

THE WINEPRESS

O taste and see that God is good



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GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

PRAYER FOCUS FOR JULY

- Revival and Awakening of Christians, including JCCians, as they set aside time regularly to seek God fervently.
- 40.Day 2021 – 40 days of Fast & Prayer nationwide from July 1 to August 9.
- Goshen Initiative: Opening of doors for Goshen bridges to be built.
- David and Goliath Preschool (DGP): Registration from residents; God's blessings upon the DGP Committee, Principal and staff that they have wisdom and perseverance in managing the transition from Kindergarten to Childcare.
- Taman Jurong: Salvation for all. People to be set free from unhealthy addictions and to experience the Peace of Christ in their hearts.

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Goshen Initiative (GI): G47



THE GOSHEN INITIATIVE

BY REV ANTHONY LOH

We are in the Pentecost season, a reminder that the Holy Spirit is with us to guide us in our whole journey of life.

I thank God for the successful AGM on May 30. Please pray for our councilmen who have been elected to lead the church in fulfilling her mission.

The renovation for our David & Goliath Preschool is in progress. God has guided us to undertake the strategic transformation from our kindergarten operation to the provision of childcare services. This is one of the church's ministries. We are always conscious of the need to keep our service offerings relevant to the changing expectations of parents and the challenges of the current preschool landscape. We have been publicising the David & Goliath Preschool to the public, especially to our neighbourhood community. We have received much valuable advice from JCCians, and we also appreciate the tangible support in various ways. Justin Tay, Chairman of our Pre-school's Management Committee, says,



"We are on a constant lookout for individuals who are passionate about the ministry and are strong in the areas like administration, finance, human resources, education, communications and branding. You may reach out to us if you feel the call to serve in any of these areas."

Some of you have responded to ensure that our neighbours get to know our Preschool. Let's continue to pray for the David & Goliath Preschool – a ministry that belongs to all of us.

CAN WE STILL BE A BLESSING IN PANDEMIC TIME?

Can we still be a blessing to one another and the community in this pandemic time?

I hear a whispering voice: "Oh, let's wait for Covid-19 to die down, to slow down before we can do something."

Stresses of Covid-19 are faced by all. It's good for us to take stock of our life and our spiritual condition as we adapt to the new normal and realign ourselves according to God's purposes in evolving circumstances.

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THE GOSHEN INITIATIVE

Blessed to be a blessing is our continuing desire. Hence, we are forging ahead with the Goshen Initiative; in short, G47.

There are a few points we know about Goshen from Genesis 47:

- It was a place in Egypt.
- It was a place of plenty and comfort.
- It was the best of the land where Joseph settled his father and brothers after their long years of separation. (Gen 47:6, 11)
- In Goshen, the Israelites “were fruitful and increased greatly in number.” (Gen 47:27)

Pharaoh did not despise him, but instead gave his family the best part of the land (i.e., Goshen).

The word “Goshen” also means “approaching, drawing near.” As we approach the Goshen Initiative, we are minded to draw near to God because it is not by our might, nor by our power, but by His Spirit that we can experience His blessings even in difficult times – blessings we share as we are motivated by God’s love to go out and proclaim the wonderful name of Jesus.

As a severe famine raged in Egypt and Canaan (Gen 47:13-15), Joseph became a channel of God’s blessings to save the people from starvation. God blessed Pharaoh because he was kind to the



Club Allegra (Kids -12)
 - Carnival Day (quarterly)
 - Reading programme
 - Sporting activities
 - Tuition

Social Living
 - Elder-fun/Care Corner
 - Friendship Corner
 - Kampong Spirit

Skilling
 - Special Interest Groups
 - Upskilling Workshops
 - Professional networking

Counselling/Coaching
 - Hearing Ears
 - Career Guidance
 - Ministry

Giving & Receiving
 - Free 2nd hand goodies
 - Barang2exchange
 - Errand help
 - Food fare/Distribution

Goshen testifies of God’s provision and blessings. It evidences God calling His people and setting them apart. It tells of restoration, protection, healing, and the multiplying of God’s people as blessings received became blessings shared.

Through the **GOSHEN** Initiative, God is calling us: **GO!** Shout out **H**is **E**xcellent **N**ame.

When Joseph introduced his father (Jacob) to Pharaoh (Gen 47:1-12), Jacob acknowledged that he had been living a troubled life for many years.

Israelites. In Goshen, the Israelites also thrived.

The story of Joseph is not just about one man who held no ill-will towards his brothers who had once ill-treated him. Joseph exemplified the measure of a great man of God. The spiritual message is about how God uses a humble man to fulfill His providence for a nation of His people to be raised in an alien land (Goshen) in preparation for their welcoming into the land of Promise (Canaan).

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The Goshen Initiative is about claiming God's Providence:

- as a people set apart for God,
- to support the needy in restoration or healing,
- praying for God's protection upon all,
- offering hope amid a crisis,
- and pursuing the Great Commission for the multiplication of God's people.

BUILDING THE GOSHEN BRIDGES

How can we **GO!** Shout out **His Excellent Name** in our effort to reach out to the community with love?

We can build the Goshen Bridges – different links to the community through which differentiated services are provided to cater to different needs.

Are we ready to position ourselves for the parts we can play in the overall Goshen Initiative to draw people into the warmth of JCC as a place of comfort where they experience God's love because we are experiencing the same and sharing it? There are small roles that you can explore with the Goshen Initiative team – like helping out in a reading program for children, be back-up support for one event, etc. You can start by paying a visit to

botspice.com/GOSHEN/InternalSurvey

JOIN THE GOSHEN INITIATIVE NOW!

Jacob and his family experienced physical and spiritual succor in times of famine. The famine crisis did not stop all blessings in their tracks. So, will the Covid-19 pandemic now stop the Goshen Initiative from building lives? Do I still hear the whispering voice: "Oh, let's wait for Covid-19 to die down, to slow down before we can do something"?

All of us can respond positively to the Goshen Initiative which is a corporate effort for us to be united in sharing the tangible love of Jesus to our loved ones, our friends, our neighbours, our schoolmates and to the community as God opens doors for us in this pandemic situation.

The Goshen Initiative is not about an activity. It is about placing a heart for God first, and approaching Him for restoring us back to Him, for healing of our lives and in turn going out to share our blessings.

God has not forgotten you. He wants to bless you and empower you to be a blessing!

MY JOURNEY TO GOSHEN

BY PEGGY TAN

Many in JCC already know me as I have been with JCC for over 30 years, since the 1980s. I joined JCC with my husband, John Lee, after my first son, Benedict Lee, was born. After that, my two other sons, Ian Lee and Shawn Lee came along.

Prior to my marriage, I worshipped in a Charismatic Church. Hence, initially I faced a bit of striving to get used to the Lutheran style of liturgical worship. I am glad that with the warm fellowship and support of fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, including the Jurong West CG, I have been well-supported in fulfilling God's calling for me to serve in various ministries and grow myself spiritually in this wonderful church.

I am a cheerful and easy-going type of person. I suppose that God blesses me with this type of personality to minister among children (in Sunday School) and among the elderly folk (in the Dialect

ministry).

Joining the little ones in singing songs and telling Bible stories; fellowshipping and sharing God's love

with the elderly dialect folk; all these I enjoy. I feel very much blessed by the joyfulness and affection from those I serve.

God has given me a husband who has a different personality that complements in the overall divine purpose of having us serving the Lord in different ministries according to our different talents. I am glad to have his encouragement and support for my work in the ministries, including the Outreach Ministry.

I came to be involved in the outreach team years

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ago when Richard Lee, then HOM, invited me to join. Later, by God's will, the HOM baton was handed over to me. I look back with wonder at how things work out with God's invisible hand leading. Despite the challenging nature of the outreach work, especially relating with individuals with "seasoned" worldview, the opportunity I have of serving the pre-believer folk gives me the same joy I feel when serving in the dialect ministry.

With the onslaught of the Covid pandemic last year, with the setting up of the S3P to meet physical needs and the planning for the David & Goliath Preschool (bridges to the community), the stakeholders (Council, Outreach MLT, etc.) in the course of discussions sensed the urgency of the time to strengthen the church's outreach thrust. Hence, the Goshen Initiative came about.

I remember that on 12 July 2020, while the group of intercessors were praying at the sanctuary, one

of them saw the vision of a food distribution in the Taman Jurong community. On 1 Nov 2020, while praying, the image came up of the whole sanctuary becoming a home for strangers, homeless people, injured people with bandages – pews replaced by couches.

I am involved in the Goshen Initiative (G47) because it is parked under the Outreach Ministry.

G47 reminds us of Goshen in Genesis 47, a place where help is provided to people in need. JCC is positioning herself to be a place like Goshen "to be a channel of blessing, protection and provision for the community around us, for people to experience Jesus' love and grace."

By God's leading, after much prayer, I have accepted JCC's offer of a role in G47 as a part-time staff. Pray with me for this as we look forward to greater things from the Lord.



REFLECTIONS ON THE GIRL'S BRIGADE – 1982-2008

BY MICHELLE ONG

John 15:16 "You did not choose me, but I chose you".

How real is God's Word living and active in the Girls' Brigade (GB) Ministry in JCC? I had the opportunity to know Jesus through my involvement in GB by teaching drill. How so? I did not know Jesus but through listening to the GB

devotions, attending church and reading God's Word, He revealed Himself to me.

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword."

How GB started was a miracle that no man can fathom. One can only acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit. It was started with no plans, no volunteers, no recruitment drive and no experience in running a GB Company in JCC.

In 1982, 28th Boys Brigade (BB) Company was recruiting members. Lo and behold at least 30 girls signed up to join the BB. How did 30 girls respond thinking that BB was for girls? With at least 30 girls amongst the boys, the Church Pastoral and Leadership team together with the

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Michelle Ong is seated, right.

BB Company took the leap of faith and started the 17th GB Company with no knowledge whatsoever among those who took up the call to serve in this ministry.

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

Mark 10:27 "With people it is

impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God".

Our first Captain, Mrs. Christian Daniel (Pastor Michael's mother), a housewife in her 50s had zero knowledge of GB but was a woman who sought after God, faithful in prayer and depending on God's wisdom and strength to lead a group of 30 girls and a few officers. What I did was just teaching drills, I was only 17 years of age then. I remember Mrs Daniel attending the women's prayer meeting every Friday night and Mr Daniel waiting in Church to bring her home. I will never forget our first Captain's meeting at GB office. Mrs Daniel did not know the way so we took a long bus journey to reach there. As we were walking her slipper broke and we walked all the way with her broken slipper. Our successive Captains - Mrs Molly Chua (previously a missionary), Mrs Sally Kee (Bishop Terry Kee's wife) and Ms Teng Ting

Ching (previously a missionary) - had one thing in common. They all started with zero knowledge in running a GB ministry but bore the same trademark of being a servant of God who acknowledges that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Great Captain. God is looking for servants who are available and have surrendered their will to God's will.

2 Cor 12:9 says "My power is made perfect in weakness."

How true and a testimony of God's wonderful work in the GB ministry. Leadership isn't about making one's own name known, it is about making God's name known by sharing the Good News and God's love for us to all mankind. Through GB, we have borne many fruits, as leaders from our own girls rose to be Captains: Miss Yap Mei Yah, Ms Lee Li Khim and Miss Chng Sook Hwee (currently serving in the BB) and Ms Sim Soo Wei (now serving full time in another Church).

With God's providence we expanded to start a Junior 51st GB Company and 9th GB Company. Although JCC is a small congregation, we have almost 20 officers and helpers to serve in these 3 Companies. How is it possible as everyone is busy with work demands and family commitments? And serving in this ministry is committing every Saturday to GB for years. It is only possible with God.

I was so blessed to be part of the GB ministry. God revealed to me countless miracles. I enjoyed God's presence, peace and promises in His Word. It is through the GB ministry that God revealed His faithfulness to me as my beloved Father and *"He will never leave me nor forsake me."* Hebrews 13:5





REFLECTION AND INSIGHT ON DIALECT MINISTRY

BY DEACON PETER CHEONG



My connection with Jurong Christian Church went way back to 1970 when my family relocated from Bukit Panjang Village to Taman Jurong, then known as Jurong Industrial Estate. The estate was essentially a boring nondescript, small industrial town with little amenities besides the noticeable pirate taxis aka “pah-ong-chia” congregating at a specific coffee shop near the market cum hawker centre.

I signed up for Tae-kwon-do class at the Jurong Civic Centre, not realizing then that it was actually a church premises. In late 1979 I began attending the church Sunday services and some years later was involved in setting up the dialect outreach work. As I reflect, I could only say that this small community church had since transformed into a larger community church by the grace of God and many lives were touched over the years.

The Dialect Ministry, a people-centred and life-transforming outreach work, sprouted up and blossomed slowly from a tiny seed sown by faith as early as 1998/99. It is still active and vibrant today. Thank God for infusing this ministry with a life that all who joined in the dialect worship and fellowship over the years could experience the special family bonding as one body in Christ.

Here is a brief reflection of the development of the Dialect Ministry in JCC:

1998/1999

The seed of the Dialect Ministry was sown in 1998/99 when about 10 adult members from the English Congregation of JCC took an interest to visit the Salvation Army Old Folks Home at Upper Bukit Timah Road (current site of Trinity Bible

College). Once monthly, after Sunday Service, they would bring snacks and home-made pastry for afternoon tea fellowship, present dialect Christian songs and share God’s Word and testimony in Hokkien with translation into Cantonese.

The six months of simple outreach effort proved to be an enriching experience. It ignited a spark of passion among this compassionate group of men and women and they soon felt the burden to expand resources to reach out to their own pre-believing parents and relatives.

As the precious seed of the Ministry was being nurtured, Bethel Care Group also extended their CNY and Christmas celebration gatherings and retreats to intentionally include their aging parents as an outreach opportunity, with potluck meals and occasionally engaging dialect speakers to give short sharing/testimony.

Sometime later, members brought their dialect-speaking parents and relatives to the monthly Saturday afternoon hi-tea session at Orchid Country Club, an outreach program hosted by Yishun Christian Church (Lutheran). 12 participants from JCC also joined their church Sunday worship and simple fellowship meal at the end of the worship service.



Tinggi) providing valuable opportunity to engage the dialect speaking participants to share the good news.

2005-2006 (CHURCH ENDORSED DIALECT MINISTRY)

The blossoming outreach effort of this small

2002-2004 (FORMATION OF DIALECT WORK TEAM)

In 2002, church members who were involved in the outreach and several concerned members from Bethel Care Group came together to form a small dialect work team to plan a fellowship/outreach program - with ad hoc activities such as lunch/tea-fellowship on CNY, Easter, Mid-Autumn and Christmas, including quarterly small group outing to places of interest. Dialect speakers would be invited to share Christian messages. The first dialect outreach fellowship lunch held at Yunnan Chinese Garden Restaurant on Sat 4 Apr 2003 saw 30 parents, relatives and team members gathered to listen to guest speaker Rev James Lim Choon Liang.

The positive outcomes further fuelled the burning passion of this team such that a dialect fellowship program was intentionally included in JCC Annual Retreats of 2004 (Port Dickson) and 2005 (Kota

dialect team was well received by the congregation at large, whose affirmative response led the Church Council (English section) to support the formal setting up of the Dialect Ministry in June/July 2005. Twenty loving members stepped forward to form the Dialect Ministry Team, which held its inaugural meeting on 19th June 2005 to plan and set the program with a mission **“to reach out to dialect speaking pre-believers, especially parents, relatives and friends of congregation members and to win them for the Kingdom of God.”**

An initial program of activities for a 7-month period (Sep 05 – Apr 06) was launched after a survey to find out the needs/interests of their dialect-speaking parents/relatives/friends. By the following month, the proposed plan and program was accepted by the English Council and the Dialect Ministry was officially endorsed as one of



the Church's outreach ministries. With that, the dialect gospel song practice became a regular feature as the core team and musicians routinely stayed back in church sanctuary after lunch for practice.

2008-2010 (LAUNCH OF DIALECT WORSHIP SERVICE)

The desire and burden to initiate a dialect worship service in the church came through when Rev William Chang was reassigned to JCC as pastor in-charge in 2008. With Rev Chang's encouragement and help from Yishun Christian Church (Lutheran) dialect worship team, we were able to start dialect worship service on Sunday 3 March 2008.

anniversary and 13 years of Dialect Service in March 2021. We look with immense gratitude to God for His grace and manifold blessings over the past years. God has chosen ordinary English educated "potatoes eaters" - non-dialect speaking bunch of faithful men and women - to sow the gospel seed to dialect-speaking people aka "sweet potatoes eaters". How these humble and faithful servants diligently tilled the soil and cultivated the germinating seed for the harvest to come ... for the joy and hope awaiting them.

It had been said that dialect-speaking group in Singapore will decline over time as the Pioneer and Merdeka generations gradually diminish. On the contrary, Singaporeans' life span as reported by WHO is one of the longest in the world averaging 84 years or more. Would dialect speakers still have



In May 2014, a Parents Appreciation outreach at Yunnan Garden Restaurant was very well attended with over 300 guests and helpers. The speaker was Rev Emily Tan and it was a joy to see a number of people committing their life to Christ.

In Oct 2009, Brother Teo Swee Hai joined as a parish worker in-charge of dialect ministry. Rev Chang was reassigned to LWF in early 2010 and brother Swee Hai left 6 months later. In Nov 2011, Brother Peter Cheong, was appointed as Deacon in Jurong Christian Church overseeing the dialect ministry. Over the years, the dialect worship ministry has grown and continued to flourish with God's blessing.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Dialect Ministry celebrated its 15th

a church to go to for worship or have a chance to hear the gospel preached to them?

The call for Singapore to be the Antioch of Asia is a challenge for the dialect speaking Christian workers to rise up and be ready to serve the many still unreached dialect speaking people/natives around our neighbouring shores, including Indonesia, Thailand and China. Hence, I see many more years of harvesting for the dialect gospel work within and outside Singapore, as the Lord continue to lead and use His servants for His glory and purpose.



CREMATION

BY JOHN LEE

Doing a Google search, you may easily feel inundated by a lot of views. At <https://tinyurl.com/4v7k6crz>, you can find the views of 8 religions. Overwhelming?

Let us not be distracted but focus attention on the Christian perspectives. Individuals may hold different views, but all can accept the civility motto of "Agreeing to Disagree."

I would like to begin by highlighting two Bible verses:

- "Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you." (Deuteronomy 4:2)
- "Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar." (Proverbs 30:6)

Since there is no biblical injunction against cremation, I shall not add any statement that God prohibits cremation.

AN ACT OF DESECRATION?

Supports for burial are mainly based on the belief in the resurrection of the body, the temple of the Holy Spirit, which one is obligated to take care of and honour.

The claim of desecration does not hold water:

- A house must be kept in habitable condition according to its use as a dwelling place. The same idea applies to the body as a temple where the Spirit is resident. However, when the person dies, the Spirit is no longer resident. Buried or cremated, the dust simply returns to the earth where it came from as the breath of life goes back to God. ([Genesis 3:19](#); [Ecclesiastes 12:7](#) GNB)
- Revelations 20:13 says, "The sea gave up the dead that were in it..."

TLSB comments: "Those whose bodies were lost at sea or burned are not excluded from the final resurrection and glorification of the body, since God will miraculously call forth these people as well."

This means that cremation does not affect one's eternal destiny.

- Even the Orthodox Church, a strong advocate of burial, does not condemn cremation outright (tinyurl.com/48psuf9w).
- Here is further assurance of one's eternal destiny notwithstanding the physical state of the body:

"But even though the body has been all quite ground up to powder by some severe accident, or by the

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ruthlessness of enemies, and though it has been so diligently scattered to the winds, or into the water, that there is no trace of it left, yet it shall not be beyond the omnipotence of the Creator—no, not a hair of its head shall perish.” – St Augustine, “The City of God”

RESPECTING THE CONTEXTS

Cremation was also carried out in ancient Israel:

1. The bodies of Saul and his sons were burnt. ([1 Samuel 31:12](#))

TLSB – “Unusual because cremation was not ordinarily practiced in Israel. Perhaps the bodies were extremely mutilated or decomposed, or perhaps this was a means to prevent further indignities.”

2. Amos 6:9-10 mentions the burning of the dead, most likely for hygiene reasons.

Clearly, cremation was not always an unacceptable act that would attract God’s punishment although death by burning was itself a punitive action at times. ([Genesis 38:24](#); [Leviticus 20:14](#))

And it shall come to pass that if there remain ten men in one house, they shall die [by the pestilence that comes with war]. And then a man’s uncle or kinsman, he who is to make a burning to cremate and dispose [of his pestilence-infected body] - Amos 6:9-10, Amplified Bible, Classic Edition)

Things done in ancient times with approval or disapproval, for isolated reasons or as a regular custom, must be regarded with contextual awareness and not be mindlessly added to God’s Word as God’s inalienable mandates or injunctions.

We don’t follow a practice just for the sake of authentic emulation:

- One might latch onto the scriptural account of the burial of Christ Himself to support emulation. To be sure, there is nothing improper about burial; but this does not signify that cremation is improper or that Christians today must still follow the old burial practice of interring the dead in a sepulchre instead of a casket burial.
- It makes no sense for Christians today to justify polygamy simply by quoting the prevalent OT practice.



In deciding for burial, the bereaved may have strong personal feelings of doing right by the departed loved one (which feelings we humbly respect) and different ideas on methods and burial sites may be chosen; but none of these is a biblical mandate.

CREMATION TO BE PREFERRED?

Insofar as there is no biblical injunction, the case for cremation may even be strongly made out as the responsible choice by Christians for its great environmental friendliness compared to burial, or for good stewardship of land resources.

CONCLUSION

The Bible does not condemn cremation. It is my view that Christians are free to choose between burial and cremation.



PARABLES OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE AND THE PEARL

BY JOHN LEE



“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.

When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. (Matthew 13:44-46)

Within this short passage from Matthew, two parables are describing the kingdom of heaven.

PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE (V 44)

A man who recognizes the great value of the kingdom would go all out, giving up everything he had, to claim it.

PARABLE OF THE PEARL (V 46)

This parable reinforces the point that the kingdom of heaven is of such superlative value that it is worth sacrificing anything for it.

WHAT IS “THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN”?

Here, I take “kingdom of heaven” (found only in Matthew) as an alternative expression for “kingdom of God”.

Some Christians perceive the kingdom as a location (quoting [Mark 14:25](#); [Luke 13:28](#)); some, as a present experience we seek of righteous lives aligned with God’s will. ([Matthew 6:33](#))

Revelations 11:15 says, “The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever.’”

Whether you think of the kingdom in eschatological perspective (a realm of life beyond death, as implicit in what Jesus told the crucified thief in [Luke 23:43](#)), or with the idea of being in the midst of it now ([Luke 17:20-21](#)), or as embracing both possibilities, the parables must draw our attention to placing our life on the right focus.

The kingdom of heaven is good news. ([Matthew 4:23](#)). It is a blessing to have the kingdom of heaven ([Matthew 5:3](#)) if we are righteous above the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. ([Matthew 5:20](#)).

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PARABLES

There are two interpretations:

1. Natural View – The treasure finder is more naturally seen as the seeker of God’s blessings. R.C.H. Lenski (1864 – 1936), a Lutheran theologian well-known as an author of many Lutheran NT commentaries, subscribed to this “natural view”. He said:

“God’s treasure, hidden, indeed, is to be found by us ([11:25](#); [Colossians 4:3, 4](#); [Luke 19:42](#)); his connection with the treasure remains and is obvious

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the moment it is uncovered. "In the field" thus serves two purposes. As part of the imagery, it fits the man who buried the treasure, for it is most unlikely that others would hunt for his treasure there. As regards the reality the field brings out the thought that God did not hide his treasure far off in the heavens where no human being could even come near it but in a common, lowly place, where it could, indeed, be found, but certainly not by the earthly wise, proud, and self-sufficient." (<https://tinyurl.com/sm585hmc>)

2. Christological View – This is what TLSB says:

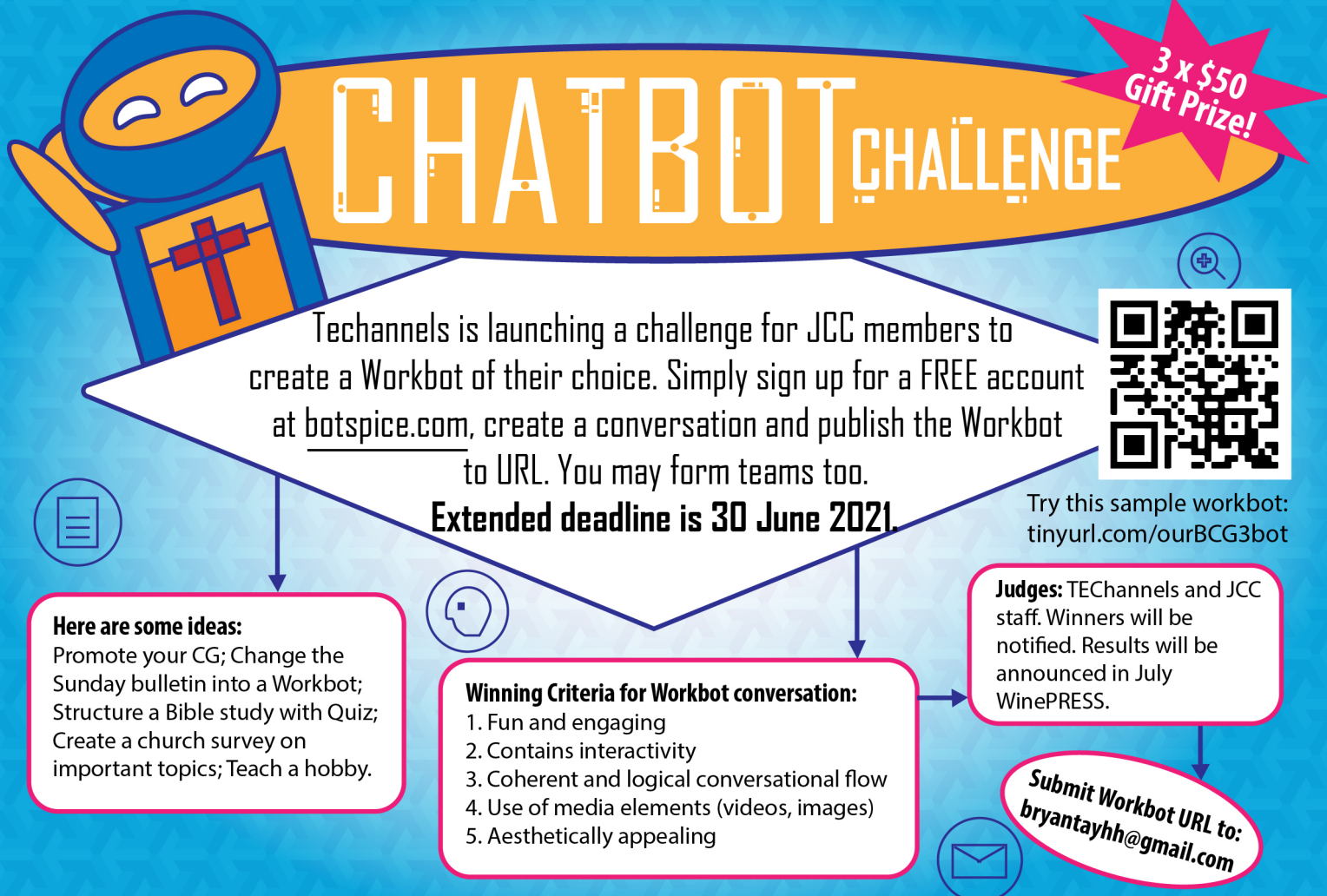
"One may naturally see the man as any man and the treasure as the kingdom he discovers. However, a more Christological interpretation describes the field as the world, the treasure as you (the hearer) and the man as Christ, who gives up the glory of heaven to win you."

It seems that the natural view is more commonly held among commentators. However, it is unnecessary for one person to take umbrage against another for holding a different preferred view.

A parable is a sketch of some truth, not for absolute literal reading or splitting hairs over microscopic details. For example, the things (physical treasure, pearl) that the parables use, or any other physical precious matter that one would propose, can never truly reflect the measureless value of the kingdom of heaven. ([Jeremiah 31:37](#)) While we cannot fully fathom the kingdom of heaven, we can leverage the introductory understanding of the parables to advance our bible study and develop our spiritual formation.

THE BASIC TRUTH

TLSB: "In the parables of both the hidden treasure and the precious pearl, Jesus reinforces this basic truth: earthly possessions cannot compare with the immense value and cost of God's kingdom. We must not press the details of these parables to say that one can buy entrance into God's kingdom by sacrificing all possessions. We inherit the kingdom by grace through faith in Christ, who purchased and redeemed us with His precious blood."



CHATBOT CHALLENGE

3 x \$50 Gift Prize!

Techannels is launching a challenge for JCC members to create a Workbot of their choice. Simply sign up for a FREE account at botspice.com, create a conversation and publish the Workbot to URL. You may form teams too.

Extended deadline is 30 June 2021.

Try this sample workbot: tinyurl.com/ourBCG3bot

Judges: TEChannels and JCC staff. Winners will be notified. Results will be announced in July WinePRESS.

Submit Workbot URL to: bryantayhh@gmail.com

Here are some ideas:
 Promote your CG; Change the Sunday bulletin into a Workbot; Structure a Bible study with Quiz; Create a church survey on important topics; Teach a hobby.

Winning Criteria for Workbot conversation:

1. Fun and engaging
2. Contains interactivity
3. Coherent and logical conversational flow
4. Use of media elements (videos, images)
5. Aesthetically appealing



GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

BY MARTIN CHEAH

C. H. Spurgeon, in one of his sermons (<https://tinyurl.com/ccwxldb7>), said: "I would have us lookout each night and light the fire of prayer, that it may be burning in case the ships of heaven should go by, that blessings may come to us ... who need them so much. Let us wait patiently till the Lord's convoy shall take us on board, that we may be carried into the glories and splendour of the reign of Christ, ... when we shall get to that better land where our possessions are, where our Father lives, where our treasures lie, where all our brethren dwell."

In our haste to encourage non-believers to become the Lord's sheep to board the ships of heaven, we often fail to concurrently tell them that the goats, weeds, and fruitless branches are thrown into the fire. My observation is that preachers who are focused on the prosperity gospel tend to preach only the Good News (of salvation). Also, most mainline denominations tend to preach the Bad News (of damnation) only to those who have become believers in Christ.

THE GOOD NEWS

"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." – John 3:16

"Whoever believes in him is not condemned" – John 3:18a

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." – Ephesians 2:8-9

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." – Romans 10:13

"My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him." – Psalm 62:1

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" – Romans 8:1

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life." – John 5:24

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." – Romans 6:23

continued on the next page

THE BAD NEWS

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’” – Matthew 25:41-43

“First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned” – Matthew 13:30b

“If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.” – John 15:6

“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?” – James 2:14

WHAT THEN CAN WE SAY?

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” – Romans 8:38-39

Luther on Grace and Works (Extracted from various web resources):

Roman Catholics of Martin Luther’s time were hyper-focused on the value of works, but Luther found that Scripture repeatedly asserts we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ, not by anything we do. Luther believed that the only correct way to respond to God’s plan of salvation, unlike what the book of James states, is to simply trust in His perfect love. What is known as works or obedience to God does not play a leading role in the salvation of the individual. Lutherans believe that faith must be the sole foundation of a believer and that after it fully exists then good works will flow from it.

According to Luther, although good works are no longer obligated for Christians as a means of justification before God, Christian freedom does not warrant license or rebellion. Rather, love compels

Christians to pursue good works as a means of purifying themselves, benefiting their neighbours, and pleasing God.



Jesus uses the metaphor of trees and fruit to capture a similar idea. If we claim to have faith in Jesus Christ but our lives bear no evidence of that, it’s like claiming to have his good fruit, but all we produce is rotten. And he makes it clear what happens to trees with rotten fruit. (see [Matthew 7:16-23](#))

According to Luther there are two ways in which good works are still necessary for Christians.

1. Since the sinful flesh continues to plague humans – Christians must pursue works that discipline their wrong desires. Luther affirms the spiritual nature of a Christian is disposed to “serve God joyfully”, while the bodily nature has “a contrary will...which strives to serve the world” and itself. Therefore, good works are necessary to reduce the bodily nature to subjection and “purify it of its evil lusts,” in obedience to God.
2. Good works are required of Christians for the sake of others. As Christ emptied himself of divine privilege for the sake of others, so Christians must empty themselves and freely serve their neighbours. Moreover, a Christian’s service of others should be free of selfish motivation, taking no account of gratitude, praise, or personal gain. Luther characterizes this kind of selfless service as imitation of the freely given gift of salvation in Christ: “I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbour.” Martin Luther insists that “a Christian is the servant of all.”



INTRODUCING THE CG - HIPHOP

BY SAW PEH PING

Do you know what HIPHOP stands for? It is “Harvesters In Practice, Harvesters Of People”. During the circuit breaker of 2020, we had a small Christmas gathering. We wanted to keep in contact with some of the pre-believers who came, and so, we embarked on the Happiness Group outreach spanning 5 to 8 sessions from mid-February to end April. Happiness Group is a structured get-together for pre-believer friends.

We want to thank God we were given this window period to interact in small groups within Safe Management guidelines after restrictions were relaxed. God also used these sessions to train various people to present their testimonies, lead in songs, conduct games, decorate the venue and share the gospel message. Apart from HIPHOP cell members, we were also blessed to have other JCC members like Peggy and Samantha join us, pray with us and invite friends to the sessions. Thank God for all the friends who joined us. Through

these sessions, we learnt to focus on showing care and sincerity by our actions, instead of perfecting the programme. Even after the Happiness Group sessions, we make ongoing efforts to connect with our friends, develop the friendships and share the Good News. Though we faced a few challenges, we will continue to keep our eyes open, looking at the fields which are ripe for harvest. (John 4:35)

Jesus said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (Mt 9:37-38)

God has blessed every member in HIPHOP through it all and we pray for more brothers and sisters in Christ to join us as harvesters in the fields He has placed us in.

OPEN TALK WITH GOD



By Bryan Tay

Dear Lord,

Are you really interested in the smallest details of my life? Sometimes I feel that You may find my prayer request silly or unimportant. At other times, I feel that even if I don't say it, You should know what I need. Do I really have to pray in every situation about everything?

My precious child,

Look at earthly parents. They delight in protecting their children and giving them what they want to the best of their ability. Some parents may fail their children, but **I WILL NEVER FAIL YOU!** I delight to hear your voice and pick out the gifts from heaven's treasure chest to meet your every need.

Listen to all these ordinary conversations... GOD ANSWERED ALL THEIR QUESTIONS!

He inquired of the Lord saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" The Lord answered him, "Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah.

1 Sam 23:2 (NIV)

So David inquired of the Lord, and he answered, "Do not go straight up, but circle around behind them and attack them in front of the poplar trees."

2 Samuel 5:23 (NIV)

So they inquired of the Lord, "Has the man come here yet?" And the Lord said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies.

1 Samuel 10:22 (NIV)

The Israelites went up to Bethel and inquired of the God. They said, "Who of us is to go up first to fight against the Benjamites?" The Lord replied, "Judah shall go first."

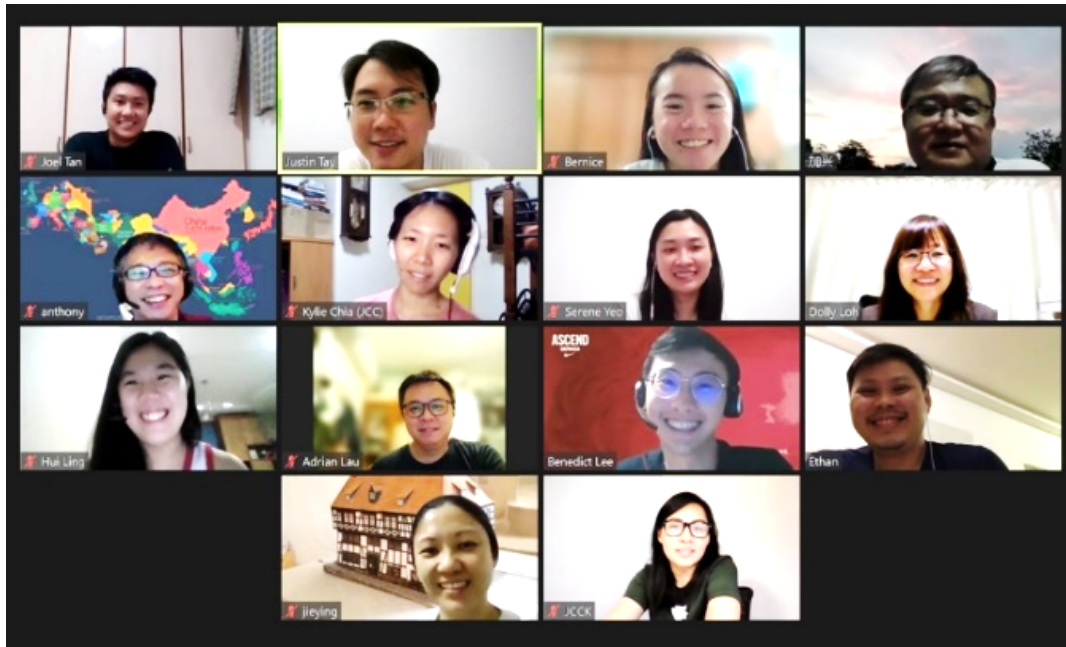
Judges 20:18

As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them, they have been found.

1 Sam 9:20a (NIV)

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

1 Kings 3:5 (NIV)



DAVID & GOLIATH PRESCHOOL BY BERNICE TAN

My experience in David & Goliath Preschool (DGP) has been an eye-opening and interesting one. I was at first given the opportunity to serve as the curriculum head to oversee the school's curriculum together with the principal. After the curriculum was settled, I ventured into the human resource department, an area that I was relatively unfamiliar with. Partnering with experienced hands in the team, I managed to learn much while developing the system for staff recruitment, evaluation and rewards.

Being involved in the Early Childhood Education sector, in nurturing the little ones for the future, is an enriching experience. Despite the taxing workload and time constraints, I still find all the efforts worthwhile. The innocence that the children exude as they play and learn cheerfully among themselves has brought me great joy and satisfaction.

The DGP's philosophy is: "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it."

I believe that we as teachers play a crucial role in shaping each child from their early years in development.

As DGP passionately prepares itself for 2022 (our

official opening), may JCC keep us in prayer for these things:

- I. Principal/Teachers/Staff - Preparing for transition
- II. DGP committee - Wisdom and Favour in planning and decision-making
- III. Renovation (June) - Safety and Smooth Renovation
- IV. Approval from authority
- V. Publicity to reach all households in the neighbourhood.
- VI. Registration of children - pray for full-house opening
- VII. Experience God's presence
- VIII. Competent staff to stay/join us in providing good service that parents are happy about
- IX. Good health for all - protection from Covid-19.

Pray also for our upcoming events:

1. Flyer distribution (June, July, October & November)
2. Virtual tour and parents' forum (July & August)
3. Kindergarten Graduation Ceremony (October)
4. Ground-breaking Ceremony (November)

DAVID & Goliath Preschool

Train up a child in the way he should go;
even when he is old he will not depart from it.



Over 50 years of success since 1967

- We continue to enrol "2nd-generation" students, following the footsteps of their parents



Professional and caring teachers/staff



Holistic and bilingual curriculum complete with robotics, coding and S.T.E.A.M.* modules



Unique learning environments like

- Creative Play Space
- Kids' Power Gym
- Science & Technology Lab
- Music & Movement Space



* S.T.E.A.M. - Science | Technology | Engineering | Arts | Math



Join us for a Virtual School Tour
cum Q&A session on either 10
July or 14 August (Saturdays) at
10am - tinyurl.com/VirtualDGP



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迦南团契的见证-之四

胡映玉/高国梁

我们看见神把所需要的同工、热心传福音的信徒们带到我们中间，我们也尽量让同胞们自己在团契当家。这些来自中国农村的民工们，因为在团契里服侍而生命、智慧、知识和能力各方面都成长。神的恩典使我们组织得有条有理，无论是崇拜聚会，大型的出游，还是体育运动，都安排得井然有序。参加多年聚会的民工们，成为团契里的同工们。

回忆起来，格外看见神在掌权，神在供应。曾经每个星期的聚会，使我们吃不消，太过劳累了。犹豫着是否应该像许多团契一样，每隔一个星期聚会一次呢？但在决定之前先祷告，刚刚祷告完，奇妙地看见一句话赫然出现在眼前：“只是义人必因信得生；他若退后，我心里就不喜欢他。”（来 10:38），

可是，我们没有精力怎么办呢？每个星期的聚会如何进行下去呢？然而，神知道，再次，我们看见神的安排，在新加坡读神学的陈恩准传道，那时梦见裕廊有一个红色砖墙的教会，他就受感动要到那个教会去服侍。他到处找，竟然发现原来的裕廊基督教会正是红砖墙，进来一问，正好有个中国同胞的团契需要他！是神这样感动人来参与祂的工作，使团契顺利地每个星期聚会下去，毫无缺乏。我们怎么能不哈里路亚赞美神呢！

国梁弟兄来团契一段时间后，亲自经历了神的医治，信心增加，我们听他分享的见证，认识到神真是奇妙，这是他自己的三句半：

8.1 国梁弟兄盼见证，
湿疹痊愈有点懵，
十一年的医治几乎要放弃，
哪路功？

8.2 俱细研究神奇根，
甚感神怜赛美龄，
写诗赞美神救助，
归主恩！

9. 迦南各各有见证，
要道一天也不停，
信主自有恩典足，
神同行！

10. 新的姐妹和弟兄，
迦南是主爱大家庭，

团结互助识真理，
欢迎！

合：欢迎，欢迎！

11. 让我们唱出神的爱，
让我们行在喜乐中，
让我们主里同生长，
新生命！

合：让我们活出新生命！

我们各人都有见证，我们各人都有软弱，但是，神扶持我们这些软弱的人，与我们这些不起眼的小民同在，在我们这些卑微的人身上显出祂的能力和恩典，祂不离弃我们。一路走来，我们亲眼看见并经历到迦南团契是神建立起来的，是神在引导，是神在扶持，都是神的作为，因为“祂愿意万人得救，明白真道。”（提前 2:4）

十一、最好的福是什么？

希伯来书4：16 所以我们只管坦然无惧地，来到施恩的宝座前，为要得怜恤，蒙恩惠作随时的帮助。

诗篇135：13 凡属万那和华的，无论大小，主必赐福给他。

约翰福音16：24 从来你们没有求我的名求什么，如今你们求就必得着，叫你们的名可以满足。

