



Lent Meditation

Reflections on the Stations of the Cross

BEHOLD YOUR MOTHER

Meditation Text: Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son". Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. (John 19:25-27)

Eighth Station : Jesus Speaks to His Mother and the Beloved Disciples

This was Jesus' final hour. He is with His closest circle. Mary, His mother who was chosen because God the Father saw the yielded heart of one who said, 'Be it Unto Me According to Your Word.' She was the same woman who brought him to the temple when Jesus was twelve and when He returned after a few days, told Mary, His mother, 'Do you not know that I am doing my Father's business.' At the scene of the cross, Mary continued to be with Jesus at the pinnacle point of His mission on earth — His death on the Cross.

Words alone may not be able to contain the depth of pain and sorrow of any mother who has to witness the torture, dying and death of her son. Scripture depicts Mary as a woman who often pondered things in her heart and walked in complete obedience to the Father. And at the end of her mission, the Lord Jesus Christ remembered her and entrusted her to be cared for by John, the disciple whom Jesus loved.

One cannot meditate on this scene and not be touched at the core of our souls by the love of the Son of Man for His earthly mother as well as the Son of God who knew His final destiny.

The Lord Jesus Christ paused in the middle of this Grand Narrative — so someone whom He loved and had loved him on earth would be taken care of when He returns to His Father. He attended to a crucial human need before accomplishing the Grand Divine purpose.

Over To You

Meditate on this. Place yourself in the character of Mary, the mother of Jesus. What has the journey been like for you? At the cross, nearing the death of Jesus, He entrusts you to his disciple, John. What do you think Jesus feels about you?

Continue this meditation. This time imagine you are John and is told about taking care of Jesus' mother, Mary. How do you feel about this responsibility?

Prayer

Lord, teach me to notice that nothing should ever be too divine that our human souls cannot comprehend or respond to practically. Teach me to love the way You loved. Teach me to love all the way.

Further Lent Reading: Gen 17:1-8, Psalm 105:4-11, John 8:51-59

(This meditation is taken from Meditations for Lent 2009 Edition, published by the Board of Worship and Music of Trinity Annual Conference.)



(Seated from r to l) Elder Kim, Rev Peter Lee and his wife Judy, Mrs Hwa Yung and Bishop Hwa Yung.
(Standing from r to l) Florence Yeow, Eddie Gan (both from CAC Malacca Methodist Church), Rev Daniel Han

Church leaders from Methodist Church in South Korea pay a visit.

On 2 February 2009, the Senior Pastor, Rev Peter Lee, his wife Judy and Elder Kim from the Bupyeong Methodist Church paid a visit to Bishop Hwa Yung. They were visiting some countries in the region where their church is involved in missions work. Coming up from Malacca they made a one day visit to Kuala Lumpur.

Bishop and Mrs Hwa Yung hosted a lunch for them, together with Rev Daniel Han, from the Bupyeong Methodist Church who has been in Malaysia since June 2008. After that they were brought on a quick tour of KL city before returning to Malacca and thence down to Singapore.

GCEC Meeting in Sibü Action Plans for the Future

The first General Conference Executive Council (GCEC) of the new quadrennium (2009-2012) was held 12-14 February in Sibü under the leadership of Bishop Hwa Yung.

Among some of the matters discussed and decisions made are the following. The Methodist Church will develop four areas of ministry for the future. They are *Evangelism and Church Planting, Discipleship and Pastoral Work, Church and Society, and Missions*. The second meeting on the long term goals will be held from 29 June to 1 July 2009 in Sabah.

Two other events were also put on the calendar. 1) Methodist Pastors' Retreat will be held from 24 - 30 April 2010 in Sibü; 2) Methodist Prayer Convention will be held from 30 April to 1 May 2011 in Sibü.

The GCEC also discussed the possibility of combined efforts between Methodist Pilley Institute (MPI) and Methodist College Kuala Lumpur (MCKL) to work towards a Methodist University College.



(From l to r) Rev C. Jayaraj (Tamil Annual Conference), Rev Ling Heu Uh (Sabah Provisional Annual Conference), Rev Dr Su Chii Ann (Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference), Bishop Dr Hwa Yung, Rev Ong Hwai Teik (Trinity Annual Conference), Rev Stewart Damat (Sarawak Iban Annual Conference), Rev Boh Che Suan (Chinese Annual Conference)

The Book of Discipline will be translated into Chinese with Rev Yau Kah Fatt as editor-in-chief assisted by Rev Ling Tung Kiing and Rev Shia Siek Hing. The Discipline is expected to be published in 2010.

The General Conference will also publish booklets on the Methodist

Small Group Ministry, Methodist Doctrines, and Methodist Worship.

About 25 members attended the GCEC meeting including all the Presidents from the six Annual Conferences.

(From the report by Winnie in Connection 15 March 2009 issue.)

Contents

Page 4-5	THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: Precepts for God's People (7) You Shall Not Commit Adultery By Ng Cho Hui
Page 6	Bahasa Malaysia Ministry Forum Sarawak Methodist Churches
Page 7	SIAC Leaders' Retreat
Page 8-11	DISCIPLESHIP Paper Presented at the 9th General Conference 2008
Page 12	News From Around The World
Page 14	Notices and Announcements

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

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
Website
• www.methodistchurch.org.my

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

Printed by
Academe Art &
Printing Services Sdn.Bhd.
No.7, Jalan Rajawali 1A,
Bandar Puchong Jaya,
47100 Selangor Darul Ehsan.

What is Happening in our Annual Conferences?

April

01	Wed	TRAC SF Public Lecture 5
12-19	Sun-Sun	CAC Conference on Worship & Liturgy
13-15	Mon-Wed	SPAC Executive Board Meeting
13-16	Mon-Thu	SCAC Board Meetings
13	Mon	SCAC Joint Board Chairmen & District Lay Leaders' Meeting
14-17	Tue-Fri	SIAC Pastors' School
14-18	Tue-Sat	GC Methodist Women – Joint Asian Seminar
20-25	Mon-Sat	TRAC Pastors / Diaconal Ministers School
27-30	Mon-Thu	Christian Federation of Malaysia National Conference

May

01-03	Fri-Sun	SIAC District Lay & Pastors Convention, Bintulu SCAC Board of Mission - Mission Camp SCAC Information Communication Board - Church Media Workshop
21-22	Thu-Fri	TAC DS/Board of Ministry, Finance & Executive Board
22-23	Fri-Sat	SCAC Board of Worship & Music – Hymn Camp
26-30	Tue-Sat	SCAC Board of Evangelism Evangelism Explosion Leaders Camp
24/5 - 9/6		SCAC Board of Worship & Music Music Seminar
30/5 - 1/6		CAC Adults Fellowship Family Retreat

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

The Ten Commandments: Precepts for God's People (7)

You Shall Not Commit Adultery

Ng Cho Hui

Introduction

When God speaks, we hear ... and obey. Anything else displeases God.

About four and a half millennia ago when God began to form a people for Himself using slaves¹ who then lived in a land and time where moral standards were no standards at all, it was necessary to provide and establish a standard of morality that would befit the people known as 'the people of God'. Such a standard became known as 'the Ten Commandments' - God's standard for his people - for their time. However because it is God's standard, it is also God's standard for ALL people and for ALL time. Hence the reason why we are re-exploring these standards in our time to re-order our lives to God's standard and bring a 'smile' upon God's face.

Holy Marriages

Holy living arises out of a holy relating to God out of which flows holy relationships with fellow human beings, fellow Earth creatures, and Earth itself. The focus of this article is on holy relationships: specifically on the foundation of holy relations among humans viz. holy marriages.

The seventh commandment in essence is about maintaining holy marriages. At first glance, it appears as a 'negative command', a prohibition, an order to NOT do something. At a deeper and more wholesome perspective, it is a command for us to work and ensure that our marriages are holy in God's sight. This

is amply supported by the whole counsel of Scripture and especially in the New Testament. ²Holy marriages therefore arise not just when we do not commit adultery, but even more so when we DO love our spouses with ALL our heart and ALL our soul and ALL our strength and ALL our mind.

Obedying the command to love will naturally fulfill the command not to commit adultery. The more we grow in love towards one's spouse, the lesser the possibility of our committing adultery. Indeed the disposition to sin in us diminishes even as we increase in truly loving one's spouse as Christ loved the Church.

Marriage and Heaven

In one sense, our marriages reflect our relationship with God. In another sense, our marriages give us a foretaste of what it means when we do get to heaven and experience union with God. A holy marriage is like experiencing heaven on Earth, even if it is just a 'sampling' of the real thing.

The mystery and intimacy between spouses as encapsulated in the phrase 'one flesh' is a pointer towards the intimacy the Church will have and experience with her bridegroom when the 'eternal marriage' takes place. Holy marriages therefore prepare us for our eternal marriage in heaven.

What happens when we fail?

The sin of adultery leads to intense pain and massive destruction. Not only is the adulterer affected, but also those related in one way or another. Trust is betrayed, homes broken, familial relationships strained, children separated from one or both of their parents, work slackens, self-esteem fractured, etc. Many lives are forever changed. For some, ministry is no longer possible³.

The consequences of the sin of adultery are extremely pervasive and deeply destructive. Often when adultery occurs, other commandments are also broken such as lying (9th commandment), dishonor for parents (5th commandment), no fear of God (1st commandment), covetousness (10th commandment), and sometimes even murder (6th commandment).⁴ One would therefore do well to seriously and continuously heed this commandment. The words of Scripture remind all (including even the 'strong') to 'take heed lest we fall' (1 Cor 10:12 ESV).

When adultery occurs, there is only one proper course of action and that is to repent⁵. Only the truly repentant and contrite heart will receive God's forgiveness and a God-given chance to pick up the broken pieces of one's life again. While it is extremely difficult to cope with life after adultery, it is not impossible with God's help and grace.

The sin of adultery leads to intense pain and massive destruction. Not only is the adulterer affected, but also those related in one way or another. Trust is betrayed, homes broken, familial relationships strained, children separated from one or both of their parents, work slackens, self-esteem fractured, etc. Many lives are forever changed.

Some practical considerations

Because sexual attraction is such a powerful force, we must therefore take all necessary precaution to ensure that we do not ever fall into the sin of adultery. ⁶A constant lifelong state of holy vigilance is needful if we are to remain true to our marriage vows and to our holy God. The following may prove to be of use in helping to maintain life-long holiness in our marriages.

- 1) Seek to stay close to God, cultivating and developing an increasing awareness of His Presence with us at all times and in all places⁷.
- 2) Seek to grow our love for one's spouse (and children when they come)⁸
- 3) Never entertain even for a moment thoughts of divorce⁹
- 4) Forgive for the sake of your own soul as well as the soul of your spouse
- 5) When separated from your spouse

for a season (e.g. due to work), always be prepared in your mind and pre-decide to stay faithful to your spouse come what may.

- 6) Be wise to never allow yourself to be regularly in situations where you are alone with the opposite sex (e.g. work situations, counseling sessions, regular meals together, etc.).
- 7) Be wise in 'not thinking' 'not touching' and 'not seeing' that which is forbidden.¹⁰
- 8) Never engage in any form of sexual activity with any living being except your legally married spouse.¹¹
- 9) Walk in holiness in all areas of life.
- 10) Get married only when ready spiritually, emotionally, financially.¹²

Conclusion

Marriage is God designed and provides for the deepest and highest form of union

between a man and a woman. It is holy and good in God's eyes, to be treasured, protected and maintained pure and holy as it was designed to be. Holy marriages lead to holy families and ultimately to holy communities. For this purpose then was the seventh commandment given by God--You shall not commit adultery.

Let us obey and reflect His glory upon the nations.

Let us obey and receive God's full blessings upon our marriages.

Let us obey and be faithful to the holy call of marriage.

May His Face shine upon our marriages.

(Ng Cho Hui is the Director of the Lay Training Institute of Trinity Methodist Church Petaling Jaya.)

1 The people of God were not only slaves when they were called out of Egypt but had been slaves for more than four centuries! (Ex 12:40) They had a 'slave mentality' and no moral standard but that of their masters.

2 'Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her' Eph 5:25. 'Let the marriage bed be undefiled' (Heb 13:4).

3 This is especially so in cases where the adulterer is involved in leadership ministry e.g. pastoral ministry, counseling ministry, preaching and teaching ministry, ministry with young people, etc...

4 The classic example of King David who committed adultery with Bathsheba followed by deceit and murder is recorded in 2 Samuel 11 & 12. Note too that adultery often leads to consequences that can last for generations as was the case in King David's lineage (2 Samuel 12:9-10).

5 True repentance is not just feeling sorry about the sin but seeing it as it truly is - a sin before the Almighty God. True repentance involves a change of mind attitude and lifestyle that conforms to what God requires of us as His holy people.

6 As Christians we must seek to avoid all sin. However certain sins bring much pain and damage such as the sin of adultery, which therefore requires of us much greater watchfulness that we may not fall. The injunction against adultery can also be seen to be an injunction to avoid ALL sexual immorality.

7 Regarding the presence of God, Ignatius Loyola has this to say: "He who remembers the presence of God is less open to other thoughts, especially bad thoughts. As long as we believe that God sees us, we are restrained from daring to sin before such a Witness and Judge. In two ways, the presence of God is an antidote against sin: first, because God sees us and secondly, because we see God."

8 Love in Scripture is never just a matter of feelings, but rather a deliberate conscious exercise of the will to think and do good towards another.

9 Actions often originate from thoughts. Sinful thoughts beget sinful deeds. Therefore let us heed the wise counsel of Apostle Paul in Phil 4:8 to think Godly thoughts.

10 Jesus warned against the danger of committing the sin of adultery in our hearts. (Matt 5:27-28) In contrast, the media today too often portrays adultery as 'common' 'acceptable' and even a 'norm'. Even a simple cursory review of the common TV programs of today would confirm this.

11 Take note that Scripture expressly states that marriage in the eyes of God is between a man and a woman only. Only within the exclusive confines of marriage, may we use our full senses to love one's spouse.

12 This is why the Church generally allows marriages only after sufficient instruction and counseling has been carried out with the couple to be married. It is especially needful if one of the couple is a non-believer or a divorcee.

BM Ministry Forum

Training and Equipping Leaders



The first Bahasa Malaysia Ministry forum was held 19 – 21 February at the Centennial Park, Sib. 25 participants from Methodist churches in Sarawak participated in the forum, which main purpose was to learn of the achievements, the difficulties and struggles of the ministry over the past 8 years as well as to be clear of our vision and the corresponding challenges.

Some issues brought up during the discussion included the lack of Bahasa Malaysia ministers, diversity of cultures, children education problems, under-age marriages and poverty. Most of the bumiputeras move from their longhouses into town to look for daily paid jobs and they seem to be always on the move.

Why Bahasa Malaysia Ministry?

- Bahasa Malaysia is our national language and our identity; every citizen needs to respect, love and practice it.
- Bahasa Malaysia is a tool for unity among the many races and ethnic groups in this country.
- Bahasa Malaysia can help avoid misunderstanding among the people in that we can communicate with anyone, anywhere and any time; and, of course spread the Good News.
- The mindset of our new generation is influenced by Bahasa Malaysia, so we can spread the Good News easily to them.

- Bahasa Malaysia is a great blessing from God to all the churches in Malaysia; this is the opportunity given to every Christian to proclaim the Good News.

A Wide Market

Out of a population of 2.6 million, two-thirds of Sarawakians are bumiputera; sadly, the majority still live in darkness. The harvest is plenty; we need to harvest them before others do.

It is the commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Matt. 28: 18-20 Jesus instructs us to go make disciples. In Luke 4:18 Jesus tells us to reach out to the poor. Jesus asks us in Mark 16:15 to go to all nations while in Acts 1:8 Jesus affirms us and gives us the power of the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses.

How Are We Going To Do It?

- Train more members to be disciples and leaders.
- Prepare more Bahasa Malaysia resources and materials for Sunday schools, youths, and adults.
- We affirmed and agreed to have a structured Bahasa Malaysia Order of Worship that is in line with the Methodist Order of Worship.
- We agreed to include the importance of social issues into our ministries, such as

children education, under-age marriage, hygiene, health, micro credit and basic financial management. It can be done by sharing, training, talks and counseling.

Vision and Challenges

1. Plan to have Bahasa Malaysia Annual Conference within the next 30-50 years.
2. Establish a Bahasa Malaysia Seminary that can produce more workers or a BM Department in Methodist Theological School to enroll more students.
3. Get more BM pastors from other churches or from Indonesia or train more lay preachers to help the pastors.
4. Culture is a challenge too. We need to learn it before we go further. We can affirm to contextualize certain elements the culture only if it does not contradict Christianity.

Lastly, we affirm the need to be patient and practice endurance, and the need to change our mindset in this ministry. We cannot change them within 1-5 years. "It takes time and don't worry," as Pastor Cheng said in his closing message that was based on Matt. 6:25-34. "We need to surrender all to our Father in heaven because He knows everything, all our needs."

*Reported by Hileria Panjaitan
Connection 15 March 2009*

SIAC LEADERS' RETREAT

The Leaders' retreat cum Board meetings of Sarawak Iban Annual Conference (SIAC) was held from 8-11 Jan 2009 at Centennial Park, Sibü. About 54 leaders attended this important planning meeting.

In his opening sermon, Rev. Steward Damat, President of SIAC, preached on the theme "Here am I, send Me" from Isaiah 6. He said, "This is very appropriate and in line with the quadrennium theme of the Methodist Church in Malaysia 'Spreading Scriptural Holiness, Transforming the Nation'. He thanked all who had given their time to this retreat and meeting.

"God is a holy God and he requires his people to repent of their sin and worship Him alone. God demands a complete surrender of our self. Isaiah's acknowledgment of God's holiness in the temple sprung from his worship of the Holy God. God led us to freedom of serving. It is only when our worship life is placed at the top of our priorities that other things will follow."

President Damat continued, "After serving in SIAC for over 22 years, I have observed pastors and members come and go. What goes on and on is the worship life of this community. It is the total surrender of self to God that guarantees the other parts of life

will be fixed in position. We may see people creating problems for the community in SIAC and the church. It is essential that we learn this lesson from Isaiah whose worship life produced holiness in himself and the people of God. I believe this will produce faithful servants as our worship life is empowered by faithful worship."

Leadership Development Sessions

Rev Dr Tie King Tai led the participants through a two-hour session of the Seven Steps of Freedom in Christ by Neil Anderson. Dr Tie encouraged the church leaders not to wear masks but lead a life of truthfulness in Christ.

Another session on Effective Leadership was given by Rev Dr Ling Tung Kiing. He said a good and effective leader should have many qualities and one of the foremost criteria is to draft out a blueprint for the followers to understand their roles to play and to follow.

Areas of Focus in the Coming Years

In order to articulate the quadrennium theme, SIAC will encourage the pastors and church members to start with personal holiness, then holiness in the church and in turn bringing transformation in family and in society. The following are highlights of the plans:

Covenant Disciple Group: Encourage pastors and church leaders to join and to strengthen the ministry of the small groups. The congregation should read the Methodist "Social Principles" at least once a year.

Equipping: To equip more full time pastors with theological degrees.

Baptism and Confirmation Classes: A 5-month course of baptism and confirmation classes for members to attend in order to strengthen their faith and foundation.

Attendance: To increase Prayer meeting attendance by 20% and Sunday school attendance by 50%.

Education: Provide ways to help students to improve in their studies such as opening tuition classes and English language classes.

Social Concerns: Deal with the smoking and drinking problems, nurture the factory and industrial workers, provide counseling for marriage and family problems.

Physical Facility Development: To establish an Iban centre, MYF centre, Flat, Kindergarten and Tuition Centre.

Evangelism: Church planting in Limbang, Sri Aman and Kuala Lumpur. President Damat explained that so far, there is no SIAC preaching centre or church in Limbang and Sri Aman. In KL, there are a large number of Ibans working or studying there with no place to worship in their own language.

Mission: Continue to maintain partnership with the Ministry to Sarawak Indigenous people of Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference, maintain good working relationship with other church organizations from Korea, Singapore and USA. Send out short term missions teams to different places.

Winnie
From Connection 15 Feb 2009



A time to worship.



President Steward Damat preaching at the opening service.



Rev Dr Tie King Tai



Rev Dr Ling Tung Kiing



The representatives of Senior Citizen Fellowship of SIAC paid a visit to President Damat on 16 Jan 2009 in order to have a better understanding of the ministries of the coming year.

At the 9th Session General Conference in September 2008, four papers were presented on the topics *Discipleship, Evangelism & Church Planting, Missions and Church & Society*. These provided the basis for group discussions with the view of drawing up a roadmap for the Methodist Church in Malaysia. These papers, in abridged form, will be published in the coming issues of *Pelita Methodist*. Editor:

DISCIPLESHIP

Rev Wong Kah Nguon
Mdm Goh Kim Guat

INTRODUCTION

“Then Jesus came to them and said: ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’ (Matthew 28:18-20).”

Those were Jesus’ final words to His disciples before His ascension, a command to go and make disciples of all ethnic groups. For the last three years of His earthly life, Jesus had been investing His life in theirs, teaching them what it means to be His disciples. Now they were to continue His mission and make disciples of others. Therein lies the heart and the message of the gospel - being disciples of Jesus and making disciples for Jesus.

The greatest detriment to Christianity today is a non-discipleship gospel that has permeated the life and thinking of the contemporary church. This ‘great omission’ according to Dallas Willard, has resulted in producing churches where a two-level Christian experience is accepted as the norm - discipleship is for those who are more fervent and radical; grace and forgiveness is enough for everyone else. The result is a church lacking in spiritual authority and power.

I. Biblical Foundations of Discipleship

Disciple

In the New Testament, the main word for *disciple* is the Greek noun *mathetes* which has the basic meaning of ‘a learner, apprentice, or adherent’.

In the general sense, it referred to learners who associated themselves with a great

teacher or master to follow him and become like him. And so there were disciples of people other than Jesus in the New Testament.

In the more specific sense used by Jesus in the later part of His ministry and in the early church, the word *disciple* referred to those who believed in Him and were fully committed to follow and obey Him. It was used most frequently in this way, at least 230 times in the Gospels and 28 times in Acts.

Similarly, although the term *disciple* is not used in the Epistles, the idea of discipleship as the commitment of the disciple to follow Christ and become like Him is communicated through the noun *imitator* (*mimetes*) and the verb *imitate*. Paul calls his readers to imitate him as he imitates Christ (1 Cor 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6).

We can thus define ‘disciple’ as *one who has come to Jesus for eternal life, has claimed Jesus as Saviour and God, and has embarked upon a lifelong journey of following Jesus to become like Him*.

Discipleship

a. A Journey in Community

Once a person responds to Christ’s invitation to follow Him, he or she becomes His disciple. This following after Jesus is best understood as a journey, a direction, or an orientation of one’s life toward the ultimate goal of growing to become like the Master, in other words, growing into Christlikeness. Wilkins suggests that in becoming like Christ, one would become more fully human, increasing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52), being made complete in all areas of our lives.

In the New Testament, it is the plural, not the singular form *of disciple* that is normally used. The point expressed thus

is that disciples are called to be a part of a community of followers after Jesus. So while discipleship is a deeply personal experience of self-discovery, growth and change, the journey of discipleship is not a private one. Disciples are to walk in community with others who have made a similar commitment to Christ so that there is mutual encouragement and accountability to keep journeying on. That, unfortunately, is something that is greatly missing in our churches today.

Discipleship is thus not just a program of the church. It is becoming like Jesus as we walk with Him, in community with other Christians, moment-by-moment, day-by-day, for the rest of our lives till we see Him face-to-face.

b. Marks of Discipleship

When we become disciples of Christ, we enter into a new life that will bring about radical transformation through the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit. What are the hallmarks that are evidence of a life that is being transformed?

John records in his Gospel three distinctive marks of discipleship:

- i. Abiding in Jesus’ Word
- ii. Loving one another
- iii. Bearing fruit

Each mark becomes more and more evident in the life of a disciple as the person continues by faith to follow after Jesus. Bill Hull talks about six areas of transformation as we grow to become more like Christ: *Transformed Mind, Transformed Character, Transformed Relationships, Transformed Habits, Transformed Service, Transformed Influence*. In other words, as we live in relationship with God and in obedience to His Word, we should see growing evidence of transformation in all areas of our life.

Jesus’ ‘Model’ of Discipleship

Discipleship was not simply a program that Jesus went through with His disciples. It was about His life shared with them, the relationship He developed with them as He taught and trained them to be like Him. It was an intentional process where Jesus:

1. Invested His life in His disciples for a period of three years
2. Taught and lived out the truth of God’s Word
3. Modelled a holy life for them to follow
4. Trained them to minister to and serve others by modelling it for them in His life

II. Discipleship in the Wesleyan Tradition

Foundations of Wesleyan Discipleship

a. Sanctification and Christian Perfection

For John Wesley, faith was all about responding to God's grace and love. At the heart of his spirituality and Christian discipleship was his response to the immensity of the grace of God. He saw conversion as simply the beginning of the journey of discipleship, a process in which "God's love shed abroad in our hearts" effectively transforms both our consciousness and our actions. Justification is the start of the journey in response to God's grace; sanctification, pursuing a life of personal and social holiness towards Christian perfection or holiness of heart and life, is the continuing journey.

The journey of discipleship in the Wesleyan tradition is thus a continual process of being made perfect in our love of God, for each other, and the world, and of removing our desire to sin. In other words, becoming like Christ.

b. Discipleship in Community

John Wesley's understanding of faith is that it is not an individual affair. It is to be lived in community with fellow Christians and in society. The church is "the covenanted and disciplined community of those walking in the way of Jesus Christ ... the joyful community of those who have traded everything else for the privilege of banding together around the person and the example of Christ and the cause of his kingdom."

Because Wesley understood that the journey of discipleship was not meant to be carried out alone, he worked out a system for his converts to be nurtured in community.

1. Structures

Wesley first formed societies (equivalent to our congregations today) which had only one condition for admission - "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins." But because he was concerned that the societies were too big to watch over the spiritual growth of the members, he divided them into the different small groups.

(i) Small Groups (Face-to-Face Groups)

There were different types of small groups formed to serve different purposes and to meet different needs.

The Class Meeting - The society was subdivided into classes of about twelve persons each. Every member of the society was required to join a class. Their primary purpose was actually discipline, to keep the members from straying out of the narrow path of discipleship. In the class meeting, Methodist doctrines, sermons and practices were explained. The members would share their spiritual state, struggles and sins committed. And they would encourage one another to grow in personal and social holiness through acts of charity.

The Band - Whereas the classes were the disciplinary unit of the society, the bands were the confessional unit. They were same-gender groups of five or six persons committed to each other and to live a holy life. Only about a third of the society members joined or was invited to join. Here they could pour out their hearts and share their spiritual journeys "without reserve and without disguise."

The Penitent Band - This "backslider's band" was designed specially for sincere people who kept sliding back into some habitual sin.

The Select Society - This was a small group for the leaders. Only the most faithful and dedicated were invited. It had no rules, no set procedure and no official leader. The purpose was to help one another advance in perfection, improve leadership skills and to have a select group where each can freely share.

(ii) Family Religion

This is often forgotten as one important 'group' within Wesley's discipleship structure. Families were encouraged to have family worship and study twice daily, morning and evening. Thursday night was to be given to one-on-one parent-to-child instruction. On Saturday, the family was to review what had been learned during the week.

(iii) Other Structures for Instruction

Structures for instruction in the early Methodist movement included Sunday worship, small groups, correspondence and one-on-one religious conversations, what we might call "directed studies" today. Wesley suggested readings, discussed theological issues, asked questions, and pushed his students to critically reflect on their faith.

2. Relationships

Besides the general relationships within the small groups, John Wesley emphasized various types of relationships for the 'care of souls.'

(i) Teaching Relationships

Ministers, leaders and teachers were an important part of the faith and spiritual formation of the lives of the members. They were chosen for their dedication to God and to the care of souls, their knowledge of doctrine, discipline and practice, and their example of a holy life. The teaching role was a combination of proclamation, pastoral care, religious instruction, and modeling a faithful way of being. These relationships were significant in forming and nurturing Christian identity and vocation in the early Methodist movement.

(ii) One-to-One Relationships

Spiritual guidance was an essential element in the success of the Methodist movement although it is seldom highlighted. Wesley found the role of spiritual guide thrust upon him as people sought him out for direction in both secular and spiritual matters. He was convinced that spiritual guidance was essential for all Christians and that it was the responsibility of Christians to hold one another accountable spiritually. This took place in his small groups, families and especially in his "twin soul" and faith-mentoring relationships as described below.

Twin Souls - *Twin souls* (what some today might call spiritual friendships/peer mentoring) was a one-to-one relationship which Wesley frequently introduced to believers to provide mutual guidance and support. He repeatedly warned his people, both newcomers and veterans, that they could not keep 'warm alone.'

Faith Mentoring - In early Methodist practice, spiritual guidance would also take the form of a mature Christian watching over a younger one. Sometimes a "babe" in Christ would be assigned to a "spiritual father" or "nursing mother" as Wesley would call them. He would also assign new or discouraged converts to 'seasoned saints.'

3. Practices

For Wesley, learning and practical divinity are interdependent and inform and shape each other in the whole discipleship process. He thus laid down three general rules to govern how to live a life in love of God and neighbour: “do no harm,” “do good,” and “attend upon all the ordinances of God.”

For example, in order to do no harm, behaviors such as profanity, drunkenness, etc., were to be avoided. To do good would involve actions like giving food to the hungry, and visiting the sick, those in prison, etc. These were what Wesley called **works of mercy**, outward expressions of our love for God shown in acts of loving our neighbour. Attending to the ordinances of God meant participating in spiritual practices such as corporate worship, private and public prayer, studying Scripture, etc. These were termed **works of piety**, ways of loving God shown in practices that served to deepen one’s relationship with God.

Thus the early Methodists had structures that instructed and fostered discipline and accountability, relationships that gave support and spiritual guidance, and practices with clear expectations and guidance for living in personal and social holiness. As a result, the early Methodists, through the empowering work of the Holy Spirit, became a powerful movement for spiritual renewal and social change in the English society of that period.

III. Discipleship in the Context of the Methodist Church in Malaysia

In order to construct a relevant discipleship ministry in the context of the Methodist Church in Malaysia, we need to first look at three things:

1. Challenges and Problems
2. Gaps and Flaws
3. Paradigm Shifts

Challenges and Problems Facing Our Malaysian Church Today

The list below has been culled from observations made by various key church leaders over the recent years. They are important issues to take note of as we look at how to develop an integrated and holistic discipleship ministry in our church. The church’s failure to take discipleship seriously has contributed to the following:

- a. Christians are busy ‘doing church’ rather than ‘being church.’
- b. Many see being a Christian as fulfilling religious duties. Sunday worship is the main duty they keep, especially as they struggle with the hectic pace of life, and family, work and social pressures.
- c. There is lack of an authentic community and a safe place to work out daily life struggles as a Christian.
- d. The church is losing its relevance to the youths and young adults and many from Christian families are leaving the church.
- e. Parents are at a loss as to how to nurture and disciple their own children in the faith because many of them have never been disciplined before.

Gaps and Flaws in Our Discipleship Ministry

Not long ago Willow Creek Community Church released its findings from a three-year survey-based research of its ministry. Their findings shocked them because they discovered that much of their programming had not resulted in true spiritual growth. A few significant things they discovered are common to us as well:

- a. *A church that builds a dependency on programs for discipleship will ultimately fail. High level of participation in church activities does not correlate with spiritual growth.* Our churches have built a dependency for discipleship on church programmes as well. Accountability and community, helping our people to walk with one another and work out what they are learning through all the programmes are missing in our discipleship process.
- b. *The responsibility for spiritual growth was placed on the church rather than having the people taking ownership for their own growth.* Likewise, many churches have to be constantly churning out programmes to help people grow. People unconsciously have a consumeristic approach to church and keep looking for the church to provide the next programme to help them grow. This is especially glaring in the discipling of our children and youths where parents have divested themselves of the responsibility of nurturing their children and placed it solely upon the church.
- c. *Their programs were structured on the assumption that ‘one size fits all.’ They found that those who grew most were*

the young Christians but that those who were ‘more mature’ Christians found their needs not met. Often our discipling ‘programmes’ focus on the needs of young and growing Christians and we miss out on how to encourage ‘seasoned saints’ to continue in their growth towards sanctification.

- d. *It must all come back to the basics - Bible study, prayer, discipleship and missional community are practices that must be instilled into the people through one-to-one personal discipleship in a way that makes them dependent on God.* Basic spiritual disciplines are either not taught in our churches or are taught as an end in themselves. They are not emphasized as a part of our spiritual formation and discipleship, an intentional training in our lives to be formed as Christ’s disciples.

Paradigm Shifts Needed

The following are four areas to look at if we want to find solutions to the gaps in the discipleship ministry in our churches:

1. Recover a Biblical Understanding of Discipleship

- a. The church needs to teach again that discipleship is an ongoing journey of growth to become like Christ for every believer if he or she has accepted Christ’s invitation to follow Him.
- b. It cannot just be programme-based instruction and training. If we follow Jesus’ example, it has to involve relationships and time, an investing of lives in other lives over a period of time.
- c. The church needs to put in place channels for intentional building of relationships so that she can become a real and authentic community of mutual acceptance, support and accountability. People will then start ‘being church’ rather than ‘doing church.’

2. Relook at the Wesleyan Model of Discipleship

- a. We need to recover the role of the different types of small groups as channels of discipleship and spiritual formation and take them to another level of real, authentic community. There should be the added element of intentional emphasis on mutual accountability, “watching over one another in love”, and encouraging one another to live out our lives in personal and social holiness.

- b. The practice of Wesley's Twin Souls and Faith Mentoring (our modern equivalent of Spiritual Friendship, Mentoring and/or Spiritual Guidance) must be looked into seriously and developed in the church. This one-to-one spiritual formation and discipleship process must go hand-in-hand with the development of teaching programmes. It is to nurture not just the person's knowledge of their faith (our evangelical emphasis) but also their inner spiritual life. This would be one of the greatest challenges to put in place because most Christians including leaders have never themselves been part of such a relationship.
- c. We need to recover the place of spiritual disciplines in our spiritual formation and discipleship process. The best place to nurture this would be in small groups, spiritual friendships, faith mentoring, families where there can be mutual accountability and support.

3. Recover the Role of Family in the Discipleship Process

- a. As noted, Wesley himself was a strong proponent of family religion. The church needs to relook at its ministry to families. It should begin to lay again the foundations for building up strong Christian families. Parents (especially those with young children) need to be helped in their own spiritual growth and at the same time taught to nurture their children spiritually through the different stages of their development.
- b. Spiritual instruction should not be left to the church anymore because we are producing a generation of parents who are spiritually disconnected from their children (especially their teens) and who have relinquished their spiritual authority to the Sunday School teachers and youth workers/counselors.
- c. Discipleship of Youths
 - i. We need to ask where we are failing in the discipling of our youths and take a long hard look. One link in the chain of processes is the family.
 - ii. We need to relook at how we 'do youth ministry'. Discipleship has to be worked out in relationships with the youths, not in mere programmes or more programmes.
 - iii. The larger church community needs to come in and embrace the youths as a part of their family as well. Youth ministry should not be the sole

responsibility of a few individuals, i.e. youth counselors/workers, but the corporate responsibility of the parents and the larger family of the church. The church has to stop ignoring the youth and really listen to them. We need to find ways to integrate them into the community life of the church.

- iv. These are difficult times for our youths to grow up in and beyond the family, we need to identify and set aside people with a heart for youths and support them, especially financially, to be trained and equipped to walk as spiritual friends and guides with these youths.
- v. A road map of a systematic teaching program for their spiritual growth and development needs to be developed as well to complement (iv).

4. Relook at Structures for Teaching and Training

- a. How we do our training needs to be relooked at. We have relied heavily on the training of the mind through classroom-style teaching and we know what the outcome of that is. Jesus' model was a hands-on, time-consuming, get-your-hands dirty approach in a small group, or at times on a one-to-one basis. Discipleship cannot just be taught in a classroom setting but must be taken out and experienced in daily living.
- b. There seems to be a 'missing generation' of adults who do not know how to be 'disciplers' of others because they have never experienced being in a relationship with someone who has helped them grow in their spiritual life. We need to think about how we can help this group experience that kind of growth process so that they can then begin to recover their roles as disciplers of others.
- c. At the same time, we do need to plan for the content to teach our people. The church community is made up of a very diverse group of people, varying from age to differences in their spiritual journey. Therefore any road map for discipleship should take into consideration the age and growth phases. One 'size' cannot fit all. The two groups most overlooked are the 'seasoned saints' and the youths.

Concluding Remarks

This paper has raised some key issues which need more careful attention, reflection and hopefully a concerted effort at local church as well as conference level to work out a more integrated and biblical system for discipling our people. If we want the Methodist church today to recover its heritage and become again a movement of people with transformed lives who transform the society in which we live, then this must take serious priority. May we suggest that an effective model for discipleship should include three key components:

- a. *A Right Understanding of Discipleship*
The focus of discipleship is the life of the person following after Jesus, not the programme.
- b. *A Faith Community*
The context of spiritual formation and discipleship is a community of grace with a vision for loving God and holy living.
- c. *A System that Interconnects Structures, Relationships and Practices in Community.* It is not sufficient to have each in place without the others for 'holistic' discipleship.

Most importantly, what unifies the above components and undergirds the journey of discipleship and spiritual formation towards sanctification is the person of the Holy Spirit. Even with everything in place, the power to change and be changed, to walk in that lifelong journey towards becoming like the Master can only come from the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the individual lives of each disciple and the corporate life of the community of faith. To that end, our part is to help one another live out our lives attentive and obedient to the presence of God, faithfully doing all that He has entrusted to us, and we leave the transformation to Him.

We cannot recover in a short time what has been 'watered down' or lost in decades. But we can take the first steps towards recovery and renewal so that we can be a vibrant, holy community of Jesus' followers in the 21st century, real and relevant to both our young people and the society in which we live. May God grant us the humility to do some honest evaluation of the state of our churches and conferences, the wisdom to rethink through what is needed in our own lives and in our church, and a holy boldness to step out and make the difficult and painful, but necessary changes.

Missional church

by Michelle A Vu, Christian Post

More people are talking about going missional. Churches want in on the missional movement. But what is it really and why are some claiming it is the biggest development in Christianity since the Reformation?

The missional movement, in many ways, is a counter force to the traditional way of “doing” church. Rather than being programme-focused, the missional church prides itself on being people-focused.

“Missional is a way of living, not an affiliation or activity,” explains missional leadership specialist Reggie McNeal in his new book, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church*.

We are going to have to figure out how to be the church where people already are.
Reggie McNeal

“To think and to live missionally means seeing all life as a way to be engaged with the mission of God in the world,” he writes.

A person that goes missional does not measure how well they are doing spiritually by how often they attend church, and missional churches don’t judge their spiritual health by how many people fill the pews on Sunday. Instead, missional individuals “think about God and the world” and arrange their whole life - every aspect of their life - around their faith convictions and put their faith into every day actions”.

“This missional understanding of Christianity is undoing Christianity as a religion,” McNeal writes. “These differences are so huge as to make missional and nonmissional expressions of Christianity practically unrecognisable.”

The three major shifts in thinking and behaviour seen in a person or church that goes missional are: from internal to external in terms of ministry focus; from programme development to people development in terms of core activity; and from church-based to kingdom-based in terms of leadership agenda.

“For these (missional) leaders, church has moved from being internally occupied to externally focused, from primarily concentrating on its institutional

maintenance to developing an incarnational influence,” McNeal writes. “These leaders find themselves thinking of kingdom impact more than church growth.”

Those who are part of the missional movement are “serious” about personal development and not just interested in gaining a lot of Scriptural knowledge but not putting it into practice, explains the expert who has helped churches from as large as 10,000 members to as small as 30 become missional.

Some of the activities that missional churches lead include packing food and a prayer journal into backpacks for underprivileged children and starting micro-economic businesses in inner cities.

“Missional church is not about ‘doing church’ better,” McNeal says. “It is not church growth in a new dress ... missional thinking and living change the game completely. The missional renaissance is altering both the character and the expression of the church in the world.”

The missional concept is particularly appealing because it offers an answer to why church membership is declining and how to fix it.

“An industry based on come-and-get-it is not penetrating the culture,” McNeal said to *The Christian Post* in an interview on Tuesday. “We are going to have to figure out how to be the church where people already are as opposed to setting up a separate church domain in our culture and expecting people to identify with it.”

McNeal considers the missional movement still to be in its “early days”, but he highlights its growing popularity noting that a Google search on “missional” will yield over a million hits, and churches and denominations are increasingly claiming the title of missional.

“The missional renaissance reflects the church’s response in a time of a remarkable manifestation of the kingdom,” he writes. “Those who miss it will find themselves on the other side of a divide that renders them irrelevant to the movement of God in the world.”

by Christian Today
www.christiantoday.com.my
Used with Permission.
Copyright © 2009 Christian Today. All rights reserved.
This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Archaeologists discover artefacts from time of Hezekiah

by Daniel Blake

Archaeologists in Israel have discovered a large building dating back to the time of the First and Second Temples and the reign of Hezekiah, King of Judah.

The Israeli Antiquities Authority has been excavating the village of Umm Tuba in southern Jerusalem. The agency said that it had found a building of several rooms arranged around a courtyard. The rooms contained numerous artifacts and pottery from the First and Second Temple Periods. Among the items found were the seals of government officials such as Ahimelekh ben Amadyahu and Yehokhil ben Shahar, both of whom were high up in the government of King Hezekiah.

Hezekiah was the 13th King of Judah. His life is mentioned in the Bible in the books of Kings, Chronicles and Isaiah. In Chronicles it tells of how Hezekiah, together with the prophet Isaiah, prayed to God to save the Kingdom from the invading Assyrians.

The archaeologists also found a Hebrew inscription on a jar neck, dating 600 years after the seals of the Kingdom of Judah. It is believed the building was partly destroyed during the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

The new discoveries, together with other previous finds help paint a picture of the Jewish existence in Jerusalem during the time of the First and Second Temples.

The Palestinian Authority, which wants to control both the Temple Mount and eastern Jerusalem, claims that both Jewish temples never existed.

The Temple Mount is the holiest site among Jews. The First Temple was built there in the 10th century BC by King Solomon, and housed the Ark of the Covenant. However the temple was destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonians.

The Second Temple was built in 515 BC, however this too was destroyed in 70 AD, this time by the Romans.

by Christian Today
www.christiantoday.com.my
Used with Permission.
Copyright © 2009 Christian Today. All rights reserved.
This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Taiwan marks 500th anniversary of John Calvin

by Charles Boyd

Churches in Taiwan are marking the 500th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin, one of the most prominent theologians of the Protestant Reformation.

Across the small island nation seminars, exhibitions and special courses are being held to debate and educate about the life, teachings and legacy of John Calvin.

Last week Taiwan Theological College and Seminary opened an exhibit entitled "Calvin and Taiwan" dealing with the legacy of John Calvin and his impact on churches in Taiwan.

According to Worldwide Faith News, officials at the seminary are hoping the

exhibit will help churches to come to know more about John Calvin.

In the south of Taiwan, one presbytery introduced a three month book club for people interested in knowing more about Calvin's theology. The club is being held from March through to June in one local church and is being sponsored by the Chiayi presbytery and by the Taiwan Theological College.

It has been reported that over 60 people from 20 different churches attended the club in its first session. Many from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan said how they felt it was important to know the basic teachings of Calvin to pass on his legacy.

The success of the book club has led to plans to transform it into a continuing education course at Taiwan Theological College.

John Calvin was born in France in 1509, but spent much of his life in the city of Geneva. His biggest contributions to Protestant theology were the doctrines on Predestination and the Sovereignty of God.

In Geneva itself a number of events are planned to mark the birth of the man who has become inextricably linked with the city.

On Pentecost Sunday a thanksgiving service will be held in the adopted church of Calvin in Geneva's St Pierre's Cathedral. In addition a conference of over 140 international scholars will be held in May, on the influence of Calvin from his birth down to the present day.

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches, based in Geneva, will also be inviting pastors and elders of Presbyterian and Reformed churches to take part in its "Calvin Jubilee Celebration".

Museums in and near the city will also be opening special exhibitions about the life of Calvin, his works and his theology.

by Christian Today

www.christiantoday.com.my

Used with Permission.

Copyright © 2009 Christian Today. All rights reserved.

This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.



The Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand

Middle Earth/New Zealand is the missionary environment for the growing Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand (WMCNZ). Internationally known for its spectacular beauty and material wealth, New Zealand is a spiritually poor country, with one 2006 study suggesting it is the most secular English speaking country in the world.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church is the newest member Church of the World Methodist Council family (2007), and was established in 2000 as an evangelical network of churches in the Methodist tradition and part of the international Wesleyan Church. The WMCNZ is a

multi racial church with Anglo, Maori, Tongan, Fijian, Chinese and Rotoman members and today has grown to 21 Churches with 46 licensed pastors and ordained ministers.

New Zealand Wesleyan Methodists have a youthful profile. Worship at the recent National Church Conference was led by a worship team from East City Wesleyan Church with an average age of 15 years! A one week "Inside|Out" film workshop for young people was held in September with participants learning new resiliency skills and with the prayerful support of mentors. In January the "Ignite" national youth camp will be a large multi-cultural gathering.

National Superintendent Rev. Richard Waugh has just launched his 5 part seminar called Discover Your Wesleyan DNA which was developed from his Doctor of Ministry studies at Asbury Theological Seminary in the United States. The seminar explores key characteristics of the Wesleyan theological tradition including mission, salvation, transformation/holiness, Means of Grace and ministry with the poor. Through the seminar lay leaders and especially younger people are appreciating the benefits of accessing the riches of the John Wesley tradition.

Looking ahead to the new year, Church planting continues as a priority, as well as resourcing and equipping churches for effective children and youth work.

The WMCNZ continues with a variety of ecumenical links as an important expression of living out the catholic spirit of Wesley. In April 2009 the Wesleyan Methodists, Methodists and Nazarenes in New Zealand are supporting the work of the World Methodist Evangelism Institute's Seminar in Auckland with much prayerful preparation. A key new development in August 2009 will be the first annual WMCNZ theological symposium. Dr. Joel Green from Fuller Seminary and Dr. Glen O'Brien from Kingsley/Tabor College in Australia will be special guests with other papers presented by local New Zealand leaders. It is hoped this "Wesleyans Thinking Together" forum will be an annual occasion to foster the blessings of the Wesleyan theological worldview.

For more information and news about the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand see www.wesleyan.org.nz or contact office@wesleyan.org.nz

(From World Methodist Council
First Friday Letter December 2008)

News From Around The World

The Methodist Church in Malaysia
General Conference
(Quadrennium 2009-2012)
Logo Design Competition
Guidelines

What is the Conference theme for the Quadrennium?

**SPREADING SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS,
TRANSFORMING THE NATION.**

Submission Guidelines

- **The logo** - should be a graphic representation of the theme
- **Size** - A5 Size
- **Tips for creating a logo**
 - Make sure your design communicates the Conference theme
 - Use simple shapes and text
 - Do not use photographs
 - Use a distinct color scheme (2-3 colors max)
 - If you are using vector format (Adobe Illustrator), do use very high resolution (3600px by 3600px). This will make sure the logo can be enlarged to huge proportions (signs, banners, etc.)
- **Artwork MUST be original**
 - You are welcome to get ideas from the Internet, but do not use another designer's work.
- **File specifications**
 - Submissions must be one of the following formats: pdf or jpg 300DPI resolution no larger than 2 MB per file.
 - Name your file using your first and last name (e.g. sallychong.pdf). If you submit more than one file, add a number at the end (e.g. sallychong1.pdf, etc.).
- The logo will be used in letterheads, web site, diaries, even on t-shirts, program booklets, banners, and more!
Make sure your logo will work on any background color.

Submission Instructions

The deadline is *Wednesday, April 15th, 2009.*

Submission by Email

Please send an email, using the subject line "Logo Competition Submission", to es@methodistchurch.org.my

1. Name of logo designer(s). If more than one designer, indicate main contact's details.
2. Filename
3. Church name
4. Conference name

If you are submitting more than one logo design, please send a separate email for each entry.

Jury : The GCEC Logo Task Force will decide on the final selection.

Award : The winner will receive RM 500.00.

Notification : May 15th, 2009

NOTE:

- The Winner is requested to provide a Photoshop submission at least 3600px wide/tall with the following requirements:
 - ORIGINAL document with the layers intact
 - If special fonts are used, include the font names in your submission email
- The Winner will be provided with specifics for reproduction mechanics and will be required to sign a release form permitting the winning design to become the property of The Methodist Church in Malaysia.

Trinity Methodist Church Petaling Jaya

Job Vacancy

Applications are invited from Christians for the post of Office Administrator in the General Office of Trinity Methodist Church Petaling Jaya.

Qualifications for the post are as follows:

1. Degree or diploma in accounting or equivalent.
2. Minimum of 5 years work experience in any two of the following areas of work: Administration, Human Resource, Accounting or Property Management
3. A good command of English and Bahasa Malaysia
4. Able to prepare management reports
5. Computer literate and familiar with common computer software
6. Experience in a management role in leading and supervising a team of staff.

Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications and will be in the range of RM 1800 to RM 3150

All applications together with copies of certificates and referrals are to be sent to:

The Chairman,
Staffing Committee,
Trinity Methodist Church Petaling Jaya,
6 Jalan 5/37,
46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

Applications close on: *19 April 2009*



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，吉隆坡蕉赖



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

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

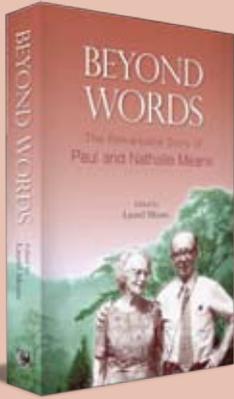
ARMOUR 2009 NEW RELEASE

BEYOND WORDS

The Remarkable Story of Paul and Nathalie Means
EDITED BY LAUREL MEANS



www.armourpublishing.com



This biography of Paul and Nathalie Means is well woven around the many letters which dramatically bring to life their unrelenting work to make *Kunci Pelajaran* (the keys to reading) a reality. Share their struggles and their triumphs. Read about how Paul on his deathbed was still planning their next mission to Malaysia, and how Nathalie fulfils her promise to him.

“This book tells the heart-warming story of two remarkable American Methodist missionaries whose lives deeply blessed individuals, families and whole communities in many parts of Asia, and especially in Southeast Asia. Paul and Natalie Means spent a lifetime letting God use their godly passion and varied skills, particularly their linguistic skills, for the transformation of people and societies through an extensive ministry of teaching, especially among several indigenous peoples.”

Bishop Dr. Robert M. Solomon
Bishop, The Methodist Church in Singapore

PRODUCT DETAILS

Editor	Laurel Means
No. of Pages	376
Book Size	229 by 152mm
ISBN No. (ISBN 13)	978-981-4222-92-1
(ISBN 10)	981-4222-92-5

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laurel Means has a Ph.D. in English and Linguistics from the University of Toronto, Canada. She is Adjunct Professor at a local college, where she teaches Christian Literature, Linguistics, Writing, and Mass Media. She also serves as a worship leader and liturgist at Discovery United Methodist Church, Chanhassen, Minnesota. She has written award-winning fiction and non-fiction books for children and adults, as well as devotional material. She was a research fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies working on Southeast Asian post-colonial literature in 1988-1989, 1993, and 1996.



Laurel currently resides in Chaska, Minnesota, with her husband, Dr. Gordon Paul Means, the eldest child of Paul and Nathalie Means. Gordon Means is a well-known scholar of Southeast Asian, especially Malaysian, politics, with many publications in the field. His forthcoming book (Lynn Reiner Press, March 2009) analyzes political Islam in Southeast Asia.



An Imprint of
ARMOUR Publishing

Cover Price: **\$S25.00** (Singapore/Malaysia)

Prayers For Lent

Into Thy hands, O Lord our God, we commend our souls and bodies this Lent. Draw nigh to us as we draw nigh to Thee, and enlighten us by Thy Holy Spirit. Be present with us in our worship, and abide with us amidst the cares and duties of our daily lives; and draw us after Thee to follow whithersoever Thou wilt lead us in Thy faith and love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O Lord and heavenly Father, Who hast given unto us Thy people the true bread that cometh down from heaven, even Thy Son Jesus Christ: grant that throughout this Lent our souls may so be fed by Him that we may continually live in Him and He in us; and that day by day we may be renewed in spirit by the power of His endless life, Who gave Himself for us, and now liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Frederick B. Macnutt