

FOCUS



CHURCH *of* CHRIST
PASIR PANJANG, SINGAPORE

Sunday Morning Worship



22 May 2022

Conquering The Chaotic Waters

By John Lim
Live @ 11am

Every good story has something called a "climax". It's the moment when the hero overcomes the enemy, when the obstacle is overcome, and the conflict is over. It's time for celebration and happy endings!

We've been going through the story of Scripture by observing a certain theme: God rescues His creation through chaotic waters. Each week, we've seen that theme play out in different biblical figures and circumstances. Important as each story is, they are but stepping stones, building to the real "climax" of the biblical story, where God finally overcomes the chaotic waters once and for all.

How will God finish the story He started? Is this the hour of His glory and victory? Will He conquer indeed, or will His Chosen One be conquered by chaos instead? Join us for the climactic revelation of this series!

Sunday Morning Worship

Order of Worship

Call To Worship

Hallelujah Praise Jehovah

Salvation Belongs To Our God

Opening Prayer

Scripture: Psalm 93:1-5

Low In The Grave He Lay

Communion And Giving

Deep and Wide

Scripture: Romans 6:1-11

Sermon

All Who Are Thirsty

Announcements

Shepherd's Prayer

I've Got Peace Like A River

Giving

Last Week's Giving: **\$12,236**



General Fund
S76SS0008AGFD



Missions Fund
S76SS0008AMFD



Building Fund
S76SS0008ABFD

If you plan to make a contribution via cheque, please make sure it is made payable to "**Church of Christ, Pasir Panjang, Singapore**". Please ensure that you write the full name so that the cheque can be processed smoothly.

Upcoming Events



22 May | 9:30am

Adult Bible Class

"The Road To Success"

Deuteronomy 2-4

By Kuek Lee Hock

GEMS Bible Class (Nursery)

Contact Agnes Lim

(9858 5935)

Youth Bible Class

"Fig Trees, Judgment and a 'Bao'"

The Gospel of Mark

By John Lim

GEMS Bible Class (Kinderkids)

"God's King"

1 Samuel 16-17

Contact Josephine Seow (9170 4343)

GEMS Bible Class (Cradle Roll)

Contact Audrey Lee

(9855 4957)

GEMS Bible Class (P123)

"I Am The Bread Of Life"

John 6:22-40

Contact Joanne Foo (9683 8266)

GEMS Bible Class (Toddlers)

Contact Koo Hwee Yee

(9173 2365)

GEMS Bible Class (P456)

"Paul's Second Missionary Journey"

Acts 15:36-16:40

Contact Rosalind Lee (9621 9006)



23 May | 7:30pm

Gladiolus Place Devotional

Contact Lucy Kwan (9838 3131)



25 May | 7:30pm

Wednesday Bible Class (Zoom @ 8pm)

The Light of the World (John 1:9-13)

Zoom ID: 852 6167 8088

Password: Logos



28 May | 9am

Young Adults Community Conversation

Contact Clarence Lim (9061 3524) or

Kenneth Kuek (9338 9698)

More details on page 6

Family News



SIBI Graduation and Luncheon



On Sunday, 29th May, SIBI Singapore will be graduating its final class of students. The ceremony will begin at 2pm in the Paradiso room at Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel. **If you would like to attend the graduation and have lunch, sign up with brother Terry Harrison outside the Galleria Ballroom.**



Young Adult Monthly Fellowship



Calling all Young Adults to the edition of the YA Monthly Fellowship! They will be meeting in the home of **Kenneth and Michelle Kuek at 7:30pm**. Bring your dinner and Bible and start the weekend on the right note in Christian fellowship!

Sign up by contacting Kenneth at **9338 9689** or visit **www.bit.ly/YAMFJune22**.



YA Community Conversations - Part 2



On Saturday, 21 May, the Young Adults took a deep dive into the world of LGBTQ+. It was a session for understanding "what's going on" and what's at stake when we seek to engage this issue with a Christ-like spirit.

The Young Adults will continue with Part 2 of this conversation this **Saturday, 28 May, from 9am to 12pm**, at the Paradiso Room in Grand Copthorne. It will be a follow-up discussion facilitated by brother Kenneth Kuek.



Congratulations Regina and Dickson!



We extend our heartiest congratulations to newlyweds Regina and Dickson Teng! They were married on Sunday 15 May.

May God crown your marriage
with joy and grace;
May Christ teach you to love one another
as He loves you;
And may the Holy Spirit bind you always
in perfect love

Regina got to know PP through sister Sandy Tan, the daughter of brother Teck Su and sister Serene Tan. Sisters Janet Gant and Chong Hong Ngee studied the Bible with Regina and she was baptised on 23 June 2019.

Dickson, an engineer originally from Penang, is a believer and an active member in his congregation when he began work in Singapore. The couple have been mentored by John and Wendy Then for almost a year.

COMMON PASSIONS



Engage missing members &
backsliders
Reach out to the "least of these"
Reach out to those around us
Pursue spiritual revival

COMMON NEEDS



Equipping to "do" outreach
Physical spaces for gatherings
Robust corporate worship
Encourage Intergenerational
Community

CHANGING SITUATIONS



Careteams and small groups:
evaluate relevance and function
Bible Classes: evaluate purpose,
structure, function
Digital Presence: evaluate
purpose

(Left) Retreat At A Glance

In sports, you will hear coaches calling for "time-outs." The game pauses and players circle up. They take stock of how they've been playing, how their opponents have been playing, and they chart a plan to improve and play a better game. It takes only a couple of minutes, but the team re-enters the field re-energised, re-focused, and more aware of the situation.

That was what Retreat 2022 was about. The church is "playing a long game" as it seeks to be the presence of Christ on earth. We need spaces to pause and take stock of where we are. As a church, we need to articulate our present situation and seize the opportunities and use resources God has placed before us. Above all, we want to refocus on our ultimate goal: to be the vibrant, living presence of Jesus on this side of heaven.

This is a summary of the many insights that members offered during the Retreat. The following pages will unpack each of these elements in a little more detail.

Common Passions

I believe God calls us to serve through the passions or ‘burdens’ He places on our hearts. If you’ve ever thought “I wish we did this as a church” or “I really feel very strongly about this community,” that’s probably God summoning you to ministry. As a community, there were several areas that many felt strongly about.

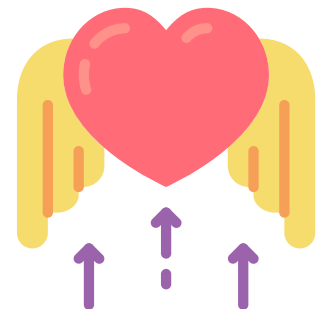
We feel called to re-engage missing members and backsliders. The pandemic has whittled down the active membership of churches across the world. Even as restrictions have been lifted, we aren’t seeing everybody back yet. We feel called to restore these members to active participation, which requires intentional visitation and follow-up.



We feel called to reach out to “the least of these.” Members named groups such as migrant workers, prison inmates, and at-risk teenagers who needed the grace, love, and compassion that only Jesus offers through His earthly body, the church. Yes, social welfare non-profit organisations exist, but we rightly sense that we who follow Jesus should be the champions of the downtrodden and the outcast. The fact that we feel this burden is a positive sign that we desire to be the active, life-giving presence of God in our community.

We feel called to reach out to those around us. Members named groups such as Grand Copthorne staff, housing estates around the hotel, and Zion Road Market among others as “ripe fields” for ministry and outreach. Another dimension is those who attend our worship services regularly but who would benefit from visitations, such as the elderly, vulnerable groups and the digitally challenged.

We feel called to spiritual revival. We are traditionally an activity-driven people. In the midst of organising outreach events and setting up new programs/ ministries, members also recognise that this burst of vibrancy must come from spiritual revival in order to “work”. New initiatives, however well-organised, only work when they are led by changed hearts and minds that are “sold out” to Jesus.



Retreat Reflection | John Lim

Common Needs

In order to rise to the challenge that God presents to us, the church also felt the need to be equipped and supported in various ways.

We need to be equipped to “do” outreach. Whether that’s towards missing members or non-Christians in prison, members felt that they needed more training before they could engage meaningfully. Beyond increasing one’s Bible knowledge, we need to be equipped to have conversations, build relationships with people who are different from us and lead people to Jesus without “stuffing the Bible down their throats”. This may require more intentional planning of classes or workshops while also recognising everybody’s busy schedules.

We need physical spaces for gatherings. Grand Copthorne Waterfront has been a blessing to us so that we could gather in-person in large numbers while 347 PP Road is being rebuilt. However, there are many groups that want to meet physically, both on Sunday and during the week, but do not have the space. As physical gatherings become more common, we hope that members with connections and resources can make them available for the rest of the church.



We need more robust corporate worship. More common among younger members (Youth and Young Adults) was the sense that our Sunday assemblies could be more. As the central hub of church life where the body of Christ gathers to behold and receive the presence of Jesus, this sacred event must be led by capable, trained, and Spirit-filled men. Participants of worship must also recognise the sacred nature of the assembly and participate fully.

We need to be an intergenerational church. Young parents expressed the importance of being a church where even the very young are welcomed into the presence of Jesus. Older members also felt it was important to ensure ongoing leadership transition as times change and people come and go.



Changing Situations

It was also interesting to notice what was **not** mentioned during the Retreat. This may signal a change in needs or priorities. Whether those changes are encouraging or concerning needs further discernment.

Careteams/small groups. Only two groups out of 9 mentioned the need for careteams or small groups. While PP once had a strong careteam system, with groups meeting weekly for serious Bible study and prayer, that is no longer the case for most. Also, some assume the careteam structure remains strong as a way to communicate information or keep tabs on all members, which is not the case. We need to reconsider the relevance and function of careteams, and how such a system will transform in the years ahead.

Bible Classes. Nothing was said about Bible classes even though they are the most prominent church events behind only Sunday worship. While GEMS and Youth Bible classes have remained been going steady, we have observed concerning trends in participation elsewhere, particularly in our online Wednesday Bible Class. All classes have also noted a shortage of teachers and a lack of synergy with curriculum of other classes. Given the desire for different kinds of equipping as stated above, perhaps this is a call to reevaluate the purpose, structure, and content of our Bible classes.

Digital Presence. Some members felt that increasing our digital presence via live-streaming was and remains effective, while others felt that it was giving people an excuse to not attend in-person. How we use digital platforms must be carefully considered, and must ultimately serve the purpose of drawing people to Jesus (as opposed to increasing convenience or headcount).

Summary

A note of caution: it is easy to assume that the leaders/elders/ministers will do the work of addressing all these issues. However, ministry is for all who claim to be followers of Jesus, not just those with titles and offices. I encourage all members to search their hearts to see how God is calling them to serve the church and the community, and to put aside the excuses that cause us to avoid service.

A note of encouragement: this data is a lot to process, and there remains much uncertainty in the next two years. We should not feel pressurised to do and succeed in every single thing. As was once preached, God calls us to faithfulness, not success. If we step out in faith and allow God to use us in just one thing, who knows how God will multiply that step of faith!



Are You Spiritual, Religious, or Both?

Here's a popular worldview for 21st century people: it's the idea that an individual can be spiritual without being religious. Everything that is associated with organised religion is “religious,” whereas everything that is associated with the individual's heart is spiritual.

You might have heard the saying "I'm spiritual but not religious." You may have even said it yourself. But what does that mean? Can you be distinctly “religious” or “spiritual”? Do the two overlap at some point?

Generally, “spiritual” behavior is related to the mind (i.e., meditation, prayer, devotion, etc.). That is separate from “religious” behaviour that refers to the activities of religion, including corporate worship, church attendance, participation in church activities, etc.

Some may conclude that as long as I take care of my “inner self” by being “spiritual”, then I don’t need to be religious (that is, by practicing some form of "organised" religion).

There are 2 vital questions we need to explore regarding these assumptions. First, is there a real distinction between the “spiritual” and the “religious”? Second, is there a clear distinction between spiritual and religious activities that are aligned to God’s nature and teachings?

The trends of deinstitutionalization and individualism have shifted many away from corporate worship to the personal domain of experiencing of God from within.

The Barna Group, a Christian research organisation based in America, conducted a research on segments of the American population who are “spiritual” but not religious.” They asked questions such as "Who are they? What do they believe? How do they live out their spirituality daily?" Some of these insights may be valuable for us.

Weekly Nugget | Kuek Lee Hock

Let's start by defining these two terms using the American Heritage dictionary:

“Spiritual”:

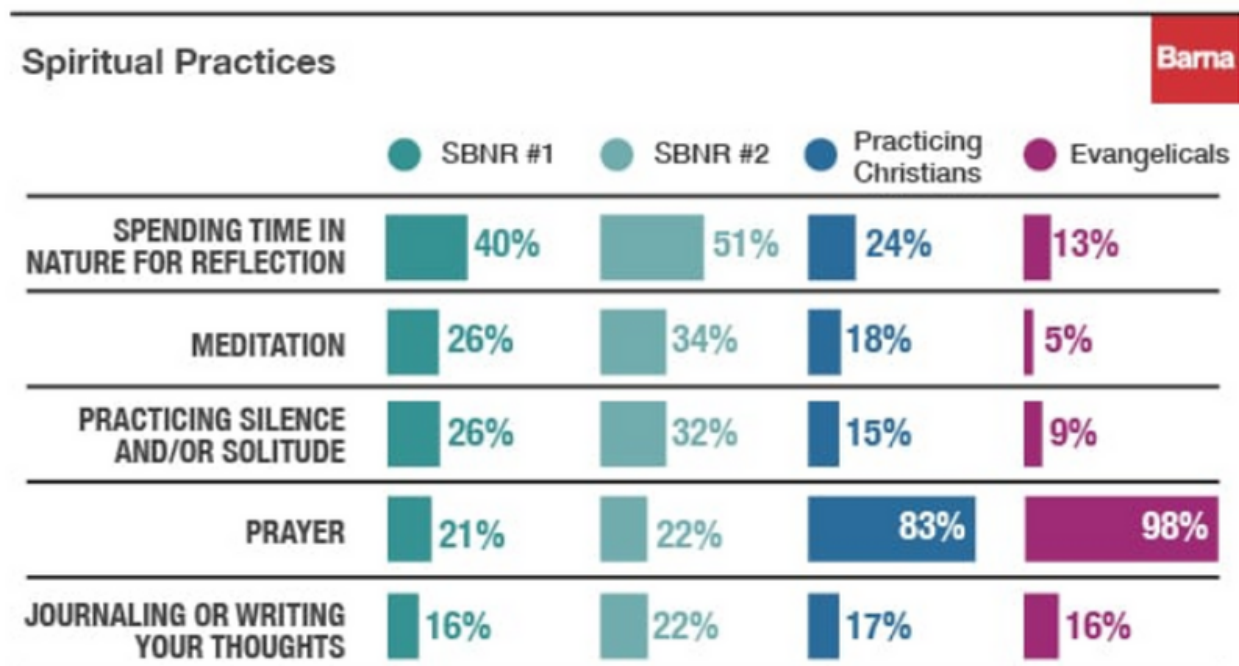
1. relating to, consisting of, or having the nature of spirit; not tangible or material. 2. concerned with, or affecting the soul; 3. from, or relating to God; deification; 4. Relating to or having the nature of spirits or a spirit; supernatural.

“Religious”:

1. Having or showing belief in and reverence for God or a deity. 2. Of, concerned with, or teaching religion: a religious text. 3. Extremely scrupulous or conscientious: religious devotion to duty; belonging to a church or religion; sacred.

What the Research Means

Barna's research shows what spirituality looks like for different groups:



Here is a breakdown of the four categories:

Spiritual but Not Religious (SBNR) #1: Those who consider themselves as spiritual but say their faith is not very important in their lives. This group is **disenchanted with the church**. They “still hold tightly to Christian belief, they just do not find value in the church as a component of that belief.”

Spiritual but Not Religious (SBNR) #2: Those who consider themselves as spiritual but do not claim any faith (atheist, agnostic or unaffiliated). They are **disenchanted with religion** itself. They prefer to define their own boundaries for spirituality—often mixing beliefs and practices taken from a variety of religions and traditions.

Practicing Christian: Those who attend a religious service at least once a month, who say their faith is very important in their lives and self-identify as a Christian.

Evangelicals who meet nine specific theological criteria:

- 1.They have made “a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today,”
- 2.Their faith is very important in their life today
- 3.They believe that when they die they will go to Heaven because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour
- 4.They strongly believe they have a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs about Christ with non-Christians
- 5.They firmly believe that Satan exists
- 6.They strongly believe that eternal salvation is possible only through grace, not works
- 7.They strongly agree that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth
- 8.They strongly assert that the Bible is accurate in all the principles it teaches
- 9.They describe God as the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect deity who created the universe and still rules it today.

Note: Being classified as an "evangelical" is not dependent on church attendance, the denominational affiliation of the church attended or self-identification. Respondents were not asked to describe themselves as “evangelical.”

2 Cor 13:5-9 “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you fail to meet the test! I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test. But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for.”

Weekly Nugget | Kuek Lee Hock

Jesus talked about worship being in spirit and truth in John 4:24. Paul advised in 2 Corinthians 4:16 “Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.” In our worship to God, the “spiritual” (in spirit) versus that which is “religious” (in truth) happens simultaneously. So, this is only a human distinction.

The Bible does not have such a distinction between these two concepts. Both works like your hand in a glove. Being religious is dependent upon spirituality. And being spiritual is dependent upon us being religious as well.

James 1:26-27 (AMP): If anyone thinks himself to be religious [scrupulously observant of the rituals of his faith], and does not control his tongue but deludes his own heart, this person's religion is worthless (futile, barren). Pure and unblemished religion [as it is expressed in outward acts] in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit and look after the fatherless and the widows in their distress, and to keep oneself uncontaminated by the [secular] world.

The point here is that one cannot be religious without being spiritual. The opposite is true as well. One cannot be spiritual without being religious.

Those who are “spiritual” are to be involved in “religious” activities, such as helping those who have gone astray to return to the church. Peter describes the church as a spiritual institution in 1 Peter 2:5, “ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Our worship offered up to God is to be “spiritual” in nature via religious activities. We cannot be spiritual without being religious as well (see John 4:24). We must have both the right attitude and the right actions, the right inner faith and the right external works.

The problem we have today is that there are so many “religious” people who aren’t spiritual and spiritual folks who are not religious. They have been drawn towards the ‘corporate measures’ which modern day “churches” use to attract the masses. Both groups have driven many away from the truth and love of God. Both groups stumble the truth seekers!

Conclusion

We need to be both spiritual and religious. Let's resolve to be so by following God's word, the Bible, the true standard for that which is both spiritual and religious. As the apostle Paul prayed, let us pray that we might be "filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding", that we might "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:9-10).

No matter which way we choose, it will soon be evident to all whether we are serving God or serving ourselves (Ephesians 4:13-15). Only when we choose to serve God, can others witness the true spiritual growth and maturity that can be attained in Christ.

Reflect and Respond

1. How can we be more spiritual in our daily devotion to God?
2. In what ways can our worship be religious and spiritual?
3. Guided by God's wisdom, let's align our inner spirit of worship to our external acts of worship for the next 30 days.

Prayer

Father, may we desire to listen and be devoted to You both spiritually and religiously. Let Your loving guidance keep us focussed on Your will and purpose for us. Let Your joy peace fill our hearts, as we offer our service of worship in words, deeds and spirit. May Your Holy Spirit dwell in our body as Your temple and may outward manifestations of our love for You be seen by all around us. To You, be the Glory and Honour! In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Connect With Us

Prayer Requests/ Feedback



<http://bit.ly/35FTEyp>



Meet Our People

Elders

Simon Goh

Peter Lim

Lim Swee Aun

Deacons

Dennis Law

Lim Kok Hin

Vincent Lim

Ministers

Tan Beng Chuan

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