



# Vision

## Bedok Methodist Church



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We're past the first month of 2004 already! You'd probably have gone full-steam into achieving your personal goals and work targets for the new year. What about your spiritual resolution for the year?

To be a people with spiritual purpose, we first need to be a community who seeks to love and obey Christ our Master. We believe the vehicles for driving this purpose into reality are the spiritual disciplines.

In this issue, we will have a special coverage on engaging in what we call the inward disciplines of worship, prayer, the word, confession and stewardship. In the next issue we will cover the outward disciplines of fellowship, outreach and serving – all of which are keys to spiritual obedience and maturity.

Ready to practise the spiritual disciplines for 2004? It's a form of training that will guarantee eternal yields. You are not alone in this race. We're running alongside you. All you have to do is to take the first step.

### firstwords

## RUN THE COURSE *A Life in the Spiritual Disciplines*



Every four years, the Olympic Games draw the world's attention to the best sportsmen and sportswomen who gather to compete in the Games. Every competitor comes with a dream of excelling and beating others to capture that moment of glory – claiming the gold medal, breaking incredible records and watching their country flag being honoured.

However, such moments will not come without strict training and discipline. The saying goes, "Success is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration." We want to taste the sweet victory and glory but often shy away from the training and pain, which are a necessary part of the discipline.

The Apostle Paul, likewise in 2 Timothy 2:1-6, makes a comparison between spiritual disciplines and disciplines of the athlete, soldier and farmer: "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs - he wants to please his commanding officer. Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops."

The lesson is clear. There is no short-cut or quick fix to spiritual growth. The soldier, the athlete and the farmer all have one thing in common, that is, they are disciplined to achieve their goals. Likewise in John 15, Jesus teaches that the key to spiritual fruitfulness is through the process of abiding in Christ and being pruned by the Father.

To grow in Christ, it is essential then that we must be connected to the True Vine, Jesus Christ. To grow in intimacy with God, we need to take time to pray, read God's Word, obey God's commands, love and serve. Just as it is in any enriching, healthy relationship, we do all we can to want to know and please the other person more and more. As such, the more we grow in knowing and loving God, we grow to be more Christ-like.

Thus, "...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." (Hebrews 12:1-3)

*Reverend Vincent Goh  
Pastor-In-Charge*

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# After The Music Fades

## A Call To Worship Outside The Sanctuary

by Jonathan Tan See Leh

Perhaps no greater anomaly is encountered than when the word “Worship” is used these days in the era of contemporary Christian worship, to signify what we actually do in giving homage to the Almighty God.



On the one hand, Christians are called to become worshippers who will worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:24), which when oversimplified, is confined to the context of that short spaced activity of “prayers, singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs...”

On the other hand, we are commanded to “offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship.” (Romans 12:1) The latter seems to suggest it is no longer an activity to be engaged in, but it is a calling to live as a worship being for God.

### What is God’s ultimate plan for true worship?

Let us examine the Scriptures like the Berean brothers did in Acts. The Old Testament concept of worship was one which was ritualistic, but very instructive. Much of worship was centred around the Tabernacle from Abraham to David, and then the focal point was the Temple from Solomon. After the period of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, God allowed enemies to capture and send His people into exile as a result of them living in disobedience and idolatry. The great Temple built by Solomon was plundered and left in ruins. After the Exile, upon the return of Jews to Jerusalem, Jewish synagogues co-existed with the Temple system. Judaism took on a new focus - the study of Scripture. In the synagogues, Jews as well as Gentiles gathered for prayers and teaching of the Jewish laws, whereas in the Temple or sacrificial system, the High Priest would continue to enter the Holy of Holies to offer atonement by the blood of slain animals.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ Himself held the Temple in high honour, yet He spoke of Himself as “greater than the Temple” (Matthew 12:6) and by quoting Hosea 6:6, God says, “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.” In His encounter with the Samaritan woman, Jesus abolished both of the whole idea of the central sanctuary and of the entire ceremonial worship: “[A] time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem... God is spirit, and His worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:21, 24) His chief interest in the Temple seems to have been as a “house of prayer” and an opportunity to reach and touch the people.

In short, worshipping the Father in Spirit and Truth cannot be separated from the living of our lives as “living sacrifices”. In Isaiah 56:7, Jesus showed us that God’s plan for the Temple was simply that it should be a house of prayer: “. . . in these I will bring to My holy mountain and give them joy in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” Worship in this sense is not inward-looking, rather it must attract others into the Kingdom of God.

Likewise, Paul teaches that we are the “temple of the Holy Spirit” wherein God dwells. (1 Corinthians 6:19) Worship, therefore, is no longer an activity confined to the sanctuary, but it goes outside, it becomes “alive” when it reaches out and touches people. We are called to practise worship where it can be viewed by others. Matthew 5:14 says, “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.”

### What then is worship when practised outside the sanctuary?

In an interview published in *Campus Life Magazine*, a panel of worship leaders in US was asked what worship was to them. Martin Smith, a lead singer of the British worship band, Delirious, said, “Worship is a lifestyle. It’s not just something we do on Sunday morning, but trying to reflect the glory of God in every part of our lives.”

When asked what does worship look like in everyday life, Michelle, a student leader replied, “For me, it first comes through serving others. I help out a single mom a couple days a week. She’s got an autistic daughter, her marriage is falling apart, and she’s going through lots of court battles. I just help around the house, watching her kids and cleaning house so she can go to work to make some money to buy groceries. And second, I just try to live in a way where I’m always asking God, “What can You do through me today?”

In an interview conducted by *Christianity Today*, singer-composer-worshipper Michael W. Smith was asked whether he sees worship in other areas of his life, to which he replied, “Do it unto the Lord in everything you do – your job, your friends, the guy at the Quick Stop, the guy at the little market you go to, whatever and wherever. It’s the way you treat people. All of that is worship to me. Experiencing God’s creation.”

Another revered worshipper, Don Moen, in an online interview ‘Worship Chat with IntegrityMusic.com’s Don Moen’, agrees with Michael’s views. “Who we are on the platform on Sunday morning cannot be different from who we are at home or at school or at work. This is what I think Jesus meant when he said the Father is looking for worshippers who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth.”

**‘Indeed the word pure *religion*, or *threskeia*, translated *worship*, revolves around ministering to broken lives.’**

Don also cautions against a myopic view of worship: “I think at times we have been guilty of worshipping worship. But this is not pleasing to God. God is always looking at the motivation of our hearts.” He adds, “Worship isn’t for God only, worship is for our sakes. Because worship is the atmosphere that welcomes His presence and gives place to His mighty works.”

Indeed, the views of these worshippers all point toward the reality that our entire beings are meant to be worship to God. In conclusion, consider these Scripture verses:

*Psalm 51:17: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. God is not looking for the service of form in an outward sanctuary, but the service of love in a life. In humility, delight yourself in the Lord, ascribe proper worth to our all-deserving Almighty God and give Him your wholehearted worship at all times.*

*James 1:27: Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. Indeed the words, pure religion, or threskeia, translated worship, revolves around ministering to broken lives.*

Certainly, it is more than just the music, because when the music fades, that’s when the litmus test of worship begins.

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# Conversations With The Father

b y s u s a n C b a n

Just like the process whereby a child grows and matures into an adult, our spirits within us too, should grow from a babe in Christ into full maturity like Christ. Prayer is fundamental in building our relationship with Christ. This relationship is absolutely crucial in the process of us becoming mature spiritually.

## What is prayer?

Prayer is simply talking with God. It is a two-way communication. It is God revealing Himself, His will and heartbeat to us and us responding to Him. As we grow in our relationship with God, our prayer life deepens. We begin to seek life's truths and want to understand more. Our prayers become conversations with God. We spend time talking with God and listening to Him; questioning and understanding. Over time and experience, we learn in prayer, to fear God, to love Him, worship Him and obey Him. Is this so for you? What kind of relationship do you have with God?

## How important is our relationship with God?

The kind of relationship we have with each other is often reflected by the extent of our communication with one another. Where there is no communication, the relationship dies - we purely co-exist. Similarly, John MacArthur, in his book, *The Keys to Spiritual Growth*, said, "If you are not praying, you are suffocating." If we do not communicate with our Heavenly Father, we do not pray; we are spiritually stunted. We cannot progress into the greater things that God has in store for us.

We remain like what Paul says: spiritual babes or infants, craving for milk and not solid food - concerned only about the worldly things and having to be taught the 'elementary truths' of God over and over again and; not ready to mature, to receive the mysteries of God, and be patient and trained with the ability to distinguish good from evil. (1 Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12)

Prayer therefore helps us to deepen our relationship with God.

## What happens in prayer?

### We know more about God

What do we want to know about God? Have we got questions that we've never dared to ask? He knows and will reveal to us appropriately. Instead of going around and asking people, or finding answers all at the wrong places, why don't we ask Him directly? We will be surprised at how much He wants to reveal to us.

### We know more about ourselves

When we come into the presence of God, and talk with Him about our fears and doubts, our inadequacies, it is like going home and being assured. We return to the One who not only created us and understands us best, but is able to help us. He reveals to us important truths that set us free from the deceptions of the world. We become people that are secure even when all seem to fall apart around us. We become people that will make a difference and not blend into the ways of the world. We become people who know our identity, purpose, direction and hope!

## Why we don't pray?

### Sin

Sin stifles prayer. When we persistently sin, we will not want to pray, because prayer will open up to God's presence, and we do not feel comfortable. What happens is that communication ceases and our relationship with God is severely affected, for the essence of sin is the shift from God-centredness to self-centeredness. This separates us from God.

### Time

The challenges of life in Singapore today are great - more and more is expected of us as individuals - more projects, greater plans, all which take up a lot of time. We always give the excuse that we have no time. Jesus had a lot to do too - many people went to Him with great needs. He had the world's greatest and most ominous project - to save mankind! Yet He held it a priority to always start the day by meeting with His Father first. From the Father, He got His direction, His purposes reinforced and His strength for the day's work.

## How can we start building on our prayer life?

### Reprioritise our life

To many people, work, recreation, people and circumstances govern their priorities. Prayer may be last on the 'do-list', only if there is spare time. In the long run, the soul becomes distant from God, dry and malnourished. Put prayer as a key priority in our schedules and it will do wonders to our spiritual lives.

*‘Prayer is fundamental in building our relationship with Christ.  
This relationship is absolutely crucial in the process of us becoming mature spiritually.’*



*“If you remain in Me and  
My words remain in you,  
ask whatever you wish,  
and it will be given you.  
This is my Father’s glory,  
that you bear much fruit,  
showing yourselves to be  
My Disciples.”*

*John 15:7-8*

### **Be humble and repent**

Leviticus 5:5 states, "When anyone is guilty in any of these ways, he must confess in what way he has sinned." We do not need to kid ourselves in God's presence - He already knows everything - our thoughts, words and actions - what we do with our hands and bodies. He wants us to come to Him, to be humble and depend on Him, to trust Him and believe that He makes all things beautiful in His time.

### **Make time daily**

We have to plan prayer into our daily schedule or we will never get down to doing it. It is so important to put aside time - undisturbed time to simply wait upon God, to remain in Him and seek truths about our situations. We need so much to take stock of where we are in the light of God's word and refocus on His will and purposes for our lives.

### **Find your entry points**

There are many entry points which help us participate in a more active and effective prayer life, such as silence, solitude, music, nature, walks, books and Quiet Time materials. Select one or two that will motivate you to pray regularly. You will then find praying in the presence of God accessible and enjoyable.

Let us strengthen our foundation in the Lord today by committing ourselves to a deeper prayer life.

*Susan Chan is BMC's Children Ministry staff. She worships at BMC with her husband, Kevin and children, Evan and Nikki.*

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

A perspective by Benjamin Yeoh

**P**osition – *Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. . .*

God places us in the intimate **position** of children bonding with our Father when we come to Him in prayer, in spite of us being fallen creatures approaching a Holy Creator.

**P**urpose – *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

We recognise that the **purpose** of prayer is to do His will. So we seek to know our Father and His will for us when we pray.

**P**rovision – *Give us this day our daily bread.*

We trust in our Father's sufficient **provision** and go on to focus on doing His will and not on our needs.

**P**ardon – *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

We ask for **pardon** for our sins and we forgive those who wronged us. We give and receive a taste of God's grace when we forgive.

**P**rotection – *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

We ask for **protection** from temptation within and evil without as we humbly acknowledge our weakness and recognise that we can do the will of God only in His strength.

**P**raise – *For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.*

We naturally end our prayer with **praise** for Him after communing with our great Father!

# WORD of GOD

by Vincent Gob

Have you ever attended to a hungry newborn? I remember my experience with my firstborn Abraham when he was an infant. Whenever he was hungry, he would yell so loudly for his milk that it was enough to wake the entire HDB block. No pacifying, cuddling or singing would do. To him, milk was his lifeline – his source of nutrition and growth. Nothing else could satisfy him. Like newborns, our desire for the Word should be that strong.

Spiritual growth does not happen in a vacuum. It grows and thrives in an environment where spiritual disciplines are actively practised. And one of these disciplines is the Word of God. Why is the Word of God necessary for spiritual maturity? It is because of its life-changing effects. The author in the Book of Hebrews declares the dynamic nature of God's Word: "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12) Any one who lives his or her life under the scrutiny of the Word of God will experience the effects of God's conviction, cleansing, and consolation. It is then that we grow stronger and deeper in the ways of God.

## The WORD<sup>GOD</sup> gives life

In creation, God spoke and the world came into being. The Word of God gives life. Mere human thoughts and words cannot impart spiritual life, but the living word of God can. James 1:18 says, "He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all He created." The Holy Spirit uses the Word to bring about new birth. The only way to become a child of God is through the living word of God: "faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17)

## The WORD<sup>GOD</sup> sustains life

When Christians do not strongly desire the Word, they become emaciated. The prophet Jeremiah exhorts, "When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty." (Jeremiah 15:16) Paul reminded Timothy of that truth: "If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed." (I Timothy 4:6)

## The WORD<sup>GOD</sup> is life-transforming

Paul encouraged the Ephesians to be renewed in the spirit of their minds. (Ephesians 4:23) In Romans 12:2, he said that the renewing of our minds transforms us. Even as believers, we need to let God's Word change us. We do not become perfect when we become believers. The Holy Spirit still has a lot to do to mould us into Christlikeness. We still struggle with our old sinful patterns of living. (Romans 7:15-25) Only by filling our minds with the Word and living in obedience to its principles can those patterns be changed.

Many Christians struggle with being more committed to the Lord. They attend seminars, read books, seek certain spiritual gifts, see counsellors, listen to talk shows - just about everything except turning to the Bible. Yet if they neglect the Word, little change will result. Only the Holy Spirit, working through the Word, has the power to bring us to maturity in Christ.

*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.*

Psalm 1:1-3

The Bible is central to our spiritual lives. Here are some specific ways to approach the Word of God:

### 1. Believe it

Accept the Bible for what it is - the divinely inspired Word of God, infallible, inerrant, and all-sufficient. Doubting the truths God has revealed will rob us of our joy and may ultimately destroy our faith.

### 2. Love it

“Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long,” wrote the Psalmist. (Psalm 119:97) Love the Word of God. Give it as much of your time and attention. Read the Bible as a love letter sent to you from God. Consume it with passion during your quiet time.

### 3. Study it

Let us not be contented with shallow, superficial Bible study, or no Bible study at all. A serious study of the Word can help us avoid doctrinal errors and correct misconceptions on living the Christian life. The Bible calls for diligent study, and through study of the Scriptures we can show ourselves approved of God. (2 Timothy 2:15)

### 4. Honour it

The citizens of Ephesus honoured the statue of Diana because they thought Jupiter sent it down from heaven. So they worshipped it - ugly, obscene, and horrible as it was. In today's context, there are many worldly substitutes that can take the place of honour in our lives such as entertainment, politics, philosophy, psychology, mysticism or personal experience. But something of true beauty has come down out of heaven from God - His precious Word, which is more valuable than gold or jewels. (Proverbs 3:14-15) Let us honour it wholeheartedly, leaving no room for other idols.

### 5. Obey it

Obedience is ultimately the only appropriate response to God's Word. It does us no good to believe, study, honour, and love the Bible unless we obey it. God's commands are not optional; they are obligatory. We cannot approach the Bible like a smorgasbord, whimsically choosing what we wish to obey and bypassing the rest. Our obedience must be absolute. Samuel told the disobedient Saul, “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.” (1 Samuel 15:22)

To conclude, here is an all-consuming quote by John Wesley on the Word of God:

*I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit, coming from God, and returning to God; just hovering over the great gulf; a few months hence I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing - the way to heaven. . . God Himself has condescended to teach the way. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that Book! At any price, give me the book of God!*

*Rev Vincent Gob is the Pastor-in-charge in BMC. He is married to Shu Yann and has two children, Abraham and Grace.*



Dawson Trotman, the founder of Navigators, introduced 5 ways of ingesting the Word of God:

**Hearing.** Listen actively whenever the Word is preached. Jot down notes. Read the Scriptures aloud with fellow believers and talk about the important lessons learnt.

**Reading.** Commit yourself to a regular Bible reading plan, e.g. using a one-year Bible or book studies.

**Studying.** Examine the Scriptures with a discipler or in bible study groups. Participate actively in the learning.

**Memorising.** Put the Word of God to memory for it can guard us against sin, encourage us and spur us to pursue the ways of God.

**Meditating.** After hearing, reading, studying and memorising, reflect deeply on the Scripture passage with open hearts and minds, equipping yourself to apply the Word of God in your life.

# CONFESSING JESUS CHRIST AS LORD

by Ho Boon Tiong

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

*Psalm 139:23-24*

Confession is a discipline of self-examination which is so necessary for believers - that we may purposefully and constantly guard our hearts from sinning against a patient and loving God.

I started the year 2003 with one unfinished business with God. I had to ask for forgiveness from someone whom I had offended some 30 years ago.

So, when my pastor gave me an opportunity to preach in church and the topic turned out to be 'Confession', my heart sank. I said to God, "Lord, of all topics, why this particular one?" Actually I knew the answer. God wanted to deal with me

Since June 1998, I was first convicted of this need to confess my sin and ask for forgiveness from this person during a Christian seminar that I had attended. Two years passed and I did not do anything.

Then in August 2000, while doing the MasterLife discipleship course, God spoke to me again. I struggled for a few days and told myself, "Maybe not the right time yet." God was very gracious and patient with me.

Within the same year in 2003, when God spoke to me for the third time, I really struggled. For days, my spirit was grieved. One of my brothers-in-Christ even suggested that perhaps I should ask Pastor for a change of topic. I did not because I knew God was dealing with me.

With each passing day, the conviction to confess and ask for forgiveness grew stronger. One day, my heart cried out to God, "Lord, I am struggling. Help me. Be gracious and have mercy on me." Then the Lord gave me a vivid picture of the sure and devastating consequences of disobedience. And when I saw that, I resolved, "That's it, Lord. I will obey."

The next morning at 11 a.m., I picked up the phone and dialled the person's number. . . I could sense that my spirit was lifted up. By His grace and help, I had acted in obedience. The rest was in God's hands.

Confession is confessing Jesus as Lord and ourselves as sinners. The two must go hand in hand. To be spiritually healthy, we must deal with the evil that we have perpetrated against a holy God. The primary feature of confession is agreeing with God at we are helplessly guilty.

We do not confess because first like me, we may be afraid of what might happen. Second we are concerned about our reputation. Third we may rationalise our behaviour, that we are not wrong. Fourth we may shun the things of God such as reading the Bible.

We do not confess because first like me, we may be afraid of what might happen. Second we are concerned about our reputation. Third we may rationalise our behaviour, that we are not wrong. Fourth we may shun the things of God such as reading the Bible.

How can we develop the humble practice of confession?

Agree with God that we have sinned. The Greek word *homologeō* literally means "to say the same thing". "Lord, I have sinned against You. I agree that this is a sin." We also have to recognise that there are two ways of sinning. Active sinning is doing something that you know is sinful. Passive sinning is not doing something that you know is the right thing to do.

Repent and purpose in your heart to turn away from evil. True confession is not just saying, "Yes, I did it." It involves repentance – You have not honestly confessed your sins until you have turned from evil thought and action towards God. Real confession includes a brokenness that inevitably leads to a change in behaviour.

Thank God that your sins – past, present and future – have all been forgiven. Romans 8:1 states, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Let us approach God with grateful hearts for giving us a new lease of life.

God has been patient with us. 1 Timothy 1:16 states, "But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life." Let us always respond to God in confession.

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# \$TEWARDship

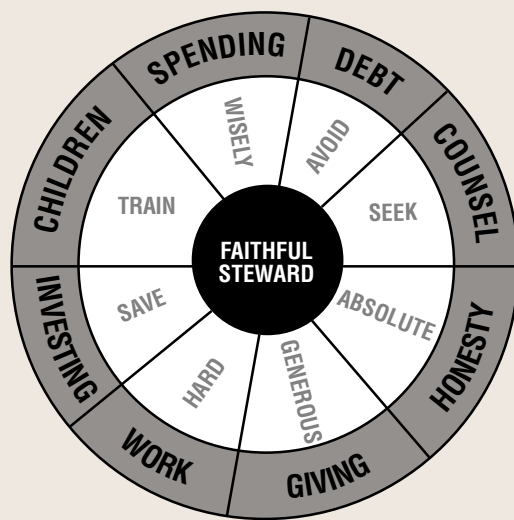
by Adeline Quek

**I**n Singapore, the clock and the dollar govern many of our day-to-day priorities. Since they affect us to a great extent, managing these resources effectively calls for a spiritual discipline of stewardship.

Questions surrounding the stewardship of God's resources have always raised concern. *Am I using my time, talents, possessions the way God wants it? How faithful am I with the money that God has given me?* Jesus knew that this is a critical area of life, that is why 16 out of his 38 parables dealt with handling money and possessions.

The Bible provides a blueprint on how we should live our lives free from bondage and yokes.

Let's examine the following wheel diagram on being a faithful steward from the book, 'Your Money Counts' by Howard Dayton (Crown Financial Ministries).



Being A Faithful Steward

**DEBT** – Get out of it or avoid it! Proverbs 22:7 says, *“The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.”* Jesus wants us free to serve Him, not bound by legal obligations to meet loans throughout our lives.

**COUNSEL** – *“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”* (Proverbs 15:22) Put aside pride and self-sufficiency and seek counsel from the Scriptures, godly people, your spouse, parents or children concerning financial planning.

**HONESTY** – The smallest ‘white lie’ can harden our hearts and make our conscience insensitive to sin over time. Luke 16:10 states *“whoever is dishonest with little will also be dishonest with much.”*

**GIVING** – Jesus said, *“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”* (Acts 20:35) Giving is the privilege and responsibility of every child of God, young or old, rich or poor. God has given us so much to use and enjoy, giving directs us back to the source from which all blessings flow!

**WORK** – King Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 9:10, *“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.”* Work hard but do not overwork! Does your job demand so much of your time and energy that you neglect your relationship with Christ or your family?

**INVESTING** – Proverbs 21:20 (The Living Bible) says, *“The wise man saves for the future, but the foolish man spends whatever he gets”.* No savings equals no accumulation. Many have fallen into ‘Get Rich Quick’ schemes. Borrowing to invest, such as contra stocks, leverage loans, is a norm for society, but is that how God wants us to invest His money?

**CHILDREN** – If a child is taught to handle money given to them prudently, that is one important principle they can live by and benefit from throughout their lives.

**SPENDING** – *“Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.”* (Ecclesiastes 5:10-11) We are constantly swarmed by messages to buy, buy, buy! George Fooshee, author of ‘You Can Beat the Money Squeeze’, states, *“People buy things they do not need with money they do not have to impress people they do not even like.”* Spend wisely. Simplify our lives so we are not distracted and spend too much time maintaining things.

We have been given certain tasks and resources to manage as God's stewards on earth. Money and possessions are not evil things, but how they are used determines our attitude to and relationship with Him.

Knowing God's word and instruction is the first step in the journey of our relationship in Him. Second, take small steps to be faithful in little things (Luke 16:10). Finally, as Paul says in Philippians 4:9, *“Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me, put into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”*

*Adeline Quek is a financial adviser. She serves in the BMC missions ministry together with her husband Benjamin Hong.*

## EMMANUEL GOD WITH US

In our reports on what's happening in the key ministries of our church, we are experiencing the exciting move of God! Whether it be the children's or youth camps, the evangelistic carolling parties or the mission trips beyond the shores of Singapore, many have been touched Him. May we continue to be faithful to an awesome God!

### E v a n g e l i s t i c C a r o l l i n g P a r t y

After a two-year hiatus, BMC's Evangelistic Carolling Party, or ECP made a comeback in 2003. The 76 carollers and 10 hosts had one common purpose – to share the light of God's love during Christmas from 20 - 23 December.

Aptly themed 'Light of the World', the love of Christ shone brightly on the carollers' faces and rang through their voices as they belted out carol after carol. But what brought the message home were testimonies of how Jesus Christ had changed lives, and of His continuous influence.

With visits made to homes as near as Bedok and as far as Bukit Timah, carollers were able to minister and witness to many, including family, friends, colleagues and students of the hosts. Feedback has been more than encouraging as hosts shared accounts of salvations and rededications from among their guests. And in the spirit of giving and receiving, this perhaps is the best gift that the carollers could receive – being able to see people open the door to their hearts and allowing the Light to enter their lives.

*by Amy Lee*



### Y o u t h M i n i s t r y C a m p



God knows that with a ministry that is growing in numbers, we need to work even harder at bonding with one another in the Frontliners. The two youth camps thus focussed on building relationships.

"Tied Up", the Junior Youth Camp, was held from 15 - 17 November at the Scripture Union Campsite, Sentosa, to help the Primary 6 youths transit more smoothly into Frontliners. "Agape", the Combined Youth Camp, was held from 18 - 22 December on our church grounds – there was no better way to build a sense of belonging!

We had our usual share of fun through the games and interaction. But God moved us beyond all the fun and laughter to times of confession and reconciliation of frayed relationships among the camp committee and campers.

What a humbling sight to behold when Christian brothers and sisters huddled together to confess their sins against each other and ask for forgiveness! This is true Christian fellowship in action! I believe that this is just the beginning; we must not take it for granted that we will always enjoy sweet fellowship. We must continue to work hard at building sincere and loving relationships, loving God and loving one another.

The youth camps also saw the Body of Christ at work. We are appreciative of all the ladies who pampered us and cooked for us! Some of the adults even took leave from work to stay with us. Praise God for the BB boys who joined us at some of our events. We pray that this marks the beginning of a more united ministry of and to the young people.

*by Judy Foo*



*“Even though I had initial reservations in joining the ECP, I was very blessed in the end. I’m looking forward to hosting a carolling party next year.” - Caroller*

*“I was able to present my testimony and gospel in the family dialect with the whole ECP team backing me. All the family members listened earnestly. I felt God removed some of the barriers between my family and Christianity, as they always thought Christianity was a western religion.” - Host*

*“Three of my guests came to know Christ during the ECP programme and in the subsequent week.” - Host*

## Children’s Ministry Vacation Bible Camp

Last year we had both the VBC pre-school and primary camps on home ground, held from 26 - 29 November. In all, there were 340 children and about 140 helpers.

It was without a doubt that our Lord Jesus’ presence was felt as we worshipped and served. Every leader was ready to go the extra mile to serve in love. It was a beautiful experience as I saw the body of Christ united in love as Jesus had prayed in John 17.

The children enjoyed themselves through the games and interaction. But even more encouraging was the way they worshipped and attentively soaked in the truths of God! It was awesome to see the exuberant singing and lifting up of hands when the two camps came together to offer sweet praises to our Lord.

The Holy Spirit ministered to many during the last day of the primary camp. There were many testimonies of tears and children sensing the loving touch of Jesus upon them. Many rededicated their lives to Jesus and expressed their desire to walk the ‘path that leads to Life’, to live in the kingdom of God. What was witnessed at these camps was the fulfillment of the vision that many of us received prior to the camp.

As I walked the compound at the close of the day, when all had left, there was a gentle breeze that spoke into my spirit. God said, “I am pleased and your labour is not in vain.” To God be the glory! For His kingdom has come into our midst and His will be done forevermore in our lives!

*by Susan Chan*



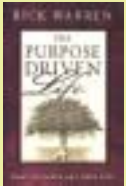
# A Historic Trip To CAMBODIA



On 10 Dec 2003, a total of 41 members from BMC went to Cambodia for a 6-day missions trip. This was the biggest team that had been organised thus far, comprising our pastors, leaders and members. Chou Fang Soong, the LCEC Chairperson, led a family team of 24 to conduct a programme for the children and youth at the COSI orphanage. The activities included organising a Christmas Outreach to the local primary school, teaching Character First and English lessons and providing medical services. I led a 17-member team that focused on seeing how BMC could partner with the Methodist Missions Society to reach the villages in the Ang Snoul commune surrounding COSI to do God's work through care group planting. The team returned humbled, excited and challenged by what God is doing in Cambodia. Won't you partner with us?

*Benjamin Hong  
Missions Committee Chairperson*

## A Disciple's Resources



**The Purpose-Driven Life**  
*By Rick Warren*  
Zondervan, Michigan, 334 pgs

An award-winning bestseller, with 4 million copies sold since it was launched in 2002, this is an excellent book to start the new year with. Warren journeys with the reader through a 40-day guide which answers life's basic question: What on earth am I here for? A book that speaks simply yet powerfully, it re-orientates us back to our roots, and establishes the truth that our purpose, mission and meaning in life can only be found in God.



**Spiritual Disciplines For The Christian Life**  
*By Donald S. Whitney*  
Navpress, Colorado Springs, 238 pgs

With a foreword by J. I. Packer, this book is a must-read for those who are serious about pursuing one purpose – a life of godliness. It is when we understand our spiritual purpose then do we find passion and motivation in practising the spiritual disciplines. Whitney presents each of the following disciplines in a clear, systematic and accessible manner: Scripture Reading, Prayer, Worship, Evangelism, Serving, Stewardship, Fasting, Silence and Solitude, Journalling, Learning.

If you have any views, comments, suggestions or contributions for the coming or subsequent issues, please write to us at [bmc\\_vision@yahoo.com.sg](mailto:bmc_vision@yahoo.com.sg)