

The Vine

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Pastor's Word



This month of July 1998 we are focussing again on missions. We thank God that the missions team that went up to Thailand in June has a meaningful trip there. As the Pastor I also encourage you all to support the Nias Indonesian orphanage support project headed by Pastor Michael.

The verse in the Gospel of John starts in this way "For God so loved the world...". This message is simple enough for a kid to understand but is also so profound that theologians throughout the ages still ponder on its implications and significance.

Most Christians believe that the basis for worldwide missions can be found in the Bible. But there may be another way of seeing it - God's

saving missions is a basis of Biblical revelations to man. The Bible therefore reveals to us God's love for all mankind through his saving actions.

It can be said that God since the beginning of time has been at work to fulfil these purposes - the redemption of mankind from sin and death. As a church, God has given us the mandate for world evangelization through the Bible. The Bible has also given us the message for world evangelization. To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord He now offers the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe.

Let us as a church, be alert and seize every opportunity to fulfil the mandate of God to evangelize. Let us continue to be diligent, resourceful and be excited about missions.

An atheist (someone who do not believe there is a God) once wrote mockingly:

"Did I firmly believe, as millions say that they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another... I should esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a life of suffering. Earthly consequences should never stay my hand, nor seal my lips. Earth, its joy and its griefs, would occupy no moment of my thoughts. I would strife to look upon eternity alone and on the immortal souls around me, soon to be everlastingly happy or everlastingly miserable. I would go forth into the world and preach it in season and out of season, and my text would be 'what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?'"



A young, wealthy, carefree cricket player in England read these words,

and though he tried to dismiss them, he could not dismiss them from his mind. Finally he had to confront his difference and he surrendered and made a full commitment to Christ his Lord. Giving up his fortune, he became a missionary carrying the



Gospel to Africa and Asia. He is none other than C.T. Studd, the founder of SIM (Sudan Interior Mission). When people asked him why he is willing to give up so much for the sake of the Gospel, he uttered this now famous statement "**If Jesus be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him.**" These words still echoes down to the 21st Century to all Christians - if indeed Jesus who is God died for you, is there any thing too great for you to sacrifice for the Gospel's sake.

Pastor Martin Yee



by Pastor Martin Yee

"How did the universe begin?"
"What keeps the universe going?"
These two questions have occupied human minds since the beginning. Great minds like those of Albert Einstein and the currently world famous Cambridge physicist Steven Hawking have probed for answers to these questions via mathematical and scientific theories such as the "Big Bang". But puzzle is still far from being solved. Different ancient cultures also have different legends and myths regarding the origin of their world. These in turn affect their worldviews and responses to events and crisis in life.

The word "cosmology" is derived from the Greek word *kosmologia* which means the study of the cosmos or universe, especially its origin or operation. Ancient creation accounts often portrayed creation as occurred through one of the following ways:

1. From chaos or disorder,
2. From nothingness (*ex nihilo*),

3. From world parents who were separated,
4. From a process of earth-diving e.g. in the Hindu *Vishnu Purana*,
5. From a few stages of appearances from some other worlds or
6. From a cosmic egg or primordial maternal mound.¹

Some principal characters also appear frequently in ancient creation stories:

1. A creator
2. An evil opponent
3. A first man or woman
4. A hero who dives to depths to find form
5. A flood hero who floats in an ark, representing a quest for a new beginning

This article seeks to look at the cosmology of some cultures prevalent in Singapore and also outline the Christian cosmology from a Biblical perspective.

Muslim cosmology

The Quran which to the Muslims is the sacred revelations of Allah to his prophet Muhammed, has several references to an *ex nihilo* creation. In Sura 41:9 the Quran questions skeptics on how they can deny Allah who was so powerful as to create the earth in two days. In Sura

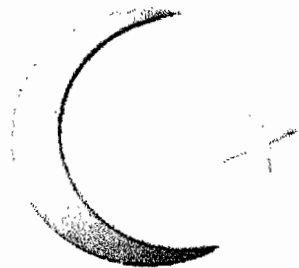
41:11, the Quran says that Allah created the world by saying, "Come ye together, willingly or unwillingly." They replied, "We do come together in willing submission." We are also informed that Allah created the world for "just ends" (Sura 16:3). Man was created from a sperm-drop (Sura 16:4). Allah also created the cattle, animals, and crops for man's benefits (Sura 16:5,8,11). Further on, the Quran says that Allah created man from dust, then from a sperm-drop and from a leech-like blood clot (Sura 40:67). In concurrence with the Christian Bible, the Quran says that Allah created the heavens and the earth in six days (Sura 7:54). The six days of creation consist of four days for the creation of the earth and life on it. The other two days involves creation of the sky which contains seven firmaments which prior to this existed as smoke, vapor or steam, a condensation of primal matters (Sura 41:9-12).

However the idea that God rested on the seventh day is not subscribed to by Muslims. They believe that Allah continues to exercise his authority in His law which he established and enforced in all parts of his creative work. Some Muslims believe that the days of creation are non-literal but metaphorical, citing Sura 22:47 that "a day in the sight of thy Lord is like

a thousand years of your reckoning". This verse bears striking resemblance to Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8.

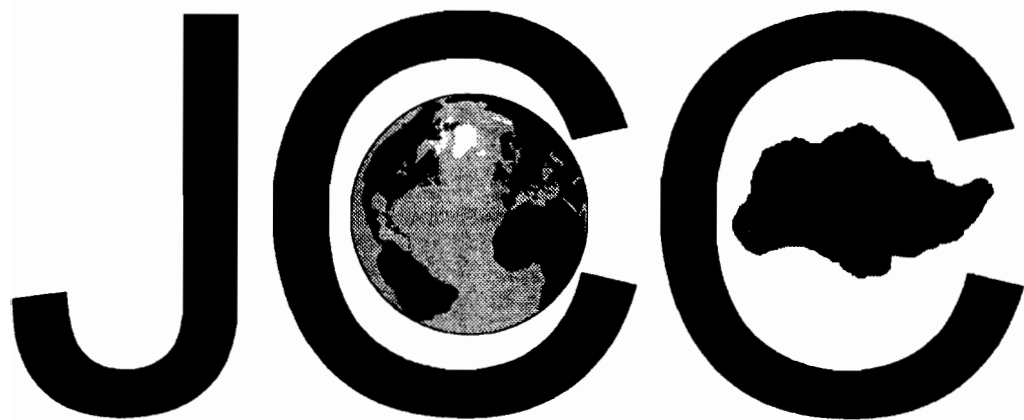
The Quran also speaks of Noah warning the wicked people before the Great Flood overwhelmed the world (Sura 7:59,64). However the Quran says that the Ark rested on Mount Judi (Sura 11:44) rather than the more general location of "mountains of Ararat" as in Genesis 8:4. Some early Jewish tradition also mentioned mountains of Qardu, apparently Jebel Judi, south of Lake Van as the site.² It is in a Turkish district and the mountain mass of the Ararat plateau dominates this area.

Lastly, the Quran says that Allah is the one that maintains the world, cherishes and sustains it (Sura 7:54).



Next issue, we cover the Chinese and Indian views of cosmology.

JACC



MOVING

**INTO THE
NEXT**

MILLENNIUM

Theme Song:

LOVE AT ITS HIGHEST

This is how God showed His love among us,
He sent His one and only son, into the world,
that we might live through him. (repeat)



By Saw Peh Ping
& Saw Peh Ern

Chorus:
This is love, this is
love,
Love at its highest
that He
Sent His son to die,
As an atoning
sacrifice for our sins.
This is love, this is
love,
Love at its highest
that He
Sent His son to die,
As an atoning
sacrifice.

Since our God so
loved us dearly,
Let us all love one
another,
Then His love is
made complete in us.
(repeat)

THE WORD IN ACTION

by Martin Cheah

Although the message of Dr Robert Solomon was clear, God had to reinforce it with practical experience for me during the Buggy Ride. Fifteen buggies were rented and the convoy started down the road fine. After sometime, with no place to drive, we decided to go off the road into a forest track. At the fork in the forest track, some of the buggies took one direction and four of the buggies took another.



I was in the group of four buggies led by Pastor Michael. We moved as a team. Each time one of the buggies got stuck in the loose sandy ground, the others would stop and help to get it out of the trap. And when the front buggy spotted the sand trap, it would quickly relay the warning to the buggy behind and the message

would be relayed to all the following buggies. This was a lesson in Community Life. That we need each other's help to get through the narrow and winding way.

Then as we seemed to have got lost, suddenly another buggy appeared. It was driven by one of the Lanjut Resort staff. He was sent to bring us back to the camp. This reminded me of Jesus who came to save us. He guided us part of the way until he was sure we were in the right direction then he let us go on our own. On the way out of the forest track we met a buggy stuck in one of the sand traps. All of us stopped to help. Finally nearing the main road again, we met another buggy just entering into the forest track. We quickly warned it not to proceed because it would get stuck in the sand trap. This was like evangelism. As a community we go out to warn people from getting into the wrong way.

Indeed, in that setting, we were willing to help each other. Are we willing to do so in the rat race we live in?



WHERE DID THAT PHRASE COME FROM?

It was the accepted practice in Babylonia 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer, and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the "honeymoon" or what we know today as the "honeymoon."

Before thermometers were invented, brewers would dip a thumb or finger into the mix to find the right temperature for adding yeast. Too cold, and the yeast wouldn't grow. Too hot, and the yeast would die. This thumb in the beer is where we get the phrase "rule of thumb."

In English pubs, ale is ordered by pints and quarts. So in old England, when customers got unruly, the bartender would yell at them to mind their own pints and quarts and settle down. It's where we get the phrase "mind your P's and Q's."

HELPFUL HINTS

Are your shoes smelly?

Here's a solution. Put some tea leaves into a pair of stockings and stuff each into a shoe. Leave for a day or two and the smell just vanishes!

Tips for stamp collectors:

Place the envelope in the freezer for a few hours. You'll then be able to easily lift the stamps off with a pair of tweezers.

Are cockroaches in your home driving you mad?

Try this tested trick. Fill a large bowl with cheap wine and leave it under the sink. The pests will drink it, get drunk, fall in the bowl and drown ...easy!

To avoid hurting your fingers while hammering metal nails into the wall:

Hold the nails with a wooden clothes peg instead. So even if you miss, you won't get hurt.



Beach Games

- 1 Coconut relay
- 2 Egg Catching



SKITTS



RETREAT @ LANIOT

Fishermen & friends



Camp-fire at the beach



Water Game





the



It was fun I expected, and there were lots of it at *Lanjut Golden Beach Resorts, Pahang*, from 12th – 15th June 1998.

It wasn't all fun only. There were lots of learning too by way of interesting lessons.

fireflies were a beautiful sight as they flitted between tree branches. I was unlucky for not being able to catch some. However, I was lucky not to have encountered the man-eating tiger that has been reported to have made meals out of two aborigines in the Malaysian jungles.

It was a 'season' of several firsts for me. For the first time, I hiked into the jungle at night to look for fireflies in pitch darkness with the help of torchlight. The



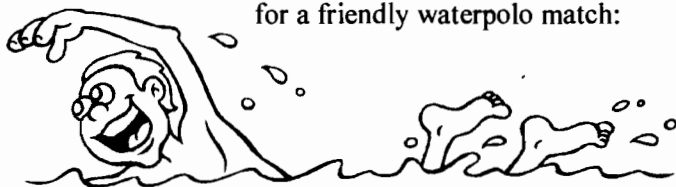
It was also the first time I had the experience of a buggy ride into the jungle on could only Uncle Martin took a buggy The buggy door. It was wheels often got and push the excitement of



one of the afternoons. Each buggy take a few persons, so I joined Cheah and family while my father with my brothers and cousin. was like a small car without any a bumpy ride on beaten tracks. The stuck in soft sand and we had to lift buggy. It was part of the the ride. So much time was spent

releasing the buggies from their griefs that an hour passed by quickly. The peaceful vegetation of the jungle must have taken umbrage at our atrocious driving habits. So when the buggy convoy came out of the jungle, the jungle clapped its hands rejoicing in our departure.

pool Straight out of the jungle and into the coolness of the swimming pool for a friendly waterpolo match:



Playing waterpolo was another first for me. Both goalkeepers were so good that the two teams struggled hard to score points. It was an exhausting game, but I enjoyed every moment of it.

This retreat was not occupied merely by the usual stuffs of singing, praying, Bible lessons, skits, beach games, campfire, etc. I enjoyed all the usual stuffs, but the number of firsts I experienced at the retreat as enumerated above made this retreat extra memorable.

I am eagerly looking forward to the JCC Retreat 1999.

Benedict Lee

Dear Lim Hong Sing,



We were glad to meet you when you visited us for the first time in June.

We continue to look forward to your visit and your

fellowship with us as one community in Jurong Christian Church.

40 DAY FAST

The **AD2000 & Beyond Movement** is a global, informed network of Christian missionary agencies, denominations, churches and individuals committed to world evangelism. Part of their activities going on at this moment in time is the 40 Day Fast which starts from July 1 and will end on August 9.

This 40 Day Fast seeks to encourage serious heartfelt prayers in this season of humbling, hope and healing. Fasting confirms our utter dependence upon God by finding in Him a source of sustenance beyond food... fasting unto our Lord therefore is feasting – feasting on Him and on doing His will. Fasting is designed to make prayer mount on eagles’ wings... If the motive to fast is proper, heaven is ready to bend its ear to listen when someone prays with fasting. Fasting can break through in the spiritual realm that could never be had in any other way.

The following are ways to fast:

TOTAL FAST

Abstain from solid foods for 24-hours.
Take only water.

PARTIAL FAST

Abstain from solid foods for an extended part of the day. Take only water. The time frame is a matter of the individual’s commitment before the Lord. For example, some may keep it at 12 hours from 7am to 7pm. Others may prefer a shorter period, from 8am to 4pm, breaking fast with a light tea.

ONE-MEAL FAST

Sacrifice one full meal a day. For example: Lunch-Fast or Dinner-Fast.

DANIEL FAST

Abstain from meats and other delicacies. Take only small portions of fresh vegetables, fruit and juices.

During this 40-Day season of humbling, hope & healing:

- Take time to seek God. Still your hearts to hear His voice.
- Adopt an attitude of prayer as you go about each day’s duties at home, at work or at school.
- Scale down your normal activities. Avoid rigorous exercise such as rock-climbing or jogging.
- Besides fasting from food, fast from things that distract [such as television, internet, computer games] or things that destroy [such as careless words].
- Break fast gradually and wisely. For health reasons, you should consume small portions as you break fast, avoiding chilli or acidic foods as much as possible.

AUGUST 8 – DAY TO CHANGE OUR WORLD

WAVE 1 from 6am to 9am

St Andrew's Cathedral

For Pastors, Elders and Leaders. A three hour worship and prayerwalk, targeting strategic sites symbolizing facets of national life and concern.

WAVE 2 from 10am to 1pm

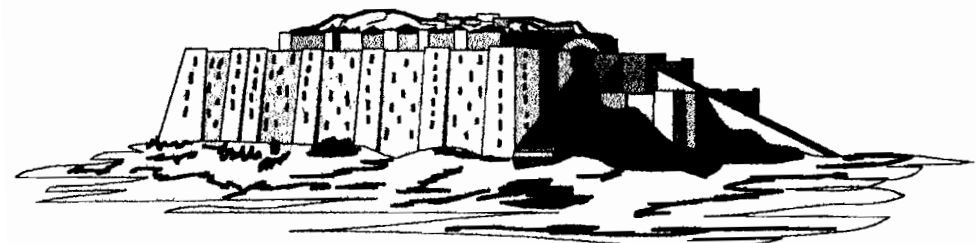
Various Prayer Centres

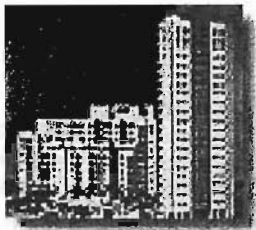
For all Christians. A three hour citywide revival prayer saturation covering the HDB heartland and specific sites symbolizing people groups, facets of life or strongholds in the nation. Participants will meet at a prayer centre nearest them.

WAVE 3 from 2pm to 6pm

Singapore Indoor Stadium

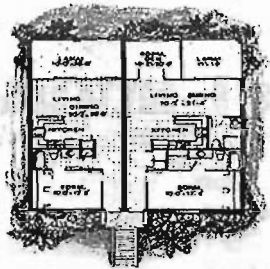
For all Christians. A four hour national prayer concert celebrating Christ's victory and Singapore's Antioch calling to bless the nations.





A Modern Parable
by Dr Lim Su Min

PARABLE OF THE CONDOMINIUM



The kingdom of heaven is like a classy condominium that an office worker greatly desires: It is in a prime residential area, with sophisticated neighbours, 3600 square feet, built-in cupboards, marble floor, solid gold fittings in the bathrooms, private jacuzzi, a covered car park, an olympic-size swimming pool and an attached 18 hole golf course. It will cost many many million dollars: more than 40 years of his total income: He takes bank loans, sells everything he has, and buys that classy condominium.



So precious is the kingdom of heaven, so desirable it is, that a man who wants it will do everything he can to acquire it.

A good condominium apartment is a target of desire that Singaporeans can relate to. Price high, never mind. They will still buy, even though it costs them every cent they can afford.

The kingdom of God is a precious possession like that: Greatly treasured, expensive to purchase. It requires you to give up all your worldly desires...



Those who have ears,
let them hear!



Acknowledgement: Above parable is taken from the internet. Reproduced here with the permission of Dr Lim.

The author is a doctor who worships at Wesley Methodist Church.

Financial Advice From The Bible

While it is not impossible, it is difficult for the rich to become citizens of God's kingdom.

Mark 10:23-25, NIV. "Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

The love of money leads to evil.

Timothy 6:10, NIV. "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

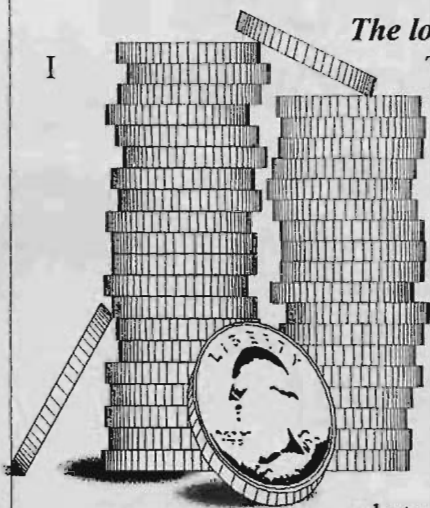
Greed often accompanies prosperity and can lead to crime.

James 4:1-2, TLB "What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Isn't it because there is a whole army of evil desires within you? You want

what you don't have, so you kill to get it. You long for what others have, and can't afford it, so you start a fight to take it away from them. And yet the reason you don't have what you want is that you don't ask God for it."

It's true, the more you give, the greater will be your reward.

Luke 12:33-34, NIV "Sell your possessions and give to the poor: Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."



**JURONG CHRISTIAN
CHURCH
VISION STATEMENT:**

Jurong Christian Church is committed to be a community growing in worship, the Word, fellowship and witnessing

**JURONG CHRISTIAN
CHURCH
MOTTO:**

Glorifying God,
Obeying the Word,
Touching lives,
Saving souls.