

FOCUS

For the Week of 14th December 2008

COUPLES' RETREAT 2008:

Reflections



Jenson & Wendy Chan:

It was a timely retreat from our daily routine and hectic life, where we were able to reflect deeply and take stock of our marriage and family life.

It also allowed us to share openly and freely with the others what each couple is experiencing and how we can reconcile, recommit and truly value our marriage.

Henry & Nat Kong:

The couples' fellowship delivered more than we bargained for. Right from the first session there were insights, emotions and a sense of discovery climaxing in the rededications. It was really great especially with participation from newly transferred members and visitors.



Lilie & Anthony Li:

We enjoyed being with the members in the retreat, especially together with each other. We learned from one another, encouraged one another, shared our joys as well as our tears with the love of our gracious Lord. Most importantly, we were enlightened by the lectures taught



and the role models among us, and also touched by those humbly rededicated hearts. Praise the Lord!



Richard & Linda Leow:

Every age has its beautiful moments... we have been married for 25 years now and we had "Our Beautiful Moment" at the Couples' Retreat 2008. There was love, confession, forgiveness, rededication of vows, not forgetting great sharing and devotions.

Continued on the centre insert



Tonight at 6pm:

Tuao team presentation at our evening worship - hear 4 youth share their missionary zeal.

17th December:

8am - Wangsa Maju, West Malaysia outreach

10am - Last Open Bible Study for the year

7:30pm - Last SPC class for 2008: Final lesson on conversational sign language

28th December:

9:30am - JBC Awards Sunday

2pm - Youth camp

6pm - Thanksgiving Service

1st January 2009:

8am-12noon - Annual Church Planning Day (breakfast and lunch provided)

4th January 2009:

9:30am - Welcome New Members Session

5th January 2009:

SIBI internship Programme

9th January 2009:

7pm SIBI's Life of Christ Course with Nat Cooper

PP FAMILY NEWS

We were happy to **welcome many visitors** this past Sunday. Amongst them are sister Poh Dee from Australia with her 3 lovely **daughters - Shuen, Lynn and Lim.**

Brother KC will exhort the congregation at our morning services today. Come back at 6pm to hear from 4 speakers of the recent Tuao missions trip.

Members, please check and verify your 2009 directory entry, by signing on the proof at the lobby. If your name is missing, please fill it in at the last section. The proof will be displayed until next Sunday, 21st December as it will be released on 1st January 2009.

Members who wish to purchase brother Paul Faulkner's book, "Making Things Right When Things Go Wrong" used at the current 9:30am Combined Adults Bible class may order them from brother Charles Cook.

The Open Bible Study will hold the final session for 2008 at 10am this Wednesday morning. The class will take a break on December 24th and 31st before resuming in 2009.

Join in the final session of the SPC **Conversational Sign Course** this Wednesday at 7:30pm. Come and pick up some useful skills and start communicating with the Hearing Impaired members at PP. The SPC will take a break for the rest of the year and resume on the 7th of January 2009. Brother Charles Cook will start off the year with a 12-lesson series, "Leadership, Jesus' Style". See the back page for more information.

This morning at the 11am service, we want to present the **Jerry Chens' month-old Christopher** to the congregation.

Coming 'round the corner: Youth camp and the SIBI intership programme. Speak to our youth leaders for more information. Do not miss these two great opportunities.

We are pleased that the **Chinese congregation** has purchased a brand new mini-bus for their work.

MEN to SERVE for this Week and the Next

Worship Service

8am

Call to Worship:
Scripture Text:

11am

Call to Worship:
SR/OP:
S. Leader:
Communion:
Preacher:
Shepherd's Prayer:
i/c Auditorium
i/c Balcony

6pm

Call to Worship:
Scripture Text:
SR/OP:
S. Leader:
Communion:
Preacher:
Closing Prayer:

Today (14th December)

Elder Adrian Teo
Psalm 31:21-24

Elder Adrian Teo
Daniel Goh
Deacon Paul Lim
Tom Goracke
Deacon KC
Elder Simon Goh
Jeronme Goh
HI Team

Elder Adrian Teo
Psalm 34:1-3
Irvin Wan
Nicholas Siew
Alistair Chong
Shawn, Johnston, Petras, Joseph
Elder Simon Goh

Next Week

Elder Tan Beng Chuan
Psalm 34:4-7

Elder Tan Beng Chuan
Vincent Lim
Kuek Lee Hock
Michael Yam
Paul Quek
Elder Adrian Teo
Richard Leow
HI Team

Elder Tan Beng Chuan
Psalm 34:8-10
Ban Haw Leong
Charles Pang
Ramesh D
Henry Kong
Elder Adrian Teo

COUPLES' RETREAT 2008:

Reflections

Continued from the Cover

Alice & Tan Yiu Huat:

The teaching that is deeply imprinted in my mind during the Couples' Retreat is Eph 5:33. The Bible teaches clearly that: "the husband is to love the wife while the wife is to respect her husband". And yet so many of us are struggling with this. But, the good news is that when we seek to do God's will, we can because His Word has guidance for us.



We are thankful that such struggles are not unique to any one couple. What a relief it is when we can weep over our weaknesses and our burdens among brethren of like mind. During these 2 days, we saw authentic Christians making an impact on one another's lives as we confessed our sins and prayed for one another. Thank God for our spiritual family in PP!

Charles & Tamara Cook:

We believe the couples retreat was a blessing to everyone who attended. The atmosphere was relaxing and casual, the meals were great and well planned. It seems Hong Ngee had many organizers involved and they all deserve our generous thanks. The presentations were designed to help us look at ourselves as married couples and rethink our marital roles. Adrian, Winston and others who made presentations were well prepared. There was renewal of our commitment to our spouses, maybe some attitudinal changes, purging, catharsis, and all that other good stuff that can come out of retreating from the norm once in a while. Our sincere thanks to all involved.



Ken & Debbi McCumsey:

We were blessed to attend the couples retreat, getting to know our brothers and sisters better as we shared our life stories with power point presentations, enjoyed delicious meals and attended informative sessions to help strengthen our marriages. The highlight of our weekend was a candle light dinner complete with romantic musical entertainment which had us all singing. Our thanks to Hong Ngee and Michelle and all those who worked so hard to make this retreat a great success.

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Mabel & Koh Kim Soon:

We must say that our lives have been energised and changed for the better after this retreat. The good organisation put into the retreat met our needs well. Those who do not attend this retreat for one reason or other have missed a golden opportunity and I hope that they will seize the next available opportunity to experience the power of the Lord to bless their union. Shalom and God bless.



Tan Beng Chuan & Woon Ching:

The sharing among the couples was deeply moving. The Holy Spirit was working in our midst through the well-planned activities, lessons and in particular, prayers for each other. As a couple, we thank God for guiding us in our marriage and renewing our devotion toward each other.

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Paul Lim & Mei Yin:

While searching through the photographs for the presentation, we had a good time recollecting past memories.

During the retreat, all of us had so much laughter over the "Bumble Bee" spectacles that most ladies wore during that era. Group discussions also brought laughter as all of us realised that men are all the same in so many ways; all women are also the same too.



During the last session, all of us have to be still and quiet for 10 minutes. That was a good time to take our minds of the hustle and bustle and to reflect on the whole retreat and also on our lives.

The couples' retreat is refreshing for all married couples. We wish more can attend future couples retreats. As the saying goes: "Chains do not hold a marriage together. It is the threads, hundreds of tiny threads which sew couples together through the years."



Simon Goh & Wai Leng:

Refreshing surroundings, efficiently organised; treats galore - Five Love Languages booklet; perpetual calendar; candlelit dinner; framed photo, CD... Reflected on our relationship as a couple. Engaged with other

Refreshing surroundings, efficiently organised; treats galore - Five Love Languages booklet; perpetual calendar; candlelit dinner; framed photo, CD... Reflected on our relationship as a couple. Engaged with other

couples and got to know them better. Ate well. Truly enjoyed ourselves. Thanks for everything!

Foo Yong Wee & Jane:

We both enjoyed the retreat. Not only did we learn and understand each other better, we also gained valuable insights from the sharing by other couples. We learn to appreciate each other more and not to take each other for granted. Thanks to the organisers for making all these possible. We feel enriched at the close of the retreat.



Calvin & Michelle Siew:

When we first signed up for the Couples' Retreat organised by the church, we thought it was another short honeymoon for us, like what we had with my Care Team last year. Little did we realise that we had to do a presentation, which is something the two of us are never good at; and what's more, it was a presentation on our courtship journey. We almost wanted to tell Winston that we're backing out.

Nevertheless, we 'dug' through our old photographs, selected the relevant ones (actually did not have many to select from), scanned them and put them together as a presentation.

Though the process was time consuming, by going through the photographs, it brought back good memories. We never realised how time flies, and were amazed how God put two persons of different characters together.

The Couples Retreat was well organised, with short lessons and good sharing sessions. There were good debates between the men and ladies, clarifying our idifferences. We shed tears through our sharing, and also from our laughed a lot. We had great joy watching each couple's presentations, laughed at our old fashioned hair styles, those big spectacles (for better focus as some men put it?) and the silly but meaningful things we did during our courtship. We also get to know our church members better. On the final night, couples were waltzing on the dance floor with the rest of us cheering and teasing them.

The short 2 days' lessons may not solve the problems we face in our daily lives, but I guess those who attended this retreat would agree with me that it did enrich our relationship, bringing the couples closer to each other. Thanks to the organising committee and all the couples who attended the retreat that made it a memorable one for us.

Pang Tee Liang & Foon Yoong:

The recent couple's retreat was timely as the last one was held many years ago. It was a time of good bonding especially for couples who do not have time to spend quality time and have heart-to-heart talk with each other. I wished more couples will sign up for future retreats and benefit from it because they do not know what they missed.



Winston Chong & Hong Ngee:

As we approach the throne of the Almighty God with confidence of His power and redemptive love for us, we are witnessing that God will honour those who humble themselves and surrender lordship for their marriages to God. God has begun a good work in many lives and we are confident of how He will bring it to perfection. We also experienced the awe and joy of the centurion who returned home to find his servant healed at the time he exercised faith in Jesus.

We received more than what we bargained for – it is a great feeling to know that God was with us for all the 3 days we spent together to honour Him. Not only that we get to connect more intimately with each other as husband & wife, we also had a chance to know all the couples in the retreat better.

Peter & Linda Ching

This 3-day-2-night getaway has helped us reflect on Matthew 7:7 - Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.



Ask and it will be given to you
When our Care Team first mooted the idea of holding a Couples' Retreat in the 3rd week of November, my immediate response was "No way!" as there were 2 giant-sized hurdles between me and this retreat.

Firstly, my company holds our annual planning meeting the same week every year – a "ritual" that everyone adheres to. Next, I'd need to persuade Peter, who doesn't even attend parent-meet-teacher sessions, to agree. Hong Ngee's advice for me was simply, "Pray and God will make it possible." She was right. When I received news just 3 weeks before the retreat that my corporate event was postponed, I couldn't believe my ears. What's more amazing was that not only did

Peter not resist the idea, he even funded the trip. Praise the Lord !

Seek and you will find

My eyes popped out when I saw the itinerary. The first item on the list was to prepare a 15-minute presentation for "A walk down the cleaving lane". We burned 2 week-ends to pull together a hundred old photographs to prepare a short movie-clip. On looking back, the family found joy and fun while browsing through the dust-filled albums - something which we would never have done as a family if not for this retreat!

Knock and the door will be opened to you

We left home without any expectations for a dramatic change in our relationship as we always thought we are an OK-couple. However, at the end of the 2-day program-packed stay, we were more than grateful that God has opened this door for us. Every session was an eye-opening moment for us. With God's love and wisdom, we have faith that we will fulfill our marriage vows - till death do us part.

Adrian & Doreen Teo:

We were led into performing marital and premarital counselling over the last four years. The intention and hosting of a couples' class



was short-lived. We were therefore particularly interested in a couples' retreat. We are still a long way from a couple's ministry but the first-ever couples' retreat at Pulau Springs Resort was an excellent start. An idea initiated at church planning day was given a huge boost by the involvement of Hong Ngee's Care team. As the Winston Chongs and the Adrian Teos met to work on the program, we were ambivalent whether the various components would actually work. Immediate adjustment was made to grouping structure even at the start of the retreat. Instead of listening to the marital journeys of half the group, we opted for listening to all 17 couples.

As we reviewed and prayed for each couple by name on night one, we made further adjustments the very next morning, still uncertain of outcomes. We prayed and "played by ear" a great deal - trying to be sensitive to the readiness of couples to respond to God's call. Some sessions had to be abandoned - like the time allotted to games. But no one seemed to mind.

Each devotion and personal sharing did its work of softening hearts. Tears flowed freely when we least expected them! We felt deeply for the brave couples who bared their souls in their rededications. The separated wives and husbands groupings enabled sharings to be braver and those "oh yours too!" sessions drew the most laughter!

We were grateful for the darkened theatre as we sobbed our hearts out watching the movie! As we went through the various sessions, the sharings became more introspective and reflective, some of us taking ownership for the state of our marriage. The prayer walk enabled us to connect spiritually and to see our relationships in the light of our relationship to Christ. The candlelight dinner was particularly memorable as we connected more intimately with another couple. The "couple-time" and "pillow-talk" enabled couples to stay real with each other. Though, as Singaporeans, we wanted to remain intellectually poised, many were ready to admit our shortcomings and cried out for forgiveness and help.

Not all relationship problems can be resolved through a one-off retreat. The opportunity continues to be available for couples to pay attention to, to listen to, and to treat each other with love and respect. We trust the intimacies shared by the couples at Pulau Springs Resort can now give courage for all of us to continue to work on our marital and parental relationships.

Doreen and I struggled to remain poised as facilitators, we had to concede that we needed to be personally engaged in our own relationship as well. We thank God we had the opportunity to review our own marital relationship and to re-commit, to cleave even more closely to each other as we live out our sunset years.

N.B. The couples retreat was held at Pulau Springs Resort, Johor on the 20th-23rd November 2008.

**WINNING THE
BATTLE WITHIN**

God.Sln.Me



Date: 28th to 31st December
Time: 1400hrs
Venue: 50 Jalan Lekar (Lim Chu Kang)
register with alvin or basil now!

For enquiries, please contact:
alvin tjijto: 9626057
basil chong: 91290567



PURLOINING

– in modern day context

by Hedy Wong

Paul in Titus Chapter 2 encourages us to be responsible employees.

“Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things: not answering again. Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity: that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”

Titus 2: 9-10 KJV

The word ‘purloining’ is not used in other translations. The Revised Standard Version’s equivalent is pilfer. The amplified version is more interesting: “Nor to steal by taking things of small value.”

The Greek translation is ‘nosphizomai’ meaning

1. Set apart, separate, divide for oneself
2. Embezzle, withdraw covertly and appropriate for one’s own use
3. Keep back.

To quote a commentary, “Employees should always do their best work and be trustworthy, not just when the employer is watching. Businesses lose millions of dollars a year to employee theft and time wasting, If all Christian employees would follow Paul’s advice at work, what a transformation it would make”.

All so often, we do purloin in the office but sadly are not even conscious of it.

Purloining in modern day context can be: -

1. Surfing the net during office hours
2. Using the company’s stationery, photocopier to copy our personal documents
3. Take away pens, pencils, office supplies for our own use at home
4. Taking “French” leave to run personal errands
5. Engaging in lengthy personal phone calls

during office hours

6. Downloading/copying software for personal use.

All these are things of small value but yet we are advised against it.

To prevent abuses, some offices insist that you exchange your used/spoilt pen for a new one and resort to issuing staff with passwords for use of the photocopier. Supermarkets lose substantial amount of money to employees who help themselves to the food. Now most supermarkets have close circuit TV to monitor staff movements.

Let us take heed to Paul’s encouragement and strive to be respectable Christian employees.



For Youth and Mature Members who want to immerse themselves in the word with practical hands-on experience during January and February 2009

Contact elder Beng Chuan or deacon Winston if you can spare 1-8 weeks in full-time study

Check out the detailed schedule at the poster in front of brother Patrick’s office or log on at <http://focusonasia.wordpress.com/2008/10/17/pp-sibi-internship-training-programme/>

CALENDAR of events

Sunday, 14th December 2008

- 7:30am Shuttle Bus Service
- 8:00am Morning Worship
Speaker: deacon KC
- 9:30am Bible Classes for all ages
- 11am Morning Worship
- 6pm Evening Worship
Tuao Missions Presentation

Wednesday, 17th December 2008

- 10:00am Final SIBI Open Bible Study session for 2008 with brother Charles Cook
- 7:30pm Final lesson on Conversational Sign Language by the HI team led by brother Patrick Ong

Cover our Wangsa Maju Youth team in your prayers led by deacon Winston, Yong Wee and Tom Goracke

Sunday, 21st December 2008

- 7:30am Shuttle Bus Service
- 8:00am Morning Worship
Speaker: Paul Quek
- 9:30am Bible Classes for all ages
- 11am Morning Worship
- 6pm Evening Worship
Speaker: Henry Kong

FAMILY CONCERNS

Please pray for:

God to continue to administer the medication prescribed by the doctor in charge of Leroy's lung infections and help him to get well soon - Doreen Lum

Michael's grandma suffering from cancer - Grace M. Travel mercy for our Korea trip from 16-23 December - Petras Ching

Wangsa Maju mission team from 17-24 December and the youth camp from 28-31 December - Timothy Lim

My physical and spiritual health as I continue to serve God. Travel mercy for the Wittkopt family going to Switzerland - Amparo

Safe journey and protection for Kevin in Batam camp from 7-10 December and our Korea trip from 11-30 December - Kim Teo

Thank God for:

Cher Yam's sermon - Hedy, Foon Yoong, Grace M. Vincent's sermon - Henry and Nat

The safe return of the Tuao Mission team and for the uplifting experience that they had there - Edward Lee, Timothy Lim, Maribel

The safe return of the Batam and Shenzhen teams - Patrick Ong, Henry

His faithfulness and love - Soo Lang

Rosie and Boo Chye for their medical treatment to my son and thanks them for the medicine too - Adelma

Safe return from Malaysia trip - Joyce Tan

FACTS & FIGURES



8am Worship	118
11am Worship	189
6pm Worship	<u>48</u>
Total:	355
Morning Giving	\$8,741
Evening Giving	<u>\$ 611</u>
Total Contribution	\$9352

Receipt No. Donor Amount

3RsF 1204	Anonymous	\$50
3RsF 1205	Anonymous	\$600
3RsF 1206	Chew Chong L:ins	\$500



New SPC Series by Charles Cook

LEADERSHIP: JESUS STYLE

Lesson 01	The Need For Church Leadership
Lesson 02	The Need For Servant Leadership #1
Lesson 03	The Need For Servant Leadership #2
Lesson 04	Leadership Development - Elders
Lesson 05	Leadership Development - Deacons, Evangelists, etc.
Lesson 06	Conflict Resolution #1
Lesson 07	Conflict Resolution #2
Lesson 08	Empowering Leadership #1
Lesson 09	Empowering Leadership #2
Lesson 10	How To Practice Church Discipline
Lesson 11	How To Truly Love One Another
Lesson 12	Leadership - Jesus Style

7:30pm Wednesdays, Starting 7 January 2009