

The

VINE

Vol 7/99

July
99

for internal circulation only

Pastor's Word

Grace to you and peace from God! We are passing into the second half of 1999 and closer to the new millennium. This month JCC will be having the Missions Emphasis week and starting on evangelistic tracting work as well in line with our church theme "Reaching out as a Community"

Those of us who participated in the Church Retreat last month at Cameron Highlands felt very blessed indeed, through the ministry of the Word, including myself. Many are recharged and revived in the spiritual fervor to reach out to help others find the way.

May this fervor remains in our heart for a long time indeed. The writing by Robert Munger called **"MY HEART - CHRIST'S**



HOME is indeed inspiring". Have you read it before? :

The first step in making the heart Christ's home: He has said, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). If you are interested in making your life an abode of the living God, let me

encourage you to invite Christ into your heart and he will surely come.

After Christ entered my heart and in the joy of that new-found relationship, I said to him, "Lord, I want this heart of mine to be

yours. I want to have you settle down here and be perfectly at home. Everything I have belongs to you. Let me show you around and introduce you to the various features of the home that you may be more comfortable and that we may have fuller fellowship

together." He was very glad to come, of course, and happier still to be given a place in the heart.

THE LIBRARY

The first room was the study -- the library. Let us call it the study of the mind. Now in my home this room of the mind is a very small room with very thick walls. But it is an important room. In a sense, it is the control room of the house. He entered with me and looked around at the books in the bookcase, the magazines upon the table, the pictures on the wall. As I followed his gaze I became uncomfortable. Strangely enough, I had not felt badly about this before, but now that he was there looking at these things I was embarrassed. There were some books there that his eyes were too pure to behold. There was a lot of trash and literature on the table that a Christian had no business reading and as for the pictures on the wall -- the imaginations and thoughts of the mind - these were shameful.

I turned to him and said, "Master, I know that this room needs a radical alteration. Will you help me make it what it ought to be-- to bring every thought into captivity to you?" "Surely!" he said. "Gladly will I



help you. That is one reason I am here. First of all, take all the things that you are reading and seeing which are not helpful, pure, good and true, and throw them out! Now put on the empty shelves the books

of the Bible. Fill the library with scriptures and meditate on them day and night. As for the pictures on the wall, you will have difficulty controlling these images, but here is an aid." He gave me a full sized picture of himself.

"Hang this centrally," he said, "on the wall of the mind." I did and I have discovered through the years that when my thoughts are centered upon Christ himself, his purity and power cause impure imaginations to retreat. So he has helped me to bring my thoughts into captivity.

May I suggest to you if you have difficulty in this little room of the mind, that you bring Christ in there. Pack it full with the Word of God, meditate upon it and keep before it ever the immediate presence of the Lord Jesus.

THE DINING ROOM

From the study we went to the dining room, the room of appetites and desires. Now this was a very large room. I spent a good deal of

time in the dining room and much effort in satisfying my wants.

I said to him, "This is a very satisfying room and I am quite sure you will be pleased with what we



serve here."

He seated himself at the table with me and asked, "What is on the menu for dinner?"

"Well," I said, "my favorite dishes: curry chicken, tau you bak, kai lan & cabbage, sardine, onions and garlic." There were the things I liked -- worldly fare. I suppose there was nothing radically wrong in any particular item, but it was not the food that should satisfy the life of a real Christian. When the food was placed before him, he said nothing about it. However, I observed that he did not eat it, and I said to him, somewhat disturbed, "Savior, you don't care for the food that is placed before you? What is the trouble?"

He answered, "I have meat to eat that you know not of. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." He looked at me again and said, "if you want food that really satisfies

you, seek the will of the Father, not your own pleasures, not your own desires, not your own satisfaction. Seek to please me, and that food will satisfy you." And there about the table he gave me a taste of doing God's will. What a flavor! There is no food like it in all the world. It alone satisfies. Everything else is dissatisfying in the end.

Now if Christ is in your heart, and I trust he is, what kind of food are you serving him and what kind of food are you eating yourself? Are you living for the lust of the flesh and the pride of life— selfishly? Or are you choosing God's will for your meat and drink?

THE HALL CLOSET

There is just one more matter that I might share with you. One day I found him waiting for me at the door. There was an arresting look in his eye. He said to me as I entered, "There is a peculiar odor in the house. There is something dead around here. It's upstairs. I think it is in the hall closet." As soon as he said the words, I knew what he was talking about. Yes, there was a small hall closet behind lock and key I had one or two little personal things that I did not want anybody to know about and certainly I did not want Christ to see. I knew they were dead



and rotting things. And yet I loved them, and I wanted them so for myself that I was afraid to admit they were there. I went up the stairs with him and as we mounted, the odor became stronger and stronger. He pointed at the door and said, "It's in there! Some dead thing!"

I was angry. That's the only way I can put it. I had given him access to the library, the dining room, and now he was asking me about a little two-by-four closet. I said inwardly, "This is too much. I am not going to give him the key."

"Well," he said, reading my thoughts, "if you think I am going to stay up here on the second floor with this odor, you are mistaken. I will take my bed out on the back porch. I'm certainly not going to put up with that." And I saw him start down the stairs.

When you have come to know and love Christ, the worst thing that can happen to you is to sense his fellowship retreating from you. I had to surrender. "I'll give you the key," I said sadly, "but you'll have to open the closet. You'll have to clean it out. I haven't the strength to do it."

"I know," he said. "I know you haven't. Just give me the key. Just

authorize me to take care of that closet and I will." So, with trembling fingers I passed the key over to him. He took it from my hand, walked over to the door, opened it, entered it, took out all the putrefying stuff that was rotting there and threw it away. Then he cleansed the closet, painted it, fixed it up, doing it all in a moment's time. Oh, what victory and release to have that dead thing out of my life! He took my life that day and I can give you my word, there is no better way to live the Christian life. He knows how to keep it in shape and deep peace settles down on the soul.

May Christ settle down and be at home in our heart as Lord of all.
Amen.

Pastor Martin Yee



JURONG CHRISTIAN CHURCH RETREAT

Cameron Highlands, Malaysia

10th - 14th June 1999

The Committee's 'Climb' Up

How It All Started

In the beginning it was not meant to be any climb. We had put on wings and the crew together with our Captain TT had set our course for a Down Under destination. Fortunately, we had not taken flight yet when different instructions were received from our 'headquarters'. We were not on the preferred course. So we re-orientated ourselves to head inland, towards this beautiful land in the clouds, Camerons.

To go further back, the Committee was actually formed during a Bethel Care Group (BCG) meeting. Brother Thomas shared that he had been approached to take up the Chairmanship of the Retreat Committee.

Seeing this as an opportunity to serve the church as a group, the BCGers rallied behind him and volunteered to be part of his committee. And there was no stopping us thereafter.



The Planning Stage

This was probably the most trying period for the committee. The Committee felt the need to bring the church to an overseas destination and we set our sights on either Perth or Phuket. However after taking

into account the results of a survey among JCC members and the church council's preferences, the Committee then decided on Camerons.



With this major factor decided, the Committee set out to settle other milestones like the retreat theme, the speaker and budget. The theme "Reach Out & Touch" was chosen because it met the objective of being aligned with JCC's vision. Initially the speaker was supposed to be the Secretary of the Singapore Bible Society. The Committee was in dire straits when he informed that the retreat dates clashed with another appointment of his. What were we to do? But God is gracious and heard our prayers. He sent us Mr Richard Ting from the Singapore Campus Crusade for Christ instead.



There were many details and decisions that the committee deliberated on. Many meetings were held especially on Sunday afternoons. Under the guidance of Bro Thomas and Bro Ronnie, the committee was intent on making it a retreat to be remembered by all. Much effort was put into making the programme pleasant and memorable for each and every participant both spiritually and physically.

A Near U-Turn

Generally up to now, the committee's ascent towards Camerons had been relatively smooth. There were small boulders that hindered the way here and there but they were overcome by and by. Now, we came face to face with a steep cliff that seemed impossible to scale....! When the retreat was launched, JCC members' response was weaker than expected. Despite much persuasion, the committee could not convince enough members to sign up for the retreat. Our target was about half our regular congregation ie about 100. However the number that signed

up was only about 80. Serious deliberations were urgently held within the committee. Should we postpone the retreat? Should we cancel it?

Again God was guiding us.

The committee voted to carry on with the retreat as much planning had already gone in and we did



not want to disappoint those members that have already committed to go. So, we pressed on, scaling the cliff without looking back.

Full Steam Ahead

We quickly tied up all other loose ends. By God's grace, everything was settled smoothly all the way to the day of departure which saw all participants trooping to Golden Mile Complex on the night of 9 Jun 99 for their Super-VIP Coach ride up.

At The TOP

Wow, what sights awaited us! There was so much of God's wonderful creation to behold and captivate us. The fresh and cool climate was invigorating.



Spiritually, I believe all members reached new heights as well. God made use of many members and especially our speaker Mr Ting

to speak to us. The messages delivered through Mr Ting touched many members and burdened us with the need and yearning to go forth winning souls for the glory of God. His messages were delivered vividly in simple and witty terms, drawing very much on God's Holy Word.

Powerful testimonies were shared on the last night of the retreat as shared briefly in the last issue of the Vine. We have been truly blessed.

Back Home

The retreat survey shows unequivocally that the retreat has been a tremendous success. THANKS BE TO GOD. As a committee and as a church, I think we can announce that we have scaled new spiritual heights. However we do not want to leave our heads in the clouds. Now that we are back on level ground, we need to put to practice all the invaluable lessons that God has graciously conveyed to us while on the mountain. We have all felt the strong need for revival. We have been given the knowledge of how to bring about a revival for the church and for ourselves. Let us all humble ourselves, pray and go forth for the GLORY of GOD!



PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

Richard Ting

Thank You for inviting me. I have been much blessed by you all. Thank you Retreat Committee for all your hard work. You are appreciated. Your labour is not in vain.

Pastor Martin Yee

Well organised. Very blessed to be in it.

Kong & Family

The committee has done a good job. The theme talks and the free time for relaxation are well spaced out.

Kim Keong

Very happy with the thoroughness in seeing to all the minor details in making it a pleasant stay. On the spiritual side, I have learnt a lot and been blessed and uplifted.

Lucy Tan

The whole committee did a very good job for the Glory of Our God. May God bless all of you and Keep it Up.

Susan Tan

The messages by speaker Richard Ting was very practical in our life and it was indeed very edifying, compelling us to really want to reach out and touch the lives of others. Praise God for making this retreat possible for our family.

Martin Cheah

The Committee pampered the participants so much it was an overkill. Thanks for stressing yourselves out these last few days? Weeks? Months?

Joo See

It was very well organised and my family really enjoyed very much. The free time was very good because we could interact and have fellowship.

Julie Kao

The standard set is very high for the next retreat committee to attain. The venue chosen is excellent. Hopefully more future retreats will be held in such cool climate. Although everything happens by God's grace, without Thomas, Ronnie, Nancy, Young Kwang, Iris, Se Ping and Teik Keat's zealous efforts (I won't say untiring efforts), we would not have such a wonderful time in Cameron Highlands.

Florence Hor

Excellent. Well organised.





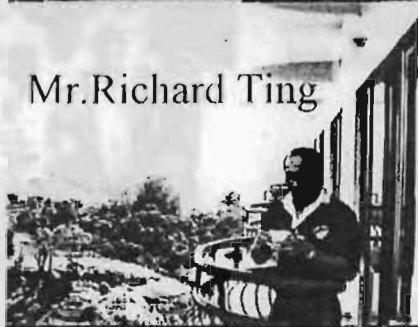
The glorious view



Me with Pastor Sin



REACH OUT AND TOUCH THE AFRICAN
Sengoi Performance
10 TO 14 JUNE 99



Mr. Richard Ting



Sis Ewe Ewe's vision



The chalets we occupied...



Tea Plantation



Sengoi children



Chairman



Skits



my recollection of Retreat 99



Games Time & Hunt

Yew Moi

The committee has set a new benchmark for future organisers. I suggest that at least 1 current committee member would participate in the future organising committee to pass on the experience gained.

Teik Keat

I thank God that it's held! I'd not exchange anything, especially work, to attend (in retrospect)

Tan Geok Wah

I want to commend the Retreat Committee for an excellent effort in organising this event. This is my first retreat and I was re-charged spiritually and physically. I look forward to attending the coming retreat. May God bless all of you and your family.

PS. I was very impressed by the daily summary that was given and the service of a secretary to record the discussion. I think this is something commendable and a great idea for future retreats.



REACH OUT AND TOUCH
JCC RETREAT
10 TO 14 JUN 99



Feedback on members' preferences for retreats in general.

Prefer JCC Retreat to be:

Held outside M'sia & S'pore	12
Held in M'sia	17
Held In Singapore	2
No Comments	1
Total	32

Duration of retreat (4 nights, 5 days) was:

Too Long	2
Too Short	3
Just Nice	26
No Comments	1
Total	32

Cost of Retreat was:

Expensive	0
Cheap	3
Reasonable	27
No Comments	2
Total	32

Prefer to have JCC Retreats:

Once a year	16
Once in 2 years	13
At even longer intervals	2
No Comments	1
Total	32

WE REACHED OUT AND TOUCHED THEM

Have you ever wondered what you are living for? Or who you are living for? Each day passes by so quickly with so many things to do -that we just do not have the time to even think about what we are doing. We just continue living, ever so busy with the nitty-gritty things in life. It's either this or that, endless things to attend to. Like what they say, "No time to stop to smell the roses". After a busy half of a year, I took time to "smell the roses".

Life is wonderful, as I have been blessed with a family. We lead a comfortable but simple lifestyle. There was no necessity for me to work and my priority is my family. And yet I wanted to work. My purpose of working was intellectual stimulation and to save up money for overseas holidays. The temptation of money has always been my weakness.

I started asking myself how I can be of use to Him as a homemaker. I wanted a confirmation that I should not work full time in the secular world but to avail myself to serve Him in church. One may think that even with a secular job, one can still serve in Church. Yes, we can. Unfortunately, we feel tired or are busy with our work that there is very little time left for Him. Most of our energy and time are spent on our job and God gets the leftover! Most of us do not have a choice, as we need to earn a living. **I have a choice.** I felt that if I worked on an 8 to 5 job, I would not have the time to really plan how best the Sunday school can be used to reach out to children in the neighbourhood. Instead the Sunday School would just "baby-sit" our children during worship service.

I felt that God had entrusted me with the Sunday School, a tool that can be used to bring young lives to know Him and to nurture those who attend regularly. How



can the Sunday school help the Church in its vision to reach out and have an impact on our society?

When I seriously started seeking the Lord, I somehow knew He was going to answer me. A day before the retreat I began to fear that He will speak to me through the speaker. I was so fearful until I cried and was reluctant to go. I went after much persuasion from Soon Eong. On 11 June morning 6 am I woke up early to do my QT before listening to the first theme talk I went to the balcony and it was almost the break of day. I started reading the bible with the lights from the living room.

The scenery was so beautiful and I started praising Him for his creation. I asked Him for signs if He wanted me to serve Him and not work in the secular world. As I conversed with Him, I asked for healing of an ulcer on my tongue as a sign of confirmation. It had been there for some time. According to my doctor, ulcers in the mouth will heal fast but not ulcers on the tongue. A voice told me that 4 people would be saved in this retreat. It was not an audible voice. I answered back that 4 is a big number considering there are not many non-Christians in the camp. Our conversation continued and I was told Jackie would be saved. I replied that I would take it as a sign if it happened. Still wanting more signs, I asked Him to write it in the clouds, since He created the heavens and the earth. Within minutes, my eyes caught the word "J e s u s" to the right portion of the clouds. It was not formed by the clouds, but each letter was so clearly created by the silver lining of the clouds. For a few seconds, I looked and looked and I could not believe my eyes. When finally I could not deny the fact that He has written the letters, tears just rolled down as I acknowledge the awesome and majestic Creator. The very minute I did that, a strong gust of wind blew over and nothing was left. It was erased completely without a trace. It was really strange how gentle our Lord is. He gave me enough time to believe what I saw.

I kept this to myself, thinking that it is such an unbelievable story. It was my private encounter with the Lord. The next morning, 12 June, Se Ping came out to the balcony and we started talking and admiring the scenery. Suddenly, she asked me if God has ever spoken to me directly. I told her what happened. On that afternoon, the gospel was preached to the 4 non-Christians but none accepted Christ then. On 13 June, Jackie accepted Christ into her life at the Sunday worship service. When I heard this, I was very happy for her. Then, I was at a lost as where to go on from here.

Today, I feel I can focus my purpose on serving Him. I am still not sure how he will use me, so I'll continue to serve Him in the Sunday School. I also intend to equip myself with His word by attending more classes. Last but not the least is - I've learnt that if we sincerely seek Him, He will be found.



Kho Ewe Ewe
(7 July 1999)

The Crucifixion

continued
from June
issue of
The Vine.

The Cross

Let's talk about the cross for just a minute. We know from Corinthian and Roman history that the crosses were usually in two parts. First, the cross bar, that from very good historical accounts can be estimated to have a weight of 125 to 150 pounds, and to be about the size of a cross tie. Many of us have stacked or used cross ties at one time or another or have certainly seen what they look like on the railroad tracks. I want to remind you that this was a rough, unplanned, unfinished piece of wood with splinters and spikes and rough places in it, just like you would expect to see in a railroad cross tie. When the victim's final trial and condemnation had taken place, to maximize the shame and suffering, the custom was to tie the cross bar to the victim, and have him carry it through the city from his point of condemnation to his point of execution. Part of the custom was that many times these people would be forced to stagger through the streets after being scourged and beaten, with the cross bar tied to their arms, and to add to the ultimate humiliation, the victim had to bear the cross naked. Imagine how humiliating that would be in this day and time, much less how humiliating and agonizing it must have been for Jesus.

The other part of the cross was an upright part, which is just like a post in the ground. Every major city at that time had an area outside their gates where they performed crucifixions. It was really not only a form of execution, but of entertainment as well. Many of the major cities had areas outside their walls where they would have three or four of these upright posts that were permanent fixtures. Someone condemned to crucifixion would bear the cross bar through the streets to the point of crucifixion, and once there, would be thrown onto the ground. Nails would then be driven through their hands into the cross bar. Then two forks, something similar to pitch forks, would be placed around each end of the cross bar, and they would be boosted up and the cross bar hung on top of the upright post. Once they were braced on the upright post, both feet would then be nailed to the foot piece.



The Nails

The nail wounds... The Romans practiced crucifixion for hundreds of years, and they perfected the art of pain and suffering. How could a man have spikes driven through his hands and feet and not bleed to death? The Romans figured out that if they drove the spike through a man's wrist right at the middle, they could avoid hitting any arteries or veins. If you go back and look at the Hebrew word for hand, it's inclusive from the fingertips to about

where your wristwatch crosses your wrist. So the hand didn't necessarily mean the palm, and I can tell you, from having been a hand surgeon at one time and from dissecting cadavers to try to see if the muscle was strong enough to hold the body weight, it's not. You can not drive a spike through a man's palm and hang him by it without it pulling right out between his fingers. It is an accepted medical fact that the muscle in your palm is not strong enough to support your body weight.

In order to be able to drive spikes through the Lord's hands, they had to drive them through at the wrists. There, there's a very strong ligament, called the traverse carpal ligament that's strong enough to support the body weight. The Romans figured out that if they came about where the crease in the wrist is and drove the spike through this area, they would miss the radial artery (the artery people cut when they try to kill themselves by cutting their wrist - right where the doctor takes

your pulse), and they would also miss what we call the ulnar artery over on the little finger side. What they would do though, is drive the nail right through the biggest nerve in the hand, called the median nerve. If any of y'all have ever had carpal tunnel syndrome, you know how uncomfortable any inflammation or irritation to that median nerve can be. When the median nerve is transected, it gives about the sensation of having an electric cattle prod stuck to your wrist and a constant electrical shock going through your hand, and causes the fingers to claw. In essence, the Romans devised a way they could drive a spike through a man's hand and not lose one drop of blood, while maximizing the amount of pain and suffering that man would endure."

"The Romans did the same thing with the feet. They calculated where they could drive a spike through both a man's feet and not cause blood loss that would cause the victim to bleed to death. The spike would have been placed between the first and second metatarsal bones, missing the dorsals pedis artery. There again, they drove the spike through the feet with no blood loss. The spike misses the artery, but does hit the plantar nerves, thereby causing that same horrible shock sensation.

Hangin' On The Cross

Let's talk now about Jesus hanging on the cross. When hanging by their arms, as a crucifixion victim's body weight sags down, their diaphragm functions like a billows. As the diaphragm drops into the abdomen it pulls in air, so someone hanging on the cross had no difficulty whatsoever pulling air into their lungs. The tough part for people hanging on the cross was breathing out. In order for a crucifixion victim to exhale, they would have to pull up against the spikes with their hands, and push up against the spikes with their feet. I want to remind you - here's Jesus hanging on the cross, probably naked in front of the whole city of Jerusalem. I've already described his back to you. Every time he took a breath, that tattered, lacerated and riddled back was drug and scraped across the splinters and the rough knobs and spikes protruding from the cross. Each time he breathed out, each time he uttered a word, he would have to pull up with his arms and push up with his legs. That's why I want to remind you just how precious Jesus' words from the cross were. That's why he couldn't say more than three or four words at a time. Because when you talk, you

only talk as you breathe out, not as you breathe in. Every word Jesus spoke on the cross was spoken as he was pulling up against the nails and dragging his back across the cross. That's why what the Lord tells us - what he spoke from the cross - is very precious to me, because I know what it cost him and how badly it hurt him. Every time I give this talk it reminds me how he died for us and just how every word hurt and how he suffered just to give us every word. What did he say? He said, 'Behold your son.' And then he said 'Behold your mother.' Jesus knew he had just about finished his job and done everything that he'd come into this world to fulfill and do. Finally, when he had done all of that, he said, 'It is finished.' And when he said 'It is finished', that's the last time he pulled up with his hands and pushed up with his feet, dragging his back across the cross as he hung there naked before the city of Jerusalem in total shame and humiliation. Convicted and tortured and condemned for something of which he was not guilty.



If you go back and look at historical accounts, you find that

people actually lived on the cross, crucified, for up to six days. If you can, imagine a man hanging on a cross outside the gates of a city with the birds pecking at his eyes and roosting on his head, as he hangs there naked as a spectacle for the whole city. That was the point of this. It was part of the shame and humiliation that a man hang there so people could come by for a day or two and stand and mock and jeer and shout accusations and railings and blasphemy at him. The idea was to make him suffer as much as possible. Crucifixion was never intended to kill anybody. It was only intended to make a human being suffer as much as could be inflicted upon him before killing him by breaking his legs.

Jesus' Death

But I don't believe Jesus died from crucifracture or from exhaustion asphyxia either. Crucifracture is what they would do when they simply grew tired of watching this agony and suffering or when they had something better to do and wanted to end a crucifixion. They would take a spear and swing it like a ball bat and hit the victim in the shins to break his shinbones. They'd break the tibula and the fibula bone. Many times they would have to beat the legs for five or ten minutes until they finally could break the shin bones - it takes a lot of force to break your shin bone. With the shinbone broken, the victim could no longer push up to breathe.



Why didn't they break Jesus' legs? If you go back to the Psalms - I believe the 34th chapter - it says, "Not a bone of his body was broken." This is why Jesus' nose and jaws and cheekbones should have been broken but couldn't have been. The 34th chapter of Psalms wouldn't let that take place. And that's why the Roman centurion didn't break his legs, because the Bible says, "Not a bone of his body was broken." That was totally uncharacteristic of the crucifixion, because that's how crucifixion victims died. When they grew tired of you and got bored with the situation they'd break your legs and in about four to six minutes you'd smother to death, because you could no longer push up with your legs. You laid there sagging, unable to breathe out, and you were asphyxiated in about four to six minutes. That's how the two thieves died. But Jesus was dead already.

Let's go back to the 19th chapter of John. What happened? What did they do when they went to the first thief? The Roman centurion broke his legs. What did he do when he went to the second thief? He broke his legs. But when the centurion went to Jesus, the Bible says he was dead already.

Now why should a young, strapping, healthy man be dead after being on the cross for six hours? There's absolutely no medical explanation for it at all. Excuse my interpretation here, but the Lord had no business being dead. He should have been alive just like the other two. He wasn't beaten to the point of death, his blood loss was minimal and we know he wasn't in shock, because everything he told us from the cross made sense. He identified his mother standing at some distance from the foot of the cross. He was able to see enough to identify her and to identify one of the disciples. And everything he said was coherent. He was not out of his mind and he was not having a nervous breakdown, and he wasn't even in shock from blood loss. The Lord was perfectly coherent and sane up to the moment he died."

The Spear Wound

"The spear wound to the Lord's side was not the cause of his death either. When the centurion saw that Jesus was dead already, he thrust a spear into Jesus' side. The Bible says in Zachariah that they may look upon him who they've pierced. The spear thrust was biblical prophecy fulfilled. That was one of the reasons why Jesus was already dead; God had a plan that we were to look upon the one they had pierced - Zachariah had to be fulfilled.

Roman centurions were trained killers. They were taught how to deliver deathblows that would take a man's life in a matter of seconds. I've taken care of many gunshot victims to the chest. A person can take a .22 through the left side of the heart and likely come in sitting up talking to you. However, if you're stabbed or shot on the right side of the heart, where the inferior and superior vena cava are emptying into the right side of the heart, you're unconscious and pretty close to dead in about twenty to thirty seconds. This blow to Jesus was no doubt delivered from the right side through the right lung into the heart and on into the spine. It would have penetrated somewhere between the seventh and eighth intercostal space probably on the right. But the Bible says that blood and water came out of Jesus' side after the spear was thrust in. Now if you take a unit of blood, drain it out of a human being's body, put it in a quart jar and set it on top of a desk, in about thirty minutes the red blood cells begin to settle out and the plasma rises to the top. The plasma separates from the red blood cells. When the soldier thrust the spear into the Lord's side, Jesus had already been dead for thirty or forty-five minutes. Maybe you've never thought about that. The spear wound did not take the life of the Lord Jesus; he was dead already when they thrust the spear into his side.

So let me conjecture a little about what I think. I think there's a very good description of the crucifixion in the Bible and there's very good medical evidence that can be pulled out of that description that tells us that the Lord did not die in the manner that most crucifixion victims die. When the Roman centurion went to him to break his legs, he was dead already. They couldn't break his legs because the Bible said in Psalms, "Not a bone of his body shall be broken." Why then would the soldier thrust a spear into his side? Because Zachariah told us hundreds of years before that we'd look upon him that we'd pierced. And what came out? Blood and water - I think there's enough medical evidence there that the Lord was dead at least a half an hour.

So what took the Lord's life? No man did. No man, no Roman centurion, no cross took Jesus' life. He was able to do something I've never seen another human being do - he laid down his life. When it was finished and with a loud voice, he gave up the ghost. Jesus gave his life."

"The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life - only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." (NIV) John 10:17,18

**IF JESUS BE GOD AND DIED FOR ME, THEN NO
SACRIFICE CAN BE TOO GREAT FOR ME TO MAKE
FOR HIM.**

C.T. Studd

TOKYO MISSION

KONNICHIWA

The Tokyo Mission Trip took off on the 17th of May 1999. Our chief objective there in Tokyo was to bring the gospel to the people.

MINISTRY AT TOKYO UNIVERSITY

A typical day would begin with breakfast and was followed by corporate worship and devotion. We would then leave for Tokyo University Komaba campus, about a 40 minute travel away from our place.

The most effective method of making friends was to get our Japanese contacts to bring us to their ECA group (or circle as it is referred to by the Japanese) and we would then make friends there. Having introduced ourselves as students of NUS, we proceeded to talk to them and ask them to bring us around Tokyo. Having made their acquaintance, we would then spend time talking and chatting with them. And if the conversation touched on the topic of religion, we would then whisk out the 4 Spiritual Laws (4SL) and share with them about having relationship with God.

Most are wary of Christians because of the recent scare of several cult groups in the campus. The Central Christian Church and the Seventh Day Adventists are working hard in Tokyo.

RESULT

This trip saw a total of 8 people receiving Christ into their lives. In these 8, we had 1 Singaporean, 1 Chinese

national, 1 Thai and the rest were Japanese.

CHRISTIANS IN JAPAN

The JCCC at Komaba Campus has about 8 members. Of these 8, there are 2 Indonesians, 1 Chinese national and 1 New Zealander.

While we were in Tokyo, some of us had the opportunity to meet Singaporeans who were also in Tokyo for 'mission' trips. However, it was unnerving to know that this 'mission' team was sent by the Central Christian Church here in Singapore and they were there to fellowship with other members from the Japanese Central Christian Church. -

SPIRITUAL ATTACKS

This trip was had its low points. By the middle of the second week, there were a few of us who fell ill.

STANDING IN THE GAP

We learned many lessons. While Japan is a relatively safe place with the notable absence of violent crimes such as riots and arson, it is a country, which has embraced many vices from pornography to the bottle. We even saw a sign, which told people not to molest others - which was a frequent occurrence in the crowded subways and trains - and that it was criminal to do so!

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE JAPANESE!!!!!!!!!!

Anthony Loh

(condensed for The Vine - for a fuller version, look out for it in the M&E LINKS newsletter)