

MARANATHA MESSENGER

Weekly Newsletter of

MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Private Circulation Only

4 May 2014

"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)

A Fruitful Preaching Ministry Down Under

Introduction

Act 2:42-43, *'And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul:'*

By the will of the Lord, we thank God for a fruitful ministry in the church camp and services and youth meetings in Ebenezer BP Church, Melbourne (started in 1999 and now with about 100 worshippers) from 12 -24 April 2014 with Rev and Mrs Patrick Tan as our host and hostess. We were well received by the people of God with Christian hospitality from the Pastor, Session and brethren of Ebenezer BP Church. This church has a vibrant ministry among the young and old and is one of the few reformed churches in a growing secular community in Victoria.

We were comfortably settled in the commodious manse just a stone's throw away from the lofty and commanding heights of the Mt Dandenongs. We loved the flora and fauna as we walked towards the mountain ranges and enjoyed God's magnificent creation as the chirping robins, magpies, finches and bee eaters greeted us alongside the throttle brushes and aromatic autumn flowers along the way.

In our morning walks with the crisp fresh air of 12 degrees, we had the opportunity to meet different people including a Chinese man outside the church. We shared the gospel with him and gave him the MRM Chinese gospel tract. You never know who you will meet along life's way as the Lord leads.

We had a fruitful and lively first session with the combined bible study groups on 11 April 2014 on *Biblical Elements of the Maintenance of a God Honouring Covenant Marriage* as we searched the scriptures together with a lively



discussion with many questions asked as moderated by Dn Hou Lian.

The Good Friday and the Resurrection Sabbath Service Sunday was chaired by Eld Dr Stephen Lim and Dr Tan with an uplifting rendition on the power of the cross by the church choir and the dedication of the 28 new pews by Rev Tan followed by the message on *The 4 Fold Imperatives of the Christian Today*.



It is good to meet old friends (Allan whom I have not met for 30 years since NUS days) and to develop fresh ties with new ones when we came here 3 years ago and ministered at the youth retreat.

The City Group Fellowship Workshop had about 25 students who attended at the new location in Swanston Street after a dinner fellowship on the Armchair Christian as we examined the reasons for Christian nonchalance and the Biblical Ways to address it. There are many overseas students here studying in the 5 major universities and a great need for evangelistic outreach and discipleship as well.



It is heartening to meet up with some of these foreign university students there and hear their concerns and encourage them in the way and will of the Lord. We are overwhelmed by their gracious reception and benevolence as different families came to meet up with us and take us out for meals and as Psalm 133:1 says, *'A Song of degrees of David. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!'*

Thank God for His wisdom and unction for us as we ministered the word at the church camp (Angie Sin spoke 4 times to the children and once to the ladies as well) to about 70 campers on the theme *The Consecrated Christian Life*, with the following 6 messages :

- The Christian and Life
- The Christian and Lips
- The Christian and Links
- The Christian and Love
- The Christian and Longings
- The Christian and Labour





Praise the Lord for a God honouring conclusion to the Ebenezer BP Church camp as we meditated on the subject of *The Biblical Precepts for Christian Ambition* with lively interaction with Q and A after the Resurrection Sunday Service and message, the lunch fellowship and sharing by Angie Sin to the ladies on the ministry of Sunday School. We were all soberly challenged by the prophet, Jeremiah. Jeremiah 45:5, *'And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.'* (but there is a proper place for God centred goals and

objectives with godly contentment in life to glorify and honour our God, conscious of the brevity of life and the nearness of eternity).

We visited 8 homes with edifying fellowship to exhort and encourage one another with the word in the midst of life's exacting demands with the word of God. Every family has its challenges but God's grace is sufficient for us as we press on in His holy will (2 Corinthians 12:9).



Tea fellowship with Nick and Tina, a lovely Dutch couple where we read from JC Ryle.

We also visited the Presbyterian Theological College and met the principal, Rev Peter Hastie to discuss some theological and academic matters. We also had the opportunity to visit some places of interest with members who brought us there for a blessed fellowship together.



It is a joy to meet Daniel Lim, Hui Hui and baby Joseph and to witness a 14 month old lovely child growing cheerfully under caring parents and to see them keeping well in the Lord and their friends as well.

We met up with the session of Ebenezer BP Church and their wives for dinner on the final night to brainstorm and discuss strategies as to how we may serve the Lord more effectively in the local church. Pray for them as they seek the will of the Lord on many concerns of the church including the search for a new Pastor and more effective publicity for the church, children, childcare, youth and student ministries and not forgetting the seniors as well.

Conclusion

We live daily sustained by the grace of God as we learned of the sinking of the South Korean ferry with many children who died in the icy waters, while where we were in Australia. Psalm 90:12 say, *'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.'* Pray for God's guidance in our lives that we may live for eternity and lay our affections above, knowing the brevity of life. Pray for divine wisdom and grace for the leaders and members of Ebenezer BP Church as they seek the Lord's will for a more permanent resident Pastor and continue to serve the Lord faithfully with their



will for a more permanent resident Pastor and continue to serve the Lord faithfully with their

different gifts and talents. There is much to be done for the worthy cause of the glorious gospel of Christ in the saving of souls in Melbourne and beyond as we await the Lord's soon return.

Jack and Angie
Sin

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MRM resources displayed at the Ebenezer tract table.

A 2 acre church near the Dandenongs.



The Church Choir singing and great fellowship with the people.

The faithful stewards of the Church.

Edifying fellowship with different families over meals.

Appreciation from Ebenezer BP Church Campers

God has truly bless us with your ministry over the Easter period. Ebenezer Session and Congregation want to thank you both and pray that our association will continue to grow for His glory. We will continue to pray for both of you and Maranatha BPC as you keep us in your prayer. Australia is a hard ground and very much a pagan country despite its heritage. Do pray for God's direction to lead us where we can truly be fruitful in His ministry.

Dn Hou Lian / On behalf of Church Session

We deeply appreciate your ministry in our midst. We have benefitted and been deeply blessed. God's word has ministered to our hearts through you both.

We thank God for blessing us with your ministry in Melbourne in the past 10 days. We pray that the seeds of consecration sown in our hearts will blossom into revival in our lives, in our families and in the church.

Thank you for sharing these soul food. We really do appreciate the Bible verses and wisdom from scholars and saints. Thank you also for speaking to us during the Easter conference. We have learnt much and enjoyed the warm fellowship extended to us.

Thank you for your time with us in Melbourne during the Easter period. I personally found the conference and extra meetings beneficial and timely as the Lord is certainly leading me to re evaluate how I live my life with the view of being more focused on Eternity and time with Him.

It was wonderful to have spent some time with you and Angie in Melbourne during Easter. And thank you very much for leading us to a greater understanding of what it means to live a consecrated life.

Thank you very much for your messages at our recent Children's Easter camp. The children enjoyed the camp and hoped that the camp was for more days. We hope to see you soon in Melbourne. God bless you in your ministry.

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CBPCI Mission Trip (24 to 28 April 2014)

Introduction

After almost 9 years since the inception of Covenant BP Church India, by the mercies and grace of God the church has grown and there is now a need for the building to be expanded in order to accommodate the growing congregation and her ministries. There are also accounting issues to be clarified and simplified as keeping proper accounts for both CBPCI and Elim ministries has taken much time out of Rev Dr George Skariah's schedule. Elder Steven Ng and I embarked on the mission trip from 24-28 April 2014 for these two main purposes. This trip would also enable us to finally see the work in Bangalore as neither of us has been there.

Day 1

We arrived on Silkair 424 at 9am, Rev Dr George Skariah was there to greet us. What joy to finally meet him after 9 years of long distance partnership in the Lord's service. He looks well, full of joy in the Lord, which can be expected of someone who has dedicated his life to the Lord.

The drive to Hotel Octave took about 1 hour in morning traffic. After a quick drop off of our personal luggage we continued on to the church which was only 10 minutes away. We finally got to see the building which Maranatha BP Church helped to build by God's grace. It is a good sized building with much potential to cater to the growing spiritual needs of the fast expanding numbers of IT workers in the immediate neighbourhood. Within a stone's throw away are many plots of land where residential blocks are being built.

We had a warm and joyous reunion with the Skariah family. Mrs Bessy was beaming with joy, Abigail is already 17 and Nathanael 14. With the school holidays on, both children were at home and helping out with the children's summer camp.



We then discussed with Rev Dr George Skariah about church accounts before going for lunch at an Indian restaurant. After lunch we drove to Vathur village to visit Pastor Babu. He and his family were expecting us. Satyaveni his wife and Amulya his 10 years old daughter prepared some simple refreshments for us. It was encouraging to hear how Pastor Babu persevered

through the initial years at this village, facing opposition from the Hindu villagers some of whom threatened to kill him and actually beat him. But through much patience and waiting on the Lord, the opposition eventually faded by the higher working of God's hand. The church now has 100 villagers worshipping each Lord's Day. We saw the beautiful sanctuary on the newly constructed second level which the church members themselves built with their own hands. Laying of tiles, erecting of staircase railings all done by church members to the cost of only S\$45,000 for an additional 5000 sq ft of worship and fellowship area. What a testimony of God's working through His obedient servants. All praise and thanks be to God. The ministry is 14 years old.

In the evening we returned to CBPCI to meet one of Rev Dr George Skariah's members, brother Shijo Paul, an IT specialist who has availed himself to keep the church accounts. This is important to free up some time for Rev Dr George Skariah to focus on the preaching of the Word and prayer, as in Acts 6:4. Elder Steven Ng who is an accountant by profession spent some time teaching him how to keep the books using *Excel* and other accounting software. We thank God for His people who avail themselves to serve Him. It reminds me of Romans 12:1, "*I beseech ye therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*" This verse we see practiced in both churches in Bangalore and in Maranatha too. Praise The Lord!



Later that evening, we climbed up to the roof to see the area that would be built upon. The plan is to build another 2 and a half levels above the existing ground level. A total of 3 and a half stories. The ground level would be used for the Elim ministry. First floor would be the parsonage to house the Skariah family, the Pastor's office, 3 classrooms and a bookroom for

a future bible training center. The second floor would have the worship hall (200 people), 3 guest rooms, a dining hall and a classroom. The third floor would be dormitories and toilets for bible students. There would also be a lift on the external of the existing building to cater for the not so mobile to reach the worship hall. This plan would add on 15000 sq ft to the existing 5000. It is estimated to be about S\$500,000. CBPCI now has S\$47,000 of its own funds and we propose they need to raise more funds and challenge the people to give to support their own church. We will seek the Lord for His provision according to His will.

Day 2

Arriving at church in the morning, we witnessed Mrs Bessy and her staff at work for both the children's summer camp and the child care which are running concurrently.

Later that morning we sat with Rev Dr George Skariah and studied in detail the accounts for the Elim ministry. What was concluded was that the Elim ministry was run extremely well. They are staffed with well qualified teachers some of whom are committed church members themselves and the childcare is able to generate a healthy income which contributes to the Trust which in turn would enable the church to raise substantial funds for its building project.



In the afternoon, we met brother Belin another church member who is in the building committee. Brother Belin is 40 years old, his wife Sheela is on the teaching staff of Elim, they have 2 young children. Brother Belin who is an IT professional recently resigned from his job and is now pursuing a Masters in Divinity programme. He is also the editor of the *Reformation Today* magazine which is a publication of CBPCI. I have read several of his articles and I have both enjoyed and benefitted from them. The 4 of us discussed the proposed building project. Brother Belin shared with us the committee's vision for the project. They have 4 reasons for the project. First, the church has grown and is expected to continue growing as more IT staff move into the residential buildings being constructed all around the church. Second, many are young families that have need of childcare facilities, so the ground floor must be freed up for Elim. Third, there is an urgent need to train reformed pastors and evangelists and so a training center for this purpose is needed. Most churches in Bangalore are pentecostal or catholic. There are believers who stop attending church because they disagree with the charismatic movement. There is an overwhelming need for reformed pastors and churches. Fourth, the Pastor's office is now too close to the Elim ministry on the ground floor. During our time there we saw for ourselves how Rev Dr George Skariah is subjected to much noise and operating distractions due to the running of the Elim ministry. His office which is next to the entrance, so parents who come by to greet him and you hear the children's noisy play time. Therefore, having the Pastor's office on the next level is necessary to shield him from the noise and distraction so he can focus on the preparation of messages, writings and prayer.



In the evening, we were invited to the home of brother Manoj and sister Relda for family worship. Brother Manoj is a mechanical engineer and was baptized last year. Sister Relda hails from Indonesia, she used to worship at Kulai BPC when brother Manoj was working in Johore. A member from Kulai had informed Rev Dr George Skariah that Relda's family had moved to Bangalore and she was overjoyed to find a BP Church for her family to worship in. Together they have 3 young children. I had the privilege to share the word from Psalm 40:1-8 after which we

answered some questions from the children, had a time of prayer and praise. We were then invited to a sumptuous dinner cooked by sister Relda. *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity!"* Psalm 133:1.



Day 3 being a Saturday was relatively free as the Elim ministry does not operate on Saturdays. The Church Bible Study Class also broke for the holiday season and would resume in June. We therefore had the opportunity to take the Skariah family out for lunch, and we had Indian cuisine. Sister Bessy and children had been hosting us for dinner and it was meaningful for us to take them out and give sister Bessy a break. We had sweet fellowship around the

table.

After that sumptuous meal later in the afternoon we returned to church where Rev Dr George

Skariah discussed with us his vision for the training center. He mentioned that possible future staff included brother Belin who is the editor of the *Reformation Now* publication and currently pursuing an M Div. Brother John Rakshith who is doing his theological studies in the US and is expected to finish in 2016 has agreed to return to be one of its teaching staff too. Another brother Vankatesh who serves at a Reformed Presbyterian Church with Dr Ram Rao may be another potential lecturer.



Some of the worshippers after service, brother Belin is on the left in white long sleeves.

Day 4

On the Lord's Day, Elder Steven Ng was tasked to teach at the Sunday School Class on the *Doctrines of Grace*. There were around 20 in attendance. Worship service started at 10am, brother Belin chaired the service and Rev Dr George Skariah delivered the Lord's message from Luke 24.

The Kannada service started at 4pm. Around 20 villagers mostly women came to worship the Lord. Brother Praveen chaired the service whilst Pastor Babu delivered the Word. By divine arrangement, the message was also taken from Luke 24. The Kannada congregation are simple and poor people, many do not read, but they sang from memory. We saw the love that these women have for the Lord.



That evening before dinner which sister Bessy cooked, Nathanael said grace, knowing it was our last meal with the Skariah family made it difficult for me. I had seen a family completely devoted to the service of the Lord. With father, mother and each child involved in serving the Lord. It brought honour and glory to Christ. I felt happy for them but also sad that we would soon part ways. Rev Dr George Skariah drove us to the airport. We caught SQ503 back arriving safely last Monday morning at 6:30am.

We thank God for a blessed and productive trip. Let us remember to pray for the ministry in Bangalore that the Lord will continue to prosper the gospel work there and to keep His people.

Dn Terence Tan

(NB. Those who want to support this worthy cause of the church extension may designate your offerings to Missions Fund).

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Theme for the Quarter :
Great Spiritual Invitations of the Bible
Rev Dr Jack Sin

The Invitation to Free Food for the Soul (Isaiah 55:1-11)

[End of MM]