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# BETHESDA NEWSLETTER

APR  
MAY 10



### Editorial Committee

William Koh (Editor)  
 Chow Chiew Gee  
 Wong Tuck Keong  
 Lois Choa  
 Lydia Choa  
 Hannah Sim  
 Jordan Tan

### Advisor

Tan Jing Poi

Printed by  
 NPE Communications Pte Ltd

Design and layout by  
 Cherie Moh

### Bethesda Hall (Ang Mo Kio)

No. 601 Ang Mo Kio Ave 4  
 Singapore 569898  
 Tel: 065-6458-7474  
 Fax: 065-6456-6771  
 Email: bethesdahall@gmail.com

### Bethesda Hall (Depot Walk)

10 Depot Walk  
 Singapore 109590  
 Tel: 065-6276-2484  
 Fax: 065-6276-2483

# ASSEMBLY NEWS

## Bereavement

12/03/10 – John Chandran, Siew Kim and family on the home calling of Siew Kim's mother.

13/03/10 – Michael Choo, Lisa and Bryan on the home calling of Michael's mother.

22/03/10 – Philip and Vivien Phay on the home calling of their son, Wesley.

19/04/10 – Yeo Peck Choon and Suzanne on the passing away of Peck Choon's grandfather.

Our deepest sympathy to the above brethren in their bereavement. Pray for the Lord's comfort and consolation to each of them during this time.

## Our New Members

We praise the Lord for the step of discipleship taken by the following through the waters of baptism on 21st March 2010: Evelyn Tan Gek Lan, Yeo Tun Ren, Chia Jiang Ping, Timothy Joachim S/O Kuehsamy, Darren Kui, Jessica Kang Siew Hwee, Lucius Tan Ren Jie, Lin Hsing Chi and Gan Sean Aaron.

We welcome them with joy into our fellowship together with Ng Lai Mei (7 March 2010), Rayson Amadeus Lee (28 March 2010) and Seah Seow Lan (25 April 2010) from other churches who desired to be identified with us. Let us fellowship with each of them and fulfill the expressed purpose of an assembly.



Our newly baptised members ↴

# ASSEMBLY NEWS

## Our New Deacons



New deacon - Kenneth Khong ↴

We thank the Lord for raising two more deacons in the persons of Kenneth Khong and Felix Lim.

Kenneth aged 29 was saved in 1991 and baptised on 19 Jan 1997. He is actively serving as a member in the Assembly Evangelistic Committee, Usher committee, COPA Gospel Meeting Committee, Mission Group, Representative of Bedok RFG and DW YP Senior Co-ordinator. Besides serving, he is also involved in the CEP, Bible Reading and many past overseas mission trips. Outside the assembly, he is a Post System Administrator with Spinnaker 360 Pte Ltd.



New deacon - Felix Lim ↴

Felix Lim Jih Cheon aged 46 was saved in 1982 and baptised on 10 August 1986 at Sungei Nibong Gospel Centre (Penang). He came to Singapore to study in 1983 and was led to attend the meetings of Bethesda Hall (BB). He has been serving as a leader in our Christian Education Programme since its commencement in 1989. In the past, he was the YP co-ordinator at Bethesda Hall (AMK) and contributed much in the A & A works of Bethesda Hall (DW). He is presently actively serving in the Joint Building Committee to help oversee future building works for the Bethesda Hall (AMK) and also in areas of new school development in Cambodia. He is married to Lim Mei Lin, currently a Sunday School Teacher in the assembly with 2 school-going children, Judith Lim Han, aged 13 and Joel Lim Kuan, aged 11. Outside the assembly he is an architect with Lend Lease.

Recognising their qualities and affirmative response to the Lord's call to be involved in the deacon ministry, they were commended to the Lord on 7th March 2010.

# ASSEMBLY NEWS



Our dentists and helpers at the COPA MDEC Dental Screening ↴

**12th March 2010** **Dental Screening for K2 Kindergarten children (AMK), 6.30 – 9.30pm**

We are indebted to the Lord for the COPA MDEC Committee in organising the dental screening for our kindergarten where 57 K2 children were screened by Drs Lim Wee Sang, Esther Ogawa and Chng Huey Shin assisted by some assembly members. Children were also taught how to take care of their teeth by some assembly members. Some of the kindergarten staff manned the registration counter and also distributed the door gifts to each child. Our Children's Corner took the opportunity to screen a Christian video for the children during the waiting time as well as to publicise their meetings to them.

**13th March 2010** **BDW COPA OAR VISIT TO JB/KUKUP**

39 attended - 27 adults (6 POAS) and 12 children They visited a chocolate factory, batik factory, fish farm, and also did shopping at Jusco shopping centre.



DW 1 Day Batik Workshop & Kukup Tour ↴

**14th March 2010** **146th Sunday School Prize Giving Day, 7.15pm**

**Speaker: Mau Teck Hwee**

**Chairman: Stephen Chang**

**Theme: And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you (Jeremiah 7:23)**

167 were awarded prizes of which 36 were Roll of Honour About 300 attended.

# ASSEMBLY NEWS



Kian Huat spoke at the Kindergarten Easter Special (AMK) ↴

**1st April 2010** **Kindergarten Easter Special (AMK), 9am**

**Speaker: Tan Kian Huat**

**Chairman: Wong Tuck Keong**

**Theme: "Rejoice"**

Song items were presented by the kindergarten children. More than 300 attended



One of the items presented by the children at the Kindergarten Easter Special (AMK) ↴

**1st April 2010** **Kindergarten Easter Special (DW), 9am**

**Speaker: Daniel Thein**

**Chairman: Tay Kim Swee**

**Theme: Wonderful Love of God**

Song items were presented by the kindergarten children. More than 200 attended.



Bethesda Choir with Eric, Chong Kiat and Harry in the middle taken at the Easter Conference ↴

**2nd April 2010** **Easter Conference (AMK), 9am**

**Speaker: Harry Tan**

**Chairman: Eric Choa**

**Theme: The Resurrection: Glimpses and Pictures in the Old Testament**  
**The Resurrection: Glory and Power in the New Testament**

Bethesda Choir presented the Easter Cantata "Because He Lives". About 500 attended.

**2nd April 2010** **GB Enrolment Service, 1.30 – 3.30pm**

**Theme: Living with purpose**

**Speaker: Mau Teck Hwee**

Singspiration by Lynette Khong. 40 families, 10 assembly members, 42 girls and 6 helpers attended.

# ASSEMBLY NEWS



Male performers of the Evangelistic Outreach

2nd April 2010 **Young Adults Gathering, 3 – 5.30pm**

**Theme: LIFE Music - Evangelistic Outreach**

**Location: Love the World Cafe @ Singapore Flyer**

Song items and testimonies were presented. About 100 attended.



Group of girls singing for the Evangelistic Outreach

3rd April 2010 **Combined BB Enrolment Service & Parade, 9am**

**Speaker: Joseph Sng**

**Guest-of-honour: Mrs Doris Lim (Principal, Mayflower Secondary School)**

**Chairman: Robert Hmar**

110 attended.



Combined BB Enrolment Service & Parade on 3 April 2010

# ASSEMBLY NEWS

4th April 2010

**Easter Gospel Service, 6pm**

**Speaker: Kenneth Wong**

**Chairman: David Kwan**



Kenneth Wong (Speaker) and David Kwan (Chairman) for the Easter Gospel Service

Bethesda Choir presented the Easter Cantata "Because He Lives"

More than 100 attended.

We thank the Lord for this Easter time where the assembly and various activity groups took the opportunity to make Christ known through songs and sermons at their respective special meetings. Let's continue to be faithful and fervent in making Christ known to those in contact with us.



Bethesda Choir presented the Easter Cantata at the Easter Gospel Service

10th April 2010

**COPA OAR Lunch for the Blk 257 elderly residents, 11am**

24 residents & 8 POAs spent 3 hours together over lunch and viewing a My Hope Singapore Video, "Starting all over" with a Billy Graham clip preaching the gospel. We believed many were moved by the gospel message and trust the Lord for soon bringing in the harvest.



# EDITORIAL

## Editorial by Jordan Tan

As the year drags into mid-season, it is perhaps time for us to regain our focus by meditating upon the life and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. While it is easy to make bold resolutions at the start of the year, it is much harder to commit to them when they seem to grow insignificant with more distractions and passing of time. The Christian, however, has been called to *'run (not walk) with perseverance'* the race which that God has marked out for us (Heb 12:1).

We can only do that – as continued in verse 2 – by *'looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith'*

### The Author

It was our names that were engraved in His heart when He finished God's script of the redemption plan by dying on the cross. It is from His death that we can start our

lives on the new page of faith. This newness of life is what the Young Adults (YA) group of Bethesda (Ang Mo Kio) was singing about during their recent YA LIFE Music event which our brother Tan Tze Yong has covered in this issue.

As the master author, He has further written the greatest irony, when through His death and suffering, our lives can be filled joy and purpose as expressed by Lynette Khong and Tan Li Sheng in their respective articles.

### The Finisher

Indeed, He finished the work on the cross when He died and rose again. However, He has yet to finish the work He started in us and is therefore actively working in the lives of Christians till He comes again. Choy Wai Fann's article is a good reminder to us that He who finished the work on the cross is also more than able

to finish the work in perfecting our lives.

As such, Jesus is really all that we need for the race that is before us. He is our life, our joy, our purpose and our perfecter. Therefore, as we look upon Jesus, may Joseph Sng's and Elizabeth Wong's write-ups also move us to re-dedicate and persevere in our service to God, be it locally or in a foreign land.

For there is *PERSEVERANCE* for a look at Jesus!

# It is finished! And that is enough for me!

Choy Wai Fann

All that was needed to be done was done.

- On the cross, Jesus asked forgiveness for the soldiers,
- promised paradise for the thief who believed,
- committed Mary to the care of John,
- expressed thirst to fulfill the scripture,
- cried out in despair for being forsaken,
- declared the completion of His task, and
- committed His spirit to His father.

During those last hours, Jesus summed up His entire mission on earth. He had to die for the sin of the whole world so that all who believe in Him will be forgiven. In dying, He began His journey to prepare a place for all those who believe. His dying would not be possible if He had not been the God incarnate Son of Mary. He was fully human, the perfect Man and only Lamb of God who could take away the sin of the world. He was with God from the beginning and had never known separation

till He bore our sin. That could have been the reason for His excruciating agony in the garden where sweat drops of blood came through. Separation was inconceivable. Being forsaken was like being cut open. Bearing our sin on His sinless being was a cup He pleaded not to drink, if possible. He beseeched God again and again, but He submitted. When He finally drank the last drop of that bitter cup, He knew it was done! It was over and He would cast Himself into the bosom of His Father.

What a life and what a death! Being buried, He did the work that needed to be done to remove the sting of death. When He rose from the dead he proved every claim he made. He completely satisfied the requirements of God for the salvation of man.

This was enough for the early church; they lived, they died and they suffered gladly for the cause of Christ. Paul wrote regarding the hardships he suffered saying that *"we were under great*

*pressure, far from our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed in our hearts we felt the sentence of death"* 2

Corinthians 1:8b-9a. Today, many believers in many parts of the world believe Christ is enough and worth their hardships and suffering.

What about us? Has He done enough for us?

Yes, His death was enough for all the offences mankind has done against God. There is therefore no one I cannot forgive for I am not greater than God.

Yes, the home He is now preparing for me surpasses the most magnificent dwelling on earth. If on earth He had no where to rest His head, can I be unhappy with what I have?

Yes, He consistently cares for those He loves; He treasures relationships and family and has made sure we have become His family. The relationship in the family requires us to take responsibility for one another.

It is a wonderful thing when we have people in our lives to shop for, to cook for, to celebrate birthdays with, to consult in decision making, to dream dreams and to share resources with. The family at home and at church local and universal is the community we can enjoy and express this “we-ness”. That is the purpose that God gave us relationships. Let us take responsibility.

Yes, He completely understands the finiteness of the human body. Let us fully enjoy and extend the faculties we have, for in time these good things will pass. Painful joints, limited back functions, poor eyesight, fats and flab where they don't belong, loss of hearing or taste, slow reflexes – these inconveniences will pass too. It is enough that we are getting new glorified bodies.

Yes, being forsaken is very personal to Jesus. He experienced it from the beginning of creation and experienced it profoundly through the covenant relationship with Israel. But

on the cross, it is beyond measure to have God the Father turned His face away. Yes, He drank the full cup for us, so let us not forsake Him. Let us not forsake those He commits to our care and let us not forsake those we promise to commit till separation by death. For everyone we hurt by forsaking, we hurt Him and this must stop.

It is enough that He finished the enormous work of redemption. There is nothing we can do to make Him love us more and nothing we can do to make Him give us up. Let us abandon ourselves to His care because He cares for us.

*‘The LORD your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, and He will rejoice over you with singing.’*  
Zephaniah 3:17

And if you ask me, HE is more than enough!

# T.G.I.G.F

(Thank God It's Good Friday)  
Tan Tze Yong

The Bethesda Ang Mo Kio Young Adults (YA) ministry organized an evangelistic “LIFE Music” event on Good Friday this year at the ‘Love the World’ café located in the Singapore Flyer complex. In line with the YA’s objectives, the event was held to provide a platform for our young adults to invite their friends to join in on our activities and in so doing, give us an opportunity to share the Gospel with them.

In the process of organizing this event, it was heartening for me to see many brothers and sisters in Christ stepping forward to put up song items and share testimonies with the purpose of sharing the Gospel through them. Our faith was tested when some of us were worried about the turnout of the event and whether we could meet our target of fifty people. However, prayer prevailed and eventually, almost a hundred people (including

thirty newcomers) attended this evangelistic event! God is indeed amazing and His providence of the unexpected turnout reminded me of Matthew 17:20 - *“I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”*

Chaired by brother Wong Yong Jian, the theme of “LIFE Music” was this: “If your life had a sound track, what would it be?” The programme, faithful to the theme, saw many of the youths singing songs that share the Christian Life to others and how through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, non-Christians can have hope in God.

Our brother Wan Yin Chi and sister Chen Enling also shared their Christian walk in the form of a talkshow where our host, Yong Jian, ‘interviewed’ them. Living a

Christian life is not easy and smooth going. Yin Chi and Enling shared that Christians do face problems just like anyone else in the world. Sometimes when things are going well, you feel that God is keeping you in the palm of His hand. Other times, when the going gets tough, you worry and cry out to God in your brokenness. Their sharing reminded us that at all times, it will do us well to remember that God is in control.

Many of us who came for the event were blessed and reminded that on that Good Friday two thousand years ago, Jesus died for our sins so that we can be alive again through His sacrifice. God was certainly in our midst and He is indeed faithful when we follow the Great Commission. The YA committee is grateful to the Lord for a unique “LIFE Music” Good Friday!

# To Myanmar With Love

Elizabeth Wong



From (10th to 16th April 2010) the four of us (Aaron Wong, Daniel Skelton and Wong Tuck Keong and I) went on a mission trip to Myanmar. We arrived at the newly built Yangon International Airport in searing heat, with the mercury level hitting 41°C. From there, we took a domestic flight to Mandalay, where we were greeted by a brother from the Myanmar assembly. After a two and half hour journey in a taxi, we arrived at our destination, Pyin Oo Lyin.

Eden Hotel, the place where we stayed, looked like a run-down version of the old Bras Basah Mission House.

We were told that every April, Myanmar is hot and dry, with a consistently high temperature between 36°C and 41° C. To make matters worse, to conserve energy, electricity supply was cut daily during noontime! The locals, however, were used to the heat. Indeed, it was the norm for all meetings to be carried out with members donning long-sleeved attire, though they were without the comfort of fans throughout the day.

The local believers meet for Worship and Ministry at Ebenezer Hall every Lord's Day. Brother K S is the elder and the overseer for the Training School where our

Bible teaching sessions were conducted over three days. He is ably assisted by brothers Mong N, Ye M, Ar N and Biak L T, all of whom are involved in the teaching ministry at the Training School. These three brothers did the interpretation during the teaching of the word by Aaron, Daniel and Tuck Keong.

The trip saw about 80 youths gathered from different states for our intensive sessions on Christian Living. Our three brothers each took five topics, excluding three unscheduled Gospel meetings and two ministry messages within three days. The unpleasantness caused

by the heat and stuffiness at the training school was much compensated by the eagerness and patience of the participants. His mercies and saving grace were evident when two young men trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ on the first day of Gospel preaching.

We saw the hand of the Lord working in our own lives too. Though we had a fully-packed schedule at Pyin Oo Lyin, because we did not want to waste any time following our long journey from Singapore, the power of the Lord was visible as each brother ably delivered their assigned topics with vigorous commitment to the Word. In addition, Tuck Keong was invited to speak at a separate gathering for two evenings where several young people were present. They were very receptive to the Word of God and listened attentively even though the meeting place was hot and stuffy.

We also enjoyed some lighter moments, travelling by bikes back to the hotel from the Training School on several

occasions. This also helped us save on some transport expenses. We also had the opportunity to visit the farms set up for victims of the 2008 Cyclone Nargis. Due to the dry weather, the farms hardly had any harvest and the strawberries were very tiny. We saw the single cow which was purchased from the balance of an aid fund. This cow had since given birth to a female calf. However, both the cow and calf required better nourishment as the cow was not producing sufficient milk. We told the believers that it was our prayer that the cows would multiply so that their farms would be self-supporting from the sale of milk. Through the visit to the farms, I saw that in spite of the many difficulties faced in their simple day-to-day living, the believers still harboured a sincere desire to learn and obey the Bible.

As I reflect on the trip in the comfort of my home, I realise that I may have taken the precious blood of our Saviour lightly. Mine was just the experience of living with the

discomforting heat in Myanmar for a few short days, but our Lord Jesus Christ made a far greater sacrifice by coming down from the comfort and glory of heaven to live among sinful ones so as to redeem us from our sins. His sole purpose of bridging us back to God was fully accomplished when He sacrificed His life on the cross. May we be moved by the love that He has shown, and may our thoughts always revolve around making Christ known, be it in Singapore, Myanmar or any other part of the world. After all, John 3:16 clearly states that God so loved the world...

*This May, some of the brothers in leadership positions will hold a Bible conference in the Chin State. It would involve two days' travel by transport and three days' travel by foot through thickly forested terrain. They will each take turns to sleep during the night as there is danger posed by wild animals. Please pray for them as they make this journey.*

# Living with purpose

Lynette Khong



JESUS CHRIST IS LORD



“Life without Jesus has no purpose, and life without purpose is meaningless.’ This is the essence of what brother Mau Teck Hwee shared with 42 girls, 40 parents and relatives, and 12 assembly members during the 57th Singapore Girls’ Brigade Enrolment Service on 2 April 2010 at 1.30pm. Brother Mau further illustrated his point through the story of the Three Trees.

“Three trees grew beside one another in a forest. The first tree wanted to be a treasure chest to hold the greatest

treasure in the world. The second tree aimed to be a big sailing ship to carry the most important person. The third tree just wanted to be the tallest tree to point people to God. The woodcutters then came to chop down the trees. The first tree was made into a feeding box, while the second was made into a tiny fishing boat and the third tree was chopped into planks. It seemed that all their ambitions were unfulfilled. However, one night, the Baby Jesus was placed into the feeding box and the first tree knew that

his wish had been fulfilled as he held the world’s greatest treasure. 30 years later, Christ was in the tiny fishing boat in the midst of a storm and the second tree heard Christ said, “Peace, be still” and the winds and the waves died down. The second tree then realized that he was carrying the most important person in the world. Some time later, the third tree was nailed into a cross on which Christ was hung. And the third tree realized that whenever people saw the cross, they would be pointed to God. So all three trees had

their hopes fulfilled in ways that they had never imagined. This could happen for us too. However, we first must have Christ in our life in order for our lives to be purposeful and meaningful.”

After the enrolment service, the girls gave a song item, “Living for Jesus”, and all had a good time of fellowship over tea. We are thankful for the steadfast support of the members of Bethesda Hall Ang Mo Kio and to the Principal and staff of Mayflower Primary School who have made it possible

for the 57th Coy to exist so that the gospel can be shared with these girls-that they may find true purpose in their lives.

# Reflections of Combined BB Enrolment 2010

Joseph Sng

Minutes before the start of the Combined BB Enrolment and Dedication service on 3rd April at AMK, while going through my notes for the message, Brother Stephen Chang approached me with a request to write honestly, as an independent observer, my thoughts and observations of the event for an assembly newsletter article. It was really difficult to turn down this earnest, faithful and humble Elder that I have come to know, respect and love. Knowing personally how much he has sacrificed for the Lord to keep this ministry going, I thought this is, perhaps, the least I could do.

Reflecting on that eventful morning, amidst all the new faces, radiant colours, smart uniforms, badges, sumptuous lunch and parade, I only have this vividly clear picture in my mind...

Under the merciless glare of the fast rising morning sun streaming into our transformed car park parade ground, the boys in

their smart BB uniforms – their well earned badges proudly displayed on their sleeves – were marching into their assigned positions. With perspiration pouring down many young cheeks, these older boys showed great discipline and determination to stay in their positions. Then a little commotion turned my attention to the far corner where the youngest company was trying to get in line to form the welcome party for the arriving Guest of Honour. I couldn't help but notice what a mess they were. Their marching was uncoordinated and they were not taking the ceremony seriously, laughing away and having a whale of a time. But their youthful exuberance, enthusiasm, innocence, contagious smiles and joy on their faces were enough to melt every one's heart to quickly overlook the mess. Looking closely to see who was giving the marching orders and expecting to see a ram rod straight smart figure of man - tough, rugged, fierce looking, with a loud booming voice, what I saw really surprised me.

Grey haired, looking tired, back bent and shoulders drooping, the figure was the very picture of a weary battle worn warrior with a voice barely audible. Still, with a steely resolve, a face aglow with love, joy, warmth, patience and gentleness that seemed to energise with each determined step, he tried and struggled to instil some semblance of order and discipline. I had to look again to make sure my eyes agree with my own fading memory bank that he was indeed Kim Swee, the Chaplain of the 29 J BB Co, Mayflower Primary School. How did the Chaplain end up giving out "left, right, left, right, brehen...til"? This was the most poignant picture in my mind that perhaps sums up everything I felt that morning.

Looking around, I couldn't help but notice our legion of "Kim Swees" in Stephen Chang, Robert Hmar, Johnny Fan, Andrew Sng, Francis Toke, Henry Soh, Yeo Ann Kian, Daphne Chiam and Janet Lim, all greying but each still glowing in their

enthusiasm and commitment. They exemplify what this verse means to me "... as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart", Ephesians 6:6. The contrasts with the boys who look so young, eager and energetic were so strikingly and painfully obvious. Looking at this, my heart welled up with deep respect and regard for these brothers and sisters who have soldiered on faithfully, lovingly, humbly, quietly, giving themselves every precious Saturdays weekly for years – and for some even their leaves and time during the weekdays – to this outreach effort. I wondered if these 2 verses, Gen. 15:1b, the Lord's promise that He will be "*Thy exceeding reward*" and Neh. 8:10b "*...for the joy of the Lord is your strength*" are the secret to their faithfulness and fruitfulness. Truly, they must be an example, an inspiration, encouragement and motivation to all of us. Seeing a youthful and promising Wesley Ng looking so smart and fresh in the BB officer's uniform was indeed a welcomed sight. It was also

very encouraging to see Melissa Wee helping out as a volunteer in training the young BB boys to do the dance and skit items. In the video presentation highlighting the BB 2009 activities, it was so nice to see younger brothers like Joel and Amos Chew involved. A picture in the video presentation of a smart, strong, serious, tough and fit looking Andrew He in the BB officer's uniform commanding last year's parade sums up what we really need for this ministry to grow.

Looking at the joyful and keen faces of the BB boys in the video presentation, the encouraging support of the 3 schools and the presence of so many parents, one cannot help but feel the tremendous opportunities the Lord has given to us to reach the unsaved children, their parents and the staff in these 3 schools. It is obvious that there is a very urgent need for younger ones with the energy, enthusiasm and experience to come in to learn, work alongside and

share the load with our seasoned veterans before eventually taking over this ministry. Our veterans who are still running the race (when they should be coaches instead) are constantly praying and looking forward to pass the baton to the next able and willing runner.

Perhaps the most ideal replacement would be the older boys who have come to know our Lord personally thru the BB activities and joined our church. They should return to their alma mater to lead as BB officers. But this is proving to be quite a challenge, as we don't seem to be able to attract many of these BB boys into our Assembly after all these years with only the possible exception of Andrew He and Poh Wei Hao. As an Assembly, we have to look at how we can reach out to these boys who our BB officers have tried so hard and often to invite and bring to our meetings and activities.

# That Your Joy May Be Full

Tan Li Sheng

*You will show me the path of life;  
In Your presence is fullness of joy;  
At Your right hand are pleasures  
forevermore.*

Psalms 16:11

Recently, I was bothered about the lack of evidence of the aspect of the fruit of the Spirit known as 'joy' amongst us believers. While I am tremendously thankful for fellow Christians that I can share my problems and pray together with, many of us seem to be so much more sorrowful and troubled than our non-Christian friends. I realise to some extent this is the natural result of the greater openness and honesty in Christian fellowship; but it does make me wonder, what happened to joy?

The first question to ask is "what is joy?" As the fruit of the Spirit, it cannot be produced by those who do not have the Spirit. This gives us a clue as to what joy is not:

- Not the warm fuzzy feeling that one gets from romance

or friendship;  
- Not the "high" that one gets from drugs, alcohol, good food, good entertainment, hobbies we enjoy etc;  
- Not the happiness that one gets from good exam results or other kinds of success.

Having eliminated all these, what are we left with? Well, the Bible records Christ's own teachings concerning joy – in particular, just before his crucifixion, he told his disciples not once but twice of how their joy could be filled to the fullest.

First: **John 15: 9-11**. Here Christ reassures us that He loves us as the Father has loved Him. This love is one of the keys to joy – but our consciousness of it depends on keeping His commandments. His love to us is unchanging, but in order to "abide" in it, we must have obedience.

Second: **John 16: 20-24**. Here Christ refers to His resurrection and promise that "I will see you again" as another basis for our joy.

"Your joy no one will take from you," our Lord promises. This joy is independent of circumstances and emotional swings. What is the key? "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." So often we ask God for material or worldly blessings – not truly asking in the name of the risen Lord. "In His name" means to pray in consistency with His character and His will, ourselves being willing to carry it out no matter the cost.

At the end, one thing about joy is clear: it's not a feeling, but an aspect of character. So now, suppose we truly ask in Jesus' name for the Spirit to produce the character of joy in us. Is the evidence of progress merely feelings of bliss, or something else? In the rest of this article I would like to suggest 2 signs of joy which are more than feelings, for us to check ourselves against.

First: **Singing (Eph 5:18-20)**. The world's notion of singing is something that is only

done by people who are either having a campfire, drunk, or tremendously talented musically. Christian singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs is quite different. It is not an attempt to "work up" an emotional mood and fill ourselves with the Spirit, instead it results from being filled with the Spirit. It is not the sole privilege of those who can sing in tune, but the result of the Spirit's work that every believer can participate in. I remember a visiting speaker sharing how the most beautiful singing he had ever heard was in a church full of deaf and dumb believers. Some of us can "method sing" very well – but we'll never really be singing to the Lord unless our heart is in tune with His.

Second: **Looking ahead to the Lord's return (Phil 4:4-5)**. As the Psalmist says, fullness of joy is in His presence – where we are going to be for all eternity. This is not wishful thinking or escapism. This is reality because we have been shown and placed on the

path of life - we are being prepared for a heavenly existence; we are being transformed from sinful creatures of a fallen creation into a new creation that will inherit the inexpressible, inexhaustible treasures that God has laid up in Christ. *'Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.'* (1 John 3:2) Are we waiting for the returning Lord with joyful anticipation? If not, perhaps we are too caught up with the things of this world, trying to find our joy in them instead of in the only Person who can give us fullness of joy?

For me, what distinguishes joy from "fun" is that joy doesn't come cheap. There is a ring of solemnity to the word that I can only attribute to the enormous cost Jesus paid in order to secure true joy for all mankind. It cost the Saviour His all – that is why I always associate joy with tears. Real joy is to be found in a relationship this Lord

Jesus who gave His all for us. Because He loves us with the full power of the Father's love; because He gives us everything we ask for "in His name"; and because He is coming "at hand" to finish our transformation and take us to be with Him forever. So we can sing: "real joy is mine, no matter if teardrops start; I've found the secret, it's Jesus in my heart."

Amen.

**Bethesda Hall (Ang Mo Kio & Depot Walk)  
SPEAKERS AND CHAIRMEN LIST (2010)**

MORNING MINISTRY			GOSPEL SERVICE	
DATE	SPEAKER (AMK)	SPEAKER (DW)	SPEAKER	CHAIRMAN
02 May	Tay Kim Swee	Tan Kian Huat	Chan Man Wong	Nathanael Chia
09 May	Tay Kim Swee	Tan Kian Huat	Joseph Sng	Steve Chia
16 May	David Goh	Boon Chuan Jian	Felix Lim	Tan Wee Siang
23 May	David Goh	Andrew Kwan	Tony Anthony	Sherman Sim
30 May	Ho Kuang Cheng	Andrew Kwan	Thomas Phua	Wesley Ng
06 Jun	Andrew Kwan	Alex Kwok	Vincent Tham	Marc Tan
13 Jun	Andrew Kwan	Peter Wong	Edmund Yong	Erik Erh
20 Jun	Robert Gordon	Kan Shik Lum	Robert Gordon	Nathaniel Sim
27 Jun	Andrew Lim	David Chua	Ng Kim Khoon	Tay Teng Hwee
04 Jul	Sum Siew Tak	Daniel Thein	Lim Kim Wah	Wong Tet Keong
11 Jul	Eric Choa	Robert Gordon	William Koh	Rally Chairman
18 Jul	Victor Ng	Aaron Wong	Robert Hmar	Wong Yong Jian
25 Jul	Wong Tuck Keong	Lee Kok Onn	David Chua	William Chew

**TUESDAY PRAYER MEETING**

DATE	BIBLE TEXT	SPEAKER (AMK)	SPEAKER (DW)
04 May	Gen 17: 9-14	Joseph Lim	-
11 May	Gen 17: 15-21	Yeo Ann Kian	William Hooi
18 May	Gen 17: 22- 27	Timothy Lim	Mah Kwok Kin
25 May	Gen 18: 1-8	Matthew Madasamy	Aaron Wong
01 Jun	Gen 18: 9-15	Sim Chear Wah	-
08 Jun	Gen 18: 16-21	Eugene Fan	Tan Hin Oon
15 Jun	Gen 18: 22-33	Johnny Fan	Peter Fong
22 Jun	Gen 19: 1-3	Wong Yong Jian	Collin Leong
29 Jun	Gen 19: 4-11	Jason Tan	Alexander Mathew
06 Jul	Gen 19: 12-14	Choong Kit Soon	-
13 Jul	Gen 19: 15-23	Lim Heng Thong	Alex Loh
20 Jul	Gen 19: 24-29	Choy Wai Mun	Kan Shik Lum
27 Jul	Gen 19: 30-38	Fong Ban Lee	Kenneth Khong