

MARANATHA messenger

Weekly Newsletter of

MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Private Circulation Only

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

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Sunday School: 9.45 am

Sunday English / Chinese Worship Service: 10.45 am Sunday Chinese Worship Service: 7 pm

Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8.00 pm

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

Offering our Spiritual Gifts and Talents for the Service of the Lord

We, Christians, are blessed with many spiritual gifts and talents which need to be used for the service of the Lord and for His glory. Spiritual gifts are the Holy Spirit's special enablement or bestowal upon Christians at the time of their conversion experience so that they would be able to serve the Lord as they grow in godliness and Christian maturity. Therefore, one can rightfully say that spiritual gifts are divinely given capabilities to be used in the church of God, especially in the area of spiritual service, for the common benefit of everyone in the congregation.

The Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 2:10 that, *we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* The word "workmanship" (Greek word *poiema*, means that which is made, has a connotation of a "work of art," especially that of a poetic work) means we are His masterpiece. The purpose of this masterpiece of God is good works that would be produced from within us. Good works are the aim of our salvation and the evidence of our faith in Him as the Apostle James explains in James 2:17-18, *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.* This is where the Spirit of God works in us, through the enablement of the spiritual gifts, that we would be able to serve Him. This is the rightful response of every truly born-again believer.

John F Walvoord, in chapter 4 of his "Contemporary Issues in the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit" explains, "Spiritual gifts are divinely given capacities to perform useful functions of God, especially in the area of spiritual service. Just as the human body has members with different capacities, so individual Christians forming the church as the body of Christ have different capacities. These help them contribute to the welfare of the church as a whole, as well as to bear an effective witness to the world. Spiritual gifts are bestowed by the sovereign choice of God and need to be exercised in the power and under the direction of the Holy Spirit."

Distinguishing Spiritual Gifts from Talents

A spiritual gift needs to be distinguished from a natural talent or a learned skill. Many people when they born many are blessed with natural talents. There are others who learn skills. But these are different from the Spirit enabled gifts. However, it may be difficult to make a clear cut distinction between a natural talent and a Spirit given gift.

Grace Gifts and Sign Gifts

Grace gifts or ordinary gifts are different from sign gifts or extraordinary gifts. Sign gifts are miraculous gifts, given only to certain groups of people, and for a purpose. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 gives the list of the sign gifts. The list includes prophesying, healing, speaking in tongues,

etc. These gifts were temporary in nature. The author of Hebrews says in Hebrews 2:3-4, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?* A W Pink explains, “This passage makes known to us God’s design in the miraculous gifts of the Spirit at the beginning of this dispensation. They were for the purpose of confirming the preached Word—for none of the New Testament had then been written! They were for the establishing of the gospel: not to beget and strengthen faith, but to cause unbelievers to listen to the Truth (compare 1 Cor 14:22, 24, 25)” (A W Pink, *The Holy Spirit*, 176.).

On the contrary, the grace gifts are special abilities given to believers by the Lord and His Holy Spirit for service in the body of Christ. These gifts are ministerial abilities, given by the special grace of the Lord to individual believers. These gifts need to be discovered and developed by active service.

Identifying Grace Gifts

Following are some of the grace gifts mentioned in the New Testament :

Serving (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:12) : The gift of serving is the gift of helping or ministering. This is a gift that most Christians are blessed with.

Teaching (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11) : Teaching is the God-given ability to clearly expound the details of God’s written revelation, the Word of God. This gift is sometimes given alone (Rom 12:7), and sometimes given along with the gift of pastor (Eph 4:11).

Evangelism (Eph 4:11) : This is a very special gift of preaching and sharing the gospel to others in season or out of season that souls be brought into the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. This can be done both publicly (eg like the Apostle Paul, going from country to country, city to city, and place to place, as an itinerant preacher) or privately (like Philip the evangelist or Onesimus, reaching out to people in their own capacity on one to one level). At the same time, we should remember that a person may do the work of an evangelist even though he may not possess the gift, as Paul exhorts Timothy, who was a pastor, to “do the work of an evangelist” (2 Tim 4:5).

Pastor (Eph 4:11) : The word “pastor” (in Greek *poimen*) means “to shepherd, to pastor.” The image of a shepherd with his flock pictures the relationship of a spiritual leader, appointed by God, to those committed to his charge, and he needs to be apt to teach, as the next word says in verse 11, and lead the congregation with an exemplary life. The gift of pastor involves leading, providing and caring for, and protecting the portion of the flock of God committed to his care. In Acts 20:28, the duty of ruling the flock is added. The words *elder*, *overseer*, and *shepherd* are all used of the same leaders of the Ephesian church (Acts 20: 17 and 28). Therefore, in the Presbyterian system of church government, the pastor is one of the elders of the church, but the term “pastor” is distinctively used to refer to his office, as he has the special gifts of teaching, exhorting, caring, and leading the people under his care.

Exhortation (Rom 12:8) : This involves encouraging, comforting, and admonishing people with the word. Take note that this is a separate and distinct gift from the gift of teaching. That means someone may have the gift of teaching, but not of exhortation and vice versa.

Faith (1 Cor 12:9) : Faith is the God-given ability to believe God’s power to supply needs and take care of our lives as we go through various circumstances in life. Every believer has been given a measure of faith (Rom 12:3), but some have a special gift of faith.

Discerning of Spirits (1 Cor 12:10) : This is to distinguish between true and false sources of revelation, especially used in dealing with the false prophets and the deception of the times.

Showing Mercy (Rom 12:8) : A gift very much needed in the pastoral ministry to show compassion and care and provide for the flock of God.

Giving (Rom 12:8) : This gift concerns a special burden to distribute one's own possessions to others to help them and for the work of God.

Administration (Rom 12:8; 1 Cor 12:28) : This is the ability or wisdom to organise the church for proper leadership with biblical convictions and principles.

Rev Dr George Skariah
Covenant BP Church
Bangalore, India

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Q & A

Q : What is the difference between young earth creation (YEC) and theistic creation (TE)? Based on genealogy found in bible records, the earth is about 6000 years old right? So is that view YEC or TE?

A : That is a good question. James Usher once did a calculation based on the genealogy of men and arrived at 6,000 years old for the age of the earth (i.e. we can put it as between 6,000—10,000 years).

From a careful study of the Bible (i.e. Genesis especially), we are persuaded that the Creation of the world occurred in six normal-length (24 hr) day. Genesis 1 use the phrase 'morning and evening' and Genesis 1 and 2 use of the Hebrew word "yom" which meant to the Jews a literal 24 hr day (YEC) and that God destroyed the earth with a global Flood during the time of Noah (Gen 7:9). Some liberal Christians, pastors and scientists (and it is getting more popular these days) do not accept the literal understanding and interpretation of Genesis and rather use their own ingenuity and by an unsubstantiated faith, believe and accept so called millions or even billions of years in creation (and put the unproven evolution on par with the biblical creation process of the bible). Their interpretation of Scripture is often influenced by "so called science," which, in reality, are the subjective naturalistic, uniformitarian interpretations by the evolutionists on scientific data with unsound presuppositions and are often highly speculative. Paul in 1 Timothy 6:20 says, '*O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.*'

We do not believe in TE which compromises biblical truth with manmade evolutionary ideas (from Charles Darwin and his atheistic view and the defective and unproven theory of evolution in his book, *The Origin of Species* in 1859) which is widely propagated today and which undermines the sovereignty of God and the biblical teaching of supernatural creation and catastrophe. The Bible teaches us that God still rules and superintends the world today. We believe in the absolute authority of the bible on the 6 literal 24 day creation which is normally called the young earth. Hebrew 11:3 says, '*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*' We stand with the Creation Science Foundation and most

conservative reformed theologians on this matter (there are others who may differ). TE is an oxymoron or a contradiction in terms (i.e. if we have God, then we do not need evolution and if there is really the process of evolution, then we do not need God to create anything at all).

There are good and sound (both biblically and scientifically) books and articles written on this theme by qualified scientists and theologians like Drs Henry Morris, Jonathan Sarfati, Gary Parker and John Whitcomb and books like *The Genesis Flood*, *The Early Earth* and *the Long War against God* are worth reading. You can read more from the Creation Science websites to get a deeper insight into this important subject.

Hope this helps

Jack Sin

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Email from Kenya

Dear Pastor, Rev Dr Jack & Mrs Angie Sin, the Session and the entire congregation of MBPC,

Blessed MBPC's 23rd Anniversary greetings in the Name of our Faithful Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We rejoice with you all dear brethren as you thankfully remember and celebrate God's goodness and faithfulness to MBPC for all these 23 years in Holy Worship on the Lord's Day of October 27, 2013. Indeed, the milestones (all with eternal value) that MBPC ministry has made in all these years in God's work has been realized all because of God's faithfulness and goodness. The Lord has enabled His servants in MBPC ministry to faithfully and fruitfully ever engage in the noble task of grounding God's people on sound biblical doctrines, equipping of the saints for ministry and spirited efforts in spreading the saving Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and indeed the whole counsel of God's Word to God's people not only in Singapore, but even to the regions beyond, through the airwaves, printed materials, and face to face. *"O How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.. Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the LORD"* (Psalm 36:7; 33:12; 144:15).

As we celebrate God's goodness together with you dear brethren on this blessed occasion of MBPC's 23rd Anniversary, by God's enabling grace and Spirit and for His own glory, we are trusting the Lord for greater things ahead through His ministry of MBPC. As my beloved teacher, Pastor Jack, used to exhort us in class thus, through the motto of the great missionary William Carey, "ATTEMPT GREAT THINGS (FOR GOD), EXPECT GREAT THINGS (FROM GOD)", so may we all be encouraged to persevere on in the Lord's work, for God Himself exhorts everyone of us thus, *"Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded"* (2 Chronicles 15:7). *To God be all the glory* (Psalm 115:1).

"And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered" (2 Chronicles 31:20-21).

Rev Francis Onyango Nyamiwa (& Violet)
Pastor / Lecturer



Song Xi Hai and some committed members of our Chinese Service.

23rd MBPC
Thanksgiving
Anniversary cum Baptismal Service
27 October 2013



Baptism of Isabelle Tan and David Zhang and Session welcome for Beverly Ye and all as our new members.

The children's choir item, *Welcome to the Family and This is my Father's World.*



The Church Choir's praise item, *God is Supreme!*

Chinese Service Choir item, *Give Me Your Heart.*



Sumptuous fellowship lunch for all after the worship service.

Theme for the Quarter :
Nurturing the Fear of God and Faith in Christ
Rev Ho Chee Lai
The Practice of Fear of God (Genesis 22:14; 1 Samuel 12:24)

[End of MM]