



## 9th Session General Conference

15-20 September 2008, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah



9th Session General Conference

### *Spreading Scriptural Holiness, Transforming the Nation*

The Methodist Church in Malaysia held its quadrennial General Conference in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah with the Sabah Provisional Annual Conference playing hosts.

About 100 delegates, guests, observers and helpers gathered at Tang Dynasty Park Hotel for six days of conferencing. The opening Communion Service was held at the Shern En Methodist Church, Kota Kinabalu.

The fraternal guests were Bishop Roy I. Sano of the United Methodist Church, USA; Rev Dr Stephen Wigley, Chair of the District of Wales of the British Methodist Church; Bishop Albert Chiew of the Chinese Methodist Church in Australia; Bishop Amat Tumino of the Methodist Church in Indonesia and Bishop Dr Robert Solomon of the Methodist Church in Singapore, who joined the Conference later in the week after their own General Conference the week before.

The theme chosen for the next quadrennium is: *Spreading Scriptural Holiness, Transforming the Nation*. Dr William J. Abraham, Professor of Wesley Studies at Southern Methodist University, USA gave four morning sermons based on the theme.

Bishop Hwa Yung, in his Episcopal Address, noted the state of our nation today in which the Methodist Church exists. He called for the Church to seriously consider her role in the social and political life of the nation. He gave an overview of the developments in the Methodist Church in the past four years, and ended with proposals for the way forward with long term as well as specific goals for the next quadrennium. (See the full text of his address on page 4)

The Conference met to receive reports from its agencies, consider petitions and proposed amendments to the Methodist Discipline, and hold elections for the Judicial Council and other officers of the Church.

Among the matters that were debated and

decided perhaps three were of particular significance. The first was the issue of the Episcopal Model for the Methodist Church. Proposals for having six or seven bishops were considered. Time was given for delegates to hear each other, for or against change from the status quo, in small groups as well as in plenary. The vote was against change to the present model. However, the Conference agreed to set up a task force to look into a thorough study of the issue and all its implications, as there were legitimate concerns and reasons for these proposals.

The second was the proposal to remove the current restrictions in the Discipline to hold office and vote for members above 70 years of age. The main argument for removing the restrictions was the recognition of the right of any member to serve and vote, as is the case for any citizen of the country. The arguments against were based on the fact that there is a retirement age for many areas of work, and that this allows greater opportunities for younger members to take up leadership.

>> continue on page 2



From left- Mr Anthony Row, Bishop Hwa Yung, Mr John Ting



Cutting the 40th Anniversary cake. The Presidents, Bishop Hwa Yung, Bishop Robert Solomon and Mr Stephen Lau (extreme right), the organizing chairman of the General Conference.



The Presidents of the Annual Conference. From left: Rev Ling Heu Uh (SPAC), Rev Dr Su Chii Ann (SCAC), Rev Boh Che Suan (CAC), Rev James Puang (SIAC), Rev Ong Hwai Teik (TRAC) and Rev P. Tevaraji (TAC)

The Conference decided to retain the restrictions, with the exception of the

President of the Methodist Seniors Fellowship. He or she, if above 70 years, has the right to vote in the Annual and Local Conference.

The third matter of significance was a major update to the Social Principles in the Methodist Discipline. The Discipline Review Council proposed additions and amendments that would bring these Principles up to date with current developments in various fields of ethics, the environment, social, political and religious issues in our own context. These were all generally welcomed by the Conference delegates.

Bishop Hwa Yung was reelected for another term, on the first ballot. Mr Tung Kam Seng retired as Conference Secretary after sixteen years in that office. He was given a standing ovation in appreciation of his diligent and faithful service. Mr Anthony Row was elected the new Conference Secretary. Mr John Ting was reelected Conference Treasurer.

This Conference saw one new thing added to its usual agenda of business. This was the incorporation of workshop discussions on four areas of importance for further development in the Methodist Church, namely, Missions, Church & Society, Discipleship, and Evangelism & Church Planting.

Four papers were presented as the basis for discussion in the workshops. The goal was to highlight the issues of concern and for development, and to make proposals

for concrete action to be taken. These would form the basis for a roadmap for the Methodist Church to move forward in the next two quadrennia and beyond.

Another event outside of the usual business of the General Conference was the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the autonomous Methodist Church in Malaysia. The SPAC took this upon them and organized a grand thanksgiving dinner and entertaining night for about 1000 guests. It was good to remind ourselves of how God has been faithful and blessed the Methodist Church through these years.

While the issues and concerns of the Church were discussed with care and attention, the current political situation and the attendant social and economic issues were always in the background. The Conference was conscious of the new challenges that confronted the Methodist Church, which called for an understanding of its role and responsibilities in nation building.

Early in the conference a small "listening group" was formed to draft a press statement that would reflect the concerns of the Methodist Church in Malaysia. The Conference, after some debate, approved the press statement that would be released to all the news agencies in the country. (The full statement is printed in this issue.)

The Conference adjourned after the Rededication service of Bishop Hwa Yung at Shern En Methodist Church.

*Christopher Cheah*

## SIAC YOUTH CAMP 19-21 August 2008

"This is a historic moment for the Iban youth," said Rev Jerry Rabbu, Sibiu District Superintendent of the Sarawak Iban Annual Conference.

About 350 youths gathered at the YMCA Camp Resort in Sibiu for three days of learning together. The size of the group and their eagerness brought out praise and thanksgiving from the Iban pastors. "We never had a great gathering like this before. This kind of gathering has been our dream for a long time. So many Iban youths from all over Sarawak gathered together, bringing their hearts and desire to be with the Spirit. It's a fantastic moment for them to have the opportunity to experience the Holy Spirit." said Rev. Elizabeth Enjut from the MTS (Methodist Theological School) Sibiu.



Worship in songs and prayer.

The camp was organized by the Christian Education Committee of SIAC, with financial support from some Korean Methodist churches. In addition, seven pastors from Korea, all having been in ministry for more than 25 years, took part in giving the messages, together with a number of the Iban pastors.

The messages focused on encountering God in prayer and through reflecting on the Word, to be a worshipper with the



The youths of SIAC.

Spirit through praise and the Word. They were opened to consider their calling, sharing of church work and in missions. The camp ended with the youths sharing about their future.

And Rev Jerry Rabbu said it for the others, "It could not be better for Methodist Ibans. Thanks to the Lord and praise the Lord!"

*Based on the report by Kim Gueon Min*

# Contents

- Page 4-9 9th Session General Conference  
– The Episcopal Address
- 
- Page 10 Methodist Pastors' Wives Prayer Retreat
- 
- Page 12 Press Release from the 9th Session  
General Conference
- 
- Page 13 CCM and CCA Statement of Solidarity

## What is Happening in our Annual Conferences?

### October

4	Sat	TAC MMM Board Meeting
6-8	Mon-Wed	SPAC Meeting of Conference Boards
10-12	Fri-Sun	TAC Methodist Seniors Fellowship Camp
13-16	Mon-Thu	SCAC Emmaus Walk (in Chinese for women)
18	Sat	SPAC East District Meeting
23	Thu	TAC DS / Board of Ministry / Board of Finance
24	Fri	TAC Executive Board Meeting (IV)
25	Sat	SPAC West District Meeting
31	Oct – 2 Nov	TRAC School for Intercessors Trainers Retreat

## Advertise with Pelita

Organizations and individuals are welcome to advertise in Pelita Methodist. Businesses, Churches, Conferences, events, personal greetings/messages can be considered. The rates per issue are:

A4 Size Paper	B/W	Colour
Full page	RM600	RM1,000
Half page	RM300	RM600
Quarter page	RM150	RM400

A discount of one issue is given for a year's advertisement. Please contact the Pelita office.

**Tel: 03-7954 1811**

**E-mail: [pelita@methodistchurch.org.my](mailto:pelita@methodistchurch.org.my)**



**Pastor Tan Har Yong**  
*Called home - 10 August 2008*

Mr Tan Har Yong, Approved Supply Pastor for Kulim and Butterworth Wesley churches in the Trinity Annual Conference passed away at the age of 54.

While serving as Supply Pastor he remained the Christian Education Director of his home church, Wesley Methodist Church Penang, a position he took on after leaving a teaching career. He was appointed Supply Pastor in 2007.

Pastor Tan leaves behind his wife and two sons. Our condolences and prayers go with his family in this time of grief.

## Subscription Rates

# Pelita METHODIST

*Pelita Methodist is published monthly, 12 issues per year.*

- Malaysia**
- RM20.00 for 1 year, inclusive of postage
- Overseas**
- US25.00 for 1 year, US40.00 for 2 years inclusive of Air Mail

For Personal or Church Subscription contact:  
Pelita Methodist • 69 Jalan 5/31, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor DE.  
Tel • 603-7954 1811  
E-mail • [pelita@methodistchurch.org.my](mailto:pelita@methodistchurch.org.my)

### Pelita Methodist

**Publisher / 出版者**  
Bishop Dr. Hwa Yung

**Chief Editor / 总编辑**  
Bishop Dr. Hwa Yung

**Executive Editor**  
Mr Christopher Cheah

**Editorial Board / 编辑委员会**  
Rev Ling Heu Uh  
Rev Steward Damat Mambang  
Rev Khon Weng Joo  
Mr Wong Meng Lei  
Mr Tung Kam Seng  
Ms Lily Ung

*All correspondence and enquiries  
to be directed to:*

**Pelita Methodist**  
69 Jalan 5/31, 46000 Petaling Jaya  
Selangor Darul Ehsan  
**E-mail**  
• [pelita@methodistchurch.org.my](mailto:pelita@methodistchurch.org.my)  
**Website**  
• [www.methodistchurch.org.my](http://www.methodistchurch.org.my)

**Designed by**  
Creative Thumbprint Sdn. Bhd  
23, Jalan Radin 2  
Bandar Baru Seri Petaling  
57000 Kuala Lumpur

**Printed by**  
Percetakan Meiji  
45, Jalan PBS 14/2  
Taman Perindustrian Bukit Serdang  
43300 Selangor Darul Ehsan



# Episcopal Address

## 9th Session

### General Conference

The Methodist Church in Malaysia

Bishop Hwa Yung giving the Episcopal Address

#### 1. Greetings and Thanksgiving

##### *i. Greetings to all delegates and guests*

**W**armest greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ! May the grace and peace of God be with you, your families and the ministries that you have left behind these few days!

I also welcome all of you on behalf of the Methodist Church in Malaysia (MCM) to this 9th Session of the General Conference (GC) of our church. Whether you are a delegate or a fraternal guest from one of our sister Methodist Churches, I pray that God will bless you richly in your conferencing with us here in Kota Kinabalu. May you be a real blessing to this conference also!

##### *ii. Thanksgiving*

The Apostle Paul in most of his letters move immediately from greetings to thanksgiving! For example, in Philippians (1:3-6) he begins with 'I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.'

From the perspective of the bishop's office, there are indeed many things that we should thank God for. Allow me briefly to list some of the most significant without going into the details.

- For the unity that we have seen within the Council of Presidents (COP) and in the work of the General Conference Executive Committee (GCEC) and experienced in various programmes,

especially in the Methodist Prayer Convention, MPC07.

- For the growing signs of renewal in spirituality, ministry and mission throughout the whole Methodist Church, including the increasing emphasis on prayer and the continuing numerical growth of the church.
- For the abundant material and financial resources God has given to our church, and the growing opportunities to share these with others in much greater need through our various ministries and overseas missions.
- For making us one of the largest three Protestant churches in this country, and challenging us to begin to take seriously our nation-wide responsibilities.
- For releasing through the Methodist Church many men and women for ministries throughout the country outside our own church.

On a personal level, I want to thank God for His grace and strength sufficient to do all that He has put into my hands to do over the past four years. I am deeply grateful to the Presidents, the GC Officers, and all GCEC members for the support they have given me in my work. I thank all those in the MCM at large for all the love, acceptance, welcome, and support they have showered upon my family and me. All these have contributed wonderfully to make my work a privilege and joy. Praise the Lord and Thank You to all of you!

I take this opportunity to say to all gathered here that where I have failed to do what is required of me, or where I have failed to be a true servant to you, to the church or to Christ, or where I have wronged you in any way, I ask for your forgiveness and forbearance. Please bear with me—God

has not given up on me yet!

#### 2. The National Context Today

Coming to the main body of my address, allow me to begin with the context in which the MCM is located. I will therefore start with some reflections on our national situation today.

##### *i. Malaysia Today - The Social, Political and Economic Context*

We just celebrated the 51st Anniversary of Merdeka two weeks ago—or, should we be celebrating it today!? We thank God for the many blessings that He has poured upon our nation. But at the same time, we cannot forget that we live in difficult and very challenging times.

Every one in this country can see that racial tensions have remained high, and in some areas have deteriorated. To this can be added the growing restrictions on religious freedom and the inter-religious problems, especially between Muslim and non-Muslim communities. Corruption has become increasingly widespread. One need only think of the comments by Tun Haniff, a former IGP, on alleged corruption in the Police and ACA, and the Lingam Video! Malaysia has shown no improvement on the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index over the past ten years, and our ranking has actually declined relative to other countries in the same period. The poor management of the economy has also meant that our economic competitiveness is relatively weak. As a result, FDIs have dropped.

Crime rates have gone up, and drug addiction has reached dangerous proportions with an estimate of 1.2 million addicts today. As for

our education standards, we appear to be going into a tailspin, with our universities dropping out of world rankings over the last decade or so. Finally, the March elections result, which was good for the country in terms of it being a wake-up call to those entrenched in their arrogance of power, also brought further political and economic instability. For all the hype about ‘Malaysia Boleh,’ what appears closer to the truth is ‘Malaysia Tak Boleh’!

### ii. *The Malaysian Church in the Nation*

This is the context in which the church finds itself in our nation. How has the church responded in general? I believe it would be true to say that the church has tended to focus on evangelism and church growth, and the pastoral care of members. Over the past 30-40 years, the growth of the church has clearly outstripped population growth rate. In 1970, Christians formed 5.4% (0.58 million; from World Christian Encyclopaedia [2001]) of the country’s population. By 2001, Government population census figures show that there are 9.1% (2.13 million) Christians. Both the World Christian Encyclopaedia (2001) and Operation World (2001) put the Methodists (14.6% & 11.9% respectively) as being the second largest church after the Roman Catholics in the country. At the same time, we should note that the Methodists are not the fastest growing.

Over the last 20 years or so, the Malaysian church has begun giving serious attention to overseas missions. Much of our efforts, though, are still given to ‘short term’ missions, rather than long-term commitments as expatriate missionaries living in recipient countries and learning their languages and cultures for greater usefulness. A good deal of attention also has been given to social concerns programmes. Malaysian churches of all denominations together run 462 ‘mission schools.’ But they are largely tightly controlled by the government, hence their effectiveness for ‘mission’ has been largely curtailed.

To sum up, it would be fair to say that the church as a whole has focused largely on evangelistic and pastoral issues, with some social concerns programmes within our country and, increasingly, missions overseas. In general, she has not responded actively to the social, political and cultural shifts that have overtaken us in the last few decades. This has resulted in the church being not as relevant to the society as it should be.

The Malaysian church has rarely addressed seriously the question of whether we have definite social responsibilities to our nation and, if we do, what these are! Since we have not wrestled with the church’s position and responsibility in our society, our pastoral and discipling processes largely remain at the individual and spiritual levels which usually fail to relate to our calling and commitment as Christians within the wider Malaysian society. The church is called to be ‘salt’ and ‘light.’ But any objective analysis will have to conclude that the Malaysian church has not been a major force for transformation in our society since Merdeka!

If the church is to be truly ‘salt’ and ‘light’ to this nation, she will have to be reengineered drastically! She will need to continue to be faithful in its evangelistic and church planting work. Indeed, if anything, we should intensify our efforts because there is still so much to be done. Further, in our pastoral and discipling ministries, we need to recover the goal of Wesley and the early Methodists, with their strong emphases on both personal and social holiness. This will ensure that the work of teaching and Christian formation of our churches will not be merely individualised and spiritualised, but will adequately prepare our members to live faithfully today. This will inevitably lead us to address crucial questions concerning the church’s responsibility to the world and socio-political transformation in our nation. That is when the real hard questions will emerge! That is also when they must be confronted, if the church is to know genuine revival and true faithfulness in our witness to Christ in the midst of the harsh realities of Malaysia in the 21st century!

God has blessed the work of the Malaysian church much in the past few decades. Nevertheless, it must be said that we have not yet seen the sort of renewal in the church that leads to both a powerful surge in the evangelistic growth of the church and the church becoming God’s instrument of social transformation in the nation. This must be the sort of revival that we must seek, if we believe in the totality of the New Testament’s teaching on Christian witness and discipleship. Indeed, can we be satisfied with anything less as Methodists?

What then should we do? We cannot answer the question for other Christians in the country. But we are responsible before God to answer it for ourselves as we meet at this 9th Session of our General Conference of the MCM.

### 3. **The Methodist Church in Malaysia, 2004-2008**

Before we proceed to answer the question raised above, we will take a brief summary look at the work and ministry of our church over the past few years.

#### i. **Statistics**

The complete set of statistics, up to the end of 2007, with breakdown for each Annual Conference (AC), including the Sengoi Mission Conference, is given in Appendix A attached herewith. The following is a summary:

Local Conferences (LC)	373
Preaching Points <i>(463 are Iban Longhouses without LCs)</i>	668
Ministerial Staff <i>(1 for every 229 adult members; not including LC appointments)</i>	460
Missionaries Overseas <i>(30 appointed by AC; 31 by LC)</i>	61
Confirmed Members	105,193
Preparatory Members	59,217
Adult Worship Attendance <i>(71% of membership)</i>	74,495
Sunday Schools	21,958

The above shows that the total confirmed membership is 105,193. If we include baptised children, we have 164,410. However there are two other figures that are not included here. On our records we have another 22,973 who are baptised, over 16 years old but not confirmed. Further there are some children from Methodist homes that are not baptised. (The estimates given by World Christian Encyclopaedia [2001] and Operation World [2001] are 230,000 and 210,000. These include what are roughly called ‘affiliates’.)

One matter that requires comment is the gross shortage of pastors faced by our church as a whole. The present ratio of 1 minister for every 229 members is seriously on the low side. This must be reversed if the church is to move ahead to deal adequately with the many challenges before us.

#### ii. **An Overview of the Ministry and Work of MCM**

We come now to the work and the various outreach activities of the church. The following is not an exhaustive summary but is intended to provide us with an overview of what the MCM has been doing in the past quadrennium.

*a. Evangelism and Church Planting*

The various ACs have been active in evangelism and church planting. Since we started collating the figures, the adult membership figures have gone from 97,509 for 2005 to 105,193 for 2007. There may be some problems with the figures (they exaggerate our growth rate) but they are in line with other evidences pointing to the continuing growth of the church. For example, the following is the number of preaching points that have been established over the past four years: CAC, 9; SCAC, 2; SPAC, 5; TAC, 6; and TRAC, 1. These do not include work done by SIAC and PMS, much of which is in the rural areas and in the villages, and also new congregations in other languages using existing buildings in the urban areas.



*b. New Church Sanctuaries (including those which have undergone major renovations) and Other Buildings*

The number of new churches built totals 54. The following is the breakdown:

CAC	20
SCAC	13
SIAC	8
SPAC	3
TAC	4
TRAC	6

In addition, other major buildings that have been built and completed are:

- SCAC: Methodist Centennial Park, Oya Road, Sibü MY Centre, Sibü
- TRAC: Headquarters, Petaling Jaya

There have also been a substantial number of buildings put up for Christian education and for social outreach ministries, including one for medical work.

The total amount of money spent on this easily adds up to some RM150-200 million. Further, there are a number of multi-million projects which are already in process but not yet completed, or in the pipeline. When the total sum is added up, the amount would be staggering. Some of the buildings are clearly necessary and the amounts spent are relatively modest. But it would be wise for us to step back and prayerfully reflect on whether some of our buildings are really necessary and whether the amounts are not too exorbitant! The danger is that we may be giving too much priority to ornate buildings in our church, and forget that ministry and mission must always take priority over buildings in our financial commitments.

*c. Social Outreach*

The church continues to play an active and expanding role in social concerns ministries. These include orphanages, homes for children with special needs, hostels for teenagers, half-way houses for ex-prisoners, outreaches to Indonesian and Filipino maids, thrift shops to aid the poor, home for old folks, medical services, dialysis centres for kidney patients, centres for the physically handicapped and outreach to street people and the homeless. I should perhaps mention one in particular, the Beautiful Gate Foundation. This was started by the CAC and has now become registered as a public charity. It now runs seven centres for the disabled in Kepong, Petaling Jaya (two), Klang, Mambau (Seremban), Batu Berendam (Melaka) and Kampar. This centre, as well as many of our other social concerns projects, has increasingly received public support and recognition. We need to ask God for grace to continue and to expand our work on all these fronts.

*d. Missions*

Missions awareness in planting and supporting churches overseas began some 20 years ago. In the past 10 years, it has greatly intensified. Today, almost every AC has major programmes overseas. Our churches are now involved in missions in the following places: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Vietnam and North Africa. The types of ministries include church planting, discipling, financial support for local ministries, theological training and education at secondary and tertiary levels.

SCAC is setting the pace for all the others. Under their AC, they have now 28 full-

time missionaries working overseas. TRAC and TAC also have respectively 21 and 10 missionaries working overseas, but these are sent out by the local churches. But even with 'short-term' outreach, substantial work is being done by our churches. The CAC has two large church plants in Myanmar (Wan Hong and Nanban) and Northern Thailand, both with some 3000 members each. Schools have been started in both areas, with the school in Wan Hong having 1300 students! This is one area which will certainly see growth in the coming decade and it is therefore imperative that the MCM give serious thought to how our work in this area can be better coordinated for greater effectiveness and with less duplication.

We also should note that many of the churches are also involved actively in ministry to migrant workers in this country. For example, TRAC has started 10 services in various languages and different churches, just for migrant workers in the country. Other ACs are similarly involved.

*e. Methodist Women*

The Methodist Women is the group that focuses on the ministry to women in our churches. They have a thriving membership of 8954 from all the ACs:

CAC	2020
SCAC	4123
SIAC	721
SPAC	353
TAC	1221
TRAC	516

They have their own special training and leadership programmes. They are also actively involved and/or participate in the CCM, National Council of Women's Organisation (NCWO), Asian Church Women's Conference of the CCA, World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFM-UCW) and the World Chinese Women Mission Conference of CCOWE. The women in our church are clearly taking the initiative to minister to other women. But one concern that I would like to raise is whether they are at present structured to reach those who are working women, and especially those who are younger and with families.

*f. Youth Ministry*

One estimate for our country puts those currently in the 15-34 age bracket at 9.75 million (42.5% of the population). All our conferences are making special efforts

to reach this group, both in evangelism and discipleship. SCAC has a purpose-built MY Centre to cater to young people where they can have activities ranging from bible studies and tuition classes to table tennis and basketball. They are seeking to reach 1000 youths in the Sibua area, irrespective of race or religion. Also different conferences are now making special efforts to reach out and disciple university students from their churches or who study near their churches. As an example, SPAC has one church, Kingfisher Park Methodist Church, which has a very large student population of 300 during the academic year of the Universiti Malaysia Sabah in Kota Kinabalu.

Despite the above efforts, it needs to be said that most of our churches are having an uphill battle when it comes to youth work. Numbers in many youth groups have declined relative to church membership. Over the years, the GCYC have been responsible for coordinating the work amongst youths. However, it does appear that we need to do a thorough rethink about how we can revitalise our youth ministry. Further, the introduction of the Youth Act by the government has also meant that the MCM has to decide whether to work with the government on youth issues in our country (which would require us to register with the government under the Youth Act) or to opt out.

Given the above, the COP, together with the GCEC, has set up a Task Force to look into the whole matter of youth ministry. Specifically the Task Force was asked to look into two matters. The first is whether we should register under the Youth Act and, if so, what that would imply for the way we organise our youths. The second is to look into how youth ministries in our churches can be revitalised in face of the challenges of the 21st century.

*g. A Prayer Movement for the MCM*

Increasingly, we have been reminded afresh that the ministry of the whole church has to be undergirded by prayer. Different ACs have emphasised it to different extent and in different ways. SIAC has been having an annual prayer conference for the whole AC since 2005. TRAC has been running a 'School for Intercessors' since 2006. 10% of its members are in prayer groups, with a special prayer network operating among the youths. In SCAC, 95% of all local churches meet every Thursday evening for prayer. The goal is to have 20% of the total membership participating every

week. Perhaps TAC is most energetic in this area. They have been having annual prayer conference for a number of years now. This year they had about 1000 people coming together for 3 days, including about 150 children.

The most memorable of our prayer events must certainly be our Prayer Convention, MPC07, held on 31 Aug-2 Sept last year, for which 3950 persons were registered. This was the first time that members of all our 6 ACs, from all over the country, have come together to worship and to pray together. The sight of almost 10,500 members gathered together for the climactic Sunday Service was a powerful inspiration to all present. Let us continue to seek God together so that a prayer movement will sweep across the whole church and country, so that revival and holiness will spread through our land.

*h. Education and Schools*

The following is a list of all colleges and schools run by the MCM:

<b>Sarawak:</b>	
Primary Schools <i>(1 SK; 2 Chinese; and 8 Iban)</i>	11
Secondary Schools <i>(SK)</i>	2
Private College <i>(Methodist Pilley Institute, Sibua)</i>	1
<b>Peninsular Malaysia:</b>	
Primary Schools <i>(35 SK; 3 Tamil)</i>	38
Secondary Schools <i>(SK)</i>	24
Private Secondary Schools	5
Private College <i>(Methodist College, KL)</i>	1

In sum, we have a total of 75 schools (both primary and secondary) under government control, 5 private schools (secondary) and 2 colleges. Generally, the schools that have been under government control have not been in the best of shape, given the government's reluctance to provide capital funding for property development and upkeep, as well as other problems. Where there have been strong school boards and adequate funding provided, the schools have been able to keep up with the best in the country. These include ACS Sibua, MBS Kuala Lumpur, MBS Penang, ACS Ipoh and MGS Ipoh. Clearly we need to rethink the position of our schools that are under government control. The church must never allow itself to be forced into a position wherein we end up giving to students in our schools a poorer quality of education than they deserve.

Either we have our schools brought up to proper standards in all aspects or we should seriously consider closing them.

But on the private schools and colleges front, the church has been making real progress. For example, Wesley Methodist School in Kuala Lumpur is one of the most affordable and most sought after private schools. This year we had 700 applicants for the 180 places available for Form 1. And both Methodist Pilley Institute and Methodist College have been making real progress into pre-university and tertiary education. Much more efforts therefore should be put into our private institutions to develop them into centres of education excellence in the nation.

But I cannot leave this section without one further comment. Over the last few years, I have had the privilege of visiting some of the mission outreaches of the SPAC within Sabah itself. Serious efforts are being made to plant churches among the indigenous peoples in the state. Side by side with the work of evangelism, our people are also starting schools in places where even the government authorities would not go. The latest is the inauguration of the church and school in January this year in Serudong Laut, which is 3 hours by river boat from Tawau. There in the midst of nowhere, a church and secondary school have been started. I think of the schools that the missionaries started over 100 years ago, and of how these eventually became premier institutions in the country and powerful agents of change. And then I begin to understand a bit more the words of the prophet Zechariah (4:10), 'Who despises the day of small things?'

*j. Finance and Administration, and Other Miscellanies*

**GC finances:** Concerning GC finances, it is good to note that the problem of the growing deficit has effectively been resolved.

**Sengoi Mission Conference (PMS) Endowment:** The AEC (P Malaysia) has also moved to top up the PMS Endowment Fund to RM 5 million so that they can now look forward to a degree of financial independence. But when this is finalised, stringent conditions will need to be emplaced so that the capital will not be touched under any circumstances.

**SIAC Finances:** I am happy to report that the SIAC leadership over the past quadrennium has worked hard towards financial independence after all these

years. They need all the encouragement and help that we can offer to them, as they will need another four years to complete what they began. Nevertheless, they should be warmly congratulated on their hard work

#### **Disaster Relief Funds:**

Tsunami Relief (2005)  
Funds collected RM 1,149,300  
Funds disbursed RM 1,080,945

Sichuan Relief (2008)  
Funds collected RM 235,000  
Disbursement Ongoing

Myanmar Relief (2008)  
Funds collected RM 283,761  
Disbursement Ongoing

19th World Methodist Conference, Seoul, 20-24 July, 2006: The MCM was represented at this conference by 26 official delegates, plus 4 observers. It was a good learning and exposure experience for all who went.

2nd Asian Methodist Council (AMC) General Assembly, Johor Baru, Malaysia, 24-27 June 2008: The MCM was represented by 22 participants from the various ACs. The Bishop of the MCM was elected to Chairmanship of the AMC. The GCEC further nominated Mr. John Ling, SCAC, to be the lay representative from our church to the AMC Executive Committee.

#### **iii. Summary Comments**

The above outline of the ministry of the MCM tells us that there is much for which we can be thankful. There are clearly many signs of spiritual life and growth, and much more besides. At the same time, there are many areas wherein we need to do some hard rethinking and diligently seek God for true wisdom, in order to face the many challenges before us.

#### **4. The Way Forward**

Where do we go from here? In the last part of my address, I would like to list down some long-term goals that we should be working towards, and some specific objectives for the next quadrennium. These proposals do not come from me alone. A number of these things have already been discussed at different times by the COP, GCEC or with different groups within the church. Some of the things that I am raising will need to be worked through and fleshed out by all of us in our deliberations on the papers on the last two days of our GC.

#### **i. Long Term Goals**

First, we need to ask ourselves what are our long-term goals as a church. The GCEC has proposed that we take up Wesley's stated goal for the Methodist Movement as our theme for the next quadrennium. In the original version, Wesley's goal is 'To reform the nation and, in particular, the church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land.' This has been abbreviated as 'Spreading scriptural holiness, transforming the nation.' What does this imply in detail?

##### **a. A Road-Map for the MCM**

The GCEC decided that, as part of our General Conference this year, we will take a serious and comprehensive look at the question of what is the role of the Methodist Church in our present context. We need to be clear as to what our role or agenda as a church is within our present day national and international context. With this in mind it was decided that we should set aside some time to work at drawing up a clear agenda or 'road-map' for the MCM for the next 20 years. This will then enable the whole church to work together in a more united and coordinated fashion, for the advancement of God's purposes.

The four papers to be discussed deal with the following:

- Evangelism and Church Planting
- Discipleship
- Church and Society
- Missions

Since we will be discussing these in detail, I will not elaborate on this further. The papers will be the basis for the delegates to take to the study sessions. Out of this process, it is hope that we will begin to draw up a road-map for the whole church for the next 20 years. The aim of this exercise is to help us answer the question raised in Section 2 earlier: How can we be truly the church in our nation and bear witness to Christ today? And what would it mean to put into practice Wesley's stated goal in our time?

Clearly the above cannot be effectively discussed without dealing with the place of a prayer movement in the life of our church. The goal before us clearly is how we can work with God for a revival of the church that leads to more effective evangelism and missions, deeper discipleship, and serious engagement of the gospel with the world in which we live.

##### **b. Doubling the Number of Ministers within the Next 12 Years**

The above leads to a second long-term concern, which is the shortage of ministers in the MCM. The reasons for the shortage are too complex to discuss here, although some of these will be looked at briefly below. But can we set as one of our goals the doubling of the number of full-time ministers in the whole MCM within the next 12 years, i.e. by 2020? But for this to happen, we will need diligently to work at removing human obstacles and changing mind-sets, and also persistent prayer.

##### **c. Revamping Our Educational Ministry**

A third long-term goal, which is related to our social responsibility in our nation, is to revamp our work in education. Here we need to start with a fundamental assumption—that either we ensure that our schools are maintained at real levels of excellence (within their respective contexts) or we should close them. It does the witness of the church no good when some of our schools are run down, termite-infested and ramshackle! We should never maintain schools in the name of Christ, if these are really second-rate or third-rate schools. This will require us to do some fundamental rethinking and take drastic action where that is needed. In real terms, it means:

(1) Schools under government control: We should do whatever it is possible to maintain their Christian character, and make them amongst the best within the existing system. For those schools wherein these two goals are not achievable, we should close them and channel their resources elsewhere.

(2) Private Schools: We should set up a string of private schools throughout the country, including Sabah and Sarawak, under the Wesley Methodist School brand name. Through these we should strive for the Christian character and educational excellence for which our schools were known in an earlier generation (before the Aziz Report), and use them as the agents of change in the lives of individuals and of our nation.

(3) A Methodist University College: Both Pilley Institute and MCKL have the same aspiration. It would appear that this is a most desirable goal in terms of our education ministry. If indeed, after seeking God, we believe it to be His leading, then we should pursue this earnestly to make it a reality within the next 5-10 years.

## *ii. Specific Goals for the Next Quadrennium, 2008-2012*

In addition to the above longer-term goals, the following is a list of specific goals which we should strive to accomplish within the next quadrennium.

### *a. Our Conferences*

- (1) Work with SIAC to enable them to accomplish the goal of full financial independence for their normal operating expenses.
- (2) Work with the SPAC to enable them to become a full Annual Conference in 4 years, or at the latest in 8.
- (3) Work with PMS to help them move forward so that the eventual transition to a Provisional Conference can be a realistic goal.

### *b. The Book of Discipline*

The DRC has put in a lot of hard work over the last four years. We are grateful to them for their commitment and contribution. But there are things within the Discipline which requires more thorough and painstaking work. These include especially the need for us to rethink the way the church is structured and run. At present there are simply too many meetings and too much bureaucracy. We need to cut through all the bureaucracy to improve efficiency without losing the built-in checks and balances. A second major area concerns the ministry. The present structures and provisions discourage many from coming into the ministry for a variety of reasons. How do we loosen these up so that many will not find the provisions so daunting that they are discouraged from entering the ministry?

For us to do a proper and thorough job, we do need to have someone working full-time on it over a year or two and supported and advised by a small committee. This must also be given priority.

### *c. A Methodist Book of Services and a Catechism*

Presently there is no unified set of services that we use for worship, etc. There is the set of services in the Discipline which is used by some and for ordinations. Further different pastors and ACs are using different liturgical orders for baptism, Communion, funerals and various other functions. All these can be very confusing, and is leading to growing divergences within the MCM. The longer term negative consequences can

be very serious. It would be good if we can have something that we can all be happy with and officially approved by the GC. This can also serve as a powerful means for unity as the MCM!

There is also need for a good Catechism book which will serve as a membership manual for all new members and for the instruction of the young within our churches. It should consist of studies of the following:

- (1) The Apostles' Creed (our beliefs)
- (2) The Ten Commandments (our ethics)
- (3) The Lord's Prayer  
(our worship and spirituality)
- (4) Methodist distinctives  
(the great strengths of our tradition that mark us out from other Christian traditions)

Properly done, it will serve as a study book for all members as well.

### *d. Coordinating Our Missions Ministries*

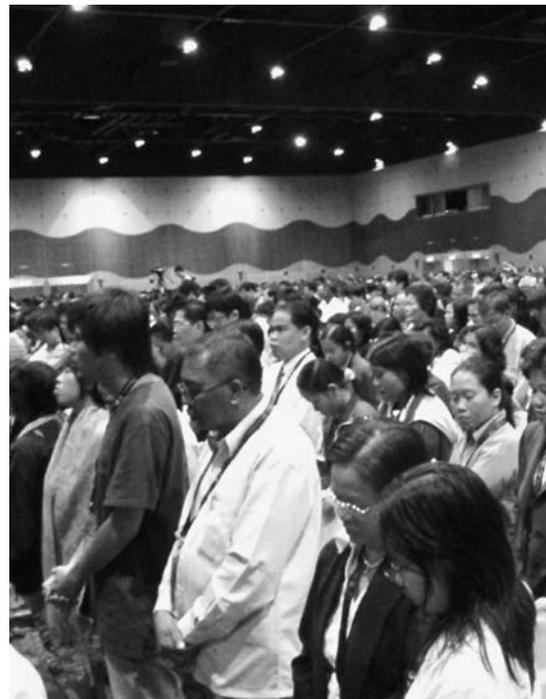
Attention was drawn to the fact that, whilst much is being done in overseas missions, there is no overall coordination among the ACs. The time has come for us to seriously ask whether we need to do something about this state of affairs. Do we need a central body to coordinate the work so as to reduce duplication and increase synergy? It is hoped that the discussion on the paper on missions at this GC will lead to a resolution of this matter.

### *e. Some Identifiable Marks of Revival and New Life*

I would like to suggest that we work as a church towards some specific marks of revival and renewal within the church. These include:

- (1) A growing prayer movement within the church which will encompass more and more of the members.
- (2) An increasing number of members belonging to small groups through which adequate pastoral oversight can be maintained over them. This is a call to return to Wesley's pastoral genius in the use of class meetings in his time.
- (3) A doubling of the numbers of those offering themselves for training for ministry.
- (4) A youth movement through which the Holy Spirit will sweep many young people into the Kingdom of God, set many on fire for Christ and call many

into full-time ministry and missions. We should note that over the past three hundred years, often great movements of God began with young people in their late teens and early 20s. This is true of the 18th century Methodist revival, the great Protestant missionary movements in UK and USA in the 19th and 20th century, the work of John Sung and the Bethel Band in China in the late 1920s and 30s, the ministry of Sadhu Sundar Singh of India., etc.



## **5. Conclusion**

I have attempted here to share with you what God has laid upon my heart over the past four years. I am deeply concerned about the critical times that we live in. At the same time I also believe that God has called us to live precisely at such a time as this, and not at any other time in history. Moreover, as Paul reminds us in Eph 3:20, God 'is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us'!

For those who have eyes to see, God has been doing many new things in the midst of the MCM over the last 10-20 years. If we would cooperate with God, He will do a far deeper and long-lasting work within our church. When that happens, the MCM will invariably impact other churches in this land. And then together, the church can become a powerful agent for the transformation of this nation. May God grant that we will all be found faithful in doing what He calls us to do!



Dr Lee Bee Teik with interpreter



Participants of the retreat

# Friendship with God

## A Prayer Retreat for Methodist Pastors' Wives

This special Prayer Retreat was held for Methodist Pastors' wives from various Annual Conferences. It was to give an opportunity for the wives to have a time of fellowship and rest spiritually and physically, away from home and church commitments.

It was organized by Reconre Ministries, and the Director, Dr Lee Bee Teik, was our retreat facilitator. We thank God for her love and passion to minister to us. Approximately 50 of us enjoyed the beautiful and peaceful environment at Clear Water Sanctuary in Batu Gajah, from 18 - 21 August 2008. We are also grateful for the loving service rendered to us by the retreat organizer, Mrs Dorcas Ong of Ipoh Wesley and her dedicated team of helpers.

The theme of the retreat was Friendship

With God. Each session started with a wonderful time of worship led by gifted worship leaders. The carefully chosen hymns were beautiful, with lyrics that melted our hearts and drew us closer to God. After each session we were given a time of personal reflection when we observed a time of silence to listen and talk to God and to journal our thoughts.

The four sessions were centered on the theme of friendship. We began with God's call and Jesus' invitation to friendship with him. In the midst of our ministry with our husbands, it is hard not to neglect our own vineyard, which is our personal relationship with God.

Jesus' farewell speech in John 15 spoke of His great love for us by laying down His life for us, His friends. What is our response to His attentive love? Who is God to me? Those were some questions posed to us. How we view God affects our attitude and the whole of our lives. A distorted image of God may be due to our weakness or emotional damage, our sin and wrong teachings.

The last session spoke very aptly of 'forgiveness at the heart of friendship.' We were encouraged "never to tire

of forgiving and so give the devil no hold. Be merciful and compassionate, spontaneously and wholeheartedly. The Lord forgives you all day long; in the silence of your heart, then, do the same, untiringly and sincerely."

Not many of us were familiar with Prayer Retreats with silence at designated times. We did not find it easy and needed much self-control but learnt that silence was a gift that we offered each other as people seeking a sacred space to be still and to reflect on the presence and action of God in our lives. This was much needed to guard our secret garden and cultivate a more intimate relationship with the ever-waiting Bridegroom, our Lord Jesus. The retreat ended with a covenant service and the Lord's Supper.

We treasured the time of bonding and fellowship as sisters in Christ with a kindred spirit and special calling to be Pastors' wives. We would like to encourage even more wives to join future Prayer Retreats, to come away and withdraw to a time of spiritual, emotional and physical rest.

*Yem Soh Kit.  
Wesley Methodist Church, Klang*



Time for reflection



Wives of Sengoi pastors

*This is a report on the Methodist Pastors' Wives Retreat written by Mrs Alice Boh.*

## 从“闹市走进祷告密室”~赴全马师母退修会后记

华人妇女年议会结束的那天下午，我和两位师母搭车从K.L北上怡保，紧接参加由Reconre Ministries主办的马来西亚卫理公会师母退修会。Reconre Ministries 的负责人是会督娘李美德医生，亦是退修会讲员，出席师母退修会的师母共有45人。来自东马砂劳越华人年议会的师母共有10位，英文年议会的师母有9位，印度年议会和Senoi年议会各有6位师母参加。华人年议会有16位师母报名，真正出席营会的师母是14位。

早在去年12月，我和印度年议会的会长娘在会督府和美德医生共商推动师母退修会事工。当报名表格出炉之

后，我们自2月起已开始号召各自年议会的师母报名参加退修会。这8个月来，我们和协办堂会（怡保英文堂的牧师娘及几位姐妹）不断保持联系，好不容易盼到退修会到来的这一天。见面之际，亦有“千呼万唤始出来，犹抱琵琶半遮面”的感觉。

在4天3夜的营会中，美德医生以“上帝，你的知己”为主题与我们分享了5堂信息，每一堂信息之后都有静默时间让我们根据讲员分发的资料去反省。已出版多本辅导书籍的美德医生准备的每一份资料都备有华、巫、英3种语文。分享信息时，除了从英语翻译华语之外，另有一位姐妹（在座位上）为Senoi年议会的师母们翻译国语。虽然参加退修会的师母人数不多，但主办当局在解决语言沟通方面尽量做到尽善尽美的安排，毕竟这是我们在接洽师母时多数人顾虑的问题。

我们在环境优美、宁静的Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Resort与来自不同年议会的师母（虽不是全部）从陌生到互相认识、交流，彼此有说不完的话题。放下

烦琐的家务之余，除了领受灵粮，我们也趁傍晚时分，尽情地善用度假场所提供的设备，进行各项户外活动，十分痛快！另外，我也有机会认识我的同房，来自东马的苏慈安会长娘，并从她那里对东马成立已有40年的师母团契事工略有些了解。

营会进行至尾声那天的分享时刻，当多位师母娓娓道出她们如何透过一草一木、藉着一景一物、高山湖水聆听神的声音时，我不竟纳闷神为何不对我说话。归途中，一种爱的感动缓缓临到我心里，想到为出席退修会的师母们赞助所有经费，想到出钱出力为我们提供最佳服务的怡保英文堂的这班姐妹，再想到关心我们、一心一意要帮助不同年议会的师母们继续举办此类退修会的会督娘，我忽然觉得，原来自己正被一层又一层厚厚的爱包围着，我的心，再次被神圣洁、伟大的爱征服了。

莫曾桂梅





## Press Release from:

### *The 9th Session General Conference, Methodist Church, Malaysia.*

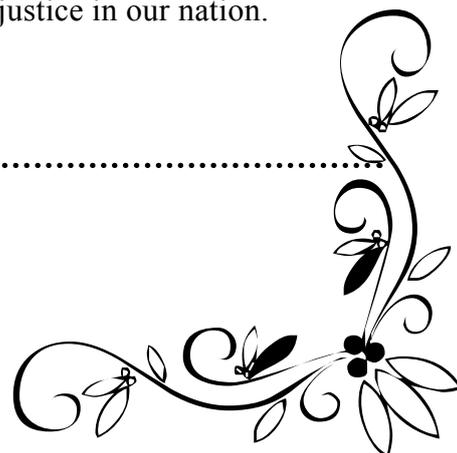
The Methodist Church in Malaysia held her 9th Quadrennial Session of the General Conference at Kota Kinabalu from 15-20 September 2008. 100 delegates and staff from the six annual conferences in Peninsular, Sabah and Sarawak gathered in conference with guests and Bishops from regional Singapore and Indonesia, the UK, Australia and the USA. During the conference, the current Bishop Dr Hwa Yung was re-elected for another term of four years. In his Episcopal address the Bishop challenged and called the church to practise scriptural holiness and to transform the nation. While deliberating on the mission of the church and her strategies for the next quadrennium, the conference also expressed with deep concern some of the issues that continue to plague the nation, calling for earnest prayer and considered action thereof. The issues include -

1. The economic and political uncertainties.
2. The socio-ethnic polarisation and schisms.
3. Rampant corruption at all levels in both the public and private sectors.
4. Delayed reforms of the Judiciary and the restoration of its integrity and independence.
5. Escalation of crimes and increased concerns on the integrity and dependability of law enforcement agencies.
6. Infringements on the land rights of some of the indigenous peoples.
7. Unlawful arrests and detentions under the oppressive Internal Security Act.
8. Ineffective measures to arrest the deterioration of education standards.
9. Exploitation of the weak, the poor, migrant workers, the stateless, children and women.
10. Erosion of freedom of religion as guaranteed in the Federal Constitution.

The Methodist Church reaffirmed her mission to “Spread Scriptural Holiness, Transforming the Nation” and to this end, she reaffirmed her commitment to

- reach out to the needy and the oppressed through social, medical and educational services
- uphold truth and justice and support all agencies that strive towards such end
- pray for peace and harmony, political stability; economic prosperity, poverty eradication, literacy advancement and the prevailing of righteousness, mercy, truth and justice in our nation.

*The Methodist Church In Malaysia  
23rd September 2008*





*Majlis Gereja-gereja  
Malaysia Council of  
Churches of Malaysia?*

“United to Build and to be a Blessing”

19th September 2008

**To: Bishop Dhiren dra Sahu  
The General Secretary  
The National Council of Churches in India  
INDIA**

RE: Statement of Solidarity for the victims of persecution in Orissa, Karnataka and Kerala

Dear Bishop Sahu,

The Council of Churches of Malaysia has been following the news about the religious violence against Christians which first began in Orissa and has now spread to other states like Karnataka and Kerala.

We are deeply saddened by the killings, the damage to churches and homes, and the displacement of hundreds of people, by the violence perpetuated by Hindu extremist groups.

We note that the central government and state authorities have not been able to stop the violence from spreading.

The church leaders in Malaysia strongly condemn the aggressive and indiscriminate acts of violence against Christians and we shall do everything possible to register with the Indian government our call for the government’s immediate and effective measure to contain the situation and bring the perpetrators to justice.

In this time, as thousands of Christians fear for their lives in the affected areas, our solidarity extends to them through our prayers and our firm commitment to stand with the NCCI and other ecumenical bodies in voicing our protest at such religious vigilantism supported by political groups advocating a Hindu fundamentalist ideology.

We have issued a call to our churches to remember the persecuted in India in their prayers, and to take offerings to help those in dire need in the affected areas.

Yours fraternally in Christ,

.....  
*REV. DR. HERMEN SHASTRI  
General Secretary*

**To: Member Churches and Councils  
and Ecumenical Partners.**

Please Pray for India!

The CCA has been following the news about religious violence in India during the past few weeks. The anti-Christian violence which started in Orissa last month has now spread to other parts of the country. We have been in touch with Bishop Dharendra Kumar Sahu, General Secretary of the NCCI, and we received news of churches being burnt and Christians attacked in the state of Karnataka. The Catholic Bishop’s Conference of India reported that over a dozen churches and prayer halls were attacked over the weekend.

This trend is especially worrisome as the acts of violence are being spread in states that are being governed by the fundamentalist Hindu based party. In the information that we received, the state governments have been accused of inaction or being slow to respond in many of the attacks.

In the state of Orissa, over 50,000 Christians have been displaced and are unable to return home for fear of more acts of violence.

The Christian Conference of Asia strongly condemns any indiscriminate acts of violence against Christians and church property and call upon both the state and central governments to act decisively to stop such indiscriminate acts of violence by one section of the community against another.

The Christian Conference of Asia also welcomes the courageous response of the Christians and supporting communities in India.

The day of prayer and fasting launched by the Indian Church on 7 September 2008 as a response to the violence against Christians in India has been welcomed by tens of thousands of people. Instead of responding “to violence with violence”, Christians have “fasted and prayed to overcome evil”, leaving the ultimate judgment to God. All over India, Christians gathered in the churches or in open spaces to express their participation in the sufferings of their brothers and sisters in faith in Orissa. Members from all the religions participated in the celebration, with prayers and readings taken from the different sacred books: Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Sarnas (tribal religions) and Christians.

In this age of pluralism, we would like to call upon all people, irrespective of race, culture and religious affiliations, to commit themselves to live in harmony with each other. Our world is big enough for everyone.

In solidarity with our brothers and sisters in India, we would like to encourage all member churches and councils and ecumenical partners to:

- Pray for the churches in India
- Write letters of support and encouragement to our NCCI and member churches in India.
- Write letters to the Indian Embassies in your countries encouraging them to act more decisively to stop all acts of violence that is being perpetrated against the church and the Christian community.

Thank you.

*Prawate Khid-arn  
General Secretary  
Christian Conference of Asia*

# Snapshots of 9th Session General Conference



A section of the guests at the 40th Anniversary Thanksgiving Dinner



Opening Service Communion



Mr Tung Kam Seng sharing some thoughts on his 16 years as Conference Secretary



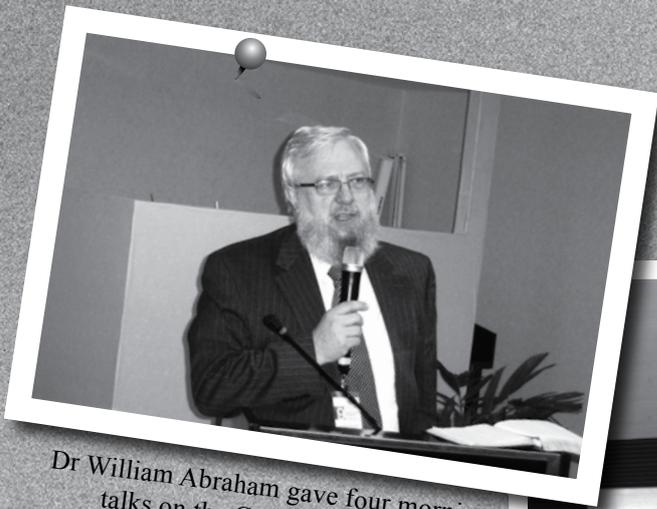
Lively debate on the Episcopal model.



Opening Service. From left – Bishop Amat Tumino, Bishop Roy Sano and Rev Dr Stephen Wigley



Legislative Committee hard at work



Dr William Abraham gave four morning talks on the Conference theme



Bishop Robert Solomon giving the sermon at the Re-dedication Service.



Rev Ling Heu Uh (back row extreme right) and some of the SPAC pastors rendering an anthem at the Re-dedication Service.



孝恩·集團  
XIAO EN GROUP



Special Design Burial Plot  
特别设计墓地



Open-Air Columbarium  
开放式骨灰阁

## Nilai Memorial Park

One of Malaysia's most beautiful memorial park, Nilai Memorial Park is situated just 30 minutes away from Kuala Lumpur. Surrounded by lush natural greenery, the Park successfully combines the best of oriental traditions and architecture with western planning and design. Set amidst all this is a series of tastefully designed and crafted memorials and niche columbariums, which not only provide a serene final resting place for our departed loved ones but also for others to pay their respects.



Professional Arrangements  
专业策划



Imported Luxury Hearse  
进口豪华灵车

## Xiao En Bereavement Care Packages

There is peace of mind in being able to fulfill your final act of filial piety and assurance knowing that every detail will be taken care of conscientiously. There is dignity in a meaningful ritual well planned and well performed. A Xiao En Bereavement Care Package ensures that the warm memories of your departed loved one will endure for generations to come.



Xiao En Centre, Jalan Kuari, Cheras  
孝恩館，吉隆坡蕉賴



Multi Function Halls  
多元用途礼堂

## Xiao En Centre

Xiao En Centre, as a complex for social education and life ceremony, is complemented with function halls for memorial services and funeral rites. We are also equipped with facilities to hold cultural & community events including art exhibitions & seminars. The centre's design, which combines the modern sensibilities & traditional concepts which appraise human values represents our unflinching commitment towards celebration of life excellences.

NILAI MEMORIAL PARK • XIAO EN BEREAVEMENT CARE • XIAO EN CENTRE • XIAO EN CULTURAL

CORPORATE OFFICE No 1 Jalan Kuari Cheras 56100 Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

T +603 9145 3888

F +603 9145 3999

W [www.xiao-en.com](http://www.xiao-en.com)

Tollfree 1-800-88-8333 (24 Hours)

# 9th Session General Conference Bishop Hwa Yung Reelected



Prayer of re-dedication. From left: Bishop Roy Sano, Bishop Robert Solomon and Bishop Albert Chiew.



Bishop and Mrs Hwa Yung

Rev Dr Hwa Yung was reelected bishop of the Methodist Church on the first ballot at the 9th Session General Conference held from 15 – 20 September 2008 in Kota Kinabalu.

In his brief speech afterwards he thanked the General Conference for the vote of confidence and affirmation in re-electing him to the office of bishop. He reiterated what he had said in the Episcopal address for his thankfulness to God's grace and strength sufficient for the work that had been put into his hands the past four years. He also thanked the Presidents of the Annual Conferences, the GC officers and all the GCEC members for their support.

Bishop Hwa Yung asked for the upholding of their prayers and giving themselves to work together to advance the work of the Gospel of Christ through the Methodist Church in Malaysia.

At the closing service of the General Conference, Bishop Dr Robert Solomon of the Methodist Church in Singapore

officiated in the re-dedication of Bishop Hwa Yung in his office, together with Bishop Roy I. Sano of the United Methodist Church, USA, Bishop Albert Chiew of the Chinese Methodist Church in Australia and Bishop Amat Tumino of the Methodist Church in Indonesia.

In his sermon Bishop Solomon pointed out that being a bishop is a noble task. It is an important office where great things can be accomplished. But just as in warfare, often the most strategic places are also the most vulnerable and therefore needs to be guarded all the more. While the office of the bishop is one of elevation, yet it is also to carry the cross.

While Bishop Solomon spoke of the consecration of the bishop to his office and task yet he called on everyone, the clergy as well as the laity, to be willing to be consecrated to the work of God. We are called to build the temple of God but we must also be careful how we build, the quality of our work just as important as the task itself.

In his greetings to the congregation Bishop Hwa Yung ended with the call to pray and work towards renewal and revival in the Methodist Church, if it is to fulfill the theme for the new quadrennium. But he explained that revival does not necessarily mean huge crowds or sensational happenings. Instead he gave three pictures of what each local church in its own location can do to bring about this renewal. First, was the picture of John Wesley speaking and ministering to small groups in barns, telling them of God's love for them. Second, was the picture of pastors preaching the Word every week to their congregations in every corner of the country. And third, the Christian who by his or her service to those around them can influence and shape their lives in ways that are often unseen and incalculable. In these small ways, with everyone doing their part, the nation can be impacted and holiness spread through the land.

*Christopher Cheah*