

MARANATHA MESSENGER

Weekly Newsletter of

Private Circulation Only

MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

20 May 2012

"Present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28)

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Sunday School: 9.45 am

Sunday English Worship Service: 10.45 am Sunday Chinese Worship Service: 6.30 pm

Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8.00 pm

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jack Sin (HP: 9116 0948)

Thanking God for the MYAF 18th Anniversary

Luke 5:4-6, 'Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.'

This is a blessed occasion as we remember God's covenant faithfulness to the MYAF all these 18 years. The church comprised redeemed and obedient people bought by the blood of Christ our Saviour and chosen by the will of God. We are saved to worship and serve God that we may be used of God to comfort and encourage, admonish and strengthen one another in the faith and to be a witness as the Lord wills to the saving of souls and the building of the flock of God to the glory of God. Peter let down his net and caught many fishes because he dared to obey the word of Christ and we need to do the same today in the MYAF. Besides Sabbath worship, there is a avenue for edifying fellowship among likeminded brethren. I just preached at the Life Church YAF last month and we meditated on how we may employ our time, resources and talents in a meaningful manner and that included fellowship with people of God.

By the will of God, we have in Maranatha BP Church 3 fellowships namely the MYF, MYAF and MLF (and the 3 NBCs in Simei, Central and SengKang) to cater to the spiritual needs of the various members in different age groups. The young adults are from their mid-twenties to their late forties and the MYAF provides edifying Christian intercession and mutual encouragement in the Lord and the in depth study and discussion of His word. We thank God for 18 productive years of edifying ministry among the young adults of Maranatha BP Church since its inception in May 1994.

While we may not be big in numbers, we hope to be caring and effective in reaching out to one another. We have been challenged and encouraged by the Lord over the years. The monthly meetings have been a time of mutual exhortation and fellowship to strengthen and admonish one another in the word of the Lord. We had a house blessing in the new home of Hong Che Hwee and Hazel recently and in the next months, we will be going to Dn. Royce Yeo and Yeo Choon Pio's home for a time of edifying fellowship and games for our children as well. We are mindful of the covenant family as most of our members have young children who need to be nurtured in the fear of God. A Family Day on 9 August is being planned for the church by the MYAF. The messages, bible study, sharing, prayer and visitation are designed to reach out and minister God's word to one another despite our busy schedule and work. We ask you to pray for the Exco that comprises our Chairman, Dn. Royce Yeo (who serves also in the Chinese Service); Hong Che Hwee, the Secretary; and Ng Thiam Koon, the Treasurer cum Vice Chairman and Dn. Terence Tan as a committee member and me as the advisor. We encourage more to come forward to the fellowship and to serve the Lord together. Let us all stay back and rejoice with the MYAF on their 18th anniversary at 1.30 pm.

Do commit to pray for those seeking the Lord's will in their career, family, relationships and for wisdom to continue for the exco in the planning of the programme. Do let us know if you have any suggestions to improve this ministry. The MYAF has also supported missions, the VBS and the church camp and others. Remember to pray and support Rev. George and Bessy Skariah and Pastor Babu (who will be here with us next month for the ERBL and the church camp) in the building of the church for Covenant BP Church India and for the saving of souls in the wide missions fields of Bangalore, India; praying and supporting Elder Dr. Lim Yew Cheng in Evangel BP Church in Kuala Lumpur (which just had their 6th anniversary on 6 May 2012), Wiwin and Mark Baldwin serving in Cambodia and Preacher Yap Kim Chuan in Tangkak BPC and BP churches in Kulai, KSBPC, JB Sunset Gospel Hour and Rev. Francis Onyango Nyamiwa from Kenya. The exco has decided that today's offering will be designated towards the translation work of the Shorter Catechism in Telugu which will be used in Covenant BP Church India and New Covenant BP Church India. Who will go for the missions trip to Covenant BP Church India from 27 June to 3 July 2012 to rejoice with them at their 7th anniversary with the mission team of 6?

We thank God for many who are responsibly serving God (besides the committee members) chairing and many others who pray behind the scenes. Let us remember to support and pray for one another and their family salvation, that they may serve the Lord as 1 Peter 4:9-11 says, *'Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.'*

Let us discover, develop and demonstrate our God given gifts and talents and be a channel of blessing to others and glorify Him.

Let every Young Adult of Maranatha BP Church strive to draw nearer to God and to build up their spiritual lives and put God first even before our career and families. It gives us great contentment, to honour and serve God and to come regularly for every bimonthly meeting and be strengthened by this effective ministry of the MYAF to the praise and glory of God. *The servant of the Lord is satisfied when the saints are edified, covenant families, sanctified and God is glorified.*

Jack Sin

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Q & A

Q : How do we strike a balance between work and leisure as a Christian?

A : That is a good question. Work and leisure are God's gifts to the human race. Our attitude towards them in our society is generally dominated by a secular and pragmatic outlook. The gradual decline of moral and spiritual values in our culture is also reflected in how people spend their leisure time. Today the confusion about work and play has degenerated into this : Someone once said, **"We worship our work, work at our play and play during worship."** Christians need to rethink, and rediscover God's blueprint for us in this vital aspect of our life.

Work can be defined as **"the meaningful employment of our time that results in productivity and fruit of our labour."** The Bible asserts the value of industrious work. Solomon said, *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest"* (Eccl 9:10). The Protestant tradition made much of work as a creation

ordinance. **The Reformers extolled diligence in work as a primary virtue in the Christian life.** It came commonly to be known as the Protestant Work Ethic in the later years. The Puritans in 17th century England emphasised on the same theme. William Perkins said, “man must live by the labour of his own hands and feed upon his own bread.” Richard Bernard added, “**idleness is a great sin, the nurse of all vice.**” Or, the common adage, “An idle mind is a devil’s workshop.” Work should be viewed as a calling in which the worker is a steward and he is accountable to God (cf. Eph 4:1). The goals of work are firstly, spiritual, to glorify God and, secondly, humanitarian, to serve men and society.

Today, the purpose and value of work is clouded by many material pursuits. The consumer ethic, coupled with the success ethic (in a meritocratic and elitist society like Singapore), has affected our career ethic. People value work as a means towards attaining success; with one of the signs of success as having a prestigious career or many promotions. The Singaporean dream consists of the five C’s—Condo (prices all time high), Car (COE is high), Club, Card and Corporate success. More importantly to the Christians are the 3 C’s—our **Creator**, our **Consecration to Christ**, and **Contempt of the world**. To achieve success, workers thought that they must deny themselves of leisure, their families and their friends. They would have a competitive spirit that tramples upon other people on the way to economic success. Christians ought not to be so, for there is a higher purpose for us in the spiritual realm than just material gains and power on earth.

The concept of leisure, on the other hand, is quite elusive and difficult to define compared to work. Some have simply defined leisure as the antithesis of work and called it non-working time. While this may be true in some sense, I find it insufficient and misleading. I believe leisure is **discretionary time**—time used fruitfully to the glory of God apart from the obligation of work, family, and society. It is an activity positively chosen for personal enrichment. It can be a time for physical, spiritual and intellectual and social refreshment, like reading a book or going for a walk or even interacting meaningfully with someone over a conversation. **Yet leisure is a matter of mental and spiritual attitude, not as a result only of external matters.** (A person on leave from work may not be enjoying leisure.) I think leisure provides the occasion for learning, growth and free expression, for rest and freedom, for rediscovering life in its entirety. It is a search for repose, for creativity and freedom. It serves many useful functions. Jesus had occasions of leisure with His disciples, as in Mark 6:31–32, we read, “*And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.*”

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:12, “*All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*” There are some things we do not do as Christians even in the name of leisure or relaxation. For example, dancing in a night spot, getting drunk with alcohol, smoking, watching worldly movies or doing yoga which has religious connotation in its philosophy and origin. I treasure reading good Christian books, exercising with long walks with my wife, swimming, cycling or listening to Christian music or messages, or playing the guitar or sharing and fellowshiping with others or just resting. It is more than non-work, it is positive benefit for our reverence of body and soul. I believe it is essential for a healthy ministry, a healthy mind and body as well. **If you do not come apart and rest awhile, you may just plain come apart!** Take a book and go to the beach or quiet place to read. Seek the Lord in meaningful moments of life away from the hue and cry of work, family and community. Take a break (e.g. holiday) from work from time to time. We need it for the refreshing of our bodies.

In the Gospel, we see the record of Jesus and the disciples engaged not just in work but also in times of physical and spiritual refreshment (Mark 7:42; 8:10; Matt 15:21, 29; Luke 16:22; John 10:40). Jesus took time off from the busy schedule of healing people, casting out demons and preaching and spent much time with the disciples privately. It was a time for personal refreshment as they retired from work and reinvigorated and re-energised themselves with the fellowship of the Lord and one another. Jesus often retreated to a mountain to pray (Mark 6:46). That is the source of spiritual strength and vitality for the continuance of the demanding Christian ministry. In the same vein, our bodies need the necessary rest and restoration. Leisure is an opportunity to repair our weary bodies and to recuperate from the stress and strain of the day. Leisure need not be non-activity. Work hard while it is time to work and have a meaningful and fulfilling time for recreation and leisure as well.

Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 3:13, “*And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.*” You can be reading a Christian book or resting on the beach or

even listening to good edifying music or light exercise. Taking care of some plants or fishes or birds may be quite refreshing. I find it helpful physically to walk, swim, or go on the treadmill twice or thrice a week. I like to read a book during my free time and to just rest on a Sunday afternoon. There is a time for everything (Eccl 3:1–2). God has made us in a way that we do not work continuously to our physical detriment but **there is a day of rest in the week to recuperate, refresh, repair and reinvigorate ourselves in the Lord and physically too**. In some companies, it is quite common to see some employees selling their annual leave to make more money and work on Sundays for overtime as well (i.e. Chinese workers). This is not necessarily a wise thing to do. Do not deprive yourselves of these wonderful privileges and pleasure.

Moderation in leisure means avoiding the idolatry in leisure. Leisure pursuit is capable of becoming a religion as well when people put other interests in the centre of their lives instead of God. For example, if everyday is play, then play will become tedious work one day. A good leisure life must meet spiritual and moral standards as well and contributes to one's personal wellbeing in constructive ways by opening up possibilities not present in the routine of work and obligation. The Puritans gave us a Christian perspective on what is generally not acceptable for leisure. The Puritans rejected games of chance like gambling, bear baiting (i.e. cruelty to animals), horse racing and carousing in and out of taverns. They were also wary of idleness, loafing and aimless inactivity. They honoured the Lord on the Sabbath in worship and rest and communion with the Lord and His people, and did spend more time with the family and the brethren in consecration and spiritual exhortation and reading of sound Christian literature.

It is possible that a legitimate leisure can be turned into inordinate affection and does not augur well for a person's spiritual health and vitality. For example, I know that there are some who are enthralled by or addicted to computer games (Diablo III launched last Sunday), TV, watching serial videos, listening to worldly music on the ipod and watching violent and occultic movies. For the children it can be excessive playing of Playstation, Transformers or other little obsessions including pets and other hobbies can be possible idols too. Others are enamoured with watching Youtube, chasing after NBA, world cup, rock music or worldly entertainment or football or golf. Some are enamoured with their leisure in that they neglect family, prayer, work and Sabbath worship. Be careful that these things be not carried to the extreme. It can do more harm than good to us spiritually if it is too excessive. Hope this helps

Jack Sin

(NB. For deeper studies, read Ryken Leland, *Redeeming the Time, A Christian Perspective of Work and Leisure*, 1995)

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Email from Bangalore

The drilling was completed and we got sufficient water. We thank the Lord for this; the Lord has been gracious unto us and remembered us once again. The drilling started early at 5am); the drilling machines and the vehicles arrived the previous night and it took almost the whole night for them to setup the system. The drilling continued throughout the day till late night and resumed the next morning at 5am.

The well is 1020 ft and the first source of water was found at 550 ft (a small source though). The next source was at 770 ft, and a few more at 850 and 960 ft.

The cost of the well has gone up much beyond what we had estimated earlier. For the drilling and casing, we have paid Rs 187,700.0 (S\$ 4700.0). The reason for this increase was that we had to use casing pipe till 160 ft depth due to loose soil. We need to spend another Rs 50,000 - 60,000 for the pump set and pipe and cable.

While drilling there was a bit of concern due to the loose soil, but we could complete the drilling without much problem. Pray that we will be able to lower the pump later and draw sufficient water.

Thank the Lord for all His goodness and mercies towards us every day. Once again, we want to thank all of you for praying for us and supporting us in this important need of the ministry here.

Thank the Lord for His provision as we are short of the total cost. In fact the total cost will be high as the cost of pipe and cable is much more than what I earlier thought of. We got a quotation for the same yesterday and I forward the same to you. For pipe and cable, the cost will be around Rs 80,000.0. This does not include the pump as we are planning to use the pump of the first borewell which is powerful enough to pump water from 1000 ft depth. Later, we may have to go for a lesser capacity pump for the old well, depending upon the level of water in that well. The cost for that would be around Rs 22,000.0.

The work for relocating the septic tank has started today and it will take at least two weeks to complete. We are making a big pit (6.0 ft width x 12.0 ft length x 16.0 ft depth) on the side of the front road, with stone walls and covering it with 6.0 inches thick stone slabs. This will be used as the septic tank, connecting to it the waste water coming from the toilets, bathrooms and kitchen. Once in a while we need to clear the tank, for which tanker lorry service is available, which will come with high capacity sucking machine to clear the tank.

Rev. George Skariah
Covenant BP Church,
Bangalore, India

(NB. We thank God for answering our prayers for providing this water source for the CBPCI and pray for the provision of other financial needs.)

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Celebration of Song Xi Hai's birthday and thanksgiving to God.



Andrew Lai teaching the Catechism Class to about 15 Chinese workers.

Associate Professor Stephen Phua (center) of NUS and his graduated student, Louise Huang (extreme right) from Shanghai who gave her testimony



Theme for the Quarter :
Portraits of Christ in John's Gospel
Rev. Peter Tan
Jesus, The Sympathetic Saviour (John 8:1-12)

[*End of MM*]