

July 2022

THE WINEPRESS

O taste and see that God is good



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DO NOT TURN AWAY FROM GOD!

BY REV ANTHONY LOH

Recently, a cultic church which had a worldwide influence was mentioned in news on the assassination of a political figure. As reported, the assassin claimed a cultic element behind his motive.

Cults do offer a lot of attractions. Even faithful Christians in their moments of imprudence had found themselves not immune to the influence. Cultic infiltration can turn up in our midst. Christians who have their hopes and fears misdirected by false preachers and teachers in the last days are at risk.

The bible does warn us against apostasy. Whether we admit it or not, apostasy has happened, is still happening, and will get worse as the age comes to a close.

Apostasy means falling away, withdrawal from truth.

"Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared," – 1 Tim 4:1-2

"So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans." – Rev 2:15

The Nicolaitans were reputed from early times to have been the followers of Nicolaos of Antioch, one of the seven (see Acts 6:5). They held the same error as the Balaamites, teaching false views of Christian liberty and leading immoral lives.

The coming of Christ is on the lips of Christians pondering about the last days. We may have the same questions as the disciples:

continued on the next page

Matt 24:3-5

As he [Jesus] sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray."

In the course of our history, we have seen the validity of Jesus' warning as many messianic pretenders come and go. (Cf Acts 5:35-40) Did the Lord say a few would come, and a few will be deceived? No, many!

So, how do we know if we have fallen away, or if we are still in the truth?

1) Test all claims in the light of God's Word

We must test everything we hear, and every preacher/ teacher, by the Word of God. (1Thess 5:20-21)

Spurgeon said:

'We are one in Christ; let us be friends with one another; but let us never be friends with one another's error. If I be wrong, rebuke me sternly; I can bear it, and bear it cheerfully and if ye be wrong, expect the like measure from me, and neither peace nor parley with your mistakes. Let us all be true to one another, and true to Christ; and as soon as we perceive an error, though it be but as the shadow of one, let us root it out and drive it from us, lest it plague the whole body, and put leprosy into the entire fabric of the church.'

2) Go deep in God's Word

Some believers are not diligent in reading and studying God's Word. They prefer the effortless way of being spoon-fed, or take in every new 'revelation' that comes along without checking it out with the bible.

When the Scottish missionary David Livingstone sought to bring Christianity to Africa, his guides were either ignorant or determined to deceive him

as he travelled with the gospel; he was quoted as saying he would have been better off without them; his compass was the only thing that kept him from going astray.

As we explore pathways in our Christian journey, the bible is the most reliable compass. How are you using it in place of guides who are ignorant or determined to deceive you?

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." - 2 Tim 2:15

3) Do not be double-minded

David said in Ps 119:113, "I hate the double-minded, but I love Your law."

A double-minded person claims to live by the certainty of God's Word while also being led by sceptical notions from other sources.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." - James 1:5-8

"Let us stay safe" – these words are always on our lips as we remind each other during the pandemic.

Let us stay safe spiritually too – when spiritual charlatans are roaring out there!

Important reminders:

- Grow deep in His Word and keep God's Word hidden in our hearts. (Ps 119:11)
- Don't be double-minded to follow just any trend that comes up, but keep close to God and resist the devil. (James 4:7)
- "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night." - Ps 1:1-2
- Test everything using God's Word. The bible must be our compass. (2 Tim 3:16-17)

PRAYER FOCUS FOR AUGUST

1. Pray for God's blessings as JCCians join our partner churches in interceding for the Taman Jurong community through the **Special Prayer Walk** at 1 p.m. on 28th Aug, 2022.
2. As we persevere in our outreach efforts via our **Goshen Bridges and the Life Shine Community Services** (Urban Farming and VIC), let us continue to seek God in prayers for wisdom and direction to connect effectively with the community. May the Spirit fill us and empower us to speak the right words that point people to Jesus.
3. David & Goliath Preschool: Thank God for the good work of the principal, teachers and the management committee in the education and wholesome development of the children. Pray that God continues to bless all with good health. We seek God for open doors and opportunities to reach out to the parents via the **DGP/JCC Lantern Festival** that we are planning for September,
4. In a world beset with troubles, **pray for God to fill us with the Spirit of understanding, wisdom and discernment** (Isa 11:2) and bless us with a fresh anointing and revival in spiritual life.

LET'S THINK & TALK STRAIGHT

BY BRYAN TAY

*"A son honors his father, and a slave his master.
If I am a father, where is the honor due me?
If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty."*
Malachi 1:6



As a Christian, I am often told to surrender to God's will. Does it mean that I cannot make my own choice and live my life – my way?

Even if I agree to surrender fully to God, what if I do not like what God is asking me to do? Although I may get down to doing it, I know that I am doing it with a reluctant attitude. Wouldn't that mean I am sinning? What's the point then?

*Why must I follow God's will?
Why can't my choice be respected?*

These are serious and practical questions that many Christians face. By asking these questions, we are basically unsure about how much we want to trust God or whether we can really trust Him.

If we have trusted God for our eternity (which is such a huge risk from a human perspective), why wouldn't we trust God for everything else? We are also supposing that God is a task master who

dishes out assignments to His children as He pleases without regard for our overall well-being. Is this our image of God? God forbid.

If we and our earthly parents are capable of considering these questions, then our Creator God is much better than that. Remember, we are made in the image of God. Try giving your full surrender and see what happens!

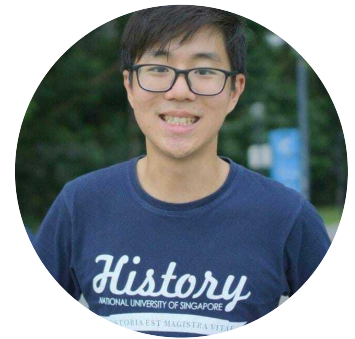
GOD IS ASKING

1. Do you know Me enough to doubt Me and My good intentions for you? Seek Me seriously before you even start to entertain doubts about Me. Let's play fair.
2. Why do you come to Me only when things seem to go wrong? Or when you need some assurance of success in the things you do? Am I reduced to being your amulet for safety and success?

I welcome your comments, thoughts and sharing on this reflection. Write to jccwinepress@gmail.com. We will publish your contribution in the next issue.

AΩ ALPHA TO THE OMEGA

BY SAMUEL CHONG 



M is for Mar Thoma Syrian Church

"Thomas said to [Jesus], 'My Lord and my God!'" (John 20:28)



Emblem of the Mar Thoma Church, Wikimedia Commons

WHAT IS THE MAR THOMA SYRIAN CHURCH?

The Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar (often shortened to Mar Thoma Church) is an autonomous Reformed Oriental Church headquartered in Kerala, India. Founded in 1889, it sees itself as a continuation of the Saint Thomas Christians – an Indian community

traditionally believed to have been founded by the Apostle Thomas in the first century AD. The Mar Thoma Syrian Church reports a global membership of over 1 million, spread via the Indian diaspora in the 20th century.

ORIGIN: THE SAINT THOMAS CHRISTIANS

The Saint Thomas Christians are an ethno-religious community of Indian Christians originating from the Malabar Coast (modern day Kerala), currently split into different denominations. Despite their differences, all Saint Thomas Christians trace their origins to the evangelistic activity of the Apostle Thomas, who according to their tradition, came to India in 52 AD.

Thomas was said to have evangelised in India for 20 years and set up seven churches before being martyred. The Christians were known locally as "Nasrani" (Nazarene) and grew with immigration from East Syriac Christians. The term "Mar Thoma" actually means Saint Thomas in Syriac. The Saint Thomas Christians would develop in India undisturbed over the next millennium-and-a-half until the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE EUROPEANS

While the Saint Thomas Christians quickly formed an alliance with the Portuguese against hostile rajas in the area, the Portuguese set about bringing them under the authority of Rome. In 1599, the Portuguese brought but purged both social customs and liturgy of elements deemed unacceptable according to Latin protocol. This fuelled resentment and led to open resistance.

In 1653, many Saint Thomas Christians met and swore an oath not to obey the Portuguese or their Archbishop, accepting only the local Archdeacon as their shepherd. The Archdeacon was proclaimed Bishop and later received canonical consecration from the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch as Thomal.

Thomal's consecration led to the first lasting formal schism in the Saint Thomas Christian

community. The faction that remained in communion with Rome came to be known as the "Old Allegiance" while that of Thomal came to be known as the "New Allegiance". Nonetheless, both factions considered themselves the true heirs to Saint Thomas.

The arrival of the Dutch ejected the Portuguese from Malabar in the 1660s, forcing them to



Persian/Nasrani cross at the St George's Church in Kadamattom, Kerala, by "Jogytmathew", Wikimedia Commons

withdraw northwards to Goa. Dutch rule eased the pressures on the “New Allegiance” faction from the Catholic Church.

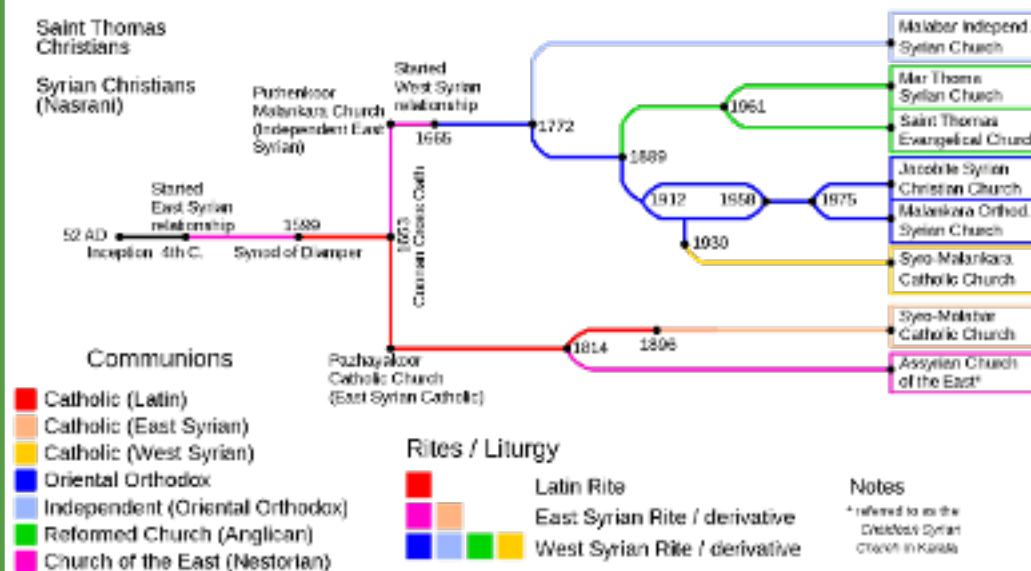
With further support from the Syrian Orthodox Church (based in Antioch), West Syriac Rite liturgy gradually replaced the East Syriac Rite originally introduced by the Church of the East (based in Mesopotamia) within the “New

partnership.

Not all Malankara (referring to Malabar) priests were opposed to the British, some were receptive to Anglican ideas. Several priests, such as Abraham Malpan, attempted to reform the West Syriac Rite along Protestant lines (e.g. removal of icons, omission of devotion to saints) and were subsequently excommunicated from

the Malankara Syrian Church. The reformists eventually decided in 1889 to separate and establish the Reformed Mar Thoma Syrian Church which gave primary authority to the Bible while continuing as successors of Saint Thomas.

History and Evolution of Saint Thomas Christians



The development of the Saint Thomas Christians denominations in India by “Kokkarani”, Wikimedia Commons

Allegiance” faction.

Dutch control over Malabar lasted until 1795. As Napoleon waged war in Europe and the Netherlands were close to defeat, the Dutch agreed to surrender control of their overseas settlements to the British to prevent a French takeover. Malabar became part of British India and remained so even after Napoleon’s defeat.

REFORMATION IN INDIA

Missionaries from the Anglican Church Mission Society helped to set up a seminary at the Saint Thomas Christians’ request.

However, British missionaries felt that a reformation of the Malabar Church was imperative since they held to beliefs rejected by Protestants (e.g. Purgatory). Their efforts provoked resistance which put an end to the

until a translation into Malayalam (the language of Kerala) became available in 1811 with British assistance. The Mar Thoma Church also uses ancient liturgies passed down from the Apostolic Age, although it has moved to conduct them in Malayalam instead of the traditional Syriac.

Mar Thoma Church buildings are built east-west with the Sanctuary to the east – the place of the rising sun and a symbol of the Risen Christ and His Second Coming. The Sanctuary is separated from the rest of the building by a veil, which is drawn from right to left at the start of any worship service.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

Despite differing doctrinal positions and schisms, the Mar Thoma Church maintains good relations (but not full communion) with the other Saint

FAITH AND PRACTICES OF THE CHURCH

While Protestant in doctrine, the Mar Thoma Church follows liturgical practices of Oriental Christianity, namely the West Syriac Rite. The Bible used by the church was in Syriac

Thomas Christian denominations owing to their shared heritage, culture, and use of West Syriac liturgical traditions.

Due to the historic links of the Malankara Reformation to Anglican missionaries, the Mar Thoma Church maintains close links with the Anglican Church. Since its theology and doctrines are closest to that of Anglicanism, the Mar Thoma Church is in full communion with all churches of the Anglican Communion.



Sanctuary of the Jerusalem Mar Thoma Church in Niranam, Kerala by "Irvikorthanan", Wikimedia Commons

The Mar Thoma Church also actively participates in ecumenical projects at the international level, such as the World Council of Churches, which it has been attending since the inaugural meeting in 1948.

THE MAR THOMA CHURCH IN SINGAPORE

The Mar Thoma Syrian Church in Singapore was formed in 1936 by Indian Syrian Christians who had arrived in Singapore about 25 years earlier. Their worship services were initially held at the Armenian Church until they built their own church building off St Michael's Road in 1952.

The Municipal Council named the reserve road serving the church and school as "Mar Thoma Road" – the road remains there today in Bendemeer. As the Mar Thoma Road premises was acquired by the Government in 1991, a new plot of land was bought at Upper Thomson; the new church building was completed in 2004.

The Mar Thoma Syrian Church is a founder member of the National Council of Churches (of which LCS is also a founder member). One of JCC's pioneers, the late Mr P.S. George, retained his membership in the Mar Thoma Syrian Church all his life.



CONCLUSION

The Mar Thoma Church, as a church upholding both Protestant doctrine and Syriac liturgical traditions, stands as another unique case study in the history and development of Christianity.

Christianity developed in Hindu-majority India initially without European colonisation and missionary efforts unlike in most parts of the world.

The Mar Thoma Church and the Saint Thomas Christians in general were nonetheless impacted by the politics of its day like its counterparts in Europe, such as during the period of Portuguese influence and British rule (e.g. schisms and separations). One can also see the Reformation's impact still reverberating 300 years after Luther and thousands of miles away from Europe.

For Further Reading

[Saint Thomas Christians](#)

[Mar Thoma Syrian Church in Singapore](#)



THE YOUNG @ HEART HAVING COFFEE

BY MARTIN CHEAH

On 1st July 2022, eight distinguished gentlemen came together for a cup of coffee and some reminiscing. This is the first meeting of many more to come. The group has agreed to meet every 1st Friday of the month for a 2-hour chit-chat session over a drink.

We all found our way to Get Together Coffee Shop in Block 429 Jurong West. Some did get lost but finally found this very clean and quiet place hidden in the alcove of Street 42. To grace our first meeting, Zewen (below) coming back from Cambodia met us as this coffee shop is next to his house.



"If you're a writer, you know that the stories don't come to you - you have to go looking for them. The

old men in the lobby: that's where the stories were." - Tom Waits

As I sat among a group of my peers (in age), I heard many stories of days gone by. The main storyteller was bro Ronnie Lim who related his journey to becoming a Singaporean, just recently, in June 2022. Over time, this little group will expand as time like an ever-rolling stream brings in more members.

The name of this new group - **RETIREE'S COFFEE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP**. We have the time to meet up when all others are at work (10am to 12pm) giving us the flexibility to chat in quiet environment, making our table the noisiest one in the coffee shop.

"Even to your old age and grey hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you." - Isaiah 46:4

Conditions for joining this group? **Free time.**



IDENTIFY TIME-EATERS

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. -1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)

We live busy lives. Many things around us scream for our attention. Everything seems important but not everything is urgent. We need to be responsible for our conduct at home, at work and in social interactions.

More critically, we need to be responsible and accountable to God in how we live our lives and manage the resources that He has entrusted to us. But we only have twenty-four hours a day.

Therefore, we need to protect our time so that we can live circumspectly, making good use of time.

More importantly, we need to identify people, habits or situations that nibble away our time. Once we have a hold of these time-eaters, we can take actions to manage them effectively with God's help.

What does God say about this?

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

Ephesians 5:16,17 (NIV)

How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest - and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.

Proverbs 6: 9-11 (NIV)

All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

Proverbs 14:23 (NIV)

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICAL LIVING?

Time eaters may appear in different forms. They can be people who exhaust you with their incessant need for communication, unannounced visits by guests, sudden non-critical tasks that claim or appear to be urgent or unproductive waiting periods to get things done or services rendered. It could simply be our own behaviour and habits in daily living such as procrastination, daydreaming or indecisiveness and letting time drift away.

One practical way to start identifying time-eaters is to plan your day and start tracking your work tasks, events and activities that happen during the day. Do that for a period of time. As far as is possible, note the duration of each occurrence, the people involved and the outcome of those occurrences.

Match these outcomes with your original plan and see how much you have accomplished. You will soon be able to identify the time-eaters that ruin your day! Above all, before you start your day, commit your plans and tasks to God and ask Him to help you enjoy a fruitful day with His help.

REFLECT AND RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

- What/Who are time-eaters in your life and daily living?
- Take action to deal effectively with at least one time-eater each week. Keep at it to progressively deal with all your time-eaters.
- Share your plan with a buddy for accountability to track your progress.



IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

BY JOHN LEE

"IN GOD'S IMAGE" VS. "IN GOD'S LIKENESS"

God made the wild animals according to their kinds. He did not create them in His image. (Gen 1:25)

After creating the animals, God then said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness..." (Gen 1:26a)

Why did God do so? He gave the reason: "...so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." (Ref Gen 1:26b)

Some people think that "in our image" and "in our likeness" convey different meanings. However, this needs not be so. The use of repetition in a

sentence is quite common for the purpose of emphasis. For example, when someone says, "We shall persevere, never admit defeat," the two underlined clauses with distinct meanings on their own match with each other in the sentence to express one single idea. There is no reason to dispute that it was also regular for the writer of Genesis to reiterate the same idea in different but matching phrases.

In the next verse (Gen 1:27), the writer of Genesis puts across the same idea of "in God's image" without dwelling on the word "likeness". Therefore, I shall not go into splitting hairs over any perceived difference between "image" and "likeness".

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Certainly, being created in the image (or likeness) of God cannot mean that we are like God in every way. Nevertheless, we can safely say that we possess some attributes in God's likeness, unlike the animals.

Many attempts have been made by philosophers and theologians to explain what "being in the image of God" means. Abilities like consciousness, emotions, intelligence, rationality, etc. have been proffered. Britannica Encyclopaedia even says, "In his work *De Trinitate*, Augustine attempted to ascertain traces of divine Trinity in the human intellect."

Each idea has its problems.

Since the Bible does not specifically mention the attributes of the "image of God" and to what extent we bear "likeness" to God in these attributes, any conjecture cannot have 100% certainty. There is no need for us to chase after a perfect definition.

REFLECTING GOD'S IMAGE

Just having a conscious recognition that we reflect the image of God should spur our prudent Christian attitude in the following ways:

- **Caring for the Earth:**

Being in the image of God confers on us a unique and direct authority to "rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." (Gen 1:26)

We are stewards of God's creation. We serve as God's deputy to care for the Earth and protect the environment.

- **Respecting human life:**

Being in the image of God attaches a particularly high value to human life. Hence, this serious warning – "Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind." (Gen 9:6)

The moral imperative "You shall not

murder" (Ex 20:13) included as one of the Ten Commandments takes on a sombre significance when we understand that human life is associated with the image of God and reflects holiness. This is also reflected by the fact that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor 6:19-20)

- **Service with humility:**

Although the attribute as the image of God has been marred by the sinfulness of man, who exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images of mortal creatures (Rom 1:23), Christians are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29); and we know that Christ is the image of God. (2 Cor 4:4)

Philippians 2:6-10 tells us of Christ's humble attitude despite His equality with God. He has set us an example. Despite being in the image of God, we should be lowly minded in love and service rather than treating it as something to be exploited for selfish purposes.





LESSONS FROM THE DONKEY

BY TAN SWEE LEONG

Jesus rode on a donkey on Palm Sunday, it is referred to as the triumphant entry. Not on a horse, as some would want him to, which Roman conquerors do in their triumphant entrance after killing their enemies – Roman *triumphus*. This is precisely what Jesus was not doing, Jesus rode into Jerusalem to save the world, not in pomp and ceremony but in humility and service.

A donkey we might think it is totally inappropriate but the Bible tells us otherwise. Donkeys were royal animals in ancient Israel and ruler frequently rode on them,

The sons of Jair and Abdon, the early judge in Israel rode donkeys:

He was followed by Jair of Gilead, who led Israel twenty-two years. He had thirty sons, who rode thirty donkeys. (Judges 10:3-4)

He (Abdon) had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy donkeys. He led Israel eight years. (Judges 12:14)

Solomon was proclaimed as king as he rode on a mule:

"Take your lord's servants with you and have Solomon my son mount my own mule and take him down to Gihon. There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, 'Long live King Solomon!'" (1 Kings 1:33-34)

Zechariah prophesied that Israel's king will return riding on a donkey:

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zechariah 9:9)



Image: Pixabay

To the Jews in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday who saw Jesus ride into Jerusalem, they would have recognised what was going on. This was Messiah, the Anointed One, or at least someone claiming to be, hence all the palm branches and cloaks and the quotation from Psalm 118:

LORD, save us! LORD (Hossana), grant us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you. (Ps 118: 25-26)

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Jesus rode on a donkey because he was coming in peace, which is why Zechariah wrote following the prophecy:

I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war horses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. (Zechariah 9:10)

Jesus proclaimed peace to the nations, Jesus rode into Jerusalem not awashed in the blood of his enemies, but to wash the feet of his disciples and to shed his blood in sacrifice.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem as a conquering King and is hailed by the people as such, in the manner of the day. Unfortunately, the praise the people lavished on Jesus was not because they recognized Him as their Saviour from sin. They welcomed Him out of their desire for a messianic deliverer, someone who would lead them in a revolt against Rome. They hailed Him as King with their many hosannas.

But when He failed in their expectations, and did not lead them in revolt against the Roman occupiers, the crowds quickly turned on Him. Within just a few days, their “hosannas” would change to cries of “Crucify Him!” Those who hailed Him as a hero would soon reject and abandon Him.

The story of the triumphal entry is one of contrasts. It is the story of the King who came as a lowly servant on a donkey, not a princely steed, not in royal robes, but on the clothes of the poor and humble.

Jesus Christ comes not to conquer by force as earthly kings but by love, grace, mercy, and His own sacrifice for His people. His, is not a kingdom

of armies and splendour but of lowliness and servanthood. He conquers not nations but hearts and minds. His message is one of peace with God, not of temporal peace.

Do you know that there is a cross marked on the back of donkeys?

Scientists have tried to explain this phenomenon, some have offered legends about the cross, even poems have been written on them. We should not allegorise meaning into this but if Jesus has made a triumphal entry into our hearts, He reigns there in peace and love. As His followers, we exhibit those same qualities, and the world sees the true King living and reigning in triumph in us.



BARANG FAIR

@ MPH1

2 Tah Ching Rd

WHEN:

**SATURDAY,
6 AUGUST
10AM-3PM**

Free items to give away.

Bring your own bag.

免费赠送物品。只需带上你
自己的背包。

free bread
distribution



For over two years, social activities were curtailed and life came to a crawl under the Covid-19 shadows. Ministry activities and fellowship bonding were all paced down. Compelled by dine-in restrictions, we had to put up with lonely meals. Hunger for company gnawed more painfully than hunger for food.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering ..." (Gal 5:22 KJV)

We have indeed been longsuffering. Thank God for blessing us with the strength of character to be steadfast in our patient endurance to get through one day at a time as our faith was being sorely tested through extended time.

We might be like bears strategically hibernating through adverse weather conditions but not sleeping the whole time. Some people might have thought that our faith had gone to sleep; but no, we were just spending more time in solitude in our dens earnestly praying and preparing for better days ahead.

KOINONIA LUNCH

Praise the Lord! Warmer weather has peeked out of the clouds. We can sense the warmth of fellowship and bonding as the Church's Koinonia Lunch returned on 26 June after the Sunday Service.



The throng of JCCians eagerly queueing for their food and quickly settling themselves down at the tables presented the picture that they had been long suffering from deprivation of Fellowship + Food (Koinonia + Lunch). Nevertheless, as good Christians, they were all well-behaved. There were no riots!

In the end, after an enjoyable time catching up with one another, it was everyone's wish: The JCC Family that eats together stays together.



RETURN OF WARM FELLOWSHIP MEALS

BY JOHN LEE

MINISTRIES' MAKAN-TIME

With the dine-in restrictions gone, it is also great makan-time for our ministry teams with their hungry bears prowling restaurants nearby to share good food and good fellowship.

On 18th June, the Dialect Ministry Team chose to have their koinonia makan spot at the nearby Sum Kee Food Chinese restaurant while the Techannels Team preferred their cosy Korean Hot Pot dinner at Jurong Point.



As you soak in the atmosphere of camaraderie around food across fellowship meals, you realise that JCC is a big extended family comprising numerous component family units (ministry groups and activity groups) under one roof.

Eating is known as one of Singaporeans' simple pleasures in life. Having a fellowship meal together whether in your own home or outside is a great way for team building and outreach. As mutual interests and experiences are shared, relationship is strengthened and fresh ministry ideas develop.

BLESS US, O GOD!

Bless our food and drink. Bless our fellowship. Strengthen our bonds and keep us steadfast in faith and service, in Christ!

OUTREACH WITH PATIENCE

BY PEGGY TAN

We are all familiar with the proverb that slow and steady wins the race. In serving God, however, we are all too familiar with impatience. A defeatist attitude sprouts like weeds in an otherwise good garden and smothers any hope for a successful harvest.

Elisabeth Elliot says, *"Restlessness and impatience change nothing except our peace and joy. Peace does not dwell in outward things but in the heart prepared to wait trustfully and quietly on Him who has all things safely in His hands."*

Faced with challenges in the outreach ministry, the parable of the growing seed provides the

reassurance about slow and steady growth. (Mark 4:26-29)

The Covid-19 pandemic has been testing everyone's patience. If there is an alternative type of antigen test for patience, we can all be happy to get a positive test result.

I hope the following sharing of outreach experiences will be encouraging to all our farmers in the field. Despite the pandemics of disruptive forces around us, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (Gal 6:9)

MIXING BADMINTON & BBQ



In the years of Covid, our JCC Badminton Club suffered as much as all other ministries in The Great Disruption to normal activities. Ironically, it was in this period that many people desperately needed the physical activities for stress-relief. So, while the badminton playing in JCC was suspended, I hosted some badminton players near my HDB block as and when the Covid rules permitted the outdoor gatherings subject to the limit on the number of persons.

We came to know a group of students from the polytechnic and ITE who were searching for a place to play badminton as bookings for the school and public sports halls were all closed. God gave us opportunities to network with them. We shared ice cream, distributed bible tracts and

CNY angpows. They were grateful to our team for the happy times together.

Fast forward to March 2022, Covid restrictions were much relaxed. In April, JCC opened its badminton hall again.

At first, the boys were hesitant about playing badminton in our church. Finally, however, their misgivings were melted. On 6 April, they came and even brought along new friends. Weekly, there would be at least three of them with us except during their examination period.



After the examination, the boys suggested having a BBQ gathering. They even volunteered to buy the food. Thus, an enjoyable BBQ fellowship time came to pass on 22 June, with eating, chit-chatting, game prizes and door gifts.

Rev. Anthony shared how he came to know the Lord. Surely, he had a pleasing time answering many questions that one of the boys asked relating to Christianity.

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TESTIMONIES FROM THE MANNA BRIDGE

The Manna Bridge is one of the bridges of outreach under our Goshen Initiative.

On 24 June, a team went distributing bread as usual. We were encouraged to have one family (non-JCC members) joining us with their two children – a boy and a girl. The boy is presently attending our DGP while the girl was a former student of DGP.

The following is some feedback from team members:

“Some residents began to recognise our faces. Some remembered that we come once a month. Some were willing to share their names with us now.”

“Some shared their physical problems although they politely declined our offer to pray for them.”

As one aunty asked me why we are doing this



(distributing the bread regularly), Samantha simply smiled and said that JCC wanted to bless the residents.

Samantha feels the positive vibe that we are making progress in confidence-building both ways – the residents’ confidence in us and our confidence in channelling God’s blessings along the Manna Bridge.

JCC LANTERN FESTIVAL

中秋联谊会

Saturday 3 September, 7-9pm
@ MPH1, 2 Tah Ching Rd
\$3/pax for adults and kids

In this family bonding event, kids will get to make their own lanterns with the help of the parents, followed by a lantern walk. Mooncakes and light refreshments will be provided.

Contact Wong Mui 98589359
 志豪 81611773 | 何淑美传道 98320797





Sign up via
 请往这网页注册 -
jcc.sg/lanternfest