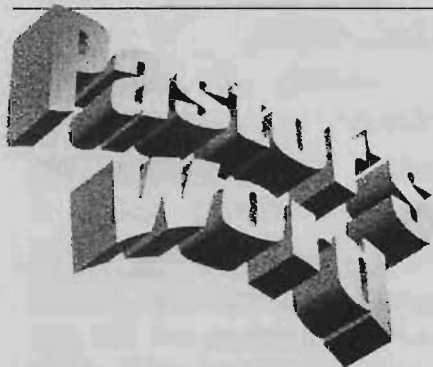


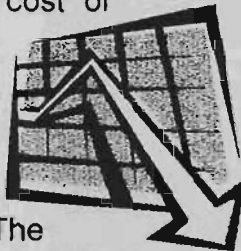
The Vine

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Christian greetings to you all. Grace and peace from God Almighty. This morning I read in the newspaper that a steel company in Malaysia made a loss of more than 10 million dollars. Why did the company lose money? In simple terms their cost of operation and production was more than their profits. My former managers use to remind us "The company does not owe us a living".



But as Christians we may not sometimes realise that the benefits of being a Christian far exceeds the cost, unless we know and think clearly about it. Discipleship has been intended by God for our good and not to burden or "torture" us as some may feel.

A story was told by Walter Henrichsen and adapted here illustrates well this point. A family of five was driving through Johore towards Mersing in a Proton Saga. It was late at night and raining cats and dogs. They could hardly see 100 metres in front of them. As they were travelling along they saw a man and a lady walking in the rain with an umbrella. They pulled alongside the woman and noticed she was carrying a baby. They asked if they can be of any help.

She said they lived in a rubber estate a few miles away. During an electrical storm their house caught fire because of circuit overload. They barely escaped with their life. They are walking to the town to stay with her brother and his family. Feeling sorry for them the man pulled out forty dollars from his wallet and gave it to her and drove on.

A couple of miles down the highway, he stopped his car and asked his family, "How much money do you have?" They pooled their money together which amounted to about four hundred dollars. He drove back to where the couple was still walking. "Do you have the money I gave you?" he asked.

Surprised, the woman answered, "Yes we do".

"Then give it to me."

Perplexed, she took out the forty dollars and handed it to him. He combined it with the money he had and handed it all to her saying, "Here you are, our family would like you to have this."

Similarly, our Lord gives us many wonderful gifts and then He comes to us and says, "I would like to have them all back - every one of the gifts." God does this so that He

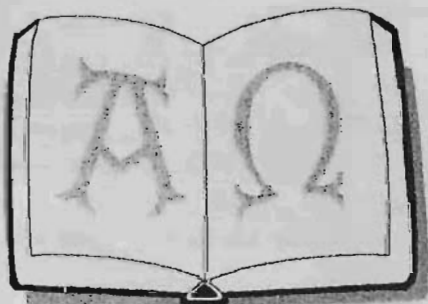
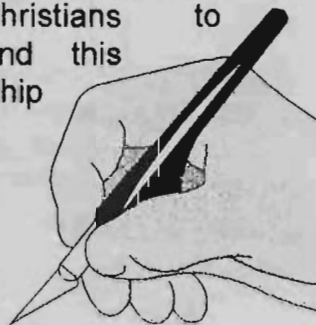
can combine it with His unlimited resources and give them all to us. What a gracious God we serve.

As Walter Henrichsen pointed out so aptly, "Discipleship is our opportunity to tap the infinite resources of God... In discipleship we are not doing God a favor. He is doing us a favor." It is important for us as Christians to understand this stewardship concept well.

Amen.

Pastor

Martin Yee



HAPPINESS IS ... ?

by Martin Yee

Christians have a popular slogan or cliché - "**Jesus is the answer!**" If Jesus is the answer, then what is the question? Many of us in Singapore are happy with our life but this cannot be said of everyone. King Solomon said "Meaningless, Meaningless! Utter meaningless! Everything is Meaningless!" Eccl 1:2. This statement probably sums up how some people feel about their life.

Ever since mankind was expelled from the Garden of Eden man yearns for lasting happiness but it has been elusive to many. The Sunday Times on National Day 9th August 1998 has a special feature section on happiness. In the survey conducted 96% of the Singaporeans indicated they are happy with their life here to various degree; 68 % are very happy, 28 % are quite happy and 4 % indicated they are unhappy. Various views on the topic of happiness were expressed by religious leaders and even the Senior Minister Lee. There are some points of agreement in their remarks with Christianity and some which we beg to differ.

From a Christian Biblical perspective what constitutes happiness? In my opinion it is perhaps too simplistic to attribute human happiness to a single factor. There are a few ingredients of happiness which I will discuss in this article:

1 *Happiness is a result of enjoying the good things God has created for man.*

- In Genesis chapter one, when God has finished creating the various things in the world, seven times He said that "it was good". Good for what? The Hebrew word for "good" reflects the quality & fitness for purpose of God's work. They were good for the sustenance and to provide a safe environment for man to live in.
- Therefore Christianity does not teach people to shun the good things that God has created e.g. food, beauty, nature, music, sex etc. but to enjoy them in moderation.
- One OT text said "A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and to find satisfaction in his work. This

too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?" Eccl 2:24-25.

SM Lee's noted aptly in the interview with the Sunday Times, "If I am hungry, inadequately sheltered, it's difficult to be in good spirits". Roman Catholic Father Joseph McNally remarked, "The Christian view of happiness is achieving a balance between the physical and the spiritual". What he probably meant is that to be happy we also need to work to provide for our family, take care of our health, have a strong husband wife relationship etc., besides a sound spiritual relationship with God.

2 *Happiness is a result of living a life according to the purpose and potential that God has created man.*

- As human we have great creativity as we are made in God's image (Gen 1:27). Human productivity is also enjoined, God put man into the garden to "work it" we are told in Gen 2:15. SM Lee interestingly said, "...my happiness is in doing what I think is worth doing, doing it well and successfully..."

- Also Christians are "blessed to be a blessing" as Abraham was told to be in Genesis 12:1-3. We are therefore not to segregate ourselves, or to be detached from the world but to be involved in it to be "salt and light of this world" as Jesus instructed his disciples in Matt 5:13-14.



The Buddhist however believe that we achieve happiness by meditation and by being detached from this world, achieving enlightenment. The Abbot of Foo Hai Chan Buddhist monastery, Venerable Shi Ming Yi said, "By accepting that the pleasures of this world are impermanent, and that eternal happiness only comes from enlightenment, one can learn to transcend the emotions of greed, anger and jealousy, and become detached from the worries that come from a disquieted heart."

The SM Lee apparently did not subscribe to such an idea in totality. He made this astute remark, "If I have a problem and spend all my time meditating and detaching myself from the problem, I may be tranquil and serene but not for long because I know that the problem is out there causing a lot of pain and suffering to many people and I am not solving it". This speaks for itself.

3 *Happiness is a result of being in harmony with God and the world He has created*

- We need peace "shalom" with God, a good relationship and communion with Him.
- We are to be at peace with our fellow man as far as possible "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the sons of God" Matt 5:9. A harmonious life in a larger community is important for happiness. As John Donne puts it "No man is an island entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."



- We are to take care of our environment "to keep it" as in Gen 2:15. Failure to do so can result in great misery as the Haze, El Nino and El Nina effects testify.
- We need to realize the Evil One is out to destroy all these harmonies and need to be alert as Genesis 3 points out.

4 *Happiness is a result of living in the presence of God*

- SM Lee noted, "Life has come to you without you wanting it, and you are the captives of the urges which go with life". But we wish to ask politely, "where does this life come from?" The Bible revealed that our life comes from God in Gen 2:7. God is the source of life and happiness.
 - Therefore we are to worship God alone and not idols (Exodus 20:4). Indeed we should glorify God joyfully as in Rev 4:11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being".

5 Happiness is a result of living a guilt free and holy life

- We need to know and to be assured that our sins are forgiven. The Psalmist proclaimed "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered" Psa 32:1.
- The problem of guilt must be dealt with and Christianity provides the key in the atonement of Christ.
- Sin mars our relationship with God and with one another. Taoist priest Li Zhiwang said, "For Taoist, the Tao or way to happiness is to cleanse ones heart and limit one's desires." We are admonished to guard against greed and discontent in the Bible also "Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless". Eccl 5:10-11. Instead godliness with content is a

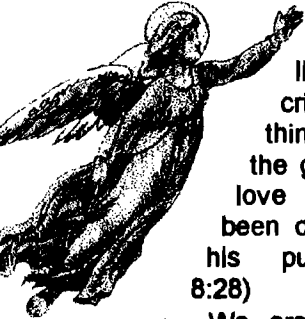


means of great gain as Paul wrote in 1 Tim 6:6.

- Sin reaps the consequence of eternal death "for the wages of sin is death" Romans 6:23. Also the Apostle Paul pointed out "A man reaps what he sows." Gal 6:7. However this is different from the Buddhist/Hindu concept of karma, the law of cause and effect. The Hindu president of the Rama Krishna Mission in Singapore, Swami Jagadatmananda said, "God loves you according to your karma, suffering is meted out in accordance to mistakes committed by the soul in past lives". But Christians reject the belief in past lives or reincarnation. The Bible stated unequivocally that "man is appointed to die once and after that comes judgment" Heb 9:27.

- To live a life of holiness we are to walk in step with the Holy Spirit who convicts us of sins (John 16:8) and produce in us the fruit of the Spirit that is love, joy, peace etc. (Gal 5:22-23).

6 *Happiness is a result of living a life of dependence on God by faith. (Prov 3:5-6).*



- We are to recognize God's sovereignty in life's success and crisis that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)
- We are to pray to God casting our anxiety on Him. Phi 4:6-7
- Muslim imam Syed Hassan Alatas said, "Lasting happiness only comes from knowledge of God, knowing that power rests in the hands of God, and He alone knows and decides... If you trust God, you accept that what will happen will happen. You try your best and leave the rest to God." However as Christians we are not fatalistic in thinking but to cooperate with God actively to recreate a better world, to usher in the Kingdom of God.

7 *Happiness is a result of knowing and believing in the glorious hope that there will be a better world to come*

- Rev 21:4 inform us that in the new heaven and new earth "there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain for the old order of thing has passed way."
- all evil and sin will be removed
- all sufferings will end
- Christians will live forever in paradise with God our Creator and source of life and joy.

MATHS TRICK

1. First, pick the number of days a week that you would like to go out (or eat pizza, whatever).
2. Multiply this number by 2.
3. Add 5.
4. Multiply it by 50.
5. If you have already had your birthday this year, add 1748. If you haven't, add 1747.
6. Last step: Subtract the four digit year that you were born.

RESULTS:

1. The first digit of this was your original number
2. The second two digits are your age!
3. This is the only year (1998) it will ever work.

Extract from a letter received from the *Gospel Mission to the Blind Ltd* dated August 1998

Dear Praying Friends,

Although I cannot see, I can hear. The Bible says we live by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7), and faith comes by **hearing** (Rom 10:17). In John chapter 10, Jesus said that His sheep hear His voice. Are we really able to hear the voice of our Good Shepherd? Are we allowing our problems or worries about the economic downturn hinder us from hearing His voice? In 1 Kings 19, Elijah, in spite of his distress and discouragement, was able to hear the voice of God and respond with awe and obedience.

Isaac and the prophet Ahijah became blind during their old age. Both encountered an incident where people tried to take advantage of their blindness and tried to deceive them. The faculty of hearing in the physical and spiritual realm is very important. Isaac heard the right voice but was deceived by Jacob. Ahijah heard the voice of God and was not deceived. Let us take care how and what we hear.

During one of our home visits on 4th August, Kok Sum Pooi shared that he heard an audible voice of the Lord last year. He described that the voice sounded very gentle and matured, and spoke right into his ears in Cantonese. Now he is set free from his fears and worries.

Ng Git Hoe lost her sight due to diabetes. After we first visited her on 9th April this year, she started coming to our Mandarin Fellowship Meetings regularly. On 25th June, she prayed and asked Jesus to be her Lord and Saviour. She is now filled with joy and boldness and is excited that Jesus hears her simple prayers.

On 16th July, we visited Clement Chng. His eyelids could not open after his head surgery.

On 18th July, we brought four youngsters for bowling at Pulau Bukom. During this outing we had opportunity to minister to a 15 year old partially blind student, Xiang Fa. On the following day, he went with our volunteers to church, and prayed to receive Jesus as his Saviour. Since then, he has been attending worship services regularly.

PRAYER POINTS

1. Pray for Git Hoe that she will soon take another step of faith to receive water baptism.
2. Pray for Xiang Fa's spiritual growth.
3. Pray that the Lord will give us wisdom to minister to Clement.
4. Pray for Khoo Lai Huang (a new contact), partially hearing impaired and partially blind man, who prayed to receive Jesus into his life on 8th August 1998. Pray that he will be able to hear the messages clearly and grow in the Lord.
5. Pray for Rajaram. 90% of his arteries are blocked and the doctors are unable to help him. Pray also that the Lord will bless him and his wife with a drink stall at a school canteen.
6. Pray for Jia Hui that she will be able to play well on 8th September, her piano grade 6 practical examination day. Pray that the Lord will give her a musical anointing.
7. Pray that the Lord will send us more volunteer drivers with vehicles to help fetch the blind people during the Chinese fellowship weeks.
8. Pray that some of the first year SBC students will volunteer to come and teach the Word of God to our Mandarin-speaking blind people.
9. Pray for our Council/Staff Retreat on 5 – 7th September at Pasir Ris.
10. Pray for the camp at Penang on 17 – 20th September organised by Agape Services for the Blind Bhd. Pray for the Lord's anointing to be upon Daniel Leong to speak and minister to the campers.
11. Pray for the Mandarin camp on 12 – 15th October. Pray for the Lord's anointing upon Pastor John Chin and Wilson Yeo.
12. Pray for our mission trip to Myanmar on 7 – 14th December. Pray for the Lord's guidance and blessings and protection during the trip.
13. Pray for our Evangelistic High Tea on 19th December that non-believers will come and receive salvation.

Thank you very much for praying with us and supporting our work. May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Yours in our Father's service,

Cheng Choo

On behalf of the GMB Family.

BEFRIENDERS' THANKSGIVING FELLOWSHIP

29th August 1998, 6pm @ the home of Bro. Peter Cheong

W

The food was good; the fellowship, great!

Within the confines of the hall space of Bro. Peter Cheong's home, with Pastors Martin Yee and Michael Christian to grace the occasion, there was simply no chance for anyone to miss anybody else who was present, both locals and foreigners in about equal numbers. In fact, the mingling with one another went beyond the hall into the kitchen space. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to catch up on getting to know one another, something many would find a mite difficult after each Sunday Church Service with everyone going in every direction with all kinds of personal or official agenda.

The cosmopolitan mix of those present (from Africa, China, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and a family back from the States) reflected well the cosmopolitan ambience in the Church and, on a more macro scale, the cosmopolitan nature of the Singapore Society.

It was aptly called a thanks giving fellowship for we had much to thank God for His blessings upon the nation, as we celebrated the 33rd Birthday of Independent Singapore. Despite the economic turbulence of the region gaining momentum, the signs are

that we in Singapore, although not unafflicted, are resilient enough to ride the storm without going under.

"It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High."
(Psalm 92:1-2)

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING is the instruction we have from God and hence, as a nation, we share our blessings with our foreign guests economically, socially or in educational exchange whether they are here to work or study, or are just passing by. Thank God that these our valued foreign guests also have their individual shares of blessings from God, their talents for example, which they bring along to share with Singaporeans.

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING INDEED!

We share with them and they share with us. Praise God that He made this possible!

We have foreigners coming to Singapore for greener pastures and we also have Singaporeans going overseas for the same reason. The world is getting smaller and I reckon that racial and national distinctions do not make any real difference to our ability to befriend, empathise, encourage, share, build up

mutual understanding and care for one another. In the Kingdom of God, skin colour does not matter. Unity should be the distinguishing mark of Christians:

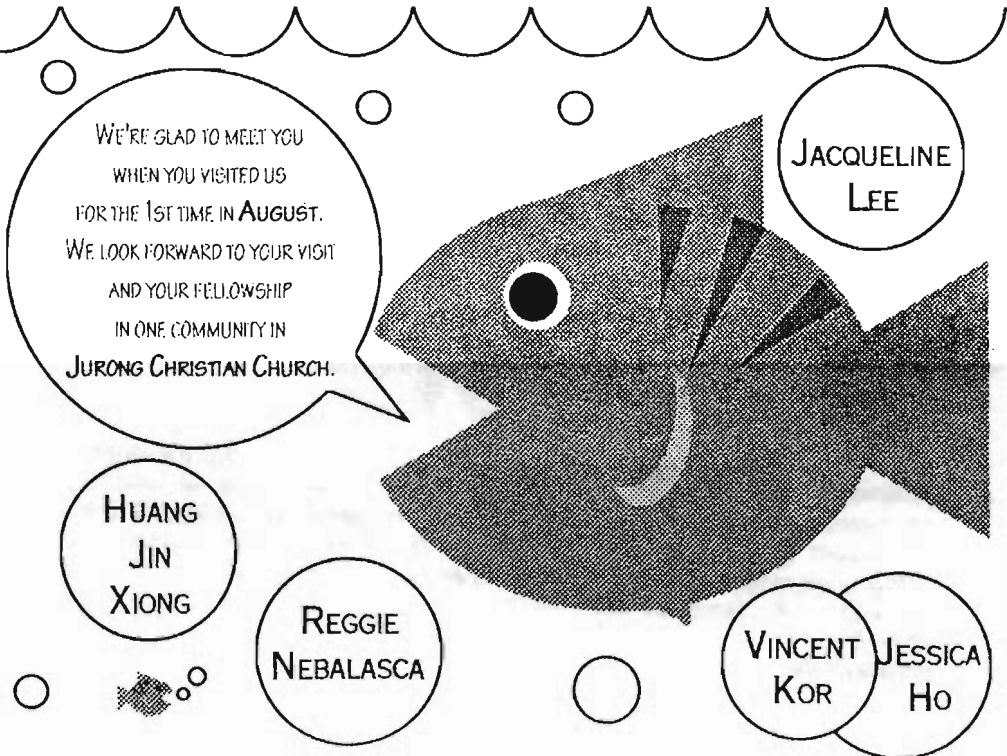
"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose." (Philippians 2:1-2)

The BEFRIENDERS' THANKSGIVING FELLOWSHIP reaffirmed the community spirit of Jurong Christian Church. I look forward to the continuation of fellowship

among those who were there, regardless of nationalities, and also hope that each and every one would continue to reach out to others in the Church, sharing according to their gifts and assisting to make the newcomers feel at home among us. Besides, it would be a joy to see our foreign brothers and sisters in Christ sharing God's blessings and His message with folks in their homeland.

Give thanks to God for His blessings. "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

by John Lee





PARABLE OF THE INVESTMENT COMPANY

A Modern Parable by Dr Lim Su Min



The kingdom of heaven is like an investment company where there are four investment officers. *(Like the sower who was sowing seeds that landed on 4 different areas.)*

The first investment officer places a quarter of a million dollars investment in a project in Bonga Bonga Land. It is a criminal fraudster's scheme and all is swindled, all is lost. *(The seed that fell on the path was taken away by the birds. Some people's hearts are stony hard. The word of God falls upon it: the message of repentance and reconciliation. But they will not hear. The seed has no chance to sprout. The devil comes to take it away. One soul lost forever....)*

The second investment officer places a quarter of a million dollars investment in a small grocery store. The town is pleasant: There is trade: the people are turnover is too low and the year. *(Some seeds fell on shallow soil. They sprout but cannot send down their roots to gather water. The sun comes up and they wither away. So too: the word of God falls on the ears of some who will listen superficially. Because they will not mature, their joy is short lived. As soon as trouble or persecution comes, they wither away.)*



officer places a investment in a small small. Overheads are low. pleasant: But business store has to fold after a

The third investment officer places a quarter of a million dollars investment in a farm on a tropical island. The weather is good, the soil is fertile and good crops are reaped. But the politicians are corrupt, and demand too much in invisible taxes. The farm goes bankrupt. *(The seeds that fell amongst the thorns started well: but as the plants grew they were strangled by the thorns: so too they who hear the Word and pay attention, but later get distracted by worldly things, strangled by wealth, corruption: they fail to contribute to the Kingdom.)*

The fourth investment officer places a quarter of a million dollars investment in a computer chip factory. The demand is good and the government honest. The investment reaps profits 30-fold, 60-fold, 100-fold. *(This speaks of people who have heard the Word, who accept it and grow in faith: they send their roots deep down to draw on the living water: They feed daily on the Bread of Life, reach maturity and bear fruit of the spirit: They tell the good news and draw others to the Kingdom. Those brought to Christ will then bring 30, 60, 100 and more to the throne of grace. Amen!)*

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

Financial Advice From The Bible

What investment strategy does God recommend?



I Timothy 6:17-19, NIV. "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

A valuable reminder for property owners.

Leviticus 25:23, TLB "And remember, the land is mine, so you may not sell it permanently. You are merely my tenants and sharecroppers!"

Contentment is not related to amount of money or possessions.

Philippians 4:12-13, TLB. "I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of contentment in every situation, whether it be a full stomach or hunger, plenty or want; for I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me the strength and power."

God asks us to return tithe and offerings to Him and in return He promises unlimited blessings.

Malachi 3:8-10, NIV. "Will a man rob God?" Yet you rob me. "But you ask, How do we rob you?" "In tithes and offerings." Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

How may all, rich and poor, honour God?

Proverbs 3:9, NIV. "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."

WHAT'S YOUR ANSWER?

Answer this question for each situation:

Would you consider abortion in the following four situations?

1. There is a preacher and his wife who are very, very poor. They already have 14 kids. Now, she finds out she is pregnant with her 15th. They are living in tremendous poverty. Considering their poverty...and the excessive world population, would you consider recommending that she get an abortion?
2. A father is sick with sniffles and the mother has TB. They have had four children. The 1st is blind, the 2nd is dead, the 3rd is deaf and the 4th has TB. She finds she is pregnant again. Given the extreme situation and the mother's health, would you consider recommending an abortion?
3. A white man raped a 13-year-old black girl and she got pregnant. If you were her parents, would you consider recommending an abortion?
4. A teenage girl is pregnant. She's not married. Her fiancé is not the father of the baby

and he is very upset. Would you consider recommending an abortion?

If you have answered "yes" to any of these questions, which were true-life situations, then...

1. In the first case, you have killed John Wesley, one of the great evangelists of the 19th century and a great hymn writer.
2. In the second case, you have killed Beethoven.
3. In the third case, you have killed Ethel Waters, the great black gospel singer.
4. And, if you said "yes" in the fourth case then you have just sanctioned the murder of Jesus Christ!



Brian Dyson, CEO of Coca Cola Enterprises, had this to say at a recent University graduation: "Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling five balls in the air. You name them - work, family, health, friends and spirit - and you're keeping all of these in the air at the same time. You will soon understand that work is a RUBBER ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. But the other four balls - family, health, friends and spirit - are made of glass. If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged or even shattered. They will never be the same. You must understand that and strive for balance in your life."

Glory Centre

Before & After School Care

by Martin Cheah

August 22, 1998 - Besides all the other events of the day, like the Solar Eclipse and the 1st day of the 7th Month, it was the opening ceremony of GLORY CENTRE BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE.

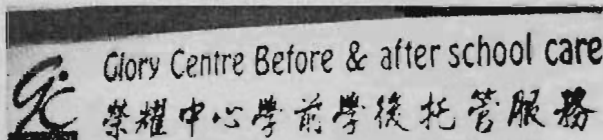
Located at Hougang Ave 8, one may wonder what has this to do with JCC? Well among its founding members is none other than our dear sister, **Ting Ching**. This is the work that the Lord has led her to do and from the testimony of Pastor Grace, who is the head of the centre, it seems that indeed God has been with them on this project all the way.

With a vision and without any means, Pastor Grace put her faith in God to provide for all the needs, especially the finance, and thus far, the Lord has not failed them. Although they still need to raise another \$100,000, they are by no means discouraged, having experienced God's provision earlier. In fact, they already have visions of expanding into other activities, like community work.

After listening to the testimony, it is indeed moving to know that there are still people around with such great faith similar to George Muller.

During the fellowship time, sister Ting Ching shared with me that they had taken everything one step at a time, trusting God to provide at each step.

May we at JCC continue to uphold sister Ting Ching and her colleagues in our prayers.



Pastor Grace showing a visitor the signboard.

The Mystery of the 13th Apostle

Sometimes in church group games involving naming the 12 disciples, it often turns up 13 names instead of 12. How did the discrepancy arise? We can only best resolve this by tabulating the names of the 12 disciples from the Gospels and Acts chapter 1.

No	Matthew 10:2-4	Mark 3:16-18	Luke 6:14-15	Acts 1:13
1	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Simon Peter
2	Andrew	Andrew	Andrew	Andrew
3	James son of Zebedee	James son of Zebedee	James son of Zebedee	James son of Zebedee
4	John	John	John	John
5	Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
6	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew
7	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas
8	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew
9	James son of Alphaeus	James son of Alphaeus	James son of Alphaeus	James son of Alphaeus
10	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
11	Thaddeus	Thaddeus	Judas son of James	Judas son of James
12	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot

From the listing it becomes obvious that the same person called “Thaddeus” by Matthew & Mark, is called “Judas son of James” by Luke in his Gospel and in Acts which he also wrote. Thaddeus is probably his nickname of devotion or endearment. His actual given name is Judas and his father’s name is James. So Thaddeus and Judas son of James is the same person. According to a legend Thaddeus later went to minister in Mesopotamia (in modern Iraq) to a people called Edessa and their king called Abgar. He preached the gospel there, performed miracles, baptised many, planted churches and appointed bishops and deacons.