the children in their school fees. Some of the children do not go to school because they do not have the money for school fees.

We have started "family worship" at every home. This is because some of the members do not like to go to the church. Therefore we decided to visit and share the Word of God with them in their homes. These people find it hard

to go to church because of the difficulties they face in life or they have a drug problem. Please pray for them.

I thank you all for your support and prayers. It has given me peace. May the Lord strengthen you and bless you all. Thank you.

In Christ,

Li Dian Ping



25 June 1997

Dear Sponsor,

Greetings to you in the name of Jesus Christ!

Winter and spring has passed and now it is summer - the rainy season in Thailand. People in the mountain areas are busy planting rice. They live by the seasons unlike the city folks who are always rushing for time:

Oftentimes when I am depressed because I cannot solve a problem, your prayers support me. Even though I have many problems, with God's help, bitterness is turned to happiness. God is always with me and I am joyful to serve Him.

We have started a family prayer meeting. We visit different families on every Sunday. After 2 weeks, many people come for the service. Praise the Lord! Please remember us in your prayer.

One year ago, a German pastor started a ministry in a place about 2 hours walk from my place. About five to six families came to know the Lord. The pastor did not speak Ahka so he needed our Ahka workers to help in his ministry. Please pray that God will provide a pastor for them.

Please pray that God will move the government to issue identity cards to those who do not have them. May the blessing of the Lord be upon you.

In His name,

LI Dian Ping

What does it mean to believe?

There was a time in my life when I did not know whether I was saved or whether I was lost.

There are 3 steps to saving faith. The first 2 will not save, but the third will. However, you cannot take the third until you have taken the first two.

- 1. HEAR "How shall they believe except they hear?" A knowledge of God's salvation is necessary before it is possible to believe.
- 2. BELIEVE simply means "giving intellectual assent to a truth". The dictionary says, "to consent with the mind". The Bible declares that demons also believe and tremble.
- 3. TRUST When the Philippian jailer asked, "What must I do to be saved?" the answer in *The New English Bible* is, "Put your trust in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:30-31) That has nothing whatever to do with the intellect; that has to do with the will, and it demands a decision.

What is the meaning of the word "trust"?

It excludes effort. Have you tried learning to float? Stop struggling - just float. Trust excludes effort.

Trust implies commitment. The moment you give yourself up to Jesus, the moment you commit yourself to Him, the moment you put your trust in Him, you are saved.

Trust requires action. The story of the tightrope walker who asked a spectator if he would like to cross the Niagara Falls in a wheelbarrow after witnessing the performance. "You don't think I am going to risk my life like that, do you?" he turns away. You may believe but you must also trust.

by Oswald J. Smith

AMAZING AUNTIE GRACE by Martin Cheah



ecently, Auntie Grace came up to the front of the sanctuary to give praise to God for her healing.

She was warded in the Singapore General Hospital for weeks due to some stones in her kidney? I am not too sure of the details, but it was a painful experience for Auntie Grace.

While she was in SGH, the doctors also operated on her eyes and now her vision is clearer. Her stones were removed by laser surgery.

During her sojourn in SGH, she received so many visitors from JCC that the nurses took notice. They were impressed by our solidarity. She had the opportunity to plant a seed among the nurses. Mr Khoo told the Jurong West Care Group of a dream Auntie Grace had while she was in SGH. In her dream, she had a vision of heaven and she saw angels singing and dancing. They were calling out to her to join them. Dearly she wanted to join them but she was awaken by the nurse.

She also saw many sweet fruits, which she likens to jambu. She enjoyed the sweet fruits. Sis Ting Ching interpreted this as the members of JCC who visited her.

Two lessons we can learn from this episode. One, that even by a simple act of visiting the sick, we may be planting a seed. Two, our visit brings joy like the sweet fruits.

Although Auntie Grace is back home, she is still weak. Continue to pray for her.



A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

by Martin Cheah

First I thought there was a gas leak in the house, that was followed by the Civil Defence alarm. Actually it was Joo See practising her vocals. But finally on Saturday, 4th October 1997, it all came to fulfillment when the choir

and music ministry members. every single one of them, came forward to sing a song.

They sang solo, in duets, in trios and quartets. One thing is for sure, they enjoyed themselves. They had joy and that is the most important element in our service to the Lord.



without a mike. If you had missed the recital, it is unfortunate that the best

voices were not taped because they sang without the mike. making taping impossible.

Maybe you may have a chance to hear our singers again at the forthcoming Christmas celebrations.

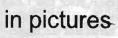
Although there were some hiccups, like the mike being switched off accidentally, overall it was entertaining night. The finale was a song by the teacher, Ms Zhou Min Lun. Her voice was so strong, she





A Night to













"A life that was never the same again" Anthony Loh

Conversion

Have you ever been frustrated with yourself?

"Why can't I be like that person? Why am I so slow? Why can't I do it?"

"Stupid, slow, no brain, failure" – These were the words that haunted me for more than 15 years.

I was born into a small family of five in a small village. From young, an inferiority complex had stifled my joy and ambition in life. I was so timid. The dare to try new things had never occurred in my mind. My life was torn apart - feeling helpless and lonely.

However, all these curses disappeared when I met a Saviour. The turning point in my life came when my aunt brought me to a building with a cross standing on the roof. There were many people in the building on that beautiful morning. My aunt told me that it was Christmas Day, and the people were celebrating a Saviour's birthday. Who was that Saviour, I wondered? I couldn't remember all the incidents, but I enjoyed myself thoroughly. I was attracted to the free gift.

Subsequently. I began to attend church activities. During the weekly Bible Study,

I was introduced to a God and a man who is called Jesus. For the first time, I understood why I was suffering all those years. Sin had jeopardized a wonderful life that God had for me. I was and am a sinner, yet God loved me that He sacrificed Jesus on the cross. Jesus was the only solution to restore my relationship with God. That morning, I confessed my sins, and asked Jesus to come into my life. Rev 3:20 gave me the assurance that Jesus would come into my life when I invited Him. I prayed and the Saviour came.

I am a new person now. My life was changed by my Saviour. He lives in me. Sometimes, life was never easy, but I knew deep in my heart Jesus was always by my side. From a timid person, He raised me to be a person who is confident and sure of my life. I am no longer haunted by my old self.

• Christian Experience

God gave me a special place that I might continued to grow in Him. The old Kampar Wesley Church was the historical place that my faith was slowly shaped, built and moulded by my Saviour. I joined the Youth Fellowship. Here, a bunch of young chaps like me was given training and guidance by a devoted counsellor, Mr. Au. I had the opportunity to serve God in various committees throughout my 5 years in this Christian Fellowship. I served as the President for a year before I left for further studies.

A new chapter of my life began when God led me to Singapore to work after my studies. I found a good Church in Jurong. Though I had to work for long hours, God in His faithfulness kept me from wandering away from Him. He opened many doors for me to serve Him. I joined the Christian Fellowship. From here, I began to explore other ministries God installed for me. Throughout my four years in Jurong Christian Church, I served as Worship leader in the Congregational Sunday Worship. I served in the choir, in ushering, in youth ministry and was involved in the Sunday School Camp.

Calling

I really enjoyed myself serving Him. Nevertheless, God did not stop there. The most dramatic event in my life was when I was challenged to give Him all. After much struggle and battling against family's concern, I was ready to carry the "cross". In 1993, I stepped onto a Theological land, Singapore Bible College. I began my full-time training. The church supported me financially, morally, mentally and in prayer. While studying in SBC. God continued to mould me and challenge me to trust Him for my future.

Four years in Bible College opened another area that God wanted me to serve Him - The Mission Field. The burden to reach out to the unreached Third world people constantly burned my heart. After my training, I have been working in Jurong Christian Church since May 1997. Church is a missions-minded church that constantly prays, supports and sends the members for cross-cultural missions work. At present, the church is supporting a Pastor who is ministering to the Akha people in Northern Thailand. tribal Moreover it is also working closely with a Pastor reaching to the Sengoi tribal people in Cameron Highlands and, is in the process of sending her own missionary to Nias island, Indonesia. My ministry in this church has allowed me to develop further and strengthened my spiritual gifts.

Campus Crusades for Christ came into the picture when I was introduced by a Crusade staff. After many inquiries about this organization, a short involvement in its ministry and many prayers, I decided to ioin SCCC to continue the calling God has for me to the unreached. The systematic and strategic outreach ministry (local and foreign), Christian unity among SCCC staff, the 'Charismatic' outlook of SCCC staff, Dynamic SCCC leadership, and Vision to fulfill the Great Commission locally and internationally, are the primary factors that challenge me to be part of this body. I hope through the Crusades, I can reach out to the lost in Myammar or Cambodia.

Commission

Yes, as I look back, God has indeed faithfully led me step by step. He provided a church to support me, a family who understands my calling (full endorsement from brother and sister, and no violent objection from parent who had some reservations), and a fiancée who is ready to work together with me in bringing the only HOPE to the lost world.

Throughout my ministry in Jurong Christian Church, God has constantly unfolded His plan for me. He shaped, moulded, broke me, carved, fashioned, and chiselled my life so that, I will be what He wants me to be. Reaching to the lost, especially to the Third World nations is always burning in my heart.

May His Name be glorified! Amen.

FASTING

Tan Swee Leong

Fasting is not well understood. Its importance is emphasised as it is mentioned more times in Scripture then something as important as baptism. (77 times for fasting to 75 times for baptism).

In our food-indulgent society, we struggle to accept and to practise fasting. There is much blessing and many lessons we can learn from Scripture on fasting.

What Is Fasting?

Fasting is a voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes. Fasting is voluntary and the motive is spiritual, God-centred.

Jesus' instruction on Fasting

In Matt 6:16-17, Jesus instructed his disciples "When you fast", just as he had instructed them "When you pray". (Matt 6:5-7) or "When you give" (Matt 6:2-3). The expectation is that we will fast.

In Matt 9:14-15, the Pharisees asked Jesus, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered, "How can the guests of one bridegroom mourn while he's with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be

taken from them; then they will fast". The time is now [we are expected to fast], until Jesus' return.

Purposes of Fasting

Scripture records many purposes for fasting. When we fast we should do so for one of these purposes. We fast not to impress God or to earn his favour or acceptance - that has been accomplished by the work of Christ.

What then are the purposes of fasting?

To Strengthen Prayer

The important lesson is the influence of fasting on our prayer - it sharpens our intercessions and makes us earnest in our requests made to God.

Fasting is not a spiritual "hunger strike" to force God to act. If we ask something outside of God's will. fasting will change not God's response. Many biblical accounts relate fasting to prayer. Nehemiah fasted and praved before God (Neh1:4). Daniel pleaded with God in prayer and petition and in fasting (Dan 9:3). The Antioch church "fasted and prayed" and "laid hands" on Saul and Barnabas before sending them off on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:3)

Historically, people who have accomplished great things for God's kingdom have testified to the necessity of fasting. John Wesley taught his followers to fast on Wednesday and Friday and would not ordain a man if

he did not do so. Others who saw the importance of fasting were Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knot, Andrew Murray and Matthew Henry.

To seek God's guidance

The Bible records fasting by God's people to discern God's will more clearly. In Judges 20, the other 11 tribes of Israel fought against the tribe of Benjamin. Even though they greatly out-numbered the Benjamites, they lost the battle and 22,000 men were killed. It was until they prayed and fasted that the Lord told them that "I will give them in your hands".

When the church in Acts appointed elders, they prayed and fasted to receive God's guidance (Acts 14:23).

Fasting does not guarantee Gods guidance, but rightly practised, it makes us more responsive to His guidance.

To Express Grief

In the Book of Judges one Israelite "wept and fasted before the Lord to express grief over their loss in battle". (Judges 20:26)

When Saul was killed, his men fasted 7 days after his burial (1 Sam 31:13)

When David and his men heard of Saul's death, they mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and

Jonathan and for the army of the Lord and the House of Israel. (2 Sam 1:11-12)

We too can fast because of grief over our sins. Fasting is an expression of our heartfelt confession before God over our sin. Fasting communicates our grief in ways words could not. We can also fast as a means of expressing grief over the sin of others or for the Church.

To Seek Deliverance or Protection

In the Old Testament, fasting was practised to seek protection or deliverance from enemies.

King Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast in Judah to seek God's help from a vast army coming against him (2 Chron 20:3-4).

When Ezra was about to lead the exiles back to Jerusalem. proclaimed a fast in order to seek the Lord for a safe journey. They faced dangers without many military protection during 900-mile the journey." So we fasted and sought our God concerning this matter, and He listened to our prayer."

In the book of Esther, a fast was called as an appeal to God for his protection from the king's wrath. Esther was going uninvited into the King's presence to ask for the King's protection for the Jews. Such an act

of entering into the King's presence uninvited could result in death.

When the church calls for a fast, we could seek God's protection from enemies that may result from our sin and to seek his deliverance from our wrongdoing.

To Express Repentance and To Return to God

Through fasting we can express repentance - a turning away from our sins and a commitment to obedience and a new direction.

In 1 Sam 7:16 the Israelite fasted and confessed, "We have sinned against the Lord."

In Joel 2:12 the Lord commanded his people to repent and to return to Him by fasting. Even now declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning."

Fasting can be in vain without repentance - it can be a form of "dead work" if we harden our heart to God's call to deal with sin in our lives.

To Humble Ourselves Before God

Fasting is an experience of humility before God. Scripture teaches that God will respond to his people who go before him in humility and repentance. (2 Chron 7:14) One of the most wicked Kings in the Bible was Ahab. He was eventually humbled by God and expressed it by fasting. 1 King 21:27-29. As a result God delayed his judgement on his life.

King David humbled himself before God, "I put sack cloth and humbled myself with fasting" (Ps 35:13). David was able to restore himself to God.

To Express Concern for the Work of God

Christians can pray and fast because they are burdened for the work of God. Nehemiah felt a deep burden when he saw the walls of Jerusalem in ruins. After his fast, Nehemiah then went to work. He did something tangible and public to strengthen this work of God.

To Overcome Temptation and Dedicate Yourself to God

Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights to prepare himself for the temptation by Satan in the wilderness.

We are not told to fast for any specific lengths of time in the Bible. Fasting is a way of dedicating ourselves to God and to overcome temptation. When we anticipate having to grapple with temptations. dedicate we can ourselves anew to the Lord through fasting. We may face decisions that places temptation before us exceptional temptation needs exceptional measure - fasting overcome temptation and renew our dedication to God in a Christlike response.

To express Love and Worship To God

Fasting is not associated with dire circumstances only. The Bible teaches that fasting can be an act of devotion to God.

Fasting can be an expression of finding your greatest enjoyment and pleasure in God. Fasting honours God as a means of worshipping Him. Fasting expresses that we are willing to subject our bodily desires to those of the Spirit. Fasting is the acceptance of a divine invitation to experience God's grace in a special way. We enjoy the spiritual feast of worship rather than the bodily satisfaction of earthly food.

A Call To Prayer & Fasting

We need to learn that there are times it is more rewarding to feast on God rather than on food (Matt 4:4). Fasting brings a surrender of our body, soul and spirit to God; gives us a fresh awareness of His presence, a whole new joy.

Are you willing to obey God and respond to Him when he calls you and the church to fast? Our response must be a response to the Spirit as He directs. The Spirit directs us through a need in our lives and in our church. If you need to strengthen your prayer life, it is a call to fast. If

you need guidance, it is a call to fast. If you need God's guidance, it is an invitation to fast. If you need deliverance or protection, it is time to fast

How long should you fast?

Fasting is not legalistic. It is a response to the Spirit.

In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to fast one whole day each year on the Day of Atonement. God thought it good enough for His people then. Should it also be enough for us?

Fasting adds a new dimension to our spiritual life enabling us to grow in Christlikeness in a way unavailable through any other means. Why not set aside a time for fasting as a response of love and devotion to God?



"FASTS" IN THE BIBLE

The Bible records various kinds of fasts:

Normal Fast

Abstaining from all food but not water. In Lk 4:2 Jesus ate nothing during his 40-day fast. It does not say he drank nothing. Our body cannot function normally for longer than 3 days without water.

Partial Fast

Not a total abstention from food. Historical Christians have observed partial fasts by eating smaller portions of food or fasting for a few meals.

Absolute Fast

Total abstinence from food and drink. Ezra in Ez 10:6, Esther in Esth 4:16 and Paul in Acts 9:9 abstained from all food and drink for a short period of time.

Supernatural Fast

When Moses was on Mt Sinai, he said, "I stayed on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights. I ate no bread and drank no water. (Deut 9:9)". in 1Kings 19:8 it was recorded that Elijah "got up and ate and drank". Strengthened by that food, he travelled 40 days and 40 nights until he reached Horeb. the Mountain of God. These fasts required God's supematural intervention. We are not called to undertake them in our own strenath.

Private Fast

Jesus in Matt 6:16-18 says that we should fast not to be seen by men but by God.

Congregational Fast

"... declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly;" (Joel 2:15-16)

It was recorded that the Church in Antioch was "worshipping the Lord and fasting" (Acts 13:2)

National Fast

In response to an armed invasion, King Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast for all Judah (2 Chron 20:3). The Jews called a national fast in Neh 9:1; and in Esther 4:16, the King of Nineveh proclaimed a fast in response to Jonah's preaching (Jon 3:5-8)

Regular Fast

God commanded in the Old Testament that every Jew was to fast on the day of atonement (Lev 16:29-31). When the Jews were in exile in Babylon the Lord declared, "The fast on the fourth, the fast on the seventh and the fast on the tenth months will become joy, gladness and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah to love truth and peace (Zech 8:19-20)

Tan Swee Leong