

# the VINE

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Vol 1/98 January 1998

## Pastor's Word

Greetings to you in the Blessed Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. Thanks be to God who has redeemed us and called us according to His purpose. As we enter the year 1998, there are many changes. With it comes many opportunities and challenges. 1997 saw several staff changes and reassignments in JCC as well as in the Singapore district.

Our beloved Pastor Rev Fredric Lee whom has been our shepherd, mentor and friend has left us on new assignment. Effective Jan 1998 I will be the pastor of the English section. I will shepherd and lead this congregation by the help of God and with your prayer and support.

The Lutheran Church in Singapore (LCS) became an independent entity, separated from the Lutheran Church in Malaysia. Our senior Pastor Rev John Tan was elected bishop of LCS and Rev Peter Chong of Queenstown Lutheran Church came in to replace him as senior Pastor of JCC wef Jan 1998. Rev Fredric Lee the English section pastor of JCC was reassigned to Bedok Lutheran Church wef 1 Jan 1998 to replace Rev David Cheah who was reassigned to Queenstown Lutheran Church Chinese section. Rev Chung Tze Lu from Redeemer Lutheran Church was reassigned to Mas Kuning Lutheran Church.



Our beloved sister Teng Ting Ching whom has served the Lord faithfully among us as Parish Worker for many years has new vision and service outside JCC. She will leave us wef Jan 1998 as well.



This year 1998 the church pastoral ministry will be focused on building the church community in Jurong Christian Church "Building a Spirit-filled community". The three main focuses are :

1. To nurture new and inactive members
2. To build up the community
3. To strengthen the missions and evangelism thrust

The sermons for this quarter will thus be focused on this area .

As pastor I exhort you to participate proactively in the life and service of the church community as ultimately we are one family. I also wish for all of us to be in small groups of regular fellowship such as Care Groups, ministries groups

etc. The word church is derived from the German word, "kirche" which is Greek word "kuriakos" which means "belonging to the Lord". Indeed we are the people of God; " God said," *I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their be their God, and they shall be my people*". 2 Cor 6:16. Christ is the head of this body (Col 1:18) of which believers are individual members or parts. Believers, united with him, are being nourished through him, the head to which they are connected. The image of the body also speaks of the interconnectedness of the body. The church is now indwelt by the Holy Spirit on both an individual and a collective basis.

The New Dawn Musical Team will be ministering in our church on Saturday, 24th Jan 1998 at 8 pm. Invite your friends to come along.

Pray and intercede for the Pastor and the Church Council to lead the church in growth.

*Pastor Martin Yee*

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A lady said to the preacher at the door, " Everything you said in your sermon was wonderful and fitted someone or other I know."

## Reflections on 1997

### Looking forward to 1998

1997 was not a good year from a worldly point of view. The economic turmoil, the currency crisis, the haze, the air disaster, the unexpected death of celebrities and well-known personalities, and the calamities worldwide came fast and furious. From a Christian perspective, however, we can see God's hand in all these events which affirm that we cannot put our trust and dependence on the economy, the currency, ... and on man himself. There are so many things that man in his finiteness cannot control and accomplish. Yet, God is sovereign and is in full control. We see life so transient, so fragile; as Scripture says, it is like "a mist that appears for a while and vanishes." (James 4:14 NIV) For Christians, our life renewed in Christ is an eternal one and we are, in the words of a familiar chorus, "This world is not my home, I am only passing through" in our temporal sojourn on this earth.

In the face of all these uncertainties, we see God moving His people and the Church worldwide in a movement to bring

the Gospel to all the peoples of the world, through the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, a worldwide movement with the goal of "A church for every people and the Gospel for every person by AD2000". The churches globally are united in this effort focusing on the 10/40 window where the core of the unreached people groups live – 97% in the least evangelized countries are in the 10/40 window, a total of 2.7 billion people accounting for 40% of the world's population.

The Church marches on, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Closer to home, the churches in Singapore are mobilized as part of this global effort in prayers through Prayer Wave Asia with the vision to unite prayer networks and ministries across Asia to build a House of Prayer for all nations. Activities and prayer programs are organized throughout the year in which Christians and churches can participate individually and corporately. The Singapore Centre of Evangelism and Mission (SCEM) is coordinating the Joshua Project which adopts unreached people groups for the purpose of on-going prayer and church planting. We can indeed see the

unrelenting powerful hand of God moving. The upheavals globally once again point out that ultimately what matter to us should be what we place at the centre of our lives, what is unchanging, what is able to anchor us in adversities and what ultimately brings true meaning and fulfillment to our lives on earth.

The tragic crash of SilkAir MI185 on 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 1997 is another grim reminder of the uncertainty of life. I have travelled many times to Jakarta and have flown on SilkAir. As I read the report of the search and rescue efforts and the heart-wrenching accounts of the lives lost and what they mean to their loved ones, I wept as many would out of shared grief. As I watched the condolence service, words indeed were unable to assuage the pain and the loss.

*"We can accept death but not its suddenness.*

*We can accept death but not when it is inexplicable.*

*We can accept death but not when we cannot render to our loved ones their last rites and bid them a proper farewell."*

As I heard the words offered in consolation and condolence, I felt thankful for the confidence and assurances we have in the Word of God, - that there is a promise of a glorious life in the hereafter. We are able to accept death: Because He lives, all fear is gone; because He lives, I can face tomorrow.

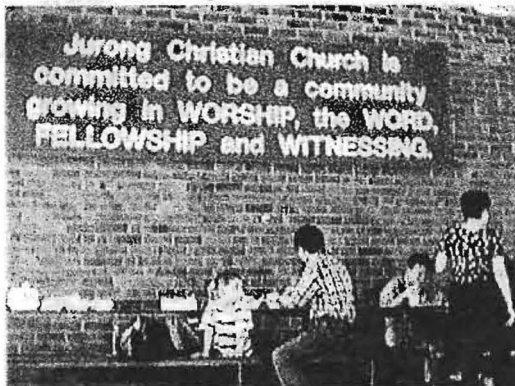
"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," said Job in spite of and in the face of all his calamity and loss. (Job 1:21)



1997 was an enriching year for JCC. We saw the hand of God at work. Even as He prepared and provided pastoral leaders four years ago, when we supported Martin Yee, Michael Christian and Anthony Loh as our theological students. We could not then have foreseen that the Lutheran Church in Singapore (LCS) would be formed, that there would have to be a reshuffling of pastors. (There are only three ordained English pastors in LCS for six Lutheran congregations.) JCC has been magnanimous in releasing Pastor Lee to meet the needs in Bedok Lutheran Church and at the same time we are

thankful that God has provided the pastoral leadership raised from within our membership. We saw God at work in JCC throughout 1997; leaders have risen to meet the needs of ministry. We have much to be thankful for. As I attended the thanksgiving service, I could indeed reflect on, and was much heartened by, God's blessings. We have made progress in moving towards the vision:

*"Jurong Christian Church is committed to be a community growing in Worship, Word, Witnessing and Fellowship."*



I pray that this vision will grip our heart and be our heart cry. JCC has grown as a community; we can sense the close bonding of the members, the greater sense of belonging, the spirit of being united in Christ. We see greater spontaneity in the life of the

church. In the four key aspects of the vision, I can recount God's goodness and pray that we will continue to deepen our lives in the Lord in these areas:

### **Worship –**

A deeper sense of worship expressed in our worship in spirit and in truth, worshipping God with our whole being, our intellect, our will, our emotions. We need to learn to truly offer our whole being in worship to God, expressed in focusing on God, giving of ourselves, lifting our hands and our hearts, yearning for God, seeking after Him.

### **Word –**

A greater and deeper love for God's Word, expressed in the building of a close personal relationship with God, in our daily devotion and study of God's Word, our intimate consciousness of God in our daily routines, encounters and interactions. Let the Lord truly be Lord in all aspects of our lives.

### **Fellowship –**

Let the Community of God find its expression in the Body of Christ, the family of God being bonded by the love of Christ

for one another. Caring, sharing and fellowshiping in oneness of heart and love for one another, because we are one in the Lord and He has called us as one body.

### **Witness –**

The heartbeat of the church, to bring the Gospel to those who do not yet know. To be obedient to the Commission given to “Go”, to be compassionate and burdened for the task. We are indeed all called to carry out this task.

In 1998, we look forward with anticipation, expectancy and with much assurance because He who has promised is faithful. We have embarked on this journey towards the vision of the church. Ultimately, we need to let the vision grip our hearts, let the vision be caught, so that the Church can move forward towards the vision. We need to truly humble ourselves and seek God's face. We need to repent of our inaction, our apathy, our passivity, our complacency. We need to arise, pray and be engaged in the spiritual battle, to gain ground and be active in this great calling God has given to each of us.

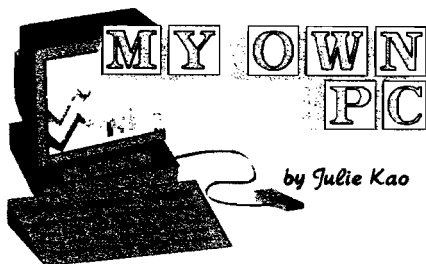
May the Lord be our

helper, our guide and our strength! “... we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” (Rom 8:37) “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rom 8:31b) God has richly provided. God has also strongly challenged us. It calls for a response of commitment, of deep conviction, of resolute determination, in the power and strength He has given us out of His grace.

Are we prepared? Are we ready? We are already in the battle. The choice is obvious, the consequences are also obvious. Choose this day – Joshua challenged the Israelites in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land. We need to do the same, to choose!

Remember the good old days when the still, small within us used to be called Conscience instead of a transistor radio.

A young woman named Murphy was teaching a Sunday school class the 23rd Psalm. As the little voices chorused out, she seemed somewhere to detect a false note. She heard the children one by one, until at last she came across one little boy who was concluding the psalm with the words, “Surely good Miss Murphy shall follow me all the days of my life.”



Martin's article in the December issue of "The VINE" prompted me to write about my experience with tithing and trusting by faith that God will provide.

My company recently moved to Centennial Tower and there were some items from our old office for sale to the staff. Computers were the most popular item as each was for sale for \$50. It was a bargain for a 486 PC. Since the response was overwhelming, we had to ballot and I specifically asked God for my own PC. The chances of getting a computer were slim, all the more a particular one, the one I was using. God knows my desire and guess what, He granted it! To purchase a new computer would have cost much more and this came just in time for my Christmas present.

My sharing is to encourage you to give. *"Remember that the person who plants few seeds will have a small crop; the one who plants many seeds will have a large crop. Each one should give, then, as he*

*has decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God loves the one who gives gladly. And God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause."* (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

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## PLEDGE STATISTICS FOR 1998

In 1997, there were 75 pledges received amounting to \$179,007.96 however, this year, 24 of the people who pledged last year did not pledge. There were 15 new pledges this year, who did not pledge last year. The total of pledges received from 66 people this year amounts to \$167,400.00. If we work that out in percentage per person, the pledge has increased by 6%.

YEAR	NO	AMOUNT	PER PERSON
1997	75	179,007.96	2386.77
1998	66	167,400.00	2536.36

It may be against your principle to pledge but I hope that this does not mean that you are not giving.

Even as I draw up the final budget for 1998, I pray that the Lord will move the 50% of the church who do not pledge to give in the loose offerings.



Luke 19:1-10

1Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through.

2A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.

3He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short

man he could not, because of the crowd.

4So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

5When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."

6So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

7All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'"

8But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

9Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

10For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Lesson from Zacchaeus

*John Lee*

←This is no ordinary Sycamore tree. It is called the **Tree of Zacchaeus**. It must be more than 2000 years old, still standing firmly rooted without succumbing to the ravages of time and elements. (Photo Dec 1997) A man named Zacchaeus climbed this tree because he was too short to see Jesus at the time of the latter's visit to Jericho.

Zacchaeus was a rich man, the chief tax collector with several tax collectors working under him, bringing in handsome profits by way of the excesses above the quota that he would have to submit to the Roman governor. He made himself wealthy at the expense of the poor, and was thus greatly unpopular, even excommunicated by the synagogue.

What a sinner! People must have regarded him thus, and opposed to seeing him around; yet he would not be put off his desire to catch a glimpse of Jesus, never mind having to put off for a while his busy schedule of financial/tax affairs. As it turned out, it was the most rewarding occasion in his life.



Sinner or not, Jesus did not lose sight of him despite his secluded perch. (Picture a large crowd of people who were excited, eager and jostling with one another for a view of a preacher named Jesus who was arriving in Jericho on a dusty summer afternoon. Who among them would have noticed someone up on a large, spreading sycamore-fig tree? Even if some had noticed Zacchaeus, would they deign to give him a second look if not a stare of disdain?)

Jesus not only lifted His eyes to meet Zacchaeus', He even invited Himself to the sinful tax collector's house. Zacchaeus was amazed that the preacher knew his name, and stupefied that a holy man wanted to stay at his house. The assuring smile of Jesus featured prominently in the mind of Zacchaeus against a backdrop of unspoken sorrow at being an unloved loner.

Zacchaeus had a lot of money, but he was never happy. When Jesus motioned him to come down from the tree and indicated interest to stay in his house, he was overwhelmed by the affable smile of the preacher. While nobody had wanted to have anything to do with him, Jesus cared. As people muttered that Jesus had gone to be the guest of a sinner, the sinner basked in the warmth of love and knew at once that it was something no money could have bought. Without hesitation, he declared: "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

**Is anyone of us like Zacchaeus who found happiness and fulfillment by placing a greater premium on the love and care of Jesus than on money?** Though an 'outcast', Zacchaeus longed to see Jesus, and took pains to do so. With his earnest desire to see Jesus, he was not to be disappointed. Not only was he noticed by Jesus, he was received with open hands. The welcome by Jesus was not justified by the sinner's works. By the grace of God, Zacchaeus showed the sincerity of his faith and repentance. His acceptance by Jesus was more important than his wealth.

**Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."**

December was a month full of activities for Jurong Christian Church. There was the "Christmas With A Difference" concert, the Sunday school children's presentation at a Taman Jurong Christmas block party, the Christmas caroling at the various homes, the Christmas Eve candlelight service, the Christmas Day service and lunch, baptisms and finally the farewell of Pastor Lee and Sis Teng Ting Ching. Here are some pictures to bring back those happy and nostalgic moments of Christmas-time.



# How to be free from demonic powers

By Philip Heng

Just what must one give up in order to be Christian? The answer to this becomes more complex as years go by. Previously, one had simply to repent and confess his sins, trust in Christ and invite Him into his life as Saviour and Lord. That was it! But nowadays young people get involved in so many occult things before coming to Christ. Unless there is a clean break with the past occult and religious contacts, the Christian can still be troubled by evil spirits.

The plain teaching of God's word tells us what to do: (Deut. 7:5, 25, 26; 12:3)

1 God's word is very plain on what we are to do about our previous religious objects. We are to "bum", "destroy", "break down", "cut down", "overthrow" and "hew down" not only the graven images of their gods, but also the altars, the pillars and the groves.

2. The word "Grove" had 2 meanings:-

a) One meant a tamarisk tree, a bush plant which yields pink and yellow

flowers in spring and is highly ornamental. Groves were connected with religious worship. As the heathen felt it was wrong to shut up their gods within walls, so altars were erected for the gods amidst bushes which afforded a kind of shelter.

b) The second meaning of "groves" was "asherah", referring to a wooden pole or perhaps a tree trunk which had been set up beside an altar and used as an object of worship.

3. God not only commanded the extermination of everything connected with heathen worship, God also expected believers to maintain the proper attitude towards heathen paraphernalia.

*We must not desire the silver or the gold on these forbidden articles. We must not take them unto ourselves. We must not bring them into our houses at all.*

*Instead, we are to utterly "detest" and to "utterly abhor" them. We are also to cease from mentioning the names of heathen gods so as to erase them from memory. God does not want any vestige of false worship.*

4 God tells us to guard our minds: "Whatsoever things are true...honest...just...pure...lovely...of good report; if there



be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil 4:8)

5. Whatever then can be burnt, should be burnt. Whatever cannot be readily consumed by fire should be smashed and put through the fire before dumping into the trash-can.

## How to be delivered from occult bondage

1. All contacts with the occult or false religions are to be renounced. Some examples: reading of horoscopes, visit to heathen temples, possession of talismans and adoption of heathen gods.

2. To renounce means to disclaim, to repudiate, to cast off, to give up a belief or opinion by open confession or recantation.

a) A simple prayer as follows is effective:-

"O Lord Jesus, I believe You are the only true Son of God. I want You as my only Saviour and my Lord. Please forgive me for my previous contact with the occult. (Name the occultic practices one by one.) I now know I was wrong to do it. I am sorry for what I have done and I promise not to do it again."



Close your prayer "In Jesus' Name." Amen.

b) If you possess a physical object of some previous worship, then you must surrender it willingly to be destroyed.

i) Do not be afraid of the demon's rebuttal. Remember, God is greater. I John 4:4.

ii) Do not be concerned about the cost of the article(s) destroyed. Absolute deliverance is worth the price.

iii) Do not secretly wish in your heart to keep it still.

c) Do not destroy an idol that does not belong to you unless the owner gives permission willingly. If the object did not belong to you, leave it alone. E.g. idol that belongs to the family. You simply renounce your own past connection with it.

d) As a general rule, do not destroy an idol or talisman until its owner professes and confesses faith in Jesus Christ.

(Mt 12:43-45)

## THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOUR

1. Helmet of salvation - make very sure of

one's own salvation.

2. Breastplate of Righteousness - doing righteousness, keeping away from sin.
3. Shield of Faith - not doubting, believing that there is deliverance in Jesus.
4. Belt of Truth - not telling lies.
5. Shoes of the Gospel of Peace - wherever we go during the case, share the Gospel of salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Abridged from IMPACT  
Jun/Jul 87*

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### *Ponder over the following story:*

A man was rich in almost every way. His estate was worth millions. He owned houses, land, antiques and cattle. But though on the outside he had it all, he was very unhappy on the inside. His wife was growing old, and the couple was childless. He had always wanted a little boy to carry on the family legacy. Miraculously, his wife became pregnant in her later years, and she gave birth to a

little boy. The boy was severely handicapped, but the man loved him with his whole heart. When the boy was five, his mom died. The dad drew closer to his special son. At age 13, the boy's birth defects cost him his life and the father died soon after from a broken heart.

The estate was auctioned before hundreds of bidders. The first item offered was a painting of the boy. No one bid. They waited like vultures for the riches. Finally, the poor housemaid, who helped raise the boy, offered \$5 for the picture and easily took the bid. To everyone's shock, the auctioneer ripped off a handwritten will from the back of the picture. This is what it said:

"To the person who thinks enough of my son to buy this painting, to this person I give my entire estate."

The auction was over. The greedy crowd walked away in shock and dismay. How many of us have sought after what we thought were true riches only to find out later that our Father was prepared to give us His entire estate if we had only sought after His Son alone?

From the internet

# Melissa's Story

I give God the glory for the safe journey to and from Sengoi, the many blessings, the fine weather and for Pastor & Mrs Sin. There were many things that could be learnt from this trip. The trip was very fulfilling, unlike what I expected. There was a sense of togetherness and co-ordination among the members. Although we were not fully prepared, we made the best of our abilities through prayer.

Upon arriving at Cameron, we were blessed by the beautiful scenery of the stars in the night sky and the perfect weather. In the mornings, Pastor Sin brought us sight-seeing. In the late afternoons, we began our ministry. The Orang Asli people lead a simple lifestyle. We can contrast our advanced and complex lifestyle against theirs. The people there lack even the basic necessities of life. When they get sick, God is the only physician they can turn to. They need our prayers.

Pastor and Mrs Sin need a lot of support from us as they minister to the Sengoi people. These people have a simple faith which I hope

will grow one day into a big mustard tree.

We communicated with them through songs, skits, handicraft, dance and testimonies. I could see that people enjoyed our programmes tremendously.

The trip to Sengoi was truly enriching and an eye-opening experience. The ministry widened my horizon and I believe that every person who went there came back with an experience they will never forget.

*Melissa Ang*



A story from the Korean War illustrates our confidence in God and determination never to accept defeat.

As enemy forces advanced, Baker Company was cut off from the rest of their unit. Headquarters tried to communicate with the missing troops. After several hours, finally a faint signal was received. Straining to hear, the corpsman asked, "Baker Company, do you read me?" "This is Baker Company," came the reply. "What is your situation?" asked the corpsman. "The enemy is to the east of us, the enemy is to the west of us, the enemy is to the north of us, the enemy is to the south of us." Then after a brief pause, the sergeant from Baker Company said with determination, "The enemy is not going to get away from us now." Although surrounded and outnumbered, he was thinking of victory, not defeat.

*Daily Bread, May 3, 1994*

# SENGOI DEC 1997 - YOUTH MISSION



The mission team to the Sengoi on 7th December 1997 comprised of the youth of JCC - Ze Wen, Melissa Ang, Amy Low, Theresa Wang and myself. Anthony Loh was our team leader. It was the first trip for most of us. All of us

were motivated by Christ's love to preach the Good News and to encourage the co-workers there.

Upon reaching Lutheran Taman Lakeview Campsite, the residence of Pastor Sin, we experience an atmosphere of solitude. As it was still early, 5.30am, we didn't want to disturb Pastor Sin's sleep and so we lingered around the hill slopes, admiring God's creation. The sky was filled with bright and shiny stars. It was truly a beautiful sight. At day break, we proceeded to Pastor Sin's house.

That day, we had fellowship with Pastor Sin. He brought us out to try the different types of Indian pancakes. When it was 5.00 in the afternoon, Pastor Sin drove us in his van to the 24th mile village. I was feeling excited yet afraid that they would not welcome us with open arms. Pastor Sin then introduced us to the villagers in the Malay language. He spoke fluent Malay and translated for us. The familiarity of language is important - it means that linguistic barriers to the Gospel could be overcome with relative ease. We had a very warm fellowship with them, singing praises to the Lord. The team presented songs, a skit and handicraft-making. Melissa shared her testimony with all of us. Before leaving, we prayed for their health.



The next morning, we did some jungle-trekking at Robinson Falls. Then, we went to the 20th mile village. Their houses were built of bamboo and there was no electricity. About twenty Sengois turned up for the service, mostly elderly women and children. I was then in a more relaxed mood. We had the same programme but this time, Amy shared her testimony.



Again Pastor Sin would distribute cough medicine and Panadol to the people.

On the last day, Mrs Sin accompanied us to the 19th mile village. The people in this village were better off than the other 2 villages as there was electricity. With the encouragement of Mrs Sin, we did our best in our final programme. We sang songs of praises with them and danced along with them. After Melissa shared her testimony, Mrs Sin asked me to do a solo



dance with Pastor Sin playing the guitar. Before we left, we played a game with the children. By then, I had no fear of ministering to the people. I realized that by trusting God, it demolishes this fear and gives me joy. It is a privilege to serve Him. That night, the team celebrated my birthday. Everyone of us enjoyed partying throughout that night.

Early next morning, we set off reluctantly back for home. Although Amy felt sick during the journey, we reached home safely. Thank the Lord.

This trip widened my vision. I got to know not only every member of the team but myself better. Even though there was a barrier of language and culture, we enjoyed every minute of our fellowship with the people. I feel that the love of God is perhaps the greatest motivation for missions. Thanks be to God for this trip and I pray that there will be many like this. I strongly urge more church members to join us in the near future. Let us continue to work in unity for the expansion of God's Kingdom. To God be the glory! Amen.

Felix Wang.