

# The VINE

Vol 11/99

Nov 99

for internal circulation only

## Congratulations

to Pastor  
Yee on his  
ordination  
on 31 st  
October  
1999.



We are nearing the end of the year again. As we reflect upon our days we remember good times and bad times. Life has its ups and downs. Sometimes we are at the pink of health and sometimes we may be sick. When sickness comes we feel pain and sufferings. Many Christians ask this: Why God did not heal me whenever I am sick and I pray to Him; why I still need to see the doctor? This boils down to the fundamental question: Does God always heal? Some Christians when they are sick are taught by their leaders not to see a doctor but to fast and pray. Is this okay?

The following thoughts by Mr Walter Martin, a well known Christian writer is helpful. You may not agree with everything he wrote but it is still worth reading:

### Does God Always Heal?

First Peter 2:24 says of Christ, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins

and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."

One of the primary rules of biblical interpretation, which must never be violated, is context. What is the context in 1 Peter 2? Answer: Salvation. There is no way to interpret it in any other sense. The verse is talking about Jesus on the cross dying for us, enduring punishment and bearing our sins, thereby providing salvation for us.



When certain people get hold of this passage, however, they change the context from salvation to physical healing. Every time such people see the word "heal" in the Bible they assume it refers to the miracle of divine healing

for the physical body, regardless of whether the context indicates otherwise.

A number of times in Scripture the word healing have specific reference to spiritual healing. There

are diseases of the soul that have to be healed -- and the primary disease of the soul is man's unregenerate state, which is rooted in sin. The good news is that God has provided healing for this disease of the soul. And that is what Peter is talking about in 1 Peter 2:24. He is not saying that physical healing of the body is guaranteed to every believer.

Certainly, healing for the body is a benefit of Christ's death on the cross, a benefit for the church as a result of His atoning sacrifice. However, it is not -- it has never been in the history of the church -- a guarantee that God has to heal your body; He doesn't have to!

God does say He will graciously entertain our prayers. He says that if we exercise faith, and if our request is in accordance with His will, He will hear us. But He never said that the mark of true spirituality is that you would never be sick.

Some within the church will try to tell you, "God's perfect will is that you are never going to be sick." Well, I'll tell you something: there are certain lessons -- if you are honest -- that you'll admit you never would have learned unless the Lord flattened you out long enough to get your attention. Sometimes God teaches us things through our suffering.

Moreover, I must say that sometimes a person, after praying for a healing, may receive a no from God -- a benevolent no, a kindly no, a protective no maybe, but no nevertheless. Tragically, however, there are teachers -- in the Faith movement, for example -- who have the colossal gall to tell people that if they were more spiritual, if they had more faith, if they believed like they believed, they would be well. Such faulty teaching can crush whatever faith these poor people have.

Now, I believe you should go to the Lord and believe Him for healing, and trust Him for healing, and pursue Him for healing. And I believe you should search your soul to make certain there is nothing in your life standing in the way of healing. But you must come to Him and lay yourself out on His conditions. The Scripture says, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:14). If perhaps God intends to teach you something through an illness, He might not heal you immediately.

So don't think you are being neglected by the Holy Spirit if you don't get healed. Don't assume that the Lord is against you. Don't conclude that you necessarily have an absence of faith or secret sin.

Take a good look at 1 Peter 2:21: "Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps." Circle the word example in this verse. Here we are told that Jesus suffered. And He left us an example. We are to follow in His steps.

And what is the meaning of Philippians 3:10, which refers to "the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings"? Let us be clear on this: suffering is an integral part of the fact of life, and is often used by God in the development and maturation of the Christian.

The apostle Paul had a greater standing with the Lord in terms of his ministry than I have or anybody else has ever had. According to 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 Paul requested healing from the Lord three times. And three times he got an answer back: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Translation: God said no to Paul's request for healing. And God had a purpose in saying no.

Did Paul have lack of faith? Rubbish! Was Paul suffering from some secret sin that he was carrying around? Do you see how utterly absurd this is? Do you see how it plays on people's emotions and lives? Do you see how it undermines faith in the absolute authority of Scripture and transfers it

to a human being whose experience becomes the criteria?

This type of teaching eats like a cancer in the body of Christ and it must be resisted and opposed at every opportunity so that Christians will not have a cloud hanging over their heads all the time. Instead, they will realize that Jesus really does love them (despite their illness) and that any healing that may come is in His sovereign hands, not ours.

May the Lord heal us in our infirmities spiritually and physically. Amen.



*Pastor Martin  
Yee.*

## Secrets of Faith Healers

In his book **"MIRACLES OR MAGIC?"**, magician Andre Kole wrote a whole chapter on God's Healing Business. Preceding this chapter, Andre wrote about his wife's death from a brain tumor. In God's Healing Business, Andre asked why some people give dramatic testimonies about God's healing, while others are left

wondering if God even heard their prayers. He reveals that today there are a number of television evangelist/faith healers who prey on the hopes of people who are suffering. These people use trickery and deception to attract thousands of followers and millions of dollars but they also leave many people confused about how God works.

He mentions 3 particular persons and gives examples of how their deception is done. The gift of knowledge is achieved by these preachers having assistants who walk through the auditorium striking up casual conversations, or pass out cards for prayer requests. The information gathered thus is then passed to the preacher in paper slips or through a small transmitter.

The rented wheelchair method is used where people, who are slightly unsteady in their walk as they enter the auditorium, are invited by an usher to sit in a wheelchair. They are then pushed to the front and then dramatically ordered to stand up and walk. Of course they can to the rousing applause of the crowd.

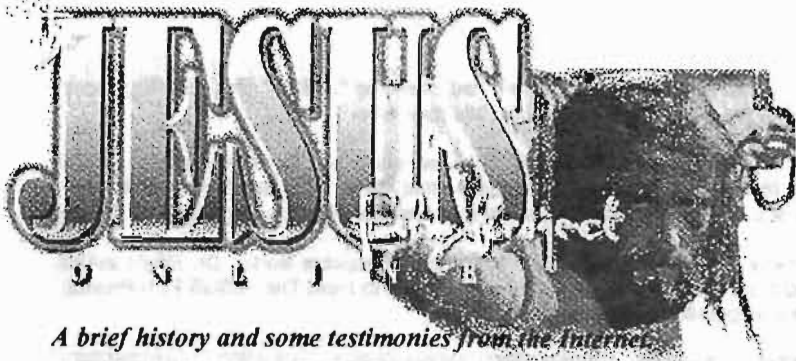


**Faith healing means that a person is relieved of symptoms or healed because of his faith.** A doctor sometimes uses the principles of faith to his advantage. He may prescribe sugar pills to help a patient believe he is getting helpful medicine. He may use suggestions like, "You should start feeling better in two days." Sometimes this really helps a person recover.

**Divine healing is God supernaturally reaching down and miraculously healing a person.** God is not required to perform in a theatrical setting. He can work anywhere. God sometimes chooses not to heal, like in the case of Joni Eareckson Tada.

Andre Kole is indeed a man who loves God. Because of his special skills as a magician, he is able to discover some of the tricks played by faith healers on innocent victims. We must realize that God can heal us regardless of our level of faith, if He chooses to. So, do not fall into the "lack of faith" trap. Read Pastor Yee's story about Paul, the apostle.

*Martin Cheah.*



Since 1950, Dr. Bill Bright, founder and president of Campus Crusade for Christ, dreamed of developing an appealing biblically accurate film about the life of Christ. He saw how the life-changing message of Jesus Christ could reach the world's millions—

### *A brief history and some testimonies from the Internet.*

especially the illiterate—with greater impact through the medium of film. A film utilizing both sight and sound to deliver the message of Christ could provide a powerful evangelistic tool that would bring the gospel message alive.

Done accurately, adhering faithfully to Scriptures—Dr. Bright foresaw a film that could be translated and re-recorded into the languages of the world.

A team of 500 scholars and leaders from a variety of secular and Christian organizations began a five-year program in the mid-1970s to determine how to best portray Jesus on the motion picture screen. The team agreed that the film must meet five important criteria:

- The film must be as archaeologically, historically and theologically accurate as humanly possible.
- The presentation must be unbiased, acceptable to all as a true depiction of Christ's life.
- The film story must appeal to all ages.
- The script must be easily translatable into virtually any language on earth.
- The film must be of theater-viewing quality, and effective with both urban and rural audiences worldwide.

In 1978, "JESUS" was produced at a cost of \$6 million, primarily funded by a businessman and long-time friend of Campus Crusade for Christ International.

John Heyman, a film producer and financier with more than 30 films to his credit, provided the driving force behind the production of "JESUS".

If you opened the Bible on your shelf to the Book of Luke right now, you would encounter the script of the film. The action and most of the words spoken by actors and narrator alike were recorded in Scripture. In the film, virtually every word spoken by Jesus is taken directly from the Gospel according to Luke.

After a six-month search and 263 screen tests, the lead role was awarded to English Shakespearean actor Brian Deacon. His portrayal of Jesus was so convincing that bystanders often broke into applause at the end of his speeches.

Before its release, the film changed the lives of many who were involved. A college dropout who worked with props on the film received Christ as Savior and Lord. A Warner Bros executive also asked Christ to come into his life after a distribution planning meeting.

Warner Brothers distributed the completed film, and "JESUS" opened in U.S. theaters in late 1979.

Within a year, millions of Americans in 2,000 theaters had seen the "JESUS" film, inspiring many decisions by viewers across the country to accept Christ into their lives.

But, as already stated, from its inception the "JESUS" film was envisioned as an evangelistic tool to be used worldwide. The film was produced to fully support that vision. The simple narrative taken straight from the Gospel of Luke made it easily adaptable for translation into any language.

To make this vision a reality, the film project needed a strong and capable leader. Dr. Bright asked Paul Eshleman, who had been involved with the film from the start, to head The JESUS Film Project. And thus, this worldwide evangelistic film ministry was born.

**TESTIMONIES FROM <http://www.jesusfilm.org/worldreports/>**

## **THAI STUDENTS SHOW "JESUS" TO TRIBAL PEOPLE**

University students from the city of Chiang Mai [chang MY], Thailand, recently conducted a summer outreach in a remote tribal area of their country. The students raised their own finances to participate.

Along with assisting a missionary in the region, the students also conducted "JESUS" film showings. Many villagers attended despite threatening thunderstorms and clouds of bugs flying into the projector. Organizers report that many viewers prayed aloud, indicating their desire to receive Christ. Project leaders were encouraged by the response, but even more by the desire of the eager students to visit other such villages with the message of Christ.

## **"JESUS" FILM VIEWER HEALED OF ASTHMA**

When the announcement came from, of all places, a Muslim mosque, that a film on the life of Jesus Christ would soon be shown, one Pakistani man attended, hoping to request healing for his asthma.

He reports that as he watched the "JESUS" film, taken directly from Luke's Gospel, Jesus seemed to be asking him, "What can I do for you?" This occurred during a scene in which a blind man is healed. The man bowed his head and prayed for healing. Instantly, he began to breathe with ease. Three months later, when film workers met with him, his asthma condition had not returned.

## **SPIRITUAL BATTLE IN BORNEO**

A ministry team went into the jungles of Borneo to show the "JESUS" film to the Iban [EE-bahn] people. On their first day there, the team encountered a negative response. That night, one ministry worker dreamed of losing a hand-to-hand battle with a host of evil spirits. As the dream went on, he called out to Jesus, then killed all the spirits.

The following morning, some people from the area told the team they wanted Jesus as their Savior! In one month alone, 763 villagers saw the "JESUS" film and 174 of them indicated decisions for Christ. Eighty-four were baptized.

## **"JESUS" FILM HELPS ACCELERATE WORLD EVANGELIZATION**

Revelation 5:9 states, "Thou...didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Many Christians see this as a description of God's work on earth today.

Mission agencies are partnering together as never before to work toward completion of the Great Commission, and increasingly, the "JESUS" film is helping them get the job done. To date, 450 agencies have taken this biblical portrayal of Luke's Gospel to more than 766 million people in 364 language versions.

# Take a Break..

## Take a Break..

The following small quiz consists of 4 questions, it tells whether you are qualified to be a professional. According to a statistics of Andersen Worldwide, around 90% of the professionals failed the exam.

### 1. How do you put a giraffe in to a refrigerator?

The correct answer is: open the refrigerator, put in the giraffe and close the door. (Simple enough?)

*This question tests whether you are doing simple things in a complicate way.*

### 2. How do you put an elephant into a refrigerator?

Wrong Answer: open the refrigerator, put in the elephant and close the refrigerator

Correct Answer: open the refrigerator, take out of the giraffe, put in the elephant and close the door.

*This tests your prudence.*

### 3. The Lion King is hosting an animal conference, all the animals attend except one. Which animal does not attend?

Correct Answer: The Elephant!  
The Elephant is in the refrigerator!  
*This tests whether you have a comprehensive thinking.*

OK, if you did not answer correctly the last three questions, this one may be your last chance to testify your qualification to be a professional.

### 4. There is a river, which is filled with crocodiles. How do you manage to pass it?

Correct Answer!: Simply swim through it. All the Crocodiles are attending the Animal Meeting!

I hope you got this one correct.

Yeo Wee Kiong

**W**elcome  
Rose Sarojini Bai.D  
Tan Chaur Jyh

## A Wonderful Family Outing

8<sup>th</sup> of November was a public holiday well spent for my family and my extended JCC family at the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

God's blessings for the family outing were obvious: The sunny weather, warm but not hot; the wide open space with ample shades and breeze from the palm trees, a large lake adding to the beauty of the scenery, etc. We could not have asked God for anything more. In fact, the undulating grounds were good enough to serve as a golf course for amateur golfers to putt around with the lake serving as a water hazard. Even though nobody brought along golf clubs and no permission was granted for use of the grounds in that manner, full advantage was taken of the facility for children to run free and adults to relax in between activities.

A mass aerobic exercise, a football game, a "Jog and Hunt" competition, a quiz for all to test their knowledge of JCC and the Reformation Day, group contests, etc. – there was no lack of enterprise in the organisers to prove that while members of JCC worked hard on normal days, they were still well energised to play hard on a holiday.



135 members participated in the family outing and many went home with prizes won in the activities serving as mementos of a wonderful time spent at the palm valley of the Singapore Botanic Gardens. As for those who did not win any prize, they still wore broad smiles - having enjoyed a great time of fellowship and fun!

For a family outing, did we break any record for attendance? Yes or no, let it be put on record our thanks to:

- God, for His abundant blessings;
- Rev. Martin Yee for lending support to the event;
- the organising committee for their hard work and
- members of JCC for turning out in force and adding warmth to the fellowship.

*John Lee*



## A Day at the Singapore Botanic Gardens

It was a lovely morning at the palm valley of the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

The palm leaves swayed gently to the breeze as more than a hundred JCC members gathered for a day of fun-filled activities and warm fellowship. We were warmly greeted by the clear azure sky. What delighted me were an assortment of activities that catered to both the young and old alike.

There was a lot of food for lunch; every family was ready to share what they had brought.

I enjoyed the session when we were tested on our understanding of JCC, her members and activities. We kept breaking into laughter when any of us answered any question incorrectly. Of course, by the end of the day, I had managed to pick up much information, which enhanced my understanding of fellow members and our activities in JCC.

We left the Gardens at about half past one. It was surely a memorable outing for me.

*Sophia Lau*  
K.I.D.S. Church

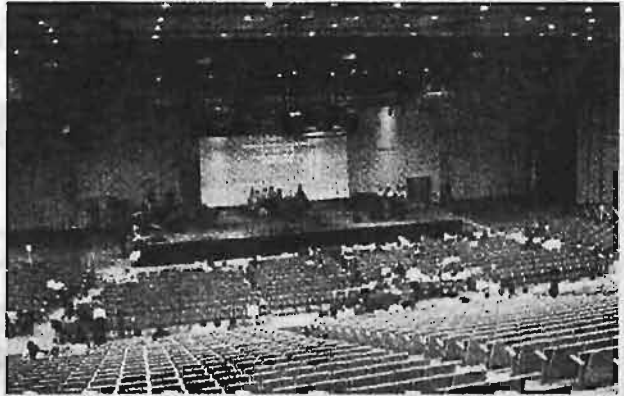




# GLORIOUS!

**ONE word captures the whole spirit of the Reformation Day combined service and celebration at the World Trade Centre on 31 Oct 99..... GLORIOUS! God's hand was certainly orchestrating the whole service.**

Even before the service started, there was excitement in the air. Simply watching the vast hall steadily fill with fellow Lutherans brought a tingling of pride - that we are part of this big family of God's followers. Right from the start the pastors leading the service lead the congregation through the programme with ease and confidence.



The interchange between Mandarin and English was done skillfully. The Procession of Clergy and the Banner Procession were grand. The slow file of clergy in their full ceremonial finery and the colourful banners were a sight to behold. We were all straining to spot our pastors and banner. Yes! We found Yew Moi, proudly bearing the Cross right in front of the procession.

Psalm 95 verses 1 and 2 say "Come, let us sing to the Lord; let us shout to the Rock of Salvation. Let us come before Him with Thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song." Roger, our Song Leader did a marvellous job of stirring the whole pavilion to joyous singing and praise. The dancers added to the vibrancy with their colourful attire and expressive dance movements. Roger's enthusiastic movements onstage were infectious. If the stage were big enough, we would have gone up to join Roger in his dance in honour of our Lord of Lord and King of Kings!

The message by Dr Steve Haggmark was simple but marked with many refreshing insights of a Christian's responsibilities.

We are called to be PRIESTS! In fact it is our duty. We all share the hope that comes from God. The suffering of the world is akin to labour pain. We all have a part to bring about the new creation. We cannot lay back and wait for the pastors to act. In our daily

acts, we need to show love. This is our vocation. The Holy Spirit plays the role of a MID-WIFE who assists with the birth. The Holy Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. Without him, the child would be still born. However, we are cautioned that we should not criticize the shape of the child born. Instead we need to ask what's God's intention in the life of the church that's born.

We have to learn to be CARELESS as God is a care-less God! How so? We must learn to give of ourselves unconditionally – to love others without a care about whether it will be reciprocated. Jesus came to die for sinners. He knew that we would not comprehend his actions but he gave himself for our salvation anyway. God's love doesn't make sense; it surpasses human understanding. We need to emulate Him. We have nothing to fear, nothing to lose. Our cup is always filled with his loving kindness. With this assurance, we can freely give and give. We have nothing to lose but the world has everything to gain. The world might label us FOOLS. But we are no simple fools, only FOOLS for CHRIST.

The message was conveyed in simple terms but revealed deep truths. I was quite stung by the bare facts of what we are called to do. We have no excuse not to be priests, whatever our station in life.

There were many wonderful presentations by the adult and children choirs, skits and a cross-talk. We couldn't help but be proud of familiar faces in the forefront of some the presentations. Joseph from the Chinese congregation was leading the Chinese Choir while Dr Bloomquist led the English. The congregation also celebrated Holy Communion together. Another part of the service, which was of special significance to JCC was the ordination of our own dear Pastor Yee.



While the adults were together in the main service, a children's programme was run in parallel. The children were treated to a magic show and other entertainment at a separate venue. The service ended with light refreshment but I believe we all received far more superior refreshment on a spiritual plane. It was indeed a GLORIOUS Reformation Service. Amen.

by Iris Lee

# LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SINGAPORE IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

## GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE PLAN

The plan will be evolved around the propagating of the shared vision amongst the congregations, strengthening the unity and cooperation of our members and fervor recruiting of new members. All these tasks must be initiated and supervised dedicatedly by all church pastors and parish workers. The collective efforts by all must be sustained throughout the five years, through proper planning and coordination by all involved.

**Sharing of Vision** - Vision sharing is the first step to success. Unless there are effective ways to disseminate and explain the vision, it is unlikely that objective of shared vision can be realized. The followings are some methods that can be explored for this purpose.

- a. Newsletters - publicizing the shared vision through a half-yearly newsletter from the LCS with specific theme in each edition. These themes should be emphasized again in the various newsletters circulated in the various churches.
- b. Poster - produce posters and brochures related to the shared vision periodically to complement the newsletters.
- c. LCS Diary incorporate the shared vision and the work plan in the yearly LCS diary.
- d. Announcement on Sunday Worship Services - Whenever possible inject the shared vision and targets of the church during sermons.

**Enhancement of Unity** - Unity is strength. However, unity does not come naturally. Deliberate activities must be created for ice breaking to promote collaboration which in turn unify our members. These activities must be jointly organized by different congregations in order to achieve maximum effectiveness.

- a. Joint Retreat - encourage and promote joint retreat. This can be achieved first through the joint retreat of Chinese and English congregations within a church to that of at least two churches in each joint retreat. This will help in enhancing the unity of church members.

- b. Joint Reformation Day Service - Can be organized in a small scale from joint service in the church to joint-church service at a later stage.
- c. LCS Family Day - Family Day can be organized as an activity to strengthen our tie as a Lutheran family.
- d. Exchange of Pulpit - This will help pastors and church members to get to know each other.

**Church Renewal** - Church renewal is of utmost importance for spiritual build up. In the absence of such renewal, the church is no more than a beautiful building that house wayward souls. Nevertheless, this aspect of growth needs the undivided attention and dedication of the Parish workers.

- a. Prayer - Organize prayer campaign periodically to promote the habit of praying collectively in the churches. Organize prayer seminar and conduct prayer training to arouse members' interest in praying. Establish prayer chain within the congregation to show the effect of praying. Organize special prayer meetings to meet members' needs.
- b. Enhancing members' biblical knowledge - Conduct Bible classes and seminar to elevate the members' knowledge in Bible. Conduct Bible competition to sustain interests.
- c. Long Term Planning for Church Ministry - Develop a long term development and growth plan for the various church ministry.
- d. Learning from other churches - Conduct study trips locally and abroad, attending seminars, conferences and revival meetings in order to improve the practice of churches in terms of evangelism and education.

**Evangelism** - One of the most common set backs in church growth is the lack of effective evangelism. Focus must be directed to this facet in our plan for the next few years. Relentless effort must be put in to organize the followings:

- a. Local church evangelism meetings - Conduct local church evangelism meeting at least once a year per church.
- b. Tracting
- c. Personal Evangelism - Conduct training to members on how personal evangelism is carried out and to use this tools to recruit new members in the "one for one" campaign.

**Leadership Training** - Resources must be channeled to the grooming of church leaders. Good leaders will attract good followers. And this is what our church needs. The church should identify suitable candidates for leadership training. They in turn can be the potential church leaders helping the church in the various ministries. The following programs must be put in place for this purpose.

- a. Pastoral Training - Identify potential leaders to attend theological training. More church workers are required in the next five years to fill the gaps in the additional three new churches and two social work centres. Therefore, in the next year or so, potential candidates must be sent for theological training. Programs will also be organized to refresh and upgrade pastors for the betterment of ministry.
- b. Church Council Training Programs - This must be organized to upgrade the knowledge and skill of the council members.
- c. Diaconate Training Programs - Members with potential must also be selected to attend this program in order to assist the church.
- d. Training for Mobilization

### **Church Planting and Social Ministry**

- a. Survey- Identify good location for three new churches and two social work centres
- b. Church Growth Seminar and Training
- c. Team Work

**Cell Group Ministry** - An effective way to increase church members. Well-planned grouping with effective leaders will go a long way in the recruitment of new members.

**Increase of Worship Services** - With increased members it is hoped that the church would be able to increase Worship Services.



## EXECUTION

It will be a multi-pronged five years plan to be accomplished in phases as follows.

- a. **Phase I (1999-2000) - The Infancy Phase** - This phase will focus on foundation laying. Much preparations need to be done to ensure the smooth build up of the church. The following are the main tasks:
  - (1) Publicize shared vision through deliberate publicity means.
  - (2) Identify potential church workers and members for grooming.
  - (3) Promote unity through church level retreats.
  - (4) Train members for evangelical work.
  - (5) Establish prayer training class and prayer class
  - (6) Conduct Bible study class.
  - (7) Recruit church workers
  - (8) Set member recruitment target at 500.
  
- b. **Phase II (2001-2002) - The Growing Phase** - This phase will be built on the foundation laid in the first two years. Apart from continuing with the momentum achieved in the first phase, the following must be carried out.
  - (1) Organize praying seminar to strengthen our faith.
  - (2) Conduct Bible seminar and competition to enhance member's biblical knowledge.
  - (3) Conduct leadership training for selected members.
  - (4) Conduct inter-churches (confine to 2) retreats to enhance unity.
  - (5) Recruit more church workers.
  - (6) Establish one new church or place of worship and one social work centre.
  - (7) Recruit another 1000 members.
  
- c. **Phase III (2003-2004) - The Consolidation Phase** - All the jobs must be completed in this two years. Effort must be put in to sustain the interest and growth created in the previous phases. The main tasks of this phase are:
  - (1) Conduct major LCS retreats encompassing members of various churches.
  - (2) Recruiting of more church workers for new churches and social

work centre.

- (3) Enhance total membership of church to 6000.
- (4) Establish two new churches and one social work centres.

In order to fulfil the requirements in the outlined plan, the collaboration of all the pastors and lay leaders are required. The following are the tasks allocated to the respective pastors, leaders or committees

- a Propagating shared vision through the production of newsletter, posters, brochure etc
- b. Enhancing members' unity by organization of joint activities
- c. Spiritual building for church renewal
- d. Evangelism
- e. Leadership Training
- f. Church Planting
- g. Social Work Ministry
- h. Increasing of Worship Services

## **BUDGET**

The treasurer will make provision in budgeting for the promotion of these activities and special projects each year.

Activities carried out within the respective churches will be self-funded.

## **CONCLUSION**

Let us accept this vision as a **"New Land"** that God is giving us in the new millennium. Though there may be people of great size and fortified cities along our way, we can declare confidently as what Caleb has said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it." Num. 13:17-30)

With the mighty power of God and His guidance, together with our dedication, unity and common resources, we shall be able to achieve our goal successfully.