

The Vine Committee Editor: Alicia Wong

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<u>Cover Photo:</u> JCC Youths at an LCS Youth Camp in Nov 2015





After more than 2 decades of faithful service, John, Editor, Dedicated and Inspirational, my JEDI master has stepped down from the MLT of The Vine.

In his place, God has provided, not one but 2 princesses and I think a new Force Awakens. In this first issue of 2016, you can read articles from both of the new team members.

I hope JCC readers will appreciate this new team as they write from their heart, maybe even revealing part of their psyche in their articles.

Perhaps some of us are familiar with this logo promising a S\$12 million jackpot for the TOTO Hong Bao Draw. Wouldn't this amount

solve all our monetary problems and also provide sufficient funds for the shortfall in the Rebuilding



Fund? Why if I win, I will give \$7 million to the Rebuilding Fund and still have \$5 million for myself. With this \$5 million, I can buy a condo, a Ferari and still have enough for a round the world tour. The question is do I need all these things or are they just temptations to drag me away from trusting in God?

Would the Father give you a snake when you ask for a fish? (read Matthew 7:10) From the very beginning, the Devil has been trying to convince mankind that God is withholding good things from us. In the  $3^{rd}$  chapter of Genesis, the Devil successfully convinces the woman that God is keeping the best fruit from her.

Furthermore, if you give \$2, you have given 100% but if you give \$7 million, you have only given 58% because you kept \$5 million for yourself. Remember the story of Ananias and Sapphira from Acts 5:1-

11? So if you ever consider placing the \$2 bet, think what would Jesus do.

Did Jesus face such a temptation? Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve." (Matthew 4) Yes, Jesus was "given" the whole world yet He chose the way of the Cross.

Sometimes we fall to this temptation thinking that \$12 million is enough but to be sure, Money, not enough!

In **Follow Your Conscience**, Frank Sonnenberg provides actionable advice on improving your relationships, strengthening your career, and finding your purpose in life. It addresses questions such as: "How do you achieve better balance in life?"

As a quick laste, here's a sample <sup></sup> Some mings money Dant Duy		
1.Respect	21.A good hair day	37.A second chance in
2.Well-adjusted kids	22.Patience	life
3.Work-life balance	23.Luck	38.Quality time with
4.Natural beauty	24.A good epitaph	your kids
5.Manners	25.Happy memories	39.Wisdom
6.Common sense	26.Time to relax	40.Happiness
7.A clear conscience	27.A strong work ethic	41.Humility
8.Purpose in life	28.A positive attitude	42.A good reputation
9.Integrity	29.A happy home	43.A 25-hour day
10.Good friends	30.Everything you may	44.Relationship with
11.A long life	want	your kids
12.Close-knit family	31.Appreciation of the	45.Youth
13.An open mind	simple things	46.Class
14.A worry-free day	32.True love	47.Justice
15.Trust	33.A new shot at a	48.A proper
16.A new beginning	missed opportunity	perspective
17.Clean arteries	34.Peace in the world	49.Selflessness
18.A great idea	35.A golden	
19.An honest politician	anniversary	
20.Peace of mind	36.Talent	

As a quick taste, here's a sample--"Some Things Money Can't Buy"

Luke 12:15

Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

Philippians 4:11

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

If you have most of the 49 things above already, you are truly blessed. You just need one more thing – Contentment.

On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January, we had a prayer walk around the vicinity of 2

Tah Ching Road. About 80 persons turned up for this prayer meeting, including Bishop Terry and Sally. We were paired into teams of fours and assigned various blocks of flats around the site of the new JCC. As I walked down the floors of my



assigned block, I realized that almost 90% of the doors were closed.



What is the message I get from this? We need to pray for open doors.

Yes we need money, but more than that, we need God. With money we can build the building but we cannot save anyone, only God can. Like building the ark, we will leave it to God to bring the people in, two by two.

Martin Cheah

# **INTRODUCING THE NEW WRITERS**

Starting January, The Vine will have two princesses (quoting Martin Cheah) joining it. I will kick off the year with a series of interviews, having the privilege to have one of the princesses here to unveil more about herself to us.

## Joyce Tan

Alicia: Why is Ps 46:10 your favourite verse?

**Joyce:** This verse comes to mind when I am feeling anxious or frustrated to get things done. It can be as simple a matter as waiting for the bus; knowing that I will be late to situations beyond my control. Being still and know that Jesus is there with me, calms my heart.

Alicia: A little background of you



**Joyce:** I transferred my church membership after I got married to Teck Chai at JCC and have been in the church since 2007. I became a Christian during my secondary days at Anglican High when I first knew about Jesus and met class-mates who brought me to church. My journey with God started through challenging times in the different phases of my life i.e. school, family, work and health.

Alicia: Would you describe yourself as a 'hot' or 'cold' person?

**Joyce:** One of my friends shared that I am a nice person but can be seen to be distant with people who do not know me well. For closer friends, I am someone who will share openly with heartfelt thoughts of matters good or bad.

Alicia: What led you into joining Vine?

**Joyce:** As I am not someone who is very expressive in sharing experiences as I need time to "warm-up", I heeded a "call" to write to share my experiences based on the knowledge I have of God a few years ago. Hoping that those who read can be encouraged by what is written as we give glory to God in all that we do. It is usually not as easy as we know.

In turn, others who are "shy" or are hesitant to talk about their Christian life can be motivated to share through writing. Together with Martin and John, we need to pray together for "The Vine". Let God through prayers take us on this journey, maybe, through various channels, share our Christian lives through writing. Yes, the pen is mightier than the sword only with the help of God. In Jesus Name I pray, Amen.

## Alicia Wong

Alicia: Thank you Joyce. I know it must be daunting to be interviewed by me. How about now is your turn to interview me? Let me start off with my favourite verse!

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." John 14:27

Alicia: As far as I can remember, I live a dangerous life. Big heavy tree branch falling right before me when I was a teen? Check. A distracted lorry driver almost



ran me over while I was crossing the road recently? Check. I know God has always been my saviour and never once was I ever afraid because I feel peace from Him. It's probably His way of making His presence known to me, telling me that I have work that is yet to be done.

**Joyce:** How did you know God and became a Christian?

Alicia: My parents are Christians so I've been fortunate enough to be brought up knowing God since young (you know how God always answers prayers of those young in faith?). Since there has never been any doubt that He is real, one night I just sat on my bed and said the sinner's prayer. Seems to me it was just a formality but I wanted to be sure God considers me as one of his own.

Joyce: A little background of you

Alicia: My hubby, Alvin, was a member of the Chinese Congregation and he returned to JCC upon our marriage. I requested to switch over to the English congregation after the church wedding conducted by Rev Chung, much to the chagrin of my Mother-in-Law who is from the Chinese section. Anyway, you might have seen him playing drums in worship though he has toned down in serving due to work commitments.

I've been writing since I was a kid, starting off with journals. Then I found my voice in blogging when I was still doing my tertiary education and I continue blogging till this day through various platforms. I think the people in Vine must be peeved when they realised I started a Children Ministry blog instead of joining them so I'm here to make amends.../wink vine

Catch us in our subsequent issues of The Vine

## WHEN THE FLOODS COME

## Genesis 7:1

The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation."

A long time ago, there was a great flood. Noah knew it was coming and upon God's command and instructions. he built an ark to house his family as well as a floating zoo. During the long years of building the ark, he must have endured long years of criticism and ridicule "Flood? What flood? You've gone crazy!" To his peers, he must be like a fool. spending years building the ark under the wide blue skies. Yet he did all that the



Lord commanded him and due to his faithfulness, Noah and his family were saved from the disaster.

Reading about Noah seized me with a sudden urgency. How do I help those I love weather the storms when they come? When they hit me, I feel horrible but when they are on the ones I love, it feels just as bad or even worse. Like some melodrama unfolding

in the television series, I would almost wish they happen to me instead.

Genesis 7:1-24 reminds me of the past storms in my life accident, betrayal, pain, sorrow...etc...These storms can strike any time, without warning. They are inevitable. It may be just a downpour or something as epic as the great flood, affecting even my family members. Saint or sinner, no one is spared unless God's grace intervenes. To prepare for the storms I must build my spiritual ark by spending time

studying the bible, building my shelter upon His foundations, bringing those I love before God in prayer.

I want to be ready for the storms when they come.



Alicia Wong

#### What I have learned from Noah

Don't miss the boat.

Don't forget that we're all in the same boat.

Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.

Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone might ask you to do something REALLY big.

Don't listen to critics, just get on with what has to be done.

Remember that the ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic was built by professionals.

Remember that woodpeckers inside are a larger threat than the storm outside.

No matter how bleak it looks, there's always a rainbow on the other side.

Has it been easy to be a Christian?

# It is not easy to be a Christian!

This thought has been hovering in my mind for quite a while and I finally mustered my courage to start writing this page through prayers for wisdom and guidance. When I "googled" this statement, "It is not easy to be a Christian", I was surprised to find so much content on this matter.

So, does this mean that Christians will always struggle with life in Christ in the world that we live in? Or does it mean that since the beginning of time God already knew that the journey of a believer in Christ would never be easy? Or is it our choice to take the path that we have decided to take living our lives as how Christ would have wanted us to? So many questions asked and there are many answers? Or is there only one answer, that Christ died for us and all we need is just faith in God and obedience to do His work for Him? Is the message so simple?

I recognize that I may not be able to share more insights into the answers required. But I do know that somewhere within us, we know that it is God that we need and Jesus is the only true God we have and believe.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through Him. Whoever believes in Him is not condemned but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son." (John 3:16 – 18)



It has not been easy for me over the past few years seeing doctors so often for checks, reviews and allaying worries, fears and keeping unreal thoughts in and out of my mind. While we look to God, brothers and sisters-in-Christ for encouragement and prayers; when we are going through work, health, family stress and challenges, it does not seem easy to stand tall as a Christian relying on God, needless to say that it is easy to pray or ask for help. Is it so difficult to pray and ask for help?

Last year, I saw two of my close friends, whose marriages ended in divorce and being there for them brought fond memories as we grew up with each other since school days. Yet, my heart and mind are heavy with saddened emotions filled with lots of questions on why this had to happen. We were happy for that moment, yet at a turn of time and events, things right in front of us changed, sometimes overnight. Do you know what I am talking about? I believe many of you do or do you? It is not an easy question to answer. Or is it?

Is there a time for everything? (Eccl 3: 1 - 15)

"There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heaven..

- ...a time to be born and a time to die,
- ...a time to plant and a time to uproot,
- ...a time to kill and a time to heal,
- ...a time to tear down and a time to build,
- ...a time to weep and a time to laugh,
- ...a time to mourn and a time to dance,
- ...a time to scatter stones and a time to gather time,
- ...a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
- ...a time to search and a time to give-up,
- ...a time to keep and a time to throw away,
- ...a time to tear and a time to mend,
- ...a time to be silent and a time to speak,
- ...a time to love and a time to hate,
- ...a time for war and a time for peace.

What does a worker gain from his toil? I have seen the burden that God has laid on men. He has made everything beautiful in His time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, find satisfaction in all his toil – this is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will endure forever, nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that men will revere Him."...

This picture below on the sunrise was taken on one of the days near Marina Boulevard. What a sight! How awesome it is.



There are always moments, whether we can comprehend or not understand; issues that stare in our face where we know that something needs to be done or not do anything at all; it is God who knows how you are feeling and what you are going through. As you and I have struggles and deep scars which will probably take time to heal, let us allow God to continue the walk with you in this journey as a Christian i.e. a journey that since the beginning of time, He already knows that it is not an easy path to take.

If there is only one set of footprints found on the sea-shore, we know that He is carrying us through when we leave our worries, fears, sadness, joys and cares into His Hands. Let's give thanks to Him! Can

you fathom the sun-set in the picture below? The world is the same now and forever. He has made it beautiful in His Time. Have faith and believe.



Has it been easy to be a Christian? Of course not.

It is not easy to be a Christian! Definitely not.

It is worth it to be a Christian? YES! Why not?

## Joyce Tan

# WOULD YOU DO IT?

In Survivor Games, the players are sent on a survival trip, where they are to live for a few days with limited supplies. In the final episode, Bear Grylls asked each guest on the show to urinate in a plastic bottle, and then drink their urine the following day.

While many artists struggled with the task, Michael Tse (HK Actor famous for "Laughing Sir") appeared relatively calm when he drank his own urine. He drank it all in one sitting.

Asking for his thoughts about drinking his own urine, Michael said, "The smell was horrible, but once I knew it



was my own, I didn't find it all that difficult to get through. I didn't do much pondering; I drank it quickly to get it over with."

What was his motivation? I am sure he was not compelled to do it. I can only guess that it was either for fame or for money.

# May Our Lord Jesus Bless every JCCian with a Happy and Fruitful 2016

Time flies without ourselves realising it. Five years have already gone by since I had my heart bypass surgery in late 2010. After the surgery, I have been feeling much better. I give thanks to our God and Lord Jesus for graciously taking care of my health these years.



With God's blessings, I was able to travel alone and peacefully to Osaka and Kyoto in October 2015. Besides, He also enabled me to take my mother on a short trip to Malaysia with a two-night's stay at Avani resort in Sepang. It gave me pleasure that my mother, despite her age and limited mobility, had this opportunity for a relaxed holiday.

During our 2014 and 2015 church rebuilding fundraising activities, our God and Lord Jesus opened my eyes to how gracious and generous He is in response to our seeking by faith for the amount we need. I found it spiritually encouraging to see our leaders and brethren from the English, Youth and Chinese sections of the congregation working hard together for the common goal and for His glory.

Stepping into a new year, 2016, is a time for my reflections on God's goodness to us individually and as a church.

I give thanks to God for all blessings, and pray that He will continue to extend us His generous grace as we also continue to deepen our faith in Him for years to come.

Amen!

Nick Wong

# **A Question of Time in Genesis 1**



**Bible** means a collection of books. It is not a single book. We know that there are 66 books in the collection – from Genesis to Revelation. When we have the Bible in hand, we actually have a library with an assortment of subjects such as

Revelation, History, Prophecy and Poetry.

We can say that Genesis 1 is a record of history; more precisely, the history of the universe from God's perspective. It is not like the history of the World Wars from man's perspective. The Creation of the heaven and the earth was not something within man's direct watch or involvement. Genesis 1 is seriously about revelation – God revealing what man could not have knowledge of.

Now, if you read a book of poetry, you may appreciate man's creation of beauty in words; if you read on the subject of human recorded history, you may have a mind to be culturally literate about ancient times. Each type of material has its place to inform, instruct and improve ourselves, provided we do not misread it. If we misread a book of poetry as something else and thereby give a literal interpretation to the quirky language, we may end up befuddled or even misguided. When reading Genesis 1, be very clear that we cannot read it like reading an ordinary history book. It is a special history book – a record of God's revelation which we read with understanding to accept by faith.

God is omniscient; we are not. We cannot assume superiority to know everything that God knows or to comprehend intellectually everything that God reveals in His Word. If we set off reading Genesis 1 with the wrong idea, we will get nowhere and gain nothing before we decide to give up.

Similarly, we have to accept by faith other revelations in Genesis, especially the first 11 chapters and elsewhere in the Bible on things that man would be

unable to know by simple application of his intellect. Man would be so much poorer spiritually if he simply trusts his limited intellect to apprehend the universe, to the total exclusion of the power of faith that is integral to the fullness of his being.

#### From the starting block

The word "Genesis" means "Beginning"; and it is just proper that the Genesis 1 revelation on the beginning of the universe and of mankind is right at the

beginning of the Bible. Opening the Bible to its first page, we commence our journey from the starting block – from the beginning of time when the universe was void and "darkness was upon the face of the deep."



We perceive the beauty of God's creation in the beginning – not in the least, the Garden of Eden. Then, we perceive how man's problem started to form when something happened with Adam and Eve. As we continue our journey of discovery from Genesis 1 to Exodus and beyond all the way to Revelation, we can see that the relationship between God and Man is told like a lengthy serial drama dished out in 66 parts with sub-episodes of twists and turns in Man's wobbly spirituality. We can also see God's (our loving Father's) efforts borne out of His unremitting love for His children. The unfolding of the drama has its starting block in Genesis. Until and unless we follow the drama from its beginning and devotedly through every part of the serial, we may only have a disjointed perception of the whole, whole story, seeing it as "no head, no tail". However, if we devotedly follow the serial through every part without fail, we will appreciate more coherently the history that has flowed into the past and yearn to know what is to come in the story's progression towards the eternal future.

If you have already missed out on some episodes of this serial drama containing The Story of Mankind (as revealed by God), we are now freshly at the beginning of a new year. Thankfully, you can rewind the tape and start "watching" from the beginning – Genesis 1.

## Defining a metre

A metre is a measure of length. It is precisely defined scientifically as equal to the distance travelled by light in a vacuum in  $\frac{1}{299,792,458}$  second. We can comprehend the kilometre, centimetre, millimetre, ... nanometre... and so forth. It is not sufficient to simply say that a kilometre is 1000 times a metre, or a centimetre is one-hundredth of a metre, if we do not know what a metre is. With the concept of a metre clear, it becomes the base unit that all other measures of length bear reference to.

Do we similarly have a need to define the concept of "a day" precisely as a base unit of time? If so, what can we use as the base?

DAY

<u>Defining a day</u>

Unlike the metre, the day referenced as twice the duration between sunrise and sunset does not have a precise scientific definition. It is

amorphous, subject to the vagaries of the seasons and geographical locations. If you are at the North Pole, the period from early October to the dawn in March might count as "a day" for you if you follow the sunrise-sunset standard of measure.

According to the Lunar calendar,  $8^{\text{\tiny the}}$  Feb 2016 – 27<sup> $\text{\tiny the}$ </sup> Jan 2017 is a period of one year, which is shorter in duration than the corresponding one year in the Gregorian calendar. Therefore, a concept of one day in the lunar calendar is different from that in the Gregorian calendar. Multitudes of calendars of different cultures represent wide variations in the concepts of time.

 $E=mc^2$ , which is Einstein's formula of relativity, shows another concept of time – as a function of the speed of light. There is yet another concept of time called "atomic time".

In the United States alone, there are four different standards of time: Eastern Standard Time, Central Standard Time, Mountain Standard Time and Pacific Standard Time. Add to this the GMT, "Daylight Saving Time" and the practice

of countries to adjust the time to fit preferred time zones and we can get a feel of how man's model of time measure is never consistent.

Without a scientific definition of time as precise as the definition of a metre, it is "free for all" to form their own concepts of how long a day is, subject to adjustments from time to time. By our calendar, it was 1/365 of a year last year, and is taken to be 1/366 of a year this year.

### Concept of time in Genesis

Genesis 1 gives us an account of God creating the heavens and the earth.

<u>"By the seventh day</u> God had finished the work he had been doing; so <u>on the</u> <u>seventh day</u> he rested from all his work. Then <u>God blessed the seventh day</u> and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that

he had done." – Gen. 2:1-3

There is no difficulty in understanding that God completed His creation in all of six days, and He rested on the seventh day. Yet, the question must come: What does it mean by "a day"?

Can we call it G.S.T. (God's Standard Time) in the context of the Creation period, with one day like a thousand years? (Ps 90:4)



God did His creation in six episodes, each covering a space of time that is described as a day. However, nowhere is there any suggestion that the space of "a day" was measured against the space between sunrise and sunset as we know today.

The first day of Creation started with "darkness over the surface of the deep." (Gen. 1:1) There was no sun (or sunrise) to mark the start of that first day. The Earth's spin on its axis and revolution around the sun could not be a

starting reference point in the counting of each day when the Creation was in stages of being formed.

### **Understanding Genesis**

Aristotle said:

## "Time is the most unknown of all unknown things."

### "Time is a measure of motion. All things in time measure all the time."

The amorphous nature of time in human comprehension betrays man's limited grasp of time and its measure. It makes it



easy for us to conceive that man-made calendars in use today do not follow the concept of time in the Genesis narrative.

In fact, in the beginning (Gen. 1:1) when Man had not yet appeared, time according to Man's concept was non-existent. Time first appeared for counting when the "day" and the "night" were pronounced by God in Gen. 1:5 – "the first day." (NOTE: Time was first pronounced by God, not by Man!)

God, being "the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Rev. 22:13) was the initiator (Creator) of time according to His own characterization of it rather than by the description of it according to the later concept of Man. God's time from the beginning will extend to its ending in the future and no one but the Almighty (the Omega) Himself will be the sovereign determiner of the end by His own measure – not by Man's concepts.



We cannot understand Genesis properly if we attempt to affix our present-day concepts of time onto the calendar of the creation narrative.

In gist, my conclusion is that in the Genesis narrative, the space of time in the whole creation work (until God rested) divided by 6 is the basis of "a day". The basis of "a day" in our modern human concepts is irrelevant to the concept of "a day" in Genesis. We may never truly know how that "one day" in Genesis compares with our modern concepts of "a day". If it is relevant for us to know, God will let us know. If not, we can still go about appreciating the spirit of the Genesis creation story without any loss.

John Lee



## Happily Reunited... In GOD we Trust..

One day before the eve of Christmas, my father-in-law, Mr Teo Chye Seng suddenly went missing. He went missing on the morning of December 23<sup>rd</sup> in Clementi Town and was finally found at Paya Lebar Police Station late in the evening of December 24<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Our Thanks and Lessons learnt**

#### United us as a family

As my wife Susan, my mother-in-law, my elder and younger brothers-in-law and their families are all Christians, we prayed to our loving Father in Heaven for mercy and grace as we mounted the search for my missing father-in-law.

#### In GOD we trust.

My mother-in-law's faith and trust in GOD greatly impressed us and strengthen our kindergarten faith with a quantum leap to trust God regardless of the circumstances.

#### Thanks for caring friends

I cannot express how much we appreciate Patrick and Samantha, who assisted in the search for my father-in-law. They reflect the care like Jesus cares for me.



#### All is calm God answered

prayers for my missing Father-in-law when he was found on December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve, at 9:30pm. What a great relief and

Peace and Joy we received this Christmas. Indeed it was a  $\Xi \varpi \phi$  silent night for us as a household of the FAITH.

#### TONY KOH

our



# THAI MISSIONARY WRITES....

(an extract from a letter by *Rosanna Hutagalung*, missionary sent by BLC) email: rosanna@blc.org.sg

In October 2015 ten of our youths went to Ubon Ratchathani for the Impulse camp organized by the District 4 church. The camp prepared youths especially youth leaders to rise up and serve in the various youth ministries. Praise God that our youths who went to this camp are now faithfully serving in church.

I had the opportunity to go to Ubon to celebrate the Nong Cheak church dedication. I also went to Chiangrai to witness the Baan Rai Pattana church dedication. It was a beautiful church dedication with 500 people attending. The church serves as a



learning center for seminars for the various other Akha Lutheran churches in Chiangrai.

In November, I attended 2 camps, the LMT camp in Pathum Thani and the ELCT camp in Lat Krabang for co-workers. One of the highlights of the 3 days ELCT camp was the Sports Day. I participated in almost all the games forgetting that I am halfway to 60. Oh yes, I paid the price as the next couple of days, I could not walk properly. But it was such a joy playing and laughing with the co-workers.

Good News Baptist Church from Singapore came to conduct a week long English camp in 2 schools in Beungkan. Robin Hon and his brother, Ps Hon of GNBC church led the volunteers. 19 youths mostly undergraduates came not only to conduct the camp but also to visit, share God's Word, encourage, sing Christmas carols and join in both Nonghan and Beungkan Christmas celebrations.

We had our Christmas celebration in 3 places, in Beungkan, Nonghan and Ban Chiang. We had 2 baptisms on Christmas day in Nonghan and a couple

of others received Jesus as their Savior during the Christmas night celebration both in Nonghan and Beungkan churches. We also had a Thanksgiving service on 31st December and many of our members opened up their houses for thanksgiving dinners.

We have a number of church members in Ban Chiang and our plans to open up a preaching place there will materialize on 19th of February 2016. Ban Chiang preaching station will be officially opened. Both Ps Boonma and I will take turns to conduct worship and Bible studies.

A couple, Khun Ae and Khun Tip are preparing themselves to go study in LST this June. After the first term, they will return and do their field education in Ban Chiang. Khun Ae had cancer and when his parents prayed for him, Khun Ae was healed miraculously.

I have started a bi-monthly English program in Beungkan since October last year. I travel to Beungkan on the 1st and 2nd Sunday of every month and after worship service and lunch, we have our classes. 20 children from the neighborhood, mostly non-Christian and some church member's children attend this 3 hours session. Praise God for the attentiveness and willingness of the children to learn. One of the children and her mother received Christ last month.

Prayers:

- 1. Ban Chiang preaching station that the surrounding neighborhood will hear of Jesus Christ. Strength for Ps Boonma and myself as we minister there.
- 2. For Bungkha church. Pray for Ps Chaichana and his wife for the Lord's comfort and healing to be with them. Ps Chaichana recently underwent an operation on his intestine.
- 3. Strength for Ps Boonma and Ps Tassapon as they minister regularly. For the Lord's blessing to be upon them.
- 4. Physical strength and good health for myself as I continue to serve Him here.
- 5. Pray for warm weather as the temperatures have dipped to 10 deg. C. Thank God for the warm fleece jackets Linda Oon from Bedok Church donated to the church members here in Nonghan, Beungkan and Bungkha.

Most of all thank you for not forgetting us in your prayers. God be praised and He is glorified in your prayers for Thailand.

Rosanna Hutagalung

