

MARANATHA MESSENGER

Weekly Newsletter of

Private Circulation Only

MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

30 December 2018

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

Address: 63 Cranwell Road, Singapore 509851

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Sunday School: 10 am

Sunday English / Chinese Worship Service: 10.45 am Sunday Chinese Worship Service: 7.30 pm

Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8.00 pm

Rev Colin Wong (HP : 9665 8160); Elder Daniel Tau (HP : 9761 5415); Elder Peter Ong (HP : 9626 7045)

ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEW YEAR?

Traditionally, in most cultures, the people of the world observe the beginning of a New Year. In New York City, every year as the clock nears midnight on December 31st, the eyes of the world turn once more to the dazzling lights and bustling energy of Times Square. Anticipation runs high.

New Year's Eve at the symbolic Center of New York City has become more than just a celebration – it's a global tradition. The world holds its breath and cheers as the clock strikes twelve. As the famous New Year's Eve Ball descends from the flagpole atop One Times Square, 750,000 or more people in Times Square, millions nationwide and billions worldwide watching throughout the world are united in bidding a collective farewell to the departing year, and expressing their joy and hope for the year ahead.

One signboard in Times Square, Manhattan, reads:

"Ring in the New Year at the wildest party of the year! Be part of the dazzling lights and bustling energy of Times Square. Watch the descent of the famous New Year's Eve Ball, a tradition which has become the universal symbol of welcoming the New Year. For 100 years, New York City's Times Square has been the center of the universe on New Year's Eve."

This is how the people of world welcomed the New Year. The tradition gives them "high" hope – hope that perhaps this will be the year that they have been waiting for, the year that will end all years, the year that will go down in history as their finest hour. But many of them also know that it will never happen that way.

I wonder how Christians in Singapore welcome the New Year tomorrow night. Will they join the thousands of party-goers at Orchard Road or Sentosa or Marina Bay welcoming the New Year?

Our church has a very good tradition. We welcome and begin the New Year by attending the Watchnight Service. We come to worship God. We come to reflect on the past year and give

thank to God for his faithfulness, love, care, protection, provision and protection. We come to pray. When the clock strikes twelve, instead of the famous New Year's Eve Ball descending from the flagpole atop One Times Square, we utter a heartfelt prayer to God: *"So teach us to number our days (in 2019), that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"* (Psalm 90:12).

With the New Year at hand, some of us find ourselves still thinking of the year that lies mostly behind us now. Some of us had set resolutions for 2018 but our good intentions were quickly forgotten and blown away by the rushing winds of busy society. We look back and see some exciting successes and some stunning failures. We say to ourselves, that's life!

Welcoming the New Year is like entering a dark passage. We do not know what we may meet before the end, for it is filled with uncertainties. We do not know what a day may bring forth, much less what may happen in a year. But we are ever ready for the New Year. We can face it with great confidence, confidence not in ourselves, but in the sovereign God. When the storms of life beat about us, we can cling to him and never go down. He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). When the winds beat on us, we can look to him for help and deliverance. We will hear him say, *"Be not afraid, I am with you. I am the Master of ocean and sky, I will bear you up"* (Isaiah 43:2). Such is the confidence we have in our great God.

Yes, we do not know what the year 2019 will bring, but this one thing we know and that is, "We know who holds tomorrow and we know who holds our hand." The Psalmist says, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4). God promises to be with us in all circumstances (Isaiah 43:2). We have God and his Word to guide us (Psalm 119:105). What have I to ask beside? Can I doubt his tender mercy who through life has been my Guide?

With these words, my dearly beloved, may God not only grant you wisdom, grace, patience, guidance and strength to live for Jesus and his Kingdom, but also may your love abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment so that you may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offence till the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:9).

Make the Year a Stepping-Stone to Growth

Whatever the New Year has in store
Remember there's always a good reason for
Everything that comes into our life,
For even in times of struggle and strife
If we but lift our eyes above
We see "our cross" as a "gift of love"...
For things that cause the heart to ache
Until we feel that it must break
Become the strength by which we climb
To higher heights that are sublime...
So welcome every stumbling block
And every thorn and jagged rock,
For each one is a STEPPING-STONE
To a fuller life than we've ever known,

And in the radiance of God's smiles
We learn to soar above life's trials...
So let us accept what the New Year brings,
Seeing the HAND of GOD in ALL THINGS,
And as we grow in strength and grace
The clearer we can see God's face.

(Unknown)

Pastor Colin Wong

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Testimony of Brother Wang Shu Qiang

The first time I came to Maranatha BP Church was sometime in August or September 2017. As the dormitory I lived in moved from Tampines to Marsiling subsequently, I lost touch with the Church. I returned to Singapore in 2018 and at the invitation of brothers Man Xing and Xue Feng, I returned to Maranatha BPC again. I was an atheist and did not believe in God when I was in China. I attended other churches previously, including one located at Marine Parade. However, those periods were brief.



Jesus anointed a blind man with clay and asked him to wash his eyes. After that, the blind man could see! Jesus healing of this blind man touched my heart!

During the period when I lost touch with Maranatha, I acknowledged that I was a sinner who had sinned against God. Only by coming before Him with a repentant heart, and through the help of the Holy Spirit could I be saved and my relationship with God be restored. Each time I look up to the cross, I thought of how my Lord had died for me. His blood was shed for the remission of my sins.

After I came to know the Lord, I would recall scripture verses at work. Whenever I could, I would sing hymns to praise the Lord.

I know the meaning behind baptism. I also know that the old man in me must die and I must put on the new man, and be transformed.

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Theme for the Quarter :

**LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE WORLD
(The Study of the Epistle of James)**

English Worship Service :

Rev Ho Chee Lai
speaks on

A Barometer for our Spiritual Growth

(Spiritual Text : Ephesians 4:13; Responsive Reading : Ephesians 4:1-16)

[*End of MM*]