

PELITA METHODIST

VOLUME 43, NO. 5&6
MAY/JUNE 2017



PP 3233/01/2013 (031518)

“Teachers as Nation Builders -
Frustrated but Unhindered”



Moment

Methodist Bungalow, Fraser's Hill



Methodist Bungalow or Rumah Methodist as it is commonly known was recently blessed with new cushions and seat covers for its rattan sofas and bay windows. Even the rattan sofa was refurbished and made new. The new covers have enhanced the ambience of the lounge room which look much brighter and cheerier.

Our sincere thanks to the Methodist Women of Wesley Methodist Church KL who initiated the project and contributed financially as well as co-ordinated the logistics of transportation to send the sofas and the cushions up to Fraser's Hill.

It is very heartening and encouraging to see members of our Methodist family taking care and pride in our ministry properties and we sincerely appreciate and welcome such thoughtful initiatives.

Truly God has blessed us with these three lovely properties at Fraser's Hill, Cameron Highlands and Port Dickson, so let's use what He has given for the glory of His kingdom!

By Patricia Lim



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PRAYER

1. Church

- a. On the 24th-27th of June 2017, the General Conference Youth will be holding the GCYC Youth Conference 2017 with the theme "Carrying on the legacy". Please pray for our young people to understand their heritage and mission in this country for this day and age.
- b. The Methodist Church in Malaysia is also having the Indigenous Ministry Task Force (IMTF) Conference from the 21st -22nd June. At this conference, all the Annual Conferences and some mission partners will come together to report, discuss and plan for the ministries amongst the indigenous peoples of our land.

2. Country

- a. Like the whole world, Malaysia is also not immune to the dangers of terrorism and extremism. We do remember the abduction of Pastor Raymond Koh, Pastor Joshua Hilmy and his wife and other persons who have gone missing. Let's pray that our church remains focused in being God's light and salt wherever God places us.
- b. Recently there has been an increase in the number of cases of 'Bullying' in schools and universities that has caused great pain and even deaths. Even as we cry out for God's intervention, let us also pray for courage and boldness to stand up for justice and righteousness in this country.

3. Family

- a. We just celebrated Mother's day and in this month we are celebrating Father's day. Let us pray for all mothers and fathers as they carry out the responsibility of raising children who are precious in the eyes of God and made in His image. Let us pray for grace to be upon all families.

“Teachers as Nation Builders - *Frustrated but Unhindered*”

Text: 1 Cor 15:10

ESV 1 Corinthians 15:10

“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was *not in vain*. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”

Introduction – Looking back at the Rich Heritage of the Malaysian Church in Nation Building via Education

“From their inception, Methodist Schools have been the vanguard [fore front] of nation building. They have transcended the narrow confines of ethnicity, religion, language, culture and socio-economic boundary. Methodist schools continuously endeavour to develop each individual’s potential and encourage interaction with others so that everyone will become an integral part of the total school community. I believe these are important strategies that will create awareness of multi-racialism and will foster the spirit of mutual respect, understanding, oneness and loyalty. They will also enhance social values such as tolerance, cooperation and harmony between different communities. The records will reveal that Methodist schools have long been involved in the promotion of national unity – even long before Merdeka.” Almarhum YAB Tun Hussein Onn [Third Prime Minister], at the launching of the Methodist Education Foundation, 1986.

The above statement of commendation would be true not only of the Methodist Church in Malaysia but also with the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Brethren and Presbyterian Church. Teachers are the key contributors to the formation of young lives, contributing to this nation by laying the foundation of education and moral development so that the necessary fruits of character, vocational and professional expertise can sprout in a young person’s life.

Teachers are like Architects

A country may have resources like land and natural building resources and materials, but without the building team under the architect who is trained and who possesses the necessary skills, knowledge and ethical values, these natural resources, no matter how abundant, will not transform the environment into well planned and constructed townships, comprising residential homes, condominiums, recreational parks etc.

In the building of this nation, it is acknowledged that many of the post-Merdeka teachers and educators who are essential

builders of our Malaysia are themselves educated in knowledge and character by our many mission schools.

Tun Abdullah Badawi [former PM] and Tan Sri Koh Tsu Khooon had received part of their education in MBS Penang, a school established 127 years ago. Our present Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak had his Primary and secondary education in St. John’s Institution, KL.

The beloved late Chief Minister of Sarawak Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Datuk Amar Haji Adenan Satem was educated in St Joseph’s primary and secondary schools in Kuching.

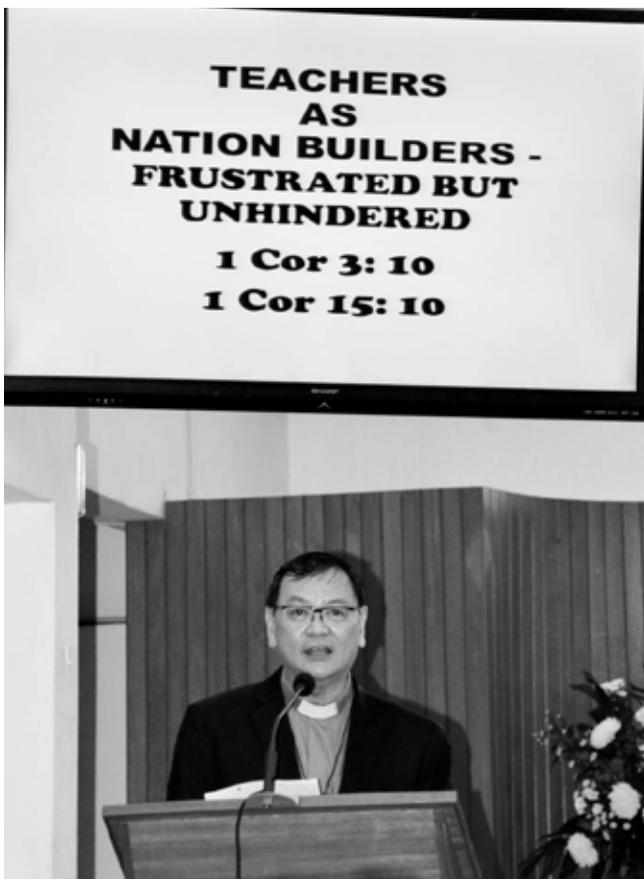
Our first Prime Minister, the late Tunku Abdul Rahman was an old boy of Penang Free School, which was started by an Anglican missionary who left an indelible mark in Penang, the Rev Robert Sparke Hutchins. This is reputed to be the oldest English-medium school in Southeast Asia founded in 1816, and it was also the first school to be established in Malaya. It has produced other notable personalities such as Tan Sri Eusoff Abdoolcadeer - Malaysian Supreme Court judge, Tun Lim Chong Eu - second Chief Minister of Penang, Tan Sri P. Ramlee - film actor, director, singer, songwriter, composer and producer.

Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz, the former Minister of International Trade and Industry for 20 years, received her education in Primary School Convent Bukit Nanas, Kuala Lumpur, Sekolah Menengah Convent in Johor Bahru and the Victoria Institution in Kuala Lumpur.

Paul – the Master Builder-Teacher

May I now refer to another great missionary teacher, the Apostle Paul of the New Testament. This spiritual educator par excellence was a skilled master builder, using the building analogy to describe the work of building up God’s Church in terms of imparting spiritual knowledge towards the end of equipping and transforming lives. In 1 Cor 3: 10 -15, Paul speaks about building the church which is also about building the all-important resource of HUMAN lives.

1 Corinthians 3:10 says –“Because of God’s grace to me, I



1 Cor 15:10 – Paul clearly spells out how he became a Master Builder-Teacher

ESV **1 Corinthians 15:10** “But **by the grace of God** I am what I am, and his grace toward me was ***not in vain***. On the contrary, **I worked harder** than any of them, though it was **not I, but the grace of God** that is with me.”

We first notice 2 “bookends” of “the grace of God” in Paul’s statement. He knew his first conversion was by God’s grace: that though he was a most intelligent, talented and a spiritually zealous person, yet only by God’s grace was he able to know Christ and enter the Kingdom of God.

He knew that his subsequent conversion from a zealous persecutor to “Apostle to the Gentiles” and builder of the Gentile Church – was by the grace of God..

The one thing that Paul would never lay claim was that of being a “self-made” man; he was utterly clear that he was the least of the apostles – and it was only by the grace of God that he was what he was!

But we also notice the 2 things he mentioned in between the 2 “bookends”.

Firstly, Paul had to face multiple and repeated frustrations. He openly declares -“His grace toward me was not in vain” as he faced frustrations in the form of hindrances, blocks, opposition and disappointments - both from enemies without, and those within the church.

He had to overcome the suspicions of the early church believers with the help of Barnabas, and to work twice as hard to gain the trust of the other leaders and believers, in order to be credible and accepted.

He encountered multi-occasions of injuries to limb and body in various hostile situations when reaching out in the synagogues in the cities of the Mediterranean world with Barnabas, Silas, Luke etc. He kept at it – quite literally not being a “once beaten twice shy” person! In Lystra, Acts 14:19 tell us that “Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead”.

He was viewed with contempt - his authority and standing questioned so as to embarrass him, as we read in **2 Corinthians 10:** ¹⁰ For some say, “ Paul’s letters are demanding and forceful, but in person he is weak, and his speeches are worthless!”

He had to face and address multiple messy situations in the churches as demonstrated in the letters to the Corinthian church. He encountered disunity [claiming bragging rights as to who had baptized them]; flagrant sexual immorality of the most grievous kind – incest; suits and legal actions against one another; divorce problems etc.

He had to deal with his disappointments in fellow key leaders like Peter and Barnabas who were not behaving with in-

have laid the foundation like an *expert*...”

Paul was a skilled builder-teacher who had contributed to the New Testament canon with 12 written treatises and letters that formed part of the 27 writings of the NT. All these have blessed many, many generations that came after him.

In Paul, we can see the reality of the apple seed analogy: “you can count the apples on a tree, but who can count the apples in a seed?” Paul’s teachings inspired by God went on to influence the founding and building of modern Western civilizations like the United States of America - “the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

The U.S. Constitution established America’s national government and fundamental laws 1787, and guaranteed certain basic rights for its citizens. The preamble states clearly: ***“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it ,and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”***



tegrity towards Gentile believers when under pressure from Jewish believers [Gal 2: 11-13].

Secondly, we note that Paul was **unhindered**: “On the contrary, **I worked harder** than any of them”

He just **“got on with it”** – realizing and accepting that he had to work harder because the frustrations and challenges were many!

He had worked hard because he had hope as he knew that all his labour in the Lord would not be in vain. It was just like the daringness and audacity displayed by Job when he declared within ear-shot of his friends – “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain [*prove, defend, argue*] mine own ways before him”.

Job said that because he knew that at the centre of the universe is a God of justice; justice would prevail because He was Jehovah Tsidkinu – the righteous God.

Similarly, Paul knew that this same God at the centre of the universe is not only just, but that “God is love” [1 John 4: 8, 16]. He would ensure that all “*things work together for good to them who love God*” [Romans 8:28]; that all the good works inspired by Him and for Him will never be in vain. Hence, he proclaimed in 1 Corinthians 15:58 – “*Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain*”.

Paul knew the truth and richness within the balanced tension of God’s sovereign grace and empowerment, and the role of human responsibility and responsiveness that can be aptly summed up in the words of Hans Urs von Balthasar – “*What you are is God’s gift to you, what you make of yourself is your gift to God*” – though finally, we still do not forget – “*though it was not I but the grace of God that is with me*”!

Conclusion

The Pike and the Invisible Barrier

Management gurus, Paul Hersey and Kenneth H Blanchard tell of an experiment that was conducted that shows how the perception, or the interpretation of reality affects one’s actual behaviour.

A pike was placed in an aquarium with many minnows swimming around it as its fodder. After the fish became used to the plentiful supply of food at its disposal, a sheet of glass was placed between the pike and the minnows to separate them.

When the pike became **hungry**, it tried to reach the minnows, but then it continually hit its head on the glass. It tried ever harder to get to the minnows as the *strength of the need for food* increased, resulting in greater painful futility!

But **finally** its *repeated failure* of goal attainment reached saturation point of **frustration** that the fish no longer attempted to eat the minnows.

When the **glass partition was finally removed**, the minnows again swam all around the pike, but this time no further goal-directed activity took place from the pike. In fact, eventually, the **pike died of starvation** while in the midst of *plenty of food*. The “*fish operated according to the way it perceived reality and not on the basis of reality itself*”.

In the teaching profession today, there are indeed many glass-like invisible hindrances blocking many. For some, we have knocked our heads against “invisible” barriers of policies, disappointments and frustrations so often- that we apathetically just “live and let live”; while others no longer “see” the issues since we have learnt to live with these “barriers” and become so used to them.

Our original dream and calling as a teacher, a flaming desire to make a difference to young lives, to contribute to the nation by a stable profession that will touch young lives – have all faded and even died away. Now these “invisible” issues of disillusionment with the system – personally feeling the injustice in the way one is rewarded in terms of career pathway. There is no more joy in teaching; being inundated and overwhelmed with so much administration and data compilation work have drained longsuffering teachers of their passion for teaching. It would seem other meetings are more important than classroom time!

These invisible but felt barriers – make us hang down our heads and our hands, blocking us from **seeing the missional opportunity reality** of the abundant “young fishes” swimming around us each day in the classroom and the school as a whole!

May we together see and recover the “Big Picture” today of 1 Corinthians 15:10 – “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was **not in vain**. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”

God through the Holy Spirit will give us the grace to pursue being a “**Master Builder-Teacher**” so that we may be “**frustrated but unhindered**”. As we discharge our call faithfully, the Lord will yet surprise us with the outcomes – just as the Rev Robert Sparke Hutchins would be - to see 200

years on the innumerable apples that the seed he had planted, Penang Free School – has yielded!

Allow me to conclude with a tribute to a beloved teacher of about 5 decades ago that I remember so well because of the way she had touched my life through her dedication and kind heartedness.

Miss Eng somehow sensitively understood the needs of a lonely 8 year old who came from a big family, so that that boy 50 over years on cannot forget that Std 2 teacher who touched his life when he needed it most, in a most vulnerable season of his young life.

She had significantly contributed to the education, formation and leadership skills of that young boy, making him look forward to going to school each day! By the good hand of our sovereign gracious God, she contributed strategically to the life of that once lost and lonely boy – so that God could make use of that boy as the 5th Bishop of the Methodist Church in Malaysia one day!

To this day, I do not cease to give thanks to Almighty God for Ms Eng whenever I recall my childhood and my calling.

May our Sovereign God of **1 Cor 15:10** – give you His promised power as you choose to act on – *What you are is God's gift to you, what you make of yourself as a skilful master*



builder-teacher; is your gift to God.

We wish all teachers a *Happy and Blessed Teachers' Day!*

Bishop Ong Hwai Teik

[Excerpted from the sermon preached at *Klang Valley Christian Teachers' Day Celebration 2017, 10 May 2017, St Paul's Church, PJ*]

Devotion

Love Always

Our Lord does not care so much for the importance of our works as for the love which they are done.

(Teresa of Avila)

IN WORD: Knowing, prophesying, giving to the poor, moving mountains by faith, practicing ministry, and all the other good works we do as Christians will one day cease. Love won't. It's different. It is part of who we are, not what we do. When Jesus comes again and rewards us according to what we have done or not done, the good works of the kingdom on earth will essentially be over. But love? It's part of who we are, and it lasts. It's eternally in the character of God and, by design, in the character of His people.

That's why, as important as ministry and good works are, love is more important than all. Faith is about what is unseen, and what is unseen will eventually be completely revealed. Hope is about what will come, and what will come will also be revealed. But love is about who we are forever. There will never be a time, in this age or the next, in the kingdoms of this world or in the Kingdom of God, when love doesn't count.

One Year at the Cross Devotional by Chris Tiegreen

That's why Paul tells us to make it count today. It's a "forever" principle, unlike almost everything else the New Testament urges us to practice. The fellowship of believers is going to last as long as the Kingdom of God lasts; that alone should convince us to major on the quality of the fellowship. And the quality of the fellowship depends almost exclusively on love. It's extremely important.

IN DEED: Does your life reflect the importance of love? Or have you mistakenly made other aspects of your character a priority? Examine yourself well, and ask God to help you focus on love. Then practice it always.

Have faith and maintain hope. Increase your knowledge and aim to prophesy—to understand God's truth and put it into practice. Do good works of ministry and charity, telling others about Jesus and reconciling the world to God. But do it all in love. Without that, none of it is right.

We know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

1 Corinthians 13:9-10

BCM2018 Committee Formed



Group photo of the committee members BCM2018, Miri, who were present last night for the first meeting.

MAY 15, MIRI - During last month's Brigade Council Meeting in Muar, it was announced that Miri was unanimously chosen as next year's AGM venue.

It is a great honor for Sarawak Boys' Brigade State Council to host such an important event in the calendar of The Boys' Brigade in Malaysia.

About 200 Officers, Delegates and Observers throughout the country are expected to attend.

Prior to this announcement at the ongoing meeting in Muar, BB Sarawak State Commissioner Hon. Capt. Hii King Ong briefly gave an introduction on Miri. Following that, a powerpoint presentation was given by 4th Miri Capt. Roseline Lee. It received a warm response and applause from the parti-

cipants.

The BCM2018 Sarawak Committee was formalized after receiving the prayer blessing from Rev. George Wong Hin Hung, the former Chaplain of the Sarawak State Boys' Brigade. The good shepherd also gave a short exhortation to the committee members present. He urged them to be extra diligent and hardworking in the BB ministry. "You all have the means to reach out to the indigenous groups of students in the rural areas. You have a duty and you have the capability to do so," urged Rev George.

BB Deputy Sarawak State Commissioner and Northern Region President Hon. Capt. Lawrence Wong was elected as the Organizing Chairman with BB Sarawak State Commissioner Hon. Capt. Hii King Ong and Honorary BB

Sarawak State Commissioner Hon. Capt. Lo Hoi Fook as Advisors.

Other members include Capt. Patrick Tiong (2nd Miri), Capt. Kenneth Law (3rd Miri), Capt. Roseline Lee (4th Miri), Hon. Capt. Ling Yew Kwong (5th Miri), Capt. David Wong (6th Miri), Capt. Tiong Hee Kwong (7th Miri), Capt. Mutang (1st Beluru), Capt. Edmund Wong (7th Kuching), Lt. Hu Wei Ung (ES, SSC), Lt. James TC Wong and Helper Aaron Wong (both of 4th Miri).

By James TC Wong

MoU to be formalised between Education Ministry and Mission Authorities



KUALA LUMPUR: A historic moment has been etched in the education for Mission Schools in Malaysia between the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Federation of Councils of Christian Mission Schools Malaysia (FCCMSM) on Cooperation in Education in Kuala Lumpur on April 10, 2017.

During the meeting, it was decided to form a Joint Working Committee to deliberate on the Memorandum of Understanding, which was made verbally between the Government and Mission Authorities in 1971.

Present to witness the event were the heads of Mission Authorities from the Churches, including the representatives from Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak, and Minister of Education YB Dato' Seri Mahdzir, who was accompanied by YB Datuk Paul Low and other representatives from the MOE.

Archbishop Julian Leow of the Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur, in his introduction, explained that the reason for the Mission Authorities to be present for the meeting was an expression of their concern of the current state of affairs in the Mission Schools today.

One such concern was the maximum consultation between the Government and the Church regarding the appointment of School Heads. Another concern was regarding the sanctity of ownership of church lands and buildings used by government-aided schools, for which a written document in print is to be formalised.

Other areas of concern touched on federal grants, maintenance and refurbishment of the schools, enrolments of students, fundraising projects by schools, the academic management of schools, the need for a liaison officer from the MOE, etc.

Archbishop Leow clarified that the formation and establishment of the FCCMSM in 2009, which was consented to by the Prime Minister, was to look after the interests of Mission Schools and to act as a liaison between the Mission Schools and the Government.

The objective of the MoU is a desire of the Mission Authorities to continue to work in partnership with the Government in providing affordable, accessible education of children of all racial, religious, cultural and socio-economic

backgrounds.

Formalising and documenting the arrangements reached between the parties would go a long way to addressing the recurring issues and problems faced by both the Government and the Mission Authorities. It would also enhance cooperation in education efforts to meet the changing needs of the nation.

It also sets out the understanding of the Mission Authorities and the Government on the position of mission schools within the national system of education.

It defines the relationship between the Mission Authorities as owners of the school land and building, and the Government which runs the schools, in particular, the sanctity of land ownership and the rights of owners, the preservation of the character and ethos of the mission schools, and the renewal of leases and other relational matters.

Archbishop John Wong was represented by Franciscan Sister Rita Chew at the meeting. — kkdiocese.net

This was reprinted with permission from the Herald Malaysia

The World Methodist Council Reacts to Recent Terrorist Attacks

The world woke this morning to the heart-breaking news of yet another bombing, yet another terrorist attack. The United Kingdom is reeling following the deadly events at the Manchester Arena last night, and another suicide bomb exploded in Damascus, Syria this morning. Each attack that we hear about leaves an indelible mark. No matter how close, or how far away, our lives are forever changed. We imagine in the back of our minds who the persons were that died: mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, young, old, weak, strong. We imagine the void such a violent death leaves in the lives of their family and loved ones. And we imagine the anguish and fear felt by those who survived.

Today, The World Methodist Council mourns with the people of Manchester (UK), Damascus, Hasakah & Hama (Syria); Hawija & Baghdad (Iraq); Mastung (Pakistan); Wadi al Shatii (Libya); Zabul (Afghanistan); and the countless other attacks carried out at the behest of terrorist groups during the month of May alone (1).

World Methodist Council General Secretary Ivan Abrahams joined with other faith leaders in condemning these terrorist attacks.

The attack in Manchester yesterday and in Damascus this morning were cowardly acts of violence toward innocent lives, many of them children. Whether for religious or ideological reasons, violence still begets violence. The end result is the same, and it must be stopped. As Christians, and Methodists, we have a longstanding tradition of condemning violence and being active in peace movements. We are committed to the World Council of Church's [Statement on the Way of Just Peace](#). We weep with those who have been deprived of their loved ones, and we must demand justice while not resorting to violence and hatred. We must move forward in the knowledge that Christ himself was the target of such hate and died a violent death, yet he forgave his executioners, and in so doing changed their lives for the better. We know that God walks with those in pain, and we can find strength and peace in that knowledge.

Reacting to the news of the Manchester bombing, The World Methodist Council's chair of the **Social and International Affairs Committee, Bishop Dr. Chibuzo Raphael Opoko (Methodist Church Nigeria)** stated:

We stand in solidarity with the people of Manchester and indeed the United Kingdom at this trying and challenging



time of vicious attacks, laden with grief, sorrow, pain, and distraught anguish.

Our hearts go out to the bereaved families and all that are wounded and pray that the Almighty God of compassion and comfort be their companion at this traumatic experience.

We call on the international community to work assiduously to tackle all forms of terrorism and terror attacks. The attack on unsuspecting civilians such as the Manchester Arena is callous, wicked and condemnable.

We commend all the men and women of emergency services and humanity that toil in great effort to assist the wounded and care for the victims showing them amazing love and compassion even in the face of anger and confusion. We stand together with you all.

Our prayer is that the world will become a better place for all where peace, unity and harmony would reign.

President of the Youth and Young Adult committee of the World Methodist Council, **Rev. Samuel Murillo Torres (Methodist Church of Mexico)**, who is currently residing in the United Kingdom shared:

It is completely sad, the violence that many youth and young adult Christians are exposed to around the world every day. This morning in England we are experiencing the sorrow of

many families facing a new reality in their lives; a missing beloved one, an injured daughter or son, etc. We call young Christians to continue praying and keeping faith in Christ as our hope, not as a theory or intellectual idea, but as a daily way of life in sharing, welcoming and helping our neighbor in the building of healthy and strong communities. Do not despair and be faithful to Christ. We call every Christian leader, national presidents and bishops to encounter, listen and pray together with young people inside and outside our churches as a very simple but necessary pastoral need.

The World Methodist Council's Wesleyan Essentials of Christian Faith challenges that "we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to be signs of Christ's presence in our communities, and in the world through our preaching, teaching, and in our deeds of justice, peace, mercy, and healing as the outworking of faith," and "we seek to understand and respond to the contexts and situations in which we live, so that our witness will have integrity." It goes on to say that "Being 'filled with the energy of love,' we anchor our service and

our life and work in love for our neighbors, including those we perceive as our enemies," and "Recalling the story of the Samaritan (Luke 10:15) we express and claim compassion for all people and accept the call in Christ to 'suffer with' the least of these in humility and love."

The World Methodist Council encourages all its member churches to "suffer with" those who are hurting, broken, and lost following these acts of terror and violence.

*Mighty and compassionate, Righteous and loving God,
We cry out to you in this time of uncertainty, fear, and pain.
Let us feel your comforting presence.
Help us to be a light in a world darkened with hate and anger.
We pray for your peace that passes all understanding to be upon us,
And we pray that we can be the peace and comfort
That our hurting neighbors need right now. Amen*

Features

News from SCAC

上帝赐给我双亲最珍贵的礼物

彩虹见证

文 / 陈兰美 (万民堂)

母亲在幼年时就失去双亲，由疼爱她的亲戚抚养大。十七岁嫁给我的好父亲。他们相依为命，养育了四男五女，过着简朴的生活。圣经说：“儿女是耶和华所赐的产业，所怀的胎是祂所给的赏赐。”（诗篇一百廿七3）

父亲是个小商人，拥有一艘载货的木船。每个月都会从家乡航行去诗巫经商，但必须途经一片汪洋。有一天，船只出海不久后，遭遇突如其来的狂风大浪，船被打翻，沉入海里。感谢上帝，还留着一块有桌面大的船板。当时父亲还很镇定，把才两岁的最小弟弟（陈邦铨）抱了放在漂浮着的船板上，并嘱咐妈妈和怀孕的二嫂要紧抓住着木块，以免分散。他们就这样在海上漂流了三个多小时。天色渐暗，才被一艘经过的渔船发现而救起。圣经说：“我将这些事告诉你们，是要叫你们在我里面有平安。在世上你们有苦难，但你们可以放心，我已经胜了世界。”（约十六33）

无微不至地关怀照料

爸爸八十多岁，体力衰退，躺卧在床，大约有三年之久，兄弟姐妹偶尔

帮助照顾父亲，但最大的照料还是归功于和爸爸住在一起的最小弟弟。父亲临终前才相信耶稣。那时，他要我每天在他身边唱诗歌给他听，并为他祷告。因为上帝与他同在，所以我唱诗歌和祷告时，他会感觉到无比的舒服与平安。终于，他也学习祷告，并接受耶稣为他救主。圣经说：“你若口里认耶稣为主，心里信上帝叫他从死里复活，就必得救。”（罗马书十9）

妈妈是个基督徒，喜欢过教会生活。她健壮时，是东山路的属长，都会与牧者及教友们去作巡视探访，传说耶稣的福音。后来因脚痛，无法走动，只好在床上生活了十多年。日复一日，年复一年，皮肤开始溃烂，化脓，流出难闻的血水。最大的伤口有拳头那么大，有中指那么深。小弟每天早晚都小心翼翼地给妈妈清洗伤口，消毒后，用药涂抹，再把它包扎妥善。小弟每天都把妈妈的身体保持得很清洁，连医院的护士都称赞我妈妈的身体是最干净的老人。虽然有印尼女佣的帮助，但是小弟每天都会检查妈妈的身体是否清洁，有无伤口出

现，如有，立刻为她涂药。

小弟对父母的关怀照料，真是无微不至。他不曾发过怨言，都是抱着喜乐的心态来看顾双亲。双亲像是他个人专属似的，一切生活起居都是他包办。圣经说：“当孝敬父母，使你的日子在耶和华你上帝所赐你的地上，得以长久。”（出廿12）幸好，我的小弟在二岁时没有沉入海里，让我的双亲在晚年都享有这样的福气，真是难能可贵，可说是上帝赐给我爸妈最珍贵的礼物。

2017年4月14日，普天下都在纪念耶稣受难，被钉死在十字架。上帝竟然在这一天接我妈妈回家。这是何等美好的日子。三天后，耶稣复活，是我妈妈出殡的好日子。耶稣说：“复活在我，生命也在我，信我的人，虽然死了，也必复活。凡活着信我的人，必永远不死。（约十一25-26）

This article is about Parent's Day with permission from The Chinese Methodist Message dated 4 June 2017.

The Place of the Bible in Pastoral Counselling

Introduction

Since the fall of mankind leading to the entrance of the condition of sin in the world in Genesis chapter 3, counseling has been an ongoing action in the lives of mankind. Hence, counseling started in the heart of Father God who counsels us to return to Him and His intentions for mankind, whom He created in His image. Centuries later, today's church on earth uses the word 'pastoral' to describe one type of counseling which has its roots in Bible passages such as Psalm 23 and John 10. Therefore, whether one is professionally/officially trained to counsel God's people pastorally, many sincere Christians are already casually or formally counselling fellow believers pastorally in churches everywhere. It has been commonly regarded as within a local church pastor's role in his call to be God's assistant and temporary shepherd. However, since this article is to discuss the relationship between the Bible and Counselling, I need to lay the basis for differentiating between pastoral counselling and all other types of counseling, especially that which follows secular presuppositions where God is excluded, irrelevant or distorted in the counseling process. But I need to place the task of pastoral counselling in the overall framework of spiritual formation i.e. the process of dying to self-will of a person born again into the family of God and the maturing conformation of God's will in his/her new life in Christ till we see Him face to face as in e.g. Revelations 21.... Otherwise, pastoral counseling appears to be similar to the other types.

Essential Differences between Pastoral Counselling and Other Types of Counseling

1. The goal of pastoral counselling, according to the spiritual formation framework, is the renewal of the mind for the transformation of the counselee into the personality of Jesus, the perfect Man and Son of God (Romans 12:1-2). However, the goal of other types of counseling is to help the counsellee be more acceptable - emotionally, mentally and socially - by others and self. To be more precise, they are to help the counselee feel happier. Please ponder on this goal before rejecting it.
2. In a pastoral counseling situation, three parties are actively involved:
the counselee
the counselor and
God.

In a non-Christian but religious counseling situation, three parties are actively involved:

The counsellee
The counselor and
The evil one.

In a secular counseling situation, two acknowledged and one unacknowledged parties are involved:

The counsellee
The counselor and
The evil one.

Wayne Oates, in his book called *"The Presence of God in Pastoral Counselling"*, heartwarmingly discusses the reality of and the need for the presence of God generally and particularly in a counselling situation. Further, Francis A. Schaeffer wrote in his book *"No Little People, No Little Places"*, that Moses' rod was a mere piece of old wood. But when used by God through the obedience of His servant Moses, that rod did wonders. So, was it the rod or Moses or God who was the real miracle worker? Pastoral counselors may be encouraged by this fact that it is not our methods or a lack of them that makes a counselling situation hopeful or sorrowful; it is the presence of the living God who lives in us and among us who does the work. It is the truth of His grace and His light which shines into the darkness of the human mind, it is Jesus who holds our hands as He takes us into the slums of the human heart e.g. John 4.

"...For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: I will live with them and walk with them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people."

2 Corinthians 6:16

We need to recall that though the Bible is the foundation of our life principles for eternity, it cannot save us. Its role is to lead us to the God of the Bible. As a once naïve young Christian doctor, I was shocked to discover, through my stint at a British seminary, that one may achieve a 1st class honours grade in theology in any university which offers the subject without being a believer in Christ. Theology is merely a subject that can be learned and argued through even if without the presence of God in one's inner being. Only God can and does save sinners. Then, when one has the Holy Spirit in him, the Bible is no longer a detached subject but an instrument of "fire and peace, sorrow and joy" which God uses to renew our broken lives! It brings light to shine into the darkness of our ordinary-nobody existence to imprint on us the ownership of God as our eternal Father; it shears through our distorted conscience so we have no peace unless we have peace with Him and in Him; it shakes us out of our earthly short-sighted futile ambitions to see His vision and mission of a world reconciled with God through Jesus His only begotten and beloved Son, the Lamb of God, it cause us to desire after the true image of God. This desire will thus encourage us to keep putting off the old wrong images of God in us in order to put on the true image of God. What joy to become more like Him with no conflicting schizophrenic thoughts and moods!

Example:

Reading Psalm 139 will instruct us in the awareness and the meaning of the lasting presence of God. The psalmist writes about the presence of God that hounds him through life and even in death.

God would not leave him alone. God knows all about us and yet still loves us. We cannot simply fall out of His watchful concerned presence. Wayne Oates calls it the all-pervasiveness and all-knowing of humankind's thoughts and doings. Hope for change is still alive in spite of our inability to change ourselves!

Therefore, we need to know God well through the specific revelation of the Bible which leads us to know the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and not just through the general revelation of which the science of psychology is but one subject. The latter will continue to change as man discovers more of God's creation, because we are still in an imperfect world.

Professional counselors have much to teach Christian church counselors (pastors or lay) in the field of psychology. But if we do not know the above two differences, then we will be the main culprits in taking our church and society into a repeat of church and social history of the post-modern western philosophies and seemingly amoral lives where long term God ordained values and morals have no place at all. We will tend to either give psychology the authority which it does not have (Dr. John White called it "selling our birth-right for a bowl of pottage"), or throw it away as from the evil one like throwing away the baby with the bath water. Used together (i.e. biblical truth about man and the science of psychology), they bring much freedom to the human mind, emotions and will. God's healing grace will reach many trapped in emotional, mental and spiritual prisons.

Three Common Types Counselees Who Seek Out Pastoral Counsellors

- ✓ The potential believer
- ✓ The confused believer
- ✓ The stubborn believer/unbeliever

Let us now glean lessons from the Bible to illustrate how we may summarise a person's pilgrimage on earth. We will call these illustrations biblical motifs or patterns for spiritual and emotional issues of being human. We shall watch how each person is transformed by the renewal of their mind by the word of God...

1. Zaccheaus, the Potential Believer

Zaccheaus represents the counselee who feels that he was not worthy to be helped because he has sinned so much and so deeply. However, he realized that he needed someone to notice and accept him. He yearned for true love. Jesus must have sensed his need intuitively or by a gift of knowledge from the Holy Spirit. He therefore invited Himself to his home to have a cup of tea, as the Sunday School song says. Guess how Zaccheaus must have felt... *"The Holy Man does not look down on me, he wants to come to my humble home in spite of my terrible reputation as a stingy, dishonest civil servant!"* We do not know what discussion they had at home but we know its consequence. When Jesus left his house, Zaccheaus, having received grace, was freed to give out grace to the needy and make restitution for with those from whom he had stolen!

2. Peter, the Confused Believer

Peter represents the many workers of God who need our gentle acceptance when they make mistakes. Having betrayed his beloved Master not once, like Judas, but three times within a short period, he had lost confidence in himself to be able to protect Jesus and do His will. What better action to take then to return to

one's old and familiar job when out of another...he went fishing. Being a born leader, six others followed him at once. Then came the betrayed Master Himself; He not only repeated a previous instruction to throw the net in the other direction, He also humbly cooked breakfast for them! Even if they could not recognize His resurrected bodily features, they could recognize His behavior and voice! Further, He then gently called Peter aside (but near enough for John to overhear their conversation and record it later for our good) to affirm his love and give him a new job! What a day of joy!

But then typical Peter, as if to show that transformation is a process and takes time, wanted to know what John's future would be...same as for Peter or not? In a friendly tick off, the Master told him to stop being a busybody!

3. A Rich Young Ruler - The Stubborn Believer/Non-Believer

This ruler must have been rather bored with the 5 C's he had inherited. *"Easy come, easy go."* He asked for another object to add to his list of antiques - eternal life. When Jesus suggested to him to let go of all that in order to have eternal life, he could not; he just was not ready. Why? It appears that eternal life was a mere second/last love (a secondary gain) while his first love (primary gain) was his possessions. His problem was the love of money, a sin. However, in Zaccheaus' case (whose primary gain was forgiveness and love from God while his secondary gain was money as a substitute for love). Zaccheaus's problem was money neurosis, a weakness to replace understanding and love. The rich ruler's problem was his sin of greed surfacing as corruption or theft.

Ponder

Is a weakness and or a sin hindering me from the freedom of conforming to the Saviour's image?

What am I doing about my discovery?

Conclusion

This is pastoral counselling carried out by Jesus, our Teacher. Many pastors have lost the art and heart to counsel their flock; hence the need is urgent in most if not all local churches.

I hope that this short article has wet your appetite to become a lay pastoral counsellor to help someone be more like Christ. The alternative is to look for a pastoral counsellor for help as a first step towards the healing of damaged emotions and minds that will lead to a more mature person in Christ.

May the Lord bless and keep you always!

By Dr. Lee Bee Teik

Author of *Experiencing the Heart of Pastoral Counselling*

Available at Armour Publishing in Singapore website.

It is suitable for counselling yourself or others, with the Holy Spirit as Teacher.

Reflection

- If you were a counselee, which type would you be?
- What does God wants you to do about it:
 - a. to be transformed and/or
 - b. to walk with others in the process of transformation into Christ likeness?

Words that Warmed Wesley's Heart

By Michigan Christian Advocate

May 24, 1738, is a day forever memorable to Methodists. On that day, as John Wesley records in his "Journal," a group of great experiences came to him.

At five o'clock in the morning he read in his Testament, "There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). Then, just as he was leaving his rooms, he opened his Bible again and read these words, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

In his "Journal" he continues, "In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, 'Out of the deep have I called thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice.'

"In the evening I went, very unwillingly, to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Charles Edwin Schofield begins his little book, "Aldersgate and After," with a forceful paragraph, that should be graven on the hearts of Methodists everywhere:

On May 24, 1938, the people called Methodists have been summoned to

celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of what has traditionally been known in Methodist annals as the "conversion" of John Wesley.

An anniversary may prove to be an opportunity. It is always in danger of becoming a liability

This celebration of a man's conversion is a rare thing in history. We celebrate the birth of great men and observe the anniversary of their death, but with John Wesley the high peak of his life was the hour of his "conversion."

Where lies the "danger" of an anniversary? Is it the danger of looking backward instead of forward? Is it a substitute for something more vital, as in the case of Churches that find an anniversary gala week less strenuous than a revival? Is there danger of misinterpreting a past even so that we are thrown off the right track, inviting future disasters? Is there danger that we might face a call from the past and then turn away, lacking the courage to accept the challenge?

What possible harm could come from our dipping into the past? Certainly, for many of us, it would be a fresh dip, for what the average Methodist of to-day does not know of John Wesley would fill a big book.

The author defines for us the experience of Wesley as far different from what we mean by a "conversion." For years he had tried to save his soul by good works and soul discipline, and then:

He came to see that what he needed to do was simply to forget himself, and,

trusting in the mercy, and forgiveness of God, launch out in a ministry of passionate preaching of the gospel to others.

Dr. Schofield is sure that a like surrender will bring us to our Aldersgate, maybe not with Wesley's emotional experience, but we shall be fitted to serve our age as Wesley's experience fitted him to serve his day. But are we ready to go up to Aldersgate?

Whenever the men and women of our generation honestly face Jesus, and resolutely declare themselves unequivocally on his side; whenever we are ready to make the great commitment to his will and dedicate ourselves without reservations to build the Kingdom of God—then we shall come to Aldersgate.

The Malaysia Message
Vol. 48 No. 4
April 1938



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