

TAF TIMES



October, 2008, Volume II, Issue 2 (Internal circulation only)

A newsletter of the Truth B-P Church Adults' Fellowship

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17)

Greetings in the blessed Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Thank God for helping us come up with another issue of the TAF TIMES. We continue to pray and hope that the written word will do much to edify and strengthen our members and friends in the faith, just as the spoken word sanctifies and build us up in the LORD. And we have heard much of God's spoken Word during the June Family Bible Camp in Batam. The camp theme was, “Revive us O Lord” and it is almost 4 months on since camp. Have our spirits been revived or are they flagging already? Are we growing in the Lord or are we going from the Lord? We need to heed God's warning to the Laodicean Church not to be lukewarm towards Him, and His exhortation to the Ephesian brethren to return to God as their first love, before He comes, swiftly and surely, to judge us. May there be no painful tears of regret when we see Him face to face at last!

Signs of the Times

Yes, the signs are that we are in the last of the last days. It was not long ago that a cataclysmic tsunami swept through Asia and took hundreds of thousands of lives in its wake! Today, the world faces a tsunami of a different kind, one, which well might be the harbinger of things to come, soon. As global financial markets plummet, leaders and governments will meet behind closed doors to thrash a way out of this epic collapse in the banking and financial systems. Talks of acting in concert to stem this crisis will bring us closer to the reality of a truly common global market down the road. Wars and rumors of war and tensions in the Middle East portend the final political and military conflict that will engulf the region before the Lord returns. What do these mean to us? We are to be sober and watch unto prayer for the end of all things is at hand (1 Thess 5:6; 1 Pe 4:7). Matthew 24:42 tell us we are to watch therefore, for we know not when our Lord doth come. As children of light, let us be prepared for the

Lord's soon return and not be caught unawares, having no oil in our lamps to meet the Bridegroom when He cometh for His Bride. Let us resolve immediately to be done with the things and empty pleasures of this life and instead be found in purity and holy living unto the Lord.

Biblical Illiteracy?

As the Lord tarries, we will continue to proclaim God's Word through this newsletter. Next year, we will focus on the learning of Scripture, in addition to articles relating to the family and Christian learning. Many believers are Bible-illiterate. You know what I mean. It is not a question of lacking in our technical ability to read and write. It is rather the lack of a willing capacity to study, learn, memorize God's Word, and to practise and live it out in our lives. Yes, it takes effort, a lot of effort most times, but try foregoing your daily food intake or try living without breathing and see what will become of you? Yet many believers are starving themselves to death and committing spiritual suicide day after day, year after year by refusing to study and learn God's Word, or making do with very basic nourishment for their hungry souls. Spiritual malnourishment will render us ineffective in holy living and in serving God (Matt 4:4). Ignorance and apathy, “don't know and don't care” attitude will literally kill us in this instance!

Remembering the Reformation, we must ask ourselves if indolence and spiritual ignorance will lead us to heaven? Is this the way to go? We really have no excuse to continue in such a state, we need instead, to enter in by the strait and narrow way. Let us pray that the Lord will grant us the desire to be spiritually-minded, and to be spiritual “giants” for Him as much as we can, for our eternal good, and unto His glory.

To this end, we are organizing an essay-writing contest on the Bible. Prizes will be given for different categories and you can find out all about this contest on page 15. Until then, blessed reading!

In this issue...

Feature Articles



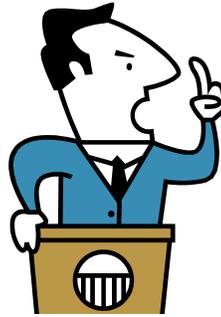
Front Page: Editorial

Page 3: Spiritual Parenting

Page 6: The Regressive Christian

*Page 8: Testimony of My Calling
to Full-Time Ministry and
Mission Work*

News & Brief



Page 10: Program Summary

Page 11: TAF Program Chart

Christian Learning



Page 12: Psalm 6

*Page 15: Christian Resource &
Recommended Websites*

Back Page: TAF Info

feature articles:

SPIRITUAL PARENTING

by Rev. Dennis Kwok

Not So Easy!

Being young parents ourselves my wife and I are still learning what it takes to be good and godly Christian parents. I believe this is the hope and desire of every serious parent in the Lord. From our experiences (only 3 years old), it is my prayer that you will be edified as you identify the similar struggles, which you have also faced or are facing. Spiritual parenting is never easy. It takes immeasurable hard work, patience, and endurance to train up a child in the way he should go so that when he is old, he will not depart from it (Pro 22:6).

How Come No Repentance?

We thank God for blessing us with 2 boys, Ernest (3 years) and Caius (6 months). Our current challenge is the older boy. He has become increasingly intelligent and smart in his own way. He knows how to manipulate us to get what he wants. But when things do not go his way, he will end up in a rage. He is an excellent 'psychologist.' He will express his anger in a way to make us feel guilty and at times confused and cause us to doubt our own methods in handling the whole matter.

Knowing his temperament, sometimes we resort to pleading and reasoning with him, having the high hope of gaining his understanding and repentance. He seemed to understand, we thought, but to our disappointment, ten times out of ten, he was back to his old ways almost immediately. How can he forget so fast? Our hope is diminishing! That's the reality and we have had to accept it.

At other times, we lost our patience with him and confronted him angrily with the rod of correction. Of course he would cry in pain as if the whole world is

coming to an end, but again the same thing occurred. He would fall back to his old ways the very next moment, forgetting how much tears he had shed, with all the visible cane marks on his legs and bottom bearing witness to his disobedience and rebellion. Why is there no repentance? I have lost count of the number of broken canes we have replaced. At this time of writing this article, I am in the process of getting one in Thailand that is supposed to be more durable and 'powerful' enough to cause anyone to fear it, including adults!

Will Our Efforts Be In Vain?

You may be wondering if there is an easy way out of this. Let me tell you this, there is none! The only solution we have is to depend on God's sufficient grace to grant us the patience and long-suffering to continue training our own children. It may take weeks, months, and years or you may not even live to see that day whether your hard work will be appreciated and rewarded! It is all in the hands of our sovereign God. Since He has blessed us with these little ones, I believe with all my heart that He has also provided us the means how we should fulfill our parental responsibilities. We just need to press on.

Just as God has been long-suffering towards us in our rebellion and waywardness time and time again, it shows that He has never given up on us. It is not because of the fact that He is the all-powerful God, and therefore there is absolutely nothing that He cannot do. It is all because of the restored relationship that He has with us, a relationship that was once broken because of sin but is now effectively restored because of Jesus Christ. How can it be broken again? As our heavenly Father, He fulfills His role faithfully even though we have failed

Him in our role as His adopted children. That is the kind of faithfulness we ought to exercise towards our own children as well. There is no perfect guarantee or 'magic formula' to ensure our children will turn out to behave the way they should. Even then, we must never give up on them no matter how 'hopeless' our children have shown themselves to be.

How Come So Difficult To Teach Obedience?

Why should we expect our children to obey us? Is it because parents are in charge and children are supposed to follow? Is it because every one expects the same thing and so I must do it as well? We must not forget the truth that it is every child's duty to obey and every parent's mandate to teach obedience to their own children. This truth is given by God Himself, and unto the parents. Parents are charged with this heavy responsibility to build up their children's spiritual and moral character by obeying God and their parents. This is no small task for parents as the Bible has already sounded the warning. The Apostle Paul included "disobedient to their parents" in the long list of sins that will be found in great intensity in the last days when perilous times shall come (2 Tim 3:1-2).

The Bible has maintained the old and yet effective measure of discipline by the rod of correction. But the world hates it. More and more are seeking to 'protect' children by making it a civil offense should parents spank the child. Spanking is now equated to physical abuse and cruelty instead of parental discipline. Because of this, the child under the protection of the law enjoys the freedom given to them so much so that they have no qualms in disobeying their parents. Some even purposefully go all the way to spite their parents. While it may be true that parents are not to overly punish an erring child resulting in serious injury and even death, the rod of correction has its place in driving home the divine message to the child that he/she is accountable for every sin committed. They should not think they can get away with it easily. Indeed this saying remains true, "Spare the rod spoil the child." We do hope that every disciplinary cane that hangs on the wall will never get to be used. But if it has to

be used, let us be bold to use it in order to save the soul of our children (Proverbs 23:14).

There is no need to teach our children not to obey us. They know this from birth and they are already experts right from the beginning. This is how much sin has seriously infected man. If Adam in his sinless state can rebel against his Creator by eating the forbidden fruit, which involved the penalty of double death, what more our children as born sinners, being condemned and judged by God already? It is necessary and important for us as Christian parents to teach and train our children to fear God and obey Him. We should not get too upset when our words go unheeded and our commands not obeyed. But rather it should disturb us very much when our children out-rightly breaks the fifth commandment of the Lord.

Don't Give Up, Ok?

Too many Christian parents have left God out in bringing up their children in the home. They conveniently shirk and pass this responsibility to the church instead, and for the Sunday School teachers to teach them about God. How many children do you think the Sunday School teachers are responsible for? And even if it is a one-to-one attention your child gets from the teacher, how long do you think the effects will last? Once a week, and at most 2 hours each time, and you expect your child to receive all that he/she needs to know about God that will transform his/her life? Wake up! Please take up your responsibility right now (me included!) and train up your child in the most God-fearing way.

If you are lost, seek God for help. Search the Scriptures and follow every biblical principle. Look up some good Christian materials on parenthood. Consult and learn from other mature parents of the same faith who have succeeded. In short, just don't give up, ok? Let us do all we can to help ourselves and our own children. Our home must be revived today. Is spiritual parenthood dying in our home? All Christian fathers and mothers, do something please, for the sake of the souls of your own children! May God be merciful. Amen.

More fit to be called a devil than a parent!

(Richard Baxter, “Motives for a Holy and Careful Education of Children”)

“Bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4)

Parents! Your example and life are a continual and powerful sermon, which is always seen by your children!

Parents! Your children have an everlasting inheritance of happiness to attain—and it is that which you must bring them up for. They have an endless misery to escape—and it is that which you must diligently teach them. If you don’t teach them to know God, and how to serve Him, and be saved, and to escape the flames of hell—you teach them nothing, or worse than nothing. It is in your hands to do them the greatest kindness or cruelty in all the world! Help them to know God and to be saved, and you do more for them than if you helped them to be kings or princes. If you neglect their souls, and bring them up them in ignorance, worldliness, ungodliness, and sin—you betray them to the devil, the enemy of souls, even as truly as if you sold them to him! You sell them to be slaves to Satan! You betray them to him who will deceive them and abuse them in this life—and torment them in eternity!

If you saw but a burning furnace, much more the flames of hell—would you not think that man or woman more fit to be called a devil than a parent, who could find in their hearts to cast their child into it? What monsters then of inhumanity are you, who read in Scripture which is the way to hell, and who they are that God will deliver up to Satan, to be tormented by him—and yet will bring up your children in that very way, and will not take pains to save them from it!

If you love them, show it in those things on which their everlasting welfare depends. Do not say you love them --and yet lead them unto hell! If you do not love them, yet do not be so unmerciful to them as to damn them! You cannot possibly do more to damn them, than to bring them up in . . .

ignorance,

carelessness,
worldliness,
sensuality and
ungodliness!

There is no other way to hell. And yet, will you bring them up in such a life—and say that you do not desire to damn them?

But if you train up your children in ungodliness, you may as well say that you intend to have them damned! And is not the devil more excusable, for dealing thus cruelly to your children—than you who are their parents, who are bound by nature to love them, and prevent their misery?

Let me seriously speak to the hearts of those careless and ungodly parents, who neglect the holy education of their children. Oh, do not be so unmerciful to those who you have brought into the world! Oh, pity and help the souls that you have defiled and undone! Have mercy on the souls that must perish in hell, if they are not saved! Oh help them that have so many enemies to assault them! Help them that have so many temptations to pass through; and so many difficulties to overcome; and so severe a judgment to undergo! Help them that are so weak, and so easily deceived and overthrown! Help them speedily; before sin hardens them, and Satan makes a stronger fortress in their hearts!

Oh be not cruel to their souls! Do not sell them to Satan, and that for nothing! Do not betray them not by your ungodly negligence to hell! If any of them will perish, let it not be because of you—who are so much bound to do them good. The undoing of your children’s souls is a work much fitter for Satan, than for their parents!

Consider how odious soul-betraying parents are—who betray their children to be the slaves of Satan here, and the firebrands of hell forever! O do not join with the devil in this unnatural, horrid wickedness!

“Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with the rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with the rod, and shall deliver his soul from hell.” (Proverbs 23:13-14)

feature articles:

THE REGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN?

by Rev. Dennis Kwok

There are two aspects to a regressive Christian. The first is of one who in extremity reverts to his old self in terms of his life. He may continue to be a professing Christian but he is not necessarily living as one. He is living an 'old' life in Christ instead of a new life in Christ. Is this acceptable? Of course not! The Bible tells us, "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*" (2 Cor 5:17). How can what which was old, which has passed away and become new, turn old again? It is almost unthinkable, yet it can happen! This explains why instruction after instruction, warning after warning had to be given again and again to the children of God. God is not being longwinded with us. But because we can be so dull of hearing and our hearts harden easily, there is a great need to remind us again and again.

Christians are not immune to falling. It is so easy to fall. To rise is so difficult. The Christian life is like walking up a slope. Along the way there are sharp rocks and potholes that make the way very difficult to walk in. One may trip and fall badly, but by God's help he can try to get up and walk again. But the worst part of such a walk is when one decides to give up after he has fallen. He decides that it is pointless to persevere on and he will just allow himself to continue to fall or slide backwards all the way to the bottom. Such a regressive Christian is a back-sliden Christian. He may still attend church regularly. He may still serve and fellowship with other Christians. But his heart has changed. His love towards God has turned cold. His perspective of life is no longer heavenward. He no longer wants to live for Christ. Soon he will find himself back to his old way of life. And eventually he will drop out of church, service and fellowship one by one and

eventually altogether. This is the picture of a regressive Christian in the extremity.

The other aspect of a regressive Christian is subtler. It speaks of one who may not have reverted to his old self in terms of his life, but he has found some good 'excuses' to retire from his duties and responsibilities as a Christian. He is usually a long-time Christian who has served in the ministry for 'donkey' years but suddenly he decides that his time is up and that he wants to take a back seat. In terms of his duties, how is he going to get out of them? The best way is get someone else to take over from him! He will look out for any potential young fellow out there and get him in immediately. Before you know it, he is out and the young fellow is in. Once he does this for a particular ministry he will do the same for the next! And he will go on and on until he is completely out for good. Nobody is going to fault him. And he has no one to account to. People will still respect him for his previous contributions and accomplishments. But his dark secret will remain with him and will probably be buried with him eventually. However that is not the end, he will have to answer to God.

In my personal opinion, I am not against good succession in leadership. In fact there is a place for succession. And succession is a good thing because it promotes continuity in the ministry. No one at any time must be indispensable. But what is so wrong is that we may hide our real intention for succession. And that is what a regressive Christian will do. He hides his ulterior motive very well, convincing and deceiving all others that it is good for him to give way for young blood and for the ministry to grow even more vibrant than before. The concept of retirement in the Christian ministry has been made popular because people in the West look upon the

pastor's duties as a job just like any other secular profession. Once you reach a certain age, you retire, that's it! That kind of thinking has infiltrated the East as well. This explains why many old pastors gave up leading their congregation so easily because they looked upon their pastoral ministry as a job. Can age really determine the life-span of one in the Christian ministry? It is very unfortunate that such an attitude has also affected ordinary members of the church. Hiding behind their advancement in age, they call for new and younger blood to take over. Rev Timothy Tow, principal of Far Eastern Bible College and Pastor of True Life B-P Church, now 87 years old, often says this to his students, 'I refuse to die now, I want to serve the Lord till He calls me Home.' I was put to shame after hearing this. How many times have I thought of giving up the ministry? The Lord has rebuked me through his words. Why would I think of giving up unless I want the easy way out? Am I so lazy that I refuse to go through a little hardship in the ministry for the Lord's sake?

In other words, a regressive Christian is a lazy Christian. Is there such a thing as retirement in Christian service or even Christian life? We cannot compare our secular profession with our service and life in the Lord. Secular professions generally look for results from us. If we are not performing well and show poor results, we get the 'axe' even if we prove ourselves to be more faithful and diligent than others. In short, they don't care how you do it, just produce good results and they are happy. That's the world for you. This American concept and philosophy is spreading like wild fire everywhere, even into Christian churches.

In Christian service and life, our perspective must be completely different from the world. It must be

different because of the different Master we are serving and living for. The world's god is Satan. But our God is our heavenly Father who loves us and saves us from eternal damnation and misery under the bondage to sin. What our heavenly Father looks for from us is entirely different! He looks from His heavenly and eternal perspective. He looks at our heart (1 Samuel 16:7). As long as we are faithful and do our best, trusting in His Holy Spirit, even if we still fail, it does not matter because it is our heart that matters. The only failure according to His divine dictionary is the failure of our heart. If our heart is not right before God though men can never see it, even if we can justify our actions biblically for others to see, God will still not be pleased with us.

We may make way for young blood to take over from us in the ministry. But our service for God must not end there. It does not mean we can put our spiritual gifts to rest. God forbid! Seek the Lord for His direction. It may be that He is leading you to another ministry or even to start a new ministry. There is no such thing as retirement from the Lord's service. As long as the Lord enables us, regardless of our age, don't be a regressive Christian, but be a progressive Christian to keep serving the Lord till we see Him face to face. Paul says "*For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*" (2 Timothy 4:6-7). Like Paul, let us serve the Lord to the end of our life on earth. Guard your heart all the time. Don't let it turn cold but keep it warm for the Lord's sake. That's the heart of a Progressive Christian, not a Regressive Christian. May God help us. Amen.

Nuggets of Gold from Charles H. Spurgeon:

"A tried Christian grows rich by his losses, he rises by his falls, he lives by dying, and becomes full by being emptied."

"It is true that we endure trials, but it is also true that we are delivered out of them."

feature articles:

TESTIMONY OF MY CALLING TO FULL-TIME MINISTRY AND MISSION WORK

by Elder Tan Nee Keng

At the time when Rev Tan Kian Sing, decided to enter FEBC, I remember telling him something like “I may be joining you soon [full-time ministry] though not in FEBC”. He probably did not understand me, but I did not proceed to explain myself.

Years earlier, I had discussed with my wife concerning “early retirement” from work. I enjoyed my work as an engineer. But work could never be finished. One day, the words from Mark 8:36 spoke very strongly to me. “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Though work was enjoyable, there were more important things in life for me, like raising my children up to know God, and my service in the church. I chose to do that which I considered to be more important in life.

Although I desired very much to serve in the church, time was often limited. That was when the thought of “early retirement” came. My wife was very supportive of the idea. We committed this to the Lord. We adopted a very simple lifestyle so that we could have some reserves for our latter years. The desire grew as the years passed. When I joined a new start-up in the IT area at the time of the dot.com boom there was a possibility that the company may not survive in the long run. However, I reasoned that it should keep afloat for at least three years. But how can man be sure of the future?

About one year into the new job, I started praying that the Lord will direct my steps and that He would show me how I should prepare myself to serve Him. At that time, I was already going to Batam regularly to preach. A few months after I started praying

earnestly, the company had to close down. While my colleagues were busy looking for other jobs, I did not do so. Yet, I had peace in my heart. It was only about one year before I was to “retire”. It did not make sense for me to go into a full-time job. I thought of giving tuition. Years earlier, I had also wanted to give tuition and registered myself with some tuition agencies. However, I did not get any assignments at that time. What could I expect? I could see nothing in front of me, but I just trusted the Lord and He gave me peace in my heart.

Then the door opened for me to do relief teaching in some Secondary Schools and the tuition students came along. I could see how the Lord wanted me to go through a time of transition to full-time service in order that I may learn to trust in Him and to practise proper discipline in managing my time. It was about the best time in my life. When God leads, He will supply. It was time for me to stop work at the end of the year, but the Lord did not open any door. I decided to continue with giving tuition. It was also proper for me to do so, because a number of my students were taking their “O” levels the following year. I felt a responsibility to them to continue another year. There was opportunity to go to Kenya [a second time] for a month at the end of that first year. Through the trip, the Lord began giving me a burden to be a missionary to Kenya.

I began making the preparations that I thought I needed. I cooked (and of course, ate) *ugali* [maize flour staple in Kenya and Tanzania] every Friday. What could I do and how was I to go about doing it? I was told that the Kenyan government was trying to help the Maasai community to settle down instead of living a nomadic life, by giving them land. An opportunity to attend a small-scale agriculture course

made me consider living with the Maasai's, teaching them agriculture and sharing the gospel with them. I tried to learn more about growing food crops and experimented in my container garden at home. I learnt how to cook a simple meal that had to be healthy and nutritious, for myself. Contact was made with a missionary in Kenya. I was on the verge of booking the air ticket. However, the Lord used Rev Timothy Tow to redirect my steps to FEBC to do the MDiv programme. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and shall direct thy paths" (Prov 3:5,6).

I was afraid because of the heavy course work that I had heard about. My memory was poor. I was not used to the amount of reading and writing that was to be expected. By man's reasoning, I could not do it. I only trusted God. From time to time I remembered what Rev Tow told me concerning the need to be trained to face people who are well trained but with false doctrines. He also said that we should always equip ourselves as much as we can so that God can use us in more places. Three and a half years flew past so quickly. By God's grace, I have been able to complete the course. It was very tough for me. I thank God for it. If it had been easy, I would have learnt nothing because it meant that I had already known everything. There was much knowledge and many skills to learn in FEBC.

What led me to the mission field? The seed was sown in an unusual way in the early 90's. I was keen on tracking. Having gone to Malaysia a few times for that purpose, I decided to go to Thailand next. However, none of my friends could make it then, so when a fellowship group announced a meeting for those who were keen to go for a mission trip to Chiangmai, I jumped at the opportunity. My plan was to go for the mission trip and then remain behind to go tracking in the nature reserves there. The experience from the trip was enriching and eye-opening. I saw how the missionaries and the local Christians were encouraged by visitors. There was much to be done, especially in countries where Christianity was not so widespread. As a result, I went again with brethren to Chiangmai to help organize and run a church camp with the

missionaries there, for a few years. Interestingly, the idea of tracking there never occurred to me all those while. Instead, part of my annual leave was reserved for a mission trip every year.

My focus was drawn to Kenya when a presentation was made of the work done in Maasai land. Though Kenya is considered to be a Christian country, the Maasai's are an un-reached community because they follow a nomadic lifestyle. Through the Christian secondary school that was set up there, some of the Maasai boys were brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. But there was much that could be done among this group that is considered the lowest of the lowest among the tribes in Kenya. I made two trips there, staying for a month on the second trip. I could see even among the other tribes, a need for trained pastors to lead the believers.

As I considered what God wanted me to do in my retirement, the call to missions became stronger. Though there was need in Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, and the nearby countries in the East, there were people willing to go to these places. But few would even consider going to Africa.

Now, I am headed for Tanzania because in the meantime, the Bible College of East Africa (Tanzania) was set up. I thank God for the opportunity to teach there. Some people question if I have forgotten my desire to serve among the Maasai's. I see that God has re-directed my steps to an area where He deems better. He has opened a way for me to teach some, that they may go out to teach others. This ministry has a multiplier effect. At the same time the door is not closed to reach out to others.

I thank God for the encouragement, prayers and support from the pastor, session and members of Berean BP Church these years that I, and my family have been worshipping in the church. These have helped me greatly in the years in Bible College. As I am sent by the church to be her first missionary, it is my prayer that I may not be the last missionary or full-time servant of the Lord from the church. The Lord's coming is very near. We must hasten to do His work.

news & brief:

TAF PROGRAM

The Truth Adults' Fellowship meets every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month at 7.00 p.m., in Room 3.7. All adults are welcome to join us, and if you like to find out more about our activities, please contact Dns. Alice Tan (AF secretary), Andy Ho (publicity chairman) or the church office.

MAY: Series on The Tabernacle; TAF Retreat

We were very blessed to have Rev Stephen Khoo speak to us on The Old Testament Tabernacle. There were 3 messages in all and the final message was delivered to us during our annual retreat on Vesak Day. As a consequence of this series, the AF is starting a new series in October, on **The Temple of God**. We look forward to learning more spiritual lessons about God's Holy Temple, and to apply them in our daily walk with God.

We also held our annual AF Retreat in Pandan and we had a blessed time together learning about The Tabernacle, in fun and games and finally, in our fellowship BBQ at Dn. Martin and Susan's place in the evening.

JUNE: Gospel Outreach

June marked the first time we had a gospel focus in our cottage meeting. Rev Dennis Kwok spoke to us on "Knowing God" at the home of Barry and Pamela. After the message, we had the chance to discuss vital questions and answers to knowing God. Through such settings, we hope to be able to bring the gospel message to our loved ones and friends and the fellowship is intent on doing more in this area. Pray for such programs that the Lord will bless and souls may be saved.

JULY: Book Study

Rev (Dr) Khoo was our special speaker for our book study on 1 Peter. Using 5 meetings to complete our study over 3 months, we were very much blessed in this series of messages. Sister Cherine took the prize on offer for coming tops in our summary quiz, conducted at the end of the series. Well done, Cherine!

AUGUST: Video Night; Church Quiz

August saw us meeting at Dn. Martin and Susan's house for a video on the 2nd Coming of our Lord. A good size crowd comprising of many church members and friends came to join us in this meeting. We were reminded of the events leading up to our Lord's Return and how we should be watchful and prayerful in view of this momentous event that will take place soon.

The AF also participated in a truncated Church Quiz and we had fun running round the church complex looking for clues and answering the various questions. It was a good time for us to remember things we have studied and to try to recall them accurately!

OCTOBER: New series on The Temple Of God

We are continuing from the series on The Tabernacle by studying The Temple of God in the next 2 months. Bring someone and join us in finding out the plans God has for His people through His Holy Temple.

JANUARY, 2009: 3rd Anniversary; AGM & Election

Remember to keep these dates with the Lord to thank Him, and to serve Him anew in 2009!

DATE	PROGRAM	SPEAKER
Apr 5th	AF Gospel Month: Prayer Meeting	Rev. (Dr.) Das Koshy
Apr 19th	AF Gospel Month: Love Incomparable	Rev. (Dr.) Das Koshy
May 3rd	The Tabernacle Part 1	Rev. Stephen Khoo
May 17th	The Tabernacle Part 2	Rev. Stephen Khoo
May 19th	AF Retreat: The Tabernacle Part 3	Rev. Stephen Khoo
Jun 7th	Knowing God Part 1	Rev. Dennis Kwok
Jun 21st	Spurgeon's Archive	(Charles H. Spurgeon)
Jul 5th	Book Study: 1 Peter Chapter 1	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Jul 19th	Book Study: 1 Peter Chapter 2	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Aug 2nd	Book Study: 1 Peter Chapter 3	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Aug 16th	Video Night: 2nd Coming of Christ	Cottage Meeting
Aug 30th	Church Quiz	
Sep 6th	Book Study: 1 Peter Chapter 4	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Sep 20th	Book Study: 1 Peter Chapter 5 cum revision quiz	Rev. (Dr.) Jeffrey Khoo
Oct 4th	Clean Hands & Pure Hearts	Pr Dennis Kabingue
Oct 18th	Solomon's Temple	Rev. (Dr.) Das Koshy
Nov 1st	Post-Exilic Temple	Pr Dennis Kabingue
Nov 15th	The Future Temple	Rev. (Dr.) Das Koshy
Nov 29th	Truth Combined Fellowship	(to be announced)
Dec 6th	Christmas Gospel Gathering	(to be announced)
Dec 20th	Truth Gospel Meeting	(to be announced)
Dec 24th	Christmas Carolling	(to be announced)
Jan 3rd 2009	TAF 3rd Anniversary	(to be announced)
Jan 17th	TAF AGM / Elections	(to be announced)

christian learning:

Psalm 6: Swimming in My Bed of Tears

[1st preached at Prayer Meeting 05/03/08 by Pr John Loo]

Psalm Six is one of the penitential Psalms. In this psalm David cried out to God for mercy. He was at one of the lowest points in his life. Plagued with illness and afflicted with pain even to the point of death, David's only help was to cry out to his God.

Difficulties, distress and discouragement are part and parcel of this life but when coupled with ill health, it can bring down the best of men. David was no exception. At this point and time he felt that he was at the receiving end of God's anger. David felt the "hot displeasure" of God – Remember our God is a consuming fire!

A Cry of Anguish

David cried out in anguish, he was under severe mental and physical suffering, and found himself in a debilitating condition that left him weak and defenseless – an easy prey for his enemies!

"O LORD" is his cry. The intensity of his anguish was so great that he cried out to the LORD! What can cause a big man to cry: David, the shepherd boy who slew Goliath the champion of the Philistine with a sling and a stone (1 Sam 17: 48-51),

David a mighty warrior cried?

When was the last time you cried? Children cry when they are hungry, neglected and insecure, it is their way of telling us their need. Older folks are better at controlling their emotions but tears do welled up when they get nostalgic. Actors and actresses are especially good at crying which is required of them but most people suppress their emotions lest they be seen as weaklings.

David cried! he felt "the rebuke and chastening" of God!

Yes, when God disciplines us, it is painful but needful! It is His process of "refining" us! Though we have been saved from our sins we are still wayward and willful. The Apostle Paul spoke of the believers' constant struggles with the flesh, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom 7:18-19). The disobedient needs to be punished and God who is our heavenly Father has to chastise us!

God's chastening is to bring us out of our no - sense to our senses. Chastening is never pleasant, both to the recipient as well as to the one who mete it. Ask any sensible parents – it grieves them when they have to punish their disobedient children.

God chastises us because we are His children, "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb 12:8). God chastises us because He loves us and wants to bring us back to a right relationship with Him. Rev Timothy Tow says of God's chastening: God's cane is a "sugar cane."

God chastises us because in His eyes we are infinitely worth more than we think. He knows even the very number of our hair and this is how much our God loves for us.

A cry of distress

"Have mercy upon me, O LORD"

To David, a mighty man of war - his strength is his crown! To every able-bodied man, his youth, body and strength are his pride and joy. But take all these away from him, he will be shattered. All of us take our health and strength for granted. It is when we are down and out and on our backs that we realize how vulnerable we are. Even small ailments such as headaches can incapacitate us. David felt totally helpless, "I am weak... my bones are vexed." Have you ever felt this way

before: totally helpless when only the other day you were on top of the world and now everything is topsy-turvy? Something is not right but you do not know what it is, the doctor does not know either and the medicine is not helping at all. Have you ever felt so hopeless with no one to turn to? For those who know not the Lord Jesus Christ, it can be an agonizing and devastating experience! But for those whose trust is in the LORD - He is their blessed Hope! David had this hope, and he cried out to Him, **“O Lord, heal me!”**

Someone said, **“God may not always heal but He will always give grace!”** Indeed we thank God for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for He is always there for you and I. He is a Friend indeed for those in need for He has said, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Heb 12:8).

Do you know this “Friend”; the One that we cannot do without both in this life as well as the next? If He is not your “Friend” than you are in dire straits, hopeless and undone. You need Christ more than He needs you! Christ is the only Way out of all your predicaments. There is no other way! You may be able to escape for now but there is no telling when trouble will strike but they will surely come. Christ is the Only Way out of eternal hellfire and damnation and this is a certainty, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:” (Heb 9:27).

Come my friend do not hesitate. Come now to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? Tomorrow maybe too late!

A cry of repentance

Most of us may not see ourselves as David or imagine ourselves in such dire straits. Not when everything is going well for us: young, healthy and vibrant with a bright future ahead, “I will never sink that low.” Think again, life is full of uncertainties!

When God is silent in our life

David felt this void – a stillness that went beyond the physical, “My soul is also sore vexed:” He pleaded for the return of sweet communion with his Lord. We may have all that the world may offer but “the best bed in this world cannot buy you a good sleep!”

Have you ever felt that you are all alone despite being surrounded by family and friends? Do you feel despondent even though you have had a good year? Is everything moving too fast for you? In this life there will be uncertainties. Much more when we sense that God is far from us, we must cry out to Him immediately! David realized his spiritual poverty, he knew that he had to make right with God – he pleaded for God’s mercy.

David cried tears of repentance – a heart’s cry to his LORD, “Return, O LORD.” David called upon the LORD to come again to him. When we sense that we are drifting away from the LORD, we must cry out to Him immediately!

The Lord is never far from us!

To those who have yet to know Him, the Lord is even at your heart’s door, waiting for you to acknowledge Him! Call out to Him now! Do not wait! To those who have received Him as LORD and Saviour, He waits lovingly for you to return to Him.

“How then is your walk with Him?” “Is everyday sweeter than the day before or are you walking apart from Him?” We are to seek Him where He could be found! Note the sequence of events that led David back the Lord. David in his pain has felt the presence of God. Now, he calls upon God to return to him again, followed by his prayer for release from sickness of body and soul. In David’s call for healing we have both the terror of sickness and the confidence in God’s mercy to save. In our mortality we know the terror, but in our faith we know God’s power to restore us. Prayer is the power that brings the healing of God’s Spirit to the wounds of our lives. Coupled with prayer is the Word of God, balm to our soul! We need to read His Word daily and to spend time with Him in prayer. Once a week is not enough – we need him everyday. In fact we need the LORD every moment of our lives; we are “trapped” in this mortal body – **“death is just a breath away!”** Life is like “a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” [Jam 4:14]

In verses 6 & 7, David elaborates on his emotional states, he talks of excruciating pains that linger continuously and of enemies, malicious people whom he can do without. Here he gives us the emotional anatomy of all illness – groaning, crying, sleepless nights, outside attacks. What else can David do but call upon the LORD? In opening out to the LORD by expressing his fears of God’s wrath and silence, David at the same time also confessed his faith in the Living God. The reverence of God must bring us humbly to His mercy and grace and in Christ is His forgiveness magnified. The LORD accepted David’s cry for healing and salvation. God has heard and He will hear: “The LORD will receive my prayer.”

David ends his psalm by cursing his enemies, “Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed:”

In attacking David they attacked the Living God. In seeing David’s sickness as God’s judgment, they had failed to see God’s mercy and His covenant love. As David recovers, his enemies’ joy will be turned into trouble.

Again, David prays, “let them return and be ashamed suddenly.” As the enemies “turn back” or “repent” from their falsehood and their evil and see God’s salvation for David, shame will come upon them. Thus God will be glorified in David’s healing and delivery.

There are several lessons that we can learn about praying for the sick.

First of all, the chain of sin, sickness, and judgment can be broken. While it is true that we reap what we sow (Gal 6:7), God is fully able and desirous of breaking that chain. Beyond His judgment is His mercy. When God comes to us in His Son, He is full of “grace and truth” (John 1:14). Thus as we pray for healing, like David, we are to focus on the mercy and the love of God.

Next, most illnesses are complex, and the physical ailment often comes from spiritual and emotional pain. When bodies and spirits are troubled (as in vv. 2-3) healing must include both the physical and the spiritual. It is important to pray for relief from pain. But unless there is also prayer for “inner healing” only the symptoms may be alleviated.

Finally, as we pray we are to trust the healing hand of God upon us. David confesses, “The LORD has heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer” (v.9).

Like David, we too can come before God to plead with Him. God will hear and receive our prayer because we come to Him in the blessed name of His Son, Jesus Christ. We may not see the immediate change as we pray. WE are to “trust and obey for there is no other way” and this must be our holy submission as we come before the Lord. **We are to keep on praying, and we are to keep on and trust in the LORD! Amen!**



Annual Retreat Pix:

< Left top: Show and Tell by Gloria & Winston :-)

< Bottom left: Group discussion with Martin, Eric, Tina & Alice

> Right: Our series speaker, Rev Stephen Khoo

> Below: Hair Day for our Advisor, President & VP :-)



Christian Resource: Recommended Websites

“The half of knowledge is knowing where to find it” Rev. (Dr.) Timothy Tow

Please note that recommendation to any website does not mean that we agree with everything that is written in these sites. Readers are to access or use these with care and spiritual discernment. Having said this, we hope you may be richly blessed in the use of these resources. Happy surfing!

www.bible-explorer.com

Category: Bible software

Used by many because it is easy to use and also because there's a free version! (***) Highly recommended)

www.quickverse.com

Category: Bible software

Another bible software provider. Supposedly available for both PCs and Macs.

www.e-sword.net

Category: Bible software

Another popular software provider that is free (donations welcome!). Just how popular is this provider? It claims more than 8 million downloads since it started in January 2000! (***) Highly recommended)

www.biblefortoday.org

Category: Biblical Christianity

History of BFT (Bible for Today): In February, 1965, while a Pastor in Newton, Massachusetts, Rev Dr. D. A. Waite felt led of the Lord to begin **THE BIBLE FOR TODAY** which, at that time, consisted of a radio broadcast heard several times each week over WRIB, Providence, Rhode Island, and, for a while also, on WSOL, Tampa, Florida. On April 11, 1966, **THE BIBLE FOR TODAY** was duly incorporated as a nonprofit, tax exempt, religious organization under the laws of the State of New Jersey. Although somewhat less active in the intervening years, on April 1, 1971, **THE BIBLE FOR TODAY**, Incorporated, again began an active ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ in an expanded and enlarged way.

TAF TIMES ESSAY-WRITING CONTEST!

Welcome to our first ever essay-writing contest! This contest is to encourage all of us to start on the wonderful journey of studying and learning God's Word consistently and systematically! This contest is open to all who are 21 years and above. Entries must reach the editor by email at: ecclesiastes121314@gmail.com latest 15th January, 2009. Each participant is allowed only 1 entry. Your essay must be written in A4 size format, in font size 12, single-spaced and at least 1000 words in length.

Write a 2 - 4 page essay on why we must study the Bible and the blessings of studying God's Word. Points will be given for proper introduction, development of essay, summary and scriptural texts to support your arguments.

Judging will be conducted by the AF committee and results will be posted in the March, 2009 issue of the TAF TIMES. There will be 2 categories of judging, an Open category and an AF category, which is reserved for AF members only. Book vouchers will be given to the best 2 entries in each category.

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to read the articles in this issue of TAF TIMES. We hope you have been truly blessed by the LORD through His Word in these pages. We wish to take this opportunity also to invite you to



our fellowship meetings for a blessed time of worshipping God and studying His Word with us.

We meet every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month at 7.00 p.m. in Room 3.7. If you are 21 years and above, you are most welcome to join us. Our messages are geared towards the adult believer and our meetings are blessed times of serving the Lord and being sanctified by His Truth. If you have not been meeting regularly with like-

minded brethren in the faith, we encourage you to do so in obedience to God's Word, for the mutual edification of our souls. We hope to see you soon! *editor*

Truth Adults' Fellowship



Motto:

"To live is Christ, to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21)

Theme 2008:

"Stedfast, Unmovable, Always Abounding in the Work of the Lord"

Theme Verse:

1 Corinthians 15:58 "Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as

ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Objectives:

- 1) To glory in understanding and knowing God (Jeremiah 9:23-24)
- 2) To observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord (Nehemiah 10:29)

Ministries 2008:

- 1) Prayer (ic Dns. Alice Tan)
 - 2) Evangelism (ic Paul Tan)
 - 3) Word (ic Andy Ho)
-