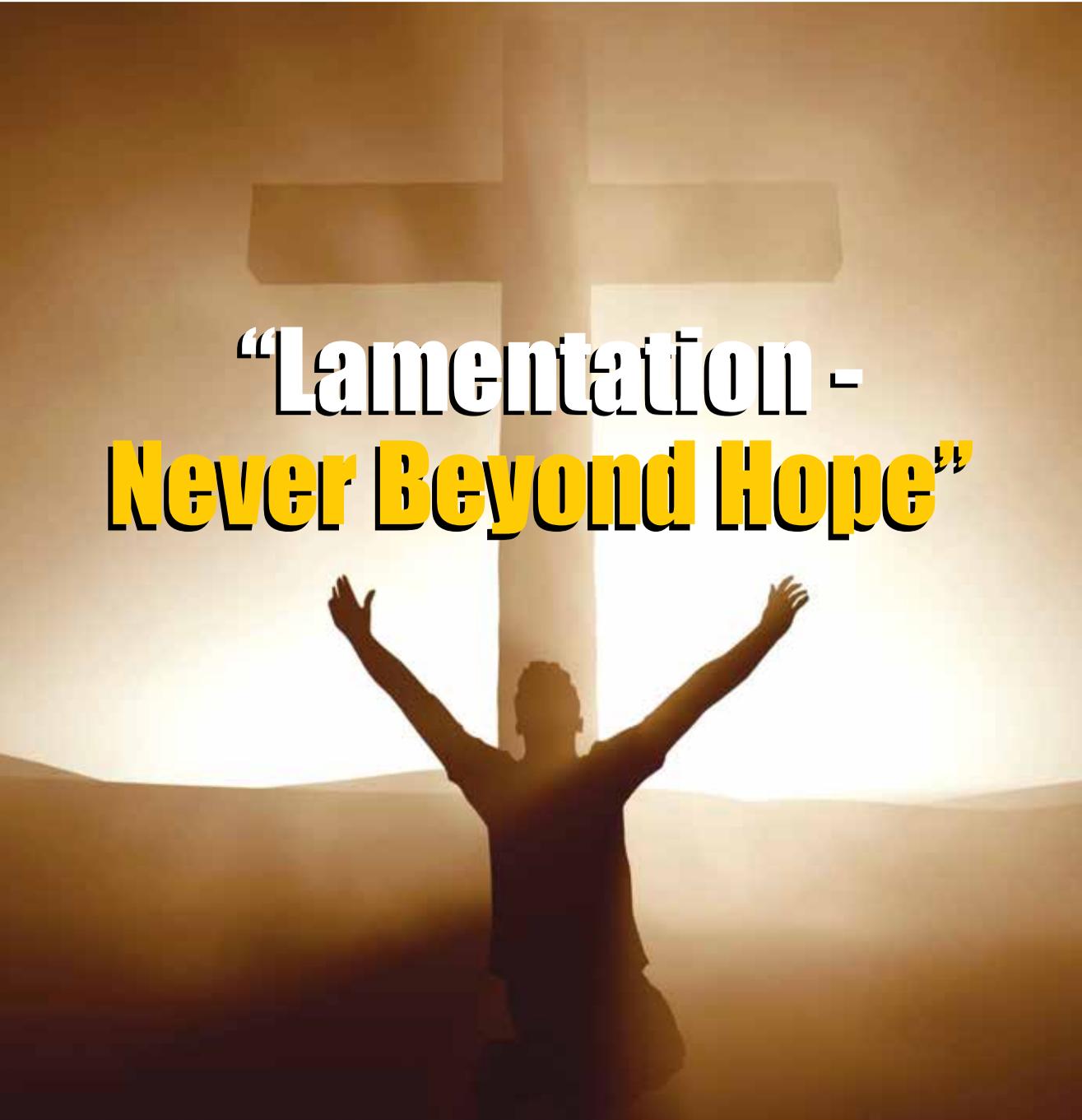


PELITA METHODIST

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**“Lamentation -
Never Beyond Hope”**

Moment

Australia Pastors' came for a visit at Methodist Headquarters on 07.04.17



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"A Church After
God's Own Heart
in Turbulent Times"

Contents

Pg. 04

"LAMENTATION - Never Beyond Hope"

By Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik

Pg. 06

COE News - WMSKLI

- Leading in Academic Excellence ...

Pg. 08

SCAC News

"God chooses volunteers and gives us amazing jobs to do ...

Pg. 10

CAC News

年会教育部幼教事工委委员会

Pg. 11

TAC News

கிறிஸ்துவிலிருந்து இன்றுவரை

Pg. 13

World Methodist Council News

Made ONE by the Resurrection

Pg. 14

Essay

The Fellowship of Caesar's Saints

PRAYER UNITED

POSSIBLE EARLY STATE ELECTIONS FOR SABAH AHEAD OF GENERAL ELECTIONS (GE1)

Pray for the raising of righteous leaders as candidates for the Sabah State Elections, rumoured to be as early as May 2017, earlier than the upcoming 14th General Elections, the GE14. Pray that they will be men of integrity with a calling to serve the people, regardless of political party. Pray for the civil servants involved in the planning for the state elections and the GE14. Pray for the overall security of Sabah, for peaceful elections.

SAFE RETURN OF PASTOR RAYMOND KOH AND PASTOR JOSHUA HILMY AND WIFE, RUTH

Pray for the safe return of Pastor Raymond Koh who was abducted on Monday, 13th February 2017. We pray for the success of law enforcement and investigating officers to locate the missing pastor and bring him to safety. Let us also pray for another pastor, Pastor Joshua Hilmy and his wife, Ruth, and another social worker, Amri who are also reported to be missing since the end of November 2016. Let us pray that they will be delivered from evil.

TERRORISM AND ORGANISED TRANS-NATIONAL CRIMINAL SYNDICATES IN THE NATION AND IN THE REGION

Pray to break strongholds in terrorism and organised transnational criminal syndicates involving human and organ trafficking, migrant smuggling, gambling, piracy, drugs, fraud, firearms and corruption of security forces to undermine the peace of the nation.

Pray for the security forces in the region to be on guard against terrorism activities as they seek to protect the cities, seas and borders.

Taken from PU Newsletter
April 2017

"LAMENTATION - Never Beyond Hope"

We gather as God's people tonight, uniting our hearts in worshipping our sovereign God, and seeking His face over someone very dear to us in the Church community and to this land that we have missed for 50 days.

Like you, I was most disturbed when I first heard of the shocking news of our brother Raymond Koh's audacious abduction in broad daylight in a busy urban residential area of Petaling Jaya on 13 February 2017.

For us Malaysians – we watch such episodes only on TV or hear of them happening in Mexico, Latin America or Africa where civil war, drug barons, clandestine armies and armed groups exist; where the rule of law has been severely compromised.

This growing sense of bewilderment, anguish and outrage is compounded by the fact that this happened to a gentle man of peace, who is a good neighbour to the peoples of Malaysia who are in need - regardless of race, standing, gender and age. He sacrificially and doggedly paid the price of having to raise the necessary funds and resources to run the centre that has given many in the margins of life hope - the Harapan Komuniti.

Then this bewilderment and lamentation is further fuelled by the paucity of information and scarcity of leads about the investigation by the law enforcement agencies. This is most troubling and anxiety provoking, especially when we realise that the chances of solving the case diminish with the passage of time.

It was at this early stage of "fearing the worst but always hoping for the best" that I sensed the Lord speaking and laying His word on my heart of "lamentation – never beyond hope".

It was similar to the epiphany, a sudden revelation of discovery, like that of the psalmist in *Psalms* 73. There in this psalm of Asaph, the psalmist had his fair share of lamentation of outrage when he declared: *Truly God is good to Israel, to those whose hearts are pure.*² *But as for me, I almost lost my footing. My feet were slipping, and I was almost gone.*³ *For I envied the proud when I saw them prosper despite their wickedness.*¹⁶ *So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is!*¹⁷ *Then I went into your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked.*

Lamentations in life are unavoidable. Lamenting speaks of physical danger and mental anguish, where inevitable questions like "why me? Why now? Why this undeserving crisis, suffering and pain?" arise. It is a deep sense of grief and outrage, often profound and at times accompanied by demonstrative and reactive expressions of sorrow and disappointment. It deplores being a victim or a recipient of unjustified crises and undeserving travails. Lamentation really puts faith in God to the test.

There are three "stand out" places of lamentation in the Old Testament – in the *Psalms*, *The Book of Lamentations* and *Job*. All these three sources tell us that ***lament is an essential ingredient of honest faith in an unchanging God.***

"We were created to live with God in a garden, yet we wake every morning in the desert of a fallen world," says Michael Card, a singer, songwriter, author, and radio host from Tennessee. There seems to be a painful "disconnect" between reality and the promises of God.

It is noteworthy that Israel's acknowledged Book of Worship, the Book of *Psalms*, contains more psalms of lament [both personal and commu-

nal] than any other major genres or categories of psalms. *Lament is indeed a prevalent experience in the life of the chosen people of God.*

The lamenters of old always brought their sorrow and suffering to God in worship and discovered that genuine lament in worship often led to a healing sense of the presence of a sovereign God. Those worshippers of old gazed honestly but unflinchingly at their present reality of pain in the face of the apparent slowness to save by their sovereign God. That could only happen because there was a real underpinning of a true relationship that was deep, real and close enough for the lamenter to "tell it to God's face" the outrage felt in the face of injustice.

T. Tennent reminds us that the *Psalms* makes an important difference between *despair* and *lamentation*. *He points out that the language may sound similar but the destination is different.* The destination of despair is hopelessness, cynicism and even suicide. The destination of the Biblical lamenter in honest faith in the unchanging sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God, Who is the Author and Perfecter of creation and faith – is *hope*.

The laments in the psalms are always songs of hope and not funeral dirges of despair – because of an honest faith in an unchanging God.

In the Old Testament book which the 19th century British poet laureate, Lord Alfred Tennyson, called "The greatest poem of ancient and modern times" – *Job*, we witness yet again another lamenter of honest faith in an unchanging God.

This "blameless and upright man" [Job 1:8], whose candidature was endorsed by God to withstand the full weight of Satan's attack - lost his children, pos-

sessions and wealth, health and reputation almost in a flash.

Yet the response of HOPE of this very man, a genuine lamenter of honest faith in an unchanging God has since echoed powerfully all the way through the corridors of history to our own day. Job had declared – “*Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him....*” [Job 13:15] and “*I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.*” Job 19:25 [*the Hebrew could also be translated as ‘my Vindicator lives’*]

But even as we are now into Lent and nearing Easter, we cannot but acknowledge the cry of the chief lamenter of honest faith in the unchanging Father God - the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus, the very Son of God, uttered the excruciating words of abandonment on the cross, “*My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?*” [Matt 27:46]. In this traditional Fourth Word at the Cross, He was quoting from Psalm 22:1. In the words of the psalmist, Jesus found a way to express the cry of his heart: *Why had God abandoned Him? Why did his Father turn his back on Him in His moment of greatest agony?*

Martin Luther once said, “*God forsaking God. Who can understand it?*” That was pain that belonged to the eternal dimension that cannot be fully understood or grasped on the mortal and temporal plane.

Nevertheless, since then, when that greatest lament of all ages and God’s greatest victory planned from eternity met at the Cross – all of life is framed with hope for those who trust in Christ!

So that just as death does not have the last word, so also our greatest laments on earth will not have the last say! In our Christ the Messiah Who expressed and embodied the greatest lament of history - God’s eternal purposes of hope for humankind are summed up and brought to fulfilment by His suffering, death and resurrection.

As we come together to seek our unchanging sovereign God on this 50th day of the abduction of our brother Pastor Raymond Koh, let us remember our lamentation on this occasion and in this circumstance is ***never beyond hope***. We in the Church of God is *doubly hopeful* and assured, for 50 days after the resurrection of Christ at Easter, the Church of God was then birthed at Pentecost in accordance to God’s eternal purpose.

Paul declares this in Ephesians 3:8-12 - *Although I am less than the least of all God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

In my heart, in the hearts of those who know Raymond Koh well enough, we can confidently say that Raymond Koh, Christ’s faithful servant who dedicated his life to God’s work, would unhesitatingly identify with Paul’s words... “*Although I am less than the least of all God’s people..... His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

We can see that out of this troubling and challenging circumstance, the unity and witness of God’s Church in Malaysia has strengthened as the people stand together across the whole nation. Since his abduction on the 13 February 2017 – this UNITY of coming together has gained momentum as evidenced by Christians united in inter-church Prayer Vigils organized on both sides of the South China Sea: in Sibul, Sarikei, Bintulu, Kuching, Kanowit, Miri, Kota

Kinabalu, Kelana Jaya, Petaling Jaya, Shah Alam, Penang, Seremban, Kluang and Johor Baru.

We witness how the early church birthed at Pentecost in the book of Acts according to God’s eternal purpose remained undefeated in the face of internal and external threats. In their “*normal Christian life and ministry*” they experienced the “*highs*” of seeing miracles of healings and deliverance of people and “*lows*” of being stoned like Stephen was!

In spite of being inundated and surrounded by “*puzzles and problems*” that included crises over church leadership, finances, ethnic tensions between Palestinian and Hellenistic Jews, theology and ethics disputes, not to mention very serious confrontations and clashes with political as well as religious authorities that threatened their lives and did them bodily harm – the early Church experienced remarkable growth within a relatively short period of time. They spread throughout the known world then with great impact.

Whatever may be our personal or communal laments – *they are never beyond hope, never greater than the eternal purpose of the sovereign unchanging God.*

So Job proclaimed - “*Though He slay me, yet I will hope in Him. I know that my Redeemer [Vindicator] lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.*”

This unchanging sovereign God Who declares “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool [Isa 66:1]” is “not restricted by space, not challenged by time, not surprised by change, and certainly not threatened by man”.

Hallelujah! Praise be to God!

Bishop Ong Hwai Teik

[This Reflection/Message was preached at the Ecumenical Solidarity Prayer Service, on 4 April 2017, Sungai Way Subang Methodist Church, Petaling Jaya, that was attended by about 400 people representing 72 churches and 8 church organisations.]

Wesley Methodist School Kuala Lumpur (International) - leading in Academic Excellence and exceptional achievements in Co-Curricular activities

Wesley Methodist School Kuala Lumpur (International) has a history of more than 30 years. We have since emerged as a school much sought after by many parents in the Klang valley as we are renowned to produce ACE students, i.e. students excelling in Academics, Character and Extra-curricular activities. Our ethos of “Education with Mission, Excellence and Compassion” remains a very important part of our school vision.

In the most recent announcements of November IGCSE 2016 examination results, we achieved an outstanding 82.38% Distinctions (A* & A), and in the May IGCSE 2016 Language papers, we achieved a stellar 100% A* in Malay as a Foreign Language, 80% A for Chinese as First Language and 92% A for Chinese as Second Language. Our achievements in Cambridge Checkpoint 2016 were also outstanding with 95% obtaining Perfect Score (6.0) for Maths, 55% for Science and 17% for English. Overall, 14% of our Checkpoint cohort succeeded in achieving Perfect Score in all the three subjects.

Countless co-curricular activities take place in the school each day, where the students take great pleasure in taking part in more than 40 types of Clubs & Societies. We have our Annual Sports Meet, Cross-Country, Concert, Book Week, Leadership Camps, Community Service Projects, Eco School Projects, Weekly Chapel and Christian Fellowship Camp, Boys’ Brigade, Girls’ Brigade, Inter-WMS Games, ISKL SEA Forensics, Model United Nations



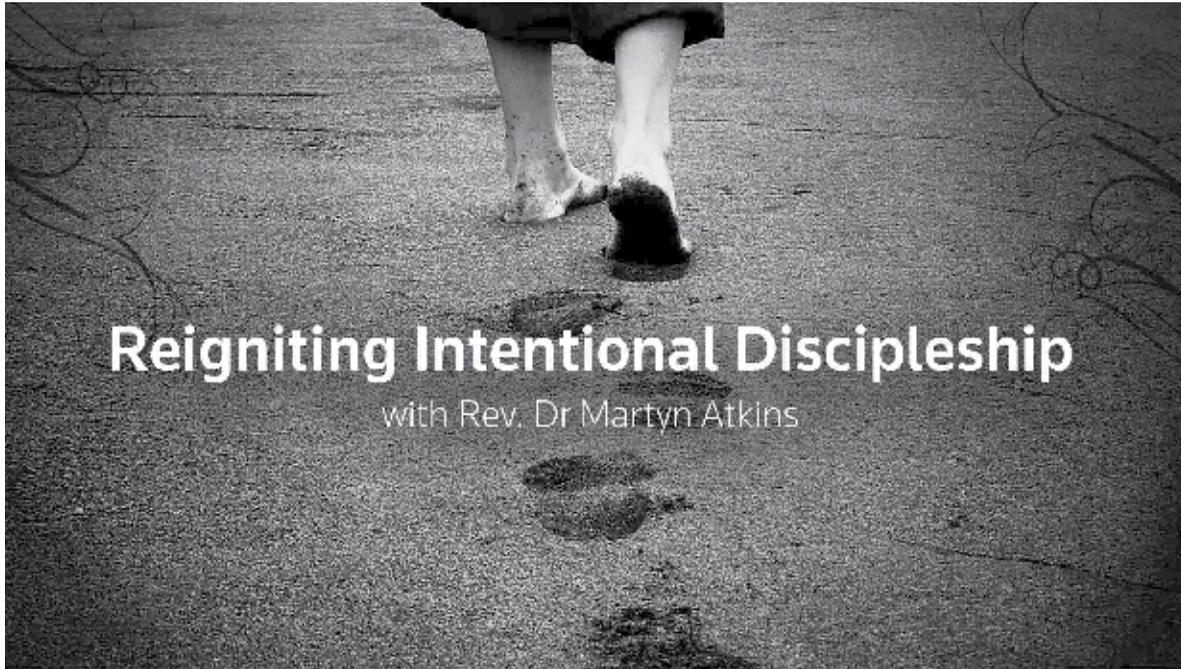
(MUN) etc. We also have many educational trips to both local and overseas destinations with special mention to UK, USA, Japan, Australia, Beijing, Vietnam and Singapore. Our students have excelled in many of the competitions held locally and overseas too, e.g. Microsoft Office Specialist Exams, Chess Tournaments, Swimming, Mathematics, Rhythmic gymnastics, Badminton, Stacking, Science & Inventions, Spelling Bee etc.

Each student is regarded as an impor-

tant individual in the school, where he/she is allowed to showcase his/her abilities and talents. The students are allowed to grow into well-rounded individuals, with emphasis on the development of leadership qualities and a great sense of community service too. We run a school here with the belief that God’s presence is with us each day.

Mdm Chia Loy Tian
Principal of Wesley Methodist School Kuala Lumpur (International)





Reigniting Intentional Discipleship

with Rev. Dr Martyn Atkins

SEMINAR TIMES

8 July 2017 | Saturday | 9.30AM – 4.30PM

9 July 2017 | Sunday | 9.00AM – 12.30PM

About Rev. Dr Martyn Atkins



Martyn Atkins became a Christian at the age of 17 in a nightclub in the early hours of the morning. As importantly, he was welcomed into a local Methodist Church where a vibrant youth group soon began and he grew in faith, quickly experiencing God's call to be a minister.

Martyn went to train for ordained ministry at the age of 22, and met and married his wife Helen during that time. His first local church appointment was in inner city Leeds, followed by several years in West Yorkshire, during which time Helen and Martyn had three sons, and he completed his PhD.

In 1991 Martyn became chaplain and head of Religious Studies at a Methodist school in North Devon, then in 1996 went to Cliff College, Derbyshire, first as a tutor and latterly as the Principal/President of the College. Over 12 years he trained both lay and ordained people for ministry of various kinds, teaching and writing mainly about mission, evangelism, preaching, then increasingly 'fresh expressions of Church' and Church renewal.

In 2007 Martyn was elected as the President of the Methodist Conference, and a year later was appointed as General Secretary of the British Methodist Church and Secretary of the Conference.

Martyn became Team Leader and Superintendent Minister of Methodist Central Hall, Westminster in 2015. Over the years Martyn has travelled widely, preaching and teaching in many countries around the world, particularly within the world Methodist family. His more recent publications are Resourcing Renewal – shaping churches for the emerging future and Discipleship and the people called Methodists which is now translated into several languages. He regularly presents the live acts of worship and early morning prayer for the day on BBC Radio Four. He is listed in 'Who's Who', a member of the 'College' of Westminster Abbey, and is currently chair of the Board of Fresh Expressions Ltd – a charity dedicated to developing and networking fresh expressions of church.

Reigniting Intentional Discipleship with Rev. Dr Martyn Atkins [8 - 9 July 2017]

SATURDAY (9.30AM – 4.30PM)

Being a 'disciple' is the common calling of all those who seek to follow Jesus Christ. But what does it mean? And, crucially, for many of us who know we are not the disciples we should or even could be, how might we become better disciples of our Lord? These key themes, and how we might become more 'intentional' about our discipleship, both as individuals and as members of Christ's Church, is the aim of the day.

- Session 1** The DNA of Discipleship
- Session 2** Really Good "Good News"
- Session 3** From 'Intending' to actually 'Being'

SUNDAY (9.00AM – 12.30PM)M – 12.30PM)

- Session 4** Sunday Sermon (Combined Worship Service)
- Session 5** Q & A

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

REG. TYPE	DUE DATE	FEE/PAX
Early Bird	By 7 May 2017	RM 40 per person
Normal	8 May - 11 Jun 2017	RM 50 per person
Late	12 - 25 Jun 2017	RM 60 per person
Walk-in	After 25 Jun 2017	RM 80 per person

Remarks:

- Full-time Student Rate: RM25 by 11 June 2017.
- Registration must be accompanied by payment to be valid.
- Fees paid are non-refundable; however, you may transfer your registration to another person.
- Fee includes lunch and tea on Saturday of the seminar.
- Walk-ins are not guaranteed food and delegate pack ("while stocks last" basis)

For registration form, please download from www.klwesley.org For enquiries, please call the Church Office, 03-2072-0338/9 or email to wmckl@klwesley.org.



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“God chooses volunteers and gives us amazing jobs to do. I believe He will help me for He is my constant companion.”

- New BB Sarawak State Commissioner Hon. Capt. Hii King Ong

BINTULU - Seventy-two Officers and Delegates from 33 Coys in Sarawak attended the 2017 Sarawak State Council AGM of The Boys' Brigade in Malaysia at Eng Kwang Methodist Church from Feb 24-25.

On Feb 25, retiring BB Sarawak State Chaplain Rev. George Wong Hin Hung commenced the AGM with an opening prayer. Following that, Rev. George gave his exhortation guided by Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV): *“Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”*

The good shepherd mentioned that while the Members worked hard to earn their awards, Officers and Helpers hardly gained any recognition. Rev. George encouraged the latter not to lose heart because of the promise of rewards awaiting in Jesus Christ. He also thanked the EXCO members and fellow Officers for their love and congenial support during his eight-year tenure as State Chaplain. He added that he would be taking a sabbatical and wished the BB Ministry the best in their endeavors.

With much appreciation, outgoing Commissioner Hon. Capt. Lo Hoi Fook presented a BB logo clock to Rev. George.

In his opening message, Hon. Capt. Lo welcomed all the delegates and observers. He extended his heartfelt thanks to the host church for the use of its excellent venue and facilities.

Hon. Capt. Lo began his address by indicating his intention to step down, adding that he had already planned the move a



few years ago for a change in leadership.

He continued by professing that it was neither a hard or easy decision for him to make knowing that God is in control and God will raise a more capable person to lead the BB to HIS glory.

Hon. Capt. Lo also affirmed that becoming volunteers in the BB ministry is one's own choice. In doing so, the volunteer has to commit his or her talents, time and money. As such, there are no material or earthly gains for the volunteer except experiencing peace and joy in serving Christ Jesus.

He attested that not only in Malaysia that Sarawak is a model state for the BB ministry but also internationally. “Sarawak is operating our own depot well, blessed with a committed FTO for 12+ years, and our own HQ building. We have achieved much not because of our strength but because Sarawak BB is very united,” he explained. “We also need to support BB Malaysia, especially at a time when they are facing various challenges. We should put God first, BBM second, and BB Sarawak third. Likewise, EXCO should put benefits to local Coys first, Sarawak second and lastly, EXCO.”

He asked all present to be wise to know what is best for BBM; to stay humble and submissive to the leading of His Spirit.

In conclusion, the outgoing Commissioner reminded all the delegates of their leadership responsibilities by putting ministry above self-interests.

Reports were also received from the President of the three respective regions; Southern, Central and Northern.

Other important reports included:

State Secretary's Report –
by Capt. Roseline Lee, 4th Miri

State Treasurer's Report –
by Lt. Linda Ting, 1st Sibü

State Training Chairman's Report –
by Lt. Aaron Tieng, 1st Sibü

State Extension Works Chairman's Report –
by Hon. Capt. Hii King Ong,
7th Kuching

State Competition Chairman's Report –
by Capt. Wong Chek Ing, 2nd Bintulu

The date and venue of the 2018 AGM were proposed and accepted to be in Sibü, March 16-18.

State Executive Council 2015/2016 was dissolved smoothly, followed by the election of the new State Commissioner. Nominations Chairman Rev. George Wong announced that Hon. Capt. Hii King Ong was the only candidate to receive more than three nominations to qualify for the post. Hence, Hon. Capt. Hii was unanimously elected as the new State Commissioner for 2017/2018.

Appointment of State Executive Council 2017/2018

Commissioner -

Hon. Capt. Hii King Ong

Honorary Commissioner -

Hon. Capt. Joseph Tin Kiew Seng, Hon. Capt. Lo Hoi Fook

Deputy Commissioner -

Capt. Edmund Wong,
7th Kuching (Southern Region),
Hon. Capt. Guang Chin Tung,
10th Sibul (Central Region),
Hon. Capt. Lawrence Wong,
1st Limbang (Northern Region)

Secretary -

Capt. Roseline Lee, 4th Miri

Treasurer -

Lt. Linda Ting, 1st Sibul

Training Chairman -

Lt. Aaron Tieng, 1st Sibul

State Extension Chairman -

Hon. Capt. Lawrence Wong,
1st Limbang

State Chaplain - TBA

Message by new State Commissioner

In his acceptance speech as the newly-elected State Commissioner, Hon. Capt. Hii thanked God for the opportunity to serve in BB ministry. He also thanked the retiring State Chaplain who had served eight years and the former State Commissioner (serving 16 years) for their great effort in leading the BB ministry in Sarawak.

Hon. Capt. Hii conceded that he had struggled for the past year to seek God's will whether he was ready for the top post after the former State Commissioner dropped him a hint.

"I decided to fast once a week to seek His will. Perhaps God will speak to me with encouraging words through close friends or during Bible-reading in my quiet time. Amazingly, God told me to have a willing heart to serve Him!" he declared. "God chooses volunteers and gives us amazing jobs to do. I believe He will help me for

He is my constant companion."

The new State Commissioner recalled in one of the sermons preached by his Pastor on how God prepared Elisha to become a leader (2 Kings 2:1-14). Knowing the heavy responsibilities that lay ahead, Hon. Capt. Hii prayed to God to equip him just as what Elisha asked Elijah for a double portion of the latter's spirit (2 Kings 2:9).

"Lastly, I pray every Officer will give me his and her full support through prayer. Together we continue the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ. Amen!" he said.

State Training Workshop

A good number of delegates arrived on Feb 24 to attend the State Training Workshop by invited Penang-based Rev. Lawrence Toh Kim Seng.

The four sessions in the Workshop were: *Serve Like Jesus, Calling And Purpose of Life, To See What The Lord Has Seen, To do What The Lord Has Commanded.*

Newly-appointed Capt. Hii Ting Ik of 6th Kuching said he was glad to attend the AGM. "The self-development training by Rev. Lawrence was very good. It awakened me and I believe other Officers felt the same. We need to refresh our relationship with God from time to time to ensure that we are serving HIM happily," he recounted.

"Thank God for the opportunity to attend this AGM. The training has inspired me how to lead my Coy and myself with the right attitude. May God bless the Boys' Brigade," expressed Siung Wen Loon, another newly-appointed Captain of 6th Sibul.

The highlight of the AGM was the celebration of the 15th Anniversary of 1st Bintulu held in the sanctuary of the hosting church. Prior to that, all the delegates and invited guests were treated to a scrumptious buffet dinner served in the church premises, followed by wonderful performances by the Boys of 1st Bintulu.

By James TC Wong

(This story was first published at jameswong.wordpress.com on March 1, 2017).



年会教育部幼教事工委委员会议

报道/摄影：甘慧仪

3月10日早上九时三十分，年会教育部幼教部员及干事——杜奇贤牧师、年会会友领袖——李祖国、年会社会关怀部主席——周道惠、总议会教育理事会执行干事——许宏仁，以及来自全国三十三间卫理幼儿园的牧师、幼教委员及园长们，抵达布城妇女、家庭与儿童事务大厦，拜见周美芬副部长。团队以年会教育部干事——杜奇贤牧师为首。

在会议上，杜牧师和周道惠弟兄积极向周副部长反映年会欲成立卫理幼幼班和安亲班的愿景与宗旨；周副部长表示会在自己的能力范围内，尽量给予协助。由于周副部长会在今年6月卸任，她吁请年会五十二间卫理幼儿园尽快处理幼托中心与安亲班（Taska dan Pusat Jagaan）的文件和申请表，让她得以在任期内协助我们注册。

年会会友领袖——李祖国呈交备忘录给周副部长后；团队来到另一间房，聆听马来西亚社会福利局官员（Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat, JKM）讲解成立幼托中心和安亲班的注册程序，认识不同地区的负责官员。总议会教育理事会执行干事——许宏仁，提出卫理幼儿园在政府教育部与注册方面的立场，他与官员对话的过程，使在场者进一步了解自己的权益和职责。

下午二时，团队来到马华大厦，继续与周副部长交流，从而得知马来西亚学前教育学院（附属马华公会）提供KAP课程（Kursus Asuhan Permata），此乃负责人申请幼托注册必备的条件之一。周副部长欢迎卫理幼儿园派教师报读KAP课程，以成立合乎标准的幼托中心。

11日早上八时，幼教部团队来到吉隆坡卫理学院，展开一场传递异象的会议。会议要点包括为卫理幼托班和安亲班注册、处理和收存卫理幼儿园对内外部文件、强化卫理幼儿园的异象和使命、为卫理幼儿园代祷、制作卫理的录像、2018年观摩新加坡幼儿园的计划及鼓励出席Mikid多媒体教学的培训。

据知，我国政府教育部计划于2020年，全面落实幼儿教师最低的门槛制度，即所有私立幼儿园和幼儿园教育中心的师资，至少必须拥有幼教专业文凭（ECE Diploma）。年会卫理幼儿园园长与幼教委员们认为，当务之急是对现有师资进行培训；但，经种种探讨后，大家要面对的问题极其严峻，主要有四：学费、上课地点、时间与课程授教语言，且仅剩三四年的时间，来培训师资和提升硬体设备。

针对上述问题，吉隆坡卫理学院幼教部主任——Dr. Grace 和许虹绿姐妹（卫理学院学术系副主任）捎来好消息：吉隆坡卫理学院与各地教会联合提供奖学金，鼓励卫理幼儿教师报读幼教专业文凭，使卫理幼儿园不致断了基督徒师资。

接着，智慧书局的新负责人——陆素梅律师，向众人推荐设立社区亲子阅读中心，会众反应不俗；五位园长轮流分享台湾幼教观摩之旅的心得，并展示如何将所学的创意，实行在幼儿园内；张许志枫（师母，年会幼教组员）藉此制作适合卫理幼儿园采用的二合一“品格+灵修”的教材；年会教育部幼儿园教育助理干事——巫月屏，阐释未来对卫理幼儿园采取的品鉴与奖励（团队式的奖励），以提升卫理素质与口碑；郑淑娜园长以“大雁精神”的短片，激励大家以团队形式支援和支持自己的团队、彼此守望卫理幼儿园。

最后，杜奇贤牧师总结第三项议案：强化卫理幼儿园的异象与使命，鼓励大家坚守岗位、不辱使命，并藉经文“……这香就是众圣徒的祈祷。”（启5：8）为始，引领会众一一按名为卫理幼儿园的幼教委员、园长和教师祷告。会议于下午一时三十分结束。



年会会友领袖——李祖国呈交备忘录给周美芬副部长（中）；前左三为总议会教育理事会执行干事——许宏仁，右四为年会社会关怀部主席——周道惠。

年会教育部幼教组来到马华大厦，由年会教育部干事——杜奇贤牧师（右）分享幼教事工；左起为年会教育部幼儿园教育助理——巫月屏、马来西亚学前教育学院院长——朱宝玲和周副部长。

கிறிஸ்துவிடமிருந்து இன்றுவரை

அன்புள்ள சபையோர்களே, இயேசுவுக்குப்பிறகு இந்நாள் வரை கிறிஸ்தவத்தில் நடந்த சில முக்கிய வரலாற்று சம்பவத்தை அறிய ஆவல் கொண்டிருப்பீர்கள். சில சம்பவங்கள் வேதத்திலேயே இருக்கிறது. மற்றவை சரித்திர வல்லுநர்கள் எழுதியச் சான்றுகள். சபையில் போதித்த இந்த சரித்திர சம்பவங்கள் நிச்சயம் உங்களுக்கு பயனாக அமையும் என நம்புகிறேன். தொடர்ந்து வாசித்து பயன் பெறுங்கள்.

கிமு 4ல் இயேசு பெத்லேகேமில் பிறந்தார். கிபி 30ல் இயேசு மரித்தார். கிபி 33ல் பெந்தேகோஸ்தே அல்லது சபையின் பிறந்த நாள் (அபு 2). கிபி 33ல் ஸ்தேவான் முதல் இரத்த சாட்சி (அபு 7). கிபி 48ல் எருசலேமில் ஆலோசனைக் கூட்டம், யூர்த் பாரம்பரியங்கொண்ட புற ஜாதிகளை ஏற்றுக்கொள்தல். கிபி 48ல் எருசலேமில் ஆலோசனைக் கூட்டம், யூர்த் பாரம்பரியங்கொண்ட புற ஜாதிகளை ஏற்றுக்கொள்தல். கிபி 60ல் மாற்கு எழுதின கலிசேஷம் வெளியீடு. கிபி 62ல் இயேசுவின் சகோதரர் யாக்கோபு இரத்த சாட்சியாய் மரித்தார். கிபி 67-68ல் ரோம ஆட்சியில், நீரோ மன்னின் கீழ் அப்போஸ்தலர்கள் பேதுரு, பவுல் இரத்த சாட்சியாய் மரித்தனர். கிபி 70ல் ரோம ஆட்சியை யூர்தர்கள் எதிர்த்தது முடிவுற்றது. எருசலேம் தேவாலயம் அழிக்கப்பட்டது. கிபி 70ல் கிறிஸ்தவ மையம் அந்தியோகியா, அலெக்சாண்டிரியா மற்றும் ரோமுக்கு மாற்றப்பட்டது. கிபி 90ல் வெளிப்படுத்தின விசேஷம் எழுதப்பட்டது, யோவான் கலிசேஷமும் எழுதப்பட்டது. கிபி 161-80ல் ரோம மன்னர் மார்க்கஸ் ஓர்லியூஸின் கீழ் கிறிஸ்தவர்களுக்கெதிராய் பரவலாக உபத்திரவம். மன்னர் டெசியுஸ் (249-251) மற்றும் டையோக்லெஷனின் (284 -305) கீழ் கிறிஸ்தவர்களுக்கெதிராய் குரூரமான உபத்திரவம். கிபி 301ல் அர்மெனியாதான் முதன் முதலில் கிறிஸ்தவத்தை தனது நாட்டின் மதமாக ஏற்றுக்கொண்ட தேசம் (ரஷ்யா துர்க்கி பக்கம்). கிபி 312ல் ரோம மன்னன் கோன்ஸ்டென்டின் வசனத்தோடு கூடிய ஒரு எளிகிற பட்டயத்தை தரிசனத்தில் கண்டார். கிபி 312ல் “இந்த அடையாளத்தோடு சுதந்திர” என்கிற வாசகம் தோன்ற அதன்பின் போர் செய்து ரைவல் மெக்ஷன்சஸ் மில்வியன் பாலத்தை தோற்கடித்தார். கிபி 313ல் கோன்ஸ்டென்டின் எடிக்க்ட் ஆப் மில்லன் வழி ரோம தேசமே கிறிஸ்தவம் ஆட்சி செய்யும் சாம்ராஜ்யமாய் மாறியது. கிபி 325ல் கோன்ஸ்டென்டின் முதன் முதல் நைசியா கவுன்சலைக் கூட்டினார் (துர்க்கி பகுதியில்). கிபி 325ல் “இயேசு படைக்கப்பட்டவர்” என்ற ஆரியன் கூற்றை நைசின் பிரமாணம் மூலம் கிறிஸ்து பிதாவின் ஒரே பேரானவர்” படைக்கப்படவில்லை என்று பறைசாட்டப்பட்டது (heresy - மதங்களுக்கு எதிரான கொள்கை). கிபி 367ல் பரிசுத்த அத்தேனசியுஸ் முதன் முதலில் 27 புதிய ஏற்பாட்டு புத்தகங்களை அவரின் பண்டிகை கடிதத்தில் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ளார்.

கிபி 381ல் கோன்ஸ்டென்டினோபோலில் கூடி மீண்டுமாக நைசின் பிரமாணத்தை தற்போதைய பிரமாணமாக சீர் அமைக்கப்பட்டது. கிபி 382ல் பரிசுத்த ஜெரோம் வேதாகமத்தை லத்தின் மொழியில் எழுதினார். கிபி 397ல் புதிய ஏற்பாடு என்பது வெறும் 27 புத்தகங்கள் மாத்திரம்தான் என்று கார்த்தேஜில் ஆயர் சபை கூடி முடிவு செய்தது. கிபி 431ல் நெஸ்தோரியனிசம் என்று சொல்லப்படக்கூடிய போதகத்தை எபேசவிலே அனைத்து சபைகளும் கூடி மறுத்தது. 431* அதாவது கிறிஸ்து 2 நபர். ஒருவர் மனிதத்தன்மை இன்னொருவர் இறைத்தன்மை கொண்டவர். 431* “மரியான் தெய்வத்தன்மை” உள்ளவர். “ஆண்டவரைச் சுமந்தவர்”, அதாவது “இயேசுவின் தாயார்” என்று பறைசாற்றியது. கிபி 449ல் எபேசவிலே 1ம் போப் லியோ கட்டுப்பாடான கிறிஸ்தவ நம்பிக்கையைத் தற்காத்துப் பேசினார். அதாவது போப்பாண்டவரின் மேலாதிக்கம்தான் மேலானது என்றார் (இயேசு ஒருவர் அதோடு 2 தன்மையுள்ளவர்). கிபி 451ல் செல்சிடோன் எல்லாச் சபைகளும் சேர்ந்த கூட்டத்தில் கிறிஸ்து 2 தன்மைகளுடைய ஒரே நபர் என்று உறுதிப்படுத்தினர் (உபபரநிலைக்குள்ளே – சரீரமும் தெய்வீகமும் சேர்ந்த நிலை). கிபி 553 எல்லாச் சபைகளும் சேர்ந்த கோன்ஸ்டென்டினோபோல் கூட்டத்தில் முன்னதான ஆலோசனைச் சபை மன்றத்தின் போதனையை உறுதிப்படுத்தினர். கிபி 563ல் கொலும்பா ஒரு மடத்தை லோனாவில் நிறுவியது. கிபி 589ல் லத்தின் வார்த்தையில் “மகனும்” என்ற பிரமாணத்தை தோலேடோ ஆலோசனை மன்றத்தில் நுழைத்தார்கள். கிபி 597ல் போப் 1ம் கிரேகரி மூலம் பரிசுத்த ஆகஸ்டின் முதன் முதலாக கேண்டிப்பிரிக்கு ஆர்ச்சிஷப்பாக நியமனம் செய்யப்பட்டார் (பிரதம மத குரு). கிபி 664ல் விட்பியில் ஆயர் சபை கூடி இங்கிலாந்தின் போப் அதிகாரம் செல்லத்தக்கது என்று முடிவெடுத்தது. கிபி 680-81 வரை எல்லா சபைகளின் ஒன்று கூடும் கோன்ஸ்டென்டினோபோல் ஆலோசனை மன்றத்தில் “மோனோதெலைட்” அதாவது ஒரே சித்தத்தையுடைய 2 இயேசு என்றதான கள்ள போதனையை நிராகரித்தனர். கிபி 731ல் பெடி தனது திருச்சபை மற்றும் போதகப் பணியைக் குறித்தான சரித்திரத்தை எழுதினார். கிபி 787ல் சபையில் சின்னங்கள், ஓவியங்கள் பயன்படுத்தலாமா வேண்டாமா என்கிற சர்ச்சையை நிக்கொயாவில் எல்லா சபைகளின் மன்றம் ஒன்று கூடி முடிவுக்குக் கொண்டு வந்தார்கள். கிபி 800ல் போப் லியோ 111 அவர்கள் பரிசுத்த ரோம சாம்ராஜ்யத்தின் மன்னராக சார்லிமேங்கை முடிசூட்டினார். கிபி 988ல் கியூரீவிலுள்ள ராஜகுமாரன் விலாடிமிர் மூலம் கிறிஸ்தவம் ரஷ்யாவில் வளர்ந்தது. கிபி 1054ல் கிழக்கு கட்டுப்பாடான கிறிஸ்தவத்திற்கும் (அர்மெனியன், கொப்டிக், அலெக்சாண்டிரியா, ப்ரஞ்ச் கோப்டிக் ஓர்த்தடொக்ஸ் சபை, சிரியா அந்தியோக், சிரியன். ஏத்தியோப்பியன்) மேற்கு கத்தோலிக்க சபைகளுக்குமிடையே பெரும் பிளவு ஏற்பட்டது (பெலாருசியன் கிரீக், பைசெண்டின், பல்கேரியன் கிரீக் ஈஸ்ட் சிரியன் கொப்டிக், அலெக்சாண்டிரியன் மேலும் 21 வரிசை) கிபி 1095 இஸ்லாமியர்களிடத்திலிருந்து பரிசுத்த பூமியை மீட்பதற்கு எர்பன் போப் 11 சிலுவைப் போர் பிரகடனம் செய்தார். சிலுவைப் போர் வீரர்கள் எருசலேமைக் கைப்பற்றினர். கிபி 1182ல் கோன்ஸ்டென்டினோப்போல் லத்தின் குடியிருப்பு வாசிகள் படுகொலைச் செய்யப்பட்டார்கள். கிபி 1187ல் சலாடின் என்ற இஸ்லாமிய இராணுவத்தினர் மூலம் எருசலேமை மீண்டும் கைப்பற்றினர். கிபி 1189ல்

இங்லாந்தின் ரிச்சர்ட் லையன் ஹார்ட் 3ம் சிலுவைப்போரை முன் நடத்தினார். கிபி 1204ல் 4ம் சிலுவைப்போரின்போது கோன்ஸ்டென்டினோப்போல் முற்றுகையிடப்பட்டது. கிபி 1216-23 வரை ஏழை மக்கள் மத்தியில் கவிசேஷம் பகிரவும் அவர்கள் கொடுக்கும் உணவைக்கொண்டு வீதியில் வாழ்வதற்கான டோமினிக்கன் மற்றும் ப்ரான்சிஸ்கன் அனுமதியை போப் மன்றம் அளித்தது. கிபி 1266-73 பெரும் பணியாகிய “சம்மா தியோலோஜி” முறைமையான இறையியலைக்குறித்து தோமஸ் இக்குய்னாஸ் எழுதினார் (முல ஆதாரங்களைக் கொண்டு வேதத்தை அறிந்துக்கொள்வது. கிபி 1305 பிரான்சின் பிலிப்பு IV ங்கோடு ஏற்பட்ட கருத்து வேறுபாட்டினாலே போப் குழுவின் ரோமுக்குச் செல்லாமல் ப்ரான்சிலுள்ள அவிக்கனோன் மாநிச் சென்றார். கிபி 1341ல் கட்டுப்பாடான கிறிஸ்தவ அவிக்குரிய எழுச்சியை கிரேகரி பலமாஸ் தற்காத்தார். ஹெசிகாசம் எழுச்சி உண்டானது (அறையில் அமைதியாக தியானத்தில் இருப்பது). கிபி 1376ல் சபைகளுக்கு மறுமாற்றம் தேவை என்று ஜோன் விக்லி.ப் “சிவில் டோமினியனை” எழுதினார் (மார்ட்டின் லூத்தருக்கு முன்பே). கிபி 1378ல் மறுபடியும் போப் குழுவின் ரோமுக்குத் திரும்பினபோது க்ளேம்மன்ட் ஆர்ப்பாட்டம் போப்புக்கு எதிர்ப்பாகத் துவங்கியது. மார்ட்டின் ஏ தேர்வுக்குப்பின் 1417ல் கருத்து வேறுபாடு முடிவுக்கு வந்தது. கிபி 1380ல் ஜோன் விக்லி.ப் வேதத்தை மத்திய ஆங்கிலத்திற்கு மொழி பெயர்த்தார் (பழைய ஆங்கில மொழி). கிபி 1453ல் ஓட்டமன் துர்க்கி கையில் கோன்ஸ்டென்டினோபோல் விழுந்தது. கிபி 1517ல் விட்டன்பெர்க் ஜெர்மனியில் மார்ட்டின் லூத்தர் 95 குறைபாடுகளை எழுதினதால் ப்ரோட்டெஸ்டன்ட் மறுமலர்ச்சி துவங்கியது. கிபி 1521ல் “டையர்ட் ஆ.ப் வெர்ம்ஸ்” (ஒன்று கூடுதல்) கத்தோலிக்க சபையை விட்டு லுத்தர் பிரிந்து போகூதல். கிபி 1525ல் வில்லியம் டிண்டேல் வேதத்தை ஆங்கிலத்தில் எழுதி முடித்தார். கிபி 1534ல் இக்ளேஷஸ் ஆப் லோயாலா ஜெசுட்ஸை உருவாக்கினார் (மறுமலர்ச்சியைத் தடுக்க உருவாக்கப்பட்ட மிஷனரி குழு). கிபி 1534ல் மேலாதிக்க செயல்பாடு நிறைவேற்றப்பட்டது. ஹென்றி VIII ஆங்கில சபையின் மேலாதிக்கத் தலைமை நிர்வாகியானார். கிபி 1536ல் ஜோன் கெல்வின் கிறிஸ்தவ மத நிறுவனத்தை வெளியிட்டார். கவுன்சல் ஆப் ட்ரெண்ட் ரோமன் கத்தோலிக்கர்களின் எதிர்ப்பு மறுமலர்ச்சி. “பொதுவான ஜெபம்” புத்தகத்தை தோமஸ் க்ரெண்மர் இங்லாந்தில் வெளியிட்டார் (அன்றாட ஜெபம், ஆராதனை ஒழங்கு – ஆங்கிலிக்கன்). ஓக்ஸ்பெர்க் சமாதான ஏற்பாடு மதப் போரை முடிவுக்கு கொண்டு வந்தது. கிபி 1611ல் “கிங் ஜேம்ஸ்” வேதாகமம் வெளியீடு. கிபி 1618-48 வரை ப்ரோட்டெஸ்டன்ட்டுக்கும், கத்தோலிக்கர்களுக்கும் கருத்து வேறுபாடு ஏற்பட்டு ஜெர்மனியில் 30 வருட யுத்தம். கிபி 1730-60 வரை அமெரிக்கா ஐக்கிய நாடுகளில் ப்ரோட்டெஸ்டன்ட்டுக்கள் மத்தியிலே “பெரும் எழுச்சி”. கிபி 1738ல் ஜோன் வெஸ்லி மற்றும் சார்ல்ஸ் வெஸ்லி மனமாற்றம் காரணமாக கவிசேஷ எழுப்புதல் உருவாகி மெதடிஸ்ட் உண்டானது. கிபி 1854ல் ரோமன் கெத்தோலிக்கவர்கள் “மரியாள் மாசுற்றவன்” என்கிற கோட்பாட்டை அறிவித்தார்கள் (பாவத்தன்மையற்றவன்). கிபி 1870-71 முதல் வெட்டிக்கன் மாமன்ற சபையில் போப்பாண்டவர் தவறு செய்யவே வாய்ப்பில்லை என்று அறிவித்தனர். கிபி 1906ல் லாஸ் ஏஞ்சல்சில் “அகசா ஸ்ட்ரீட்” எழுப்புதலின் வழி பேந்தேகோஸ்த்தே இயக்கம் துவங்கியது. கிபி 1910ல் எடின்பெர்க்கில் உலக மிஷன் மாநாடு துவங்கியது. கிபி 1918ல் பில்லி கிரஹாம் பிரந்தார். சரித்திரத்தில் ஒரு பெரிய கவிசேஷகராக வலம் வந்தார். கிபி 1948ல் உலக சபைகள் மாமன்றம் உருவானது. கிபி 1950ல் மரியாளின் அருமான கோட்பாட்டை ரோமன் கத்தோலிக்கர்கள் அறிவித்தார்கள் (மரியாள் பூமியிலே முழுமையான வாழ்வை வாழ்ந்து முடித்தமைக்காக பரலோக மகிமையை அடைந்து விட்டார்கள்). கிபி 1962-65 - II ம் வெட்டிக்கன் மன்றம். கத்தோலிக்க சபைகளிலே மறுமலர்ச்சியைத் துவக்கினார்கள். 1054ல் கட்டுப்பாடான சபைகளுக்கும் ரோமன் கத்தோலிக்கர்களுக்கும் புரிந்துணர்வு ஏற்பட்டது. கிபி 1997ல் “மிஷனரி தொண்டு” நிறுவனர் மதர் திரேசா கல்கத்தாவில் மரணித்தார்கள். கிபி 1999ல் “நீதிமானாகூதல்” விஷயத்தில் கத்தோலிக்கர்களும் லுத்தரன்களும் இணைந்து பறைசாற்றும் உடன்பாடு கையெழுத்தானது. கிபி 2005ல் போப் பெனடிக்கட் XVI க்குப் பிறகு ஜோன் போல் போப் ஆனார். கிபி 2006ல் உலக மெதடிஸ்ட் மாமன்றம் லுத்தரன் கத்தோலிக்க “நீதிமானாகூதல்” உடன்படிக்கையை ஏற்றுக்கொண்டனர். முன்பு: இரட்சிக்கப்பட தேவ கிருபையும், நமது விசுவாசம் மாத்திரம் போதும்

இப்போது: தேவ கிருபை, நமது விசுவாசம் மற்றும் *கிரியையும்* அவசியம். கிபி 2011ல் போப் ஜோன் போல் அவர்களின் முக்திபெறு (போப்பாண்டவர் இறந்த பின் அவரிடம் வேண்டுகூல் செய்யலாம்). கிபி 2013ல் போப் பெனடிக்கட் XVIன் இராஜினாமாவுக்குப்பிறகு போப் ப்ரான்சிஸ் பதவிக்கு வந்தார். இது சரித்திர சுருக்கம். இதில் பல தவறான போதனைகளை நம் முன்னோர்கள் கொண்டு வந்துள்ளார்கள். விசேஷமாக கத்தோலிக்க மதத்தில் மரியாள் நம்பிக்கை மற்றும் போப்பாண்டவரின் மேலுள்ள நம்பிக்கை. ஆகவே மெதடிஸ்ட் போதனைகளை, கோட்பாடுகளை மாத்திரம் ஏற்றுக்கொள்வோமாக.

அருட்திரு. துரைசீலன் ஜோன்
ரவுப், செரோ த. மெ. தி. போதகர்

From Jesus to the Present Times (A brief synopsis)

Rev. John presents a brief history of Christianity from the time of Jesus to our present time. He highlights some errors Christians have made throughout our history and presents our lessons as Methodists to hold on.

Made ONE by the Resurrection:

Easter Message from the President of World Methodist Council

Dear people called Methodists! Sisters and brothers in the one family of God! Grace and peace to you from Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead!

When I was visiting Gothenburg, Sweden, last month, the officers of WMC fell into deep sorrow because of a terror at Westminster, London. I also watched through TV that a sad Iraqi boy with tears running down his thin face was walking hopelessly in his village of Mosul completely destroyed by bombs. In the midst of all the tragedies in our world we are once again invited by the Spirit of God to celebrate the victory of life over the law of sin and death. Indeed, I heard the news that the Sewol ferry which sank and killed 304 people, most of whom were high school students, was raised after three years in South Korea. April 16 this year is Easter Sunday as well as the third anniversary of the Sewol ferry disaster. Peace be with you, especially the victims and their families and loved ones here in Korea and all over the world!

Jesus was raised! Jesus was faithful and obedient to God the Father to his death. All betrayed God. There was nobody who was righteous before God. Only Jesus was the most faithful Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us. Because of Jesus' filial faithfulness God raised him from the dead to redeem us the hopeless and helpless sinners from the present evil age. Not any works of human righteousness but only faith in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ the Son of God our Father in heaven can make us one in the global body of the family of God. "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29)

When I met with the host church leaders of Nordic countries in March, they suggested a theme for the next World Methodist Conference in 2021 in relation to the people of God 'On the Move.' Migrants and refugees from the Muslim countries are knocking on the doors of the Christian countries in Europe for survival and liberation from terror and war. However, not only in Europe but in the rest of the world such as in North America, Palestine, and Korea the wall of exclusion is built up higher and higher. Listen to the Word of God: "For Christ is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us." (Eph. 2:14)

Let me be straightforward with you for the sake of the glory of God. Before we witness the Gospel to the world we have to stay together in unity as our Lord prayed to God the Father, "they may all be one so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:21) Allow me share with you our beloved and true servant of God, Rev. John Wesley's exhortation: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that we be in no wise divided among ourselves. Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? I ask no farther question. If it be, give me thy hand. For opinions, or terms, let us not destroy the work of God. Dost thou love and serve God?" ("The Character of a Methodist") "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28) Indeed, there is no longer Easterner or Westerner, there is no longer conservative or progressive, there is no longer straight or gay; for all of us are one in Christ Jesus! The crucified Christ "had

put to death all human 'identities' in order to bring them through into a new existence corresponding to his own risen life." (N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*) We are all the members of God's family.

Jesus has risen! Happy Easter!



Your humble servant in Christ,
J. C. Park

The Fellowship of Caesar's Saints

By The Rev. Theodore Runyan,
of Wesley Church, Ipoh

When Paul, the prisoner in Rome, wrote his letter to his Christian friends in Philippi, he concluded it with an interesting greeting. "All the saints salute you," he wrote, "chiefly those that are of Caesar's household." The interesting and surprising thing about these words is not the salutation, but the fact that it came from saints in Caesar's household. Caesar's household was synonymous with vice and lust and moral darkness, and yet in the midst of such an environment, in surroundings that were alive with sin, a group of men and women held fast to goodness and purity.

It is not uncommon in any age to hear people blame environment for their imperfections. Many people vaguely imagine that if they could only move into a different neighbourhood and live in different surroundings, they would be better men and women. Some complain that they cannot develop character as they would if they were in a more favourable environment. Such people ought to remember "Caesar's saints" and be ashamed. No surroundings could have been more degrading than the conditions which prevailed in Caesar's household, and yet there were a few folk even there who were able to rise above their environment.

There are always some brave and noble souls who remain uncorrupted in spite of the world; some whose sense of moral loyalty and steadfastness is stronger than the temptations of the flesh; some who value moral purity more than pleasure. Daniel was such a person. In the unfavourable environment of the Babylonian court he remembered the religious training which he had received as a youth, and "he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." Too often in Sunday School children are taught that Daniel was a man who spent some time in a den of lions without being eaten. It is more important to re-

member him as a moral victor.

The city of Sardis was one of the most corrupt places in the ancient world, yet when John wrote the Book of Revelations he was able to say, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." So even in Sardis a few folk succeeded in remaining saints under most adverse conditions.

According to the writer of the Book of Hebrews, Moses was of the stuff saints are made of. Environment did not blind him to the demands of moral law. "Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

Church art has, I am afraid, used saints rather badly. In paintings and statuary they have often been depicted as anaemic, bloodless creatures with piteous expressions on their faces. In 1930 I visited an old Spanish Church on the island Guam, and the statues I saw of saints would lead one to believe that saintliness involved being queer and hungry. The walls were lined with images of emaciated, sinken-cheeked, hollow-eyed individuals with their hands folded on their breasts. These were supposed to be likenesses of God's saints. Such an impression is, I think, historically false.

The saints of Caesar's household were not other-worldly creatures. They were a real part of the world in which they moved. They performed certain duties in the royal household, and a great majority of their daily associates were *not* Christians. On the contrary, they worked among worldly, depraved, sensual people. But Paul did not advise them to leave Caesar's house-

hold and seek employment elsewhere. He taught them to show Christ's spirit and to exemplify Christian principles even in a corrupt royal court.

The true saint is not one who shuts himself up alone in a room so that he will not be corrupted by contact with the world. The true saint is one who in spite of the sinfulness and corruption of the world, keeps himself unspotted from the world. The true saint is one who instead of being changed and spoiled by his environment, will bring his knowledge and influence and character to bear in order to change and improve his environment.

This was Christ's plan for making saints—not withdrawal from the world but active participation in the affairs of the world. He prayed, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldn't keep them from evil."

Now I wish to transport you from the environment of Caesar's household and from the fellowship of Caesar's saints to the presence of Jesus as he prepared to enter Jerusalem on that last journey to the Holy City. As he singled out two of his followers and sent them into the city to borrow an ass on which he could ride, he said words which ought to burn themselves into the memory of each and every one of us—these words, "The Lord hath need." It is a strange thought that the Lord should ever have need of anything. With all power at His command we would naturally expect God to supply His own needs, and yet, I wonder if there isn't more truth in these words than we are accustomed to realize—"The Lord hath need."

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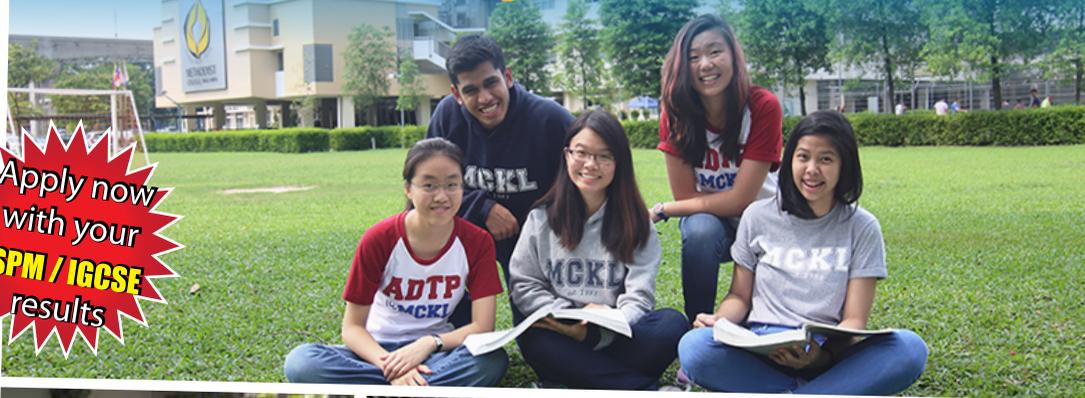


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