



THE 48TH LOCAL CHURCH OF THE TAMIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE Tamil Methodist Church Selayang!



President C. Jayaraj officiating, assisted by Central District Superintendent Rev Devadass Ratnam (left) and Rev Justin Clarence (right), Pastor of TMC KL.



The commemoration plaque



Consecration prayer

Selayang is a northern suburb of Kuala Lumpur best known for its wholesale fish markets and is situated just before Templer Park and Rawang. In the vicinity are Batu Caves and the Cave temples which attract hundreds of thousands of Hindu devotees during Thaipusam.

The Selayang Church was the culmination of 20 years of outreach work by the Tamil Methodist Church Kuala Lumpur. Pastors, student pastors and committed layman and women had developed a core of leaders, both young and old, to be the Lord's partners in Selayang. A vibrant and daring group, they had emerged as a community of believers who would be able to mobilise the resources and finances to take charge of their own affairs. That they could function as an autonomous local church became apparent especially when the new church building was acquired.

The Selayang Local Conference of the Tamil Annual Conference was formed on Saturday, 28 March 2009. Outside in the city it was wet, cold with heavy rain and traffic. Inside the spanking newly refurbished building of TMC Selayang there was warmth, an air of joy and merriment yet a solemn sense of God's presence. The Selayang Church members had toiled over the year end to construct by themselves the sanctuary with a beautiful altar area. The sanctuary looked so professionally done and for the occasion was beautifully decorated with flowers and lights. The church members were dressed

to the hilt in their very best and displayed a formidable force of Christian unity and hospitality.

The praise and worship led by the music team of the Selayang Church touched the soul and the heart. The songs were meaningful and uplifting. Truly God was pleased with the worship of His people.

Over 150 members of the church, the mother church, TMC Kuala Lumpur, other Tamil Methodist Churches as well as friends and well-wishers had braved the showers to be at the joyous celebration. Rev C.V. Jayaraj, TAC President, the District Superintendent, Rev Devadass Ratnam, the immediate past TAC President, Rev P. Tevaraji, the Conference Lay Leader, Mr Tharmapal, the Conference Finance Board Chairman and General Conference Secretary, Mr Anthony Row, and various other Central District pastors and lay leaders were present.

To the delight of the Selayang Church members, Mrs Stoner from TMC Kuala Lumpur who with her husband, the late Dr E.A. Stoner, was and continues to be a major benefactor of the Tamil Methodist Church Selayang, was also present despite having just recovered from an illness. For many years the Selayang Outreach Point met on the floor above Dr Stoner's clinic in Selayang. Dr & Mrs Stoner had gone out of their way to refurbish and fit out the floor for the worship and meetings of the Outreach Point. That place now functions

as a parsonage for the Associate Pastor of the Selayang Church.

Rev Justin Clarence led the service. He is the pastor of TMC Kuala Lumpur and concurrently posted to the Selayang Church as pastor, with Rev Reuben Kanagalingam as the Associate Pastor. The message was brought by the TAC President. The District Superintendent and the TAC President officiated the formation of the Local Conference.

A certificate to confirm the local conference status of the new Church was presented to the Church Pastor for safe-keeping. The refurbished building was also consecrated by the TAC President. After the service, a plaque to commemorate the formation of the Selayang Local Conference was unveiled by the TAC President.

A sumptuous dinner was then served and there was a great time of fellowship during and after the dinner.

I guess Mrs Maria Albert, a stalwart of the Selayang Church said it all when she wrote of the challenges facing the new church in her email:

God is working in each of our hearts, and only He can give us the strength to do His desires, reaching souls for Him, helping others see JESUS, and to experience the Biblical truth in our lives ... it is really a great journey and a challenging one.

The First BM Methodist Church in SCAC



Part of the 200 at the ceremony

The ground breaking ceremony of Tudan Methodist Preaching Centre was held on 17 May 2009. Rev Dr Su Chii Ann, President of Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference (SCAC) was invited to officiate this event.

Upon completion, the new church will be the first church in the Tudan settlement area and also the first Bahasa Malaysia speaking Methodist church in SCAC. Over 200 attended this ceremony including Miri District Superintendent, Rev Lau Chu Ee, the Chairman of the Board of Evangelism, Rev Law Hui Seng, Bintulu District Superintendent, Rev Hii Kong Ching, leader of Ministry to Sarawak Indigenous People (MSIP), Rev Wong Kee Sing and many other pastors and church leaders.

The new church is built in an area with over 1,000 families the



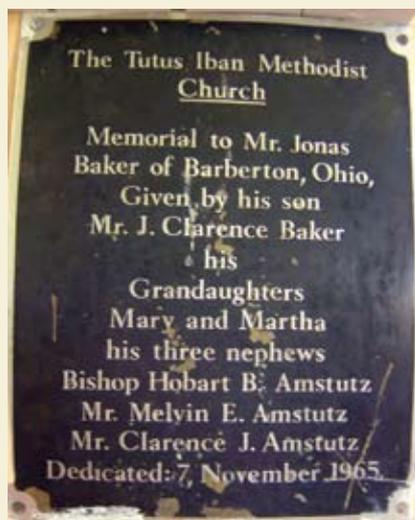
A traditional welcome

majority of whom are the indigenous people. The state government donated the 0.8 acre land for the church two years ago.

On completion the new church building, to be built at a cost of RM 900,000, will have a 400-seat worship hall, a 150-seat fellowship hall, six Sunday school classrooms, two offices, and a parsonage. The construction work is expected to be completed in 9 months.

It was Rev Law Hui Seng, the pastor-in-charge of Grace Methodist Church, Miri, who initiated the preaching centre in 2004. He also volunteered to conduct Bible Study classes and social work among the needy families in the neighbourhood.

William Ketit, Lay Leader
Tudan Preaching Centre



The original plaque of the church



The renovated church

Iban Church Re-Opens After 40 Years

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." More than 40 years after closing down, the Tutus Iban Methodist Church located downstream of Igan River was filled with worshippers again. The heavenly Father has indeed heard the cry of the Iban people and remembered them.

On 21 April, President Su Chii Ann (SCAC) and President Steward Damat (SIAC) together with representatives from the two annual conferences travelled to Tutus and began the worship service at 1:00 pm in the newly renovated church building.

The mission work of the Tutus district was pioneered by missionaries from USA. Tutus Iban Methodist Church was first built in 1965 and dedicated on 7 November 1965. It was funded by the family members of missionary Jonas Baker. It was then a

house full of worshippers but as years went by the church closed down due to a lack of pastors.

In 2007, Guong Sieng Church and Ching Ing Church of Sibu West District (SCAC) went there for their short term missions trip. It was then they heard the cry of the neighbouring seven longhouses that they wished the Chinese churches would come once a month to re-start the worship service.

Tutus District has nine longhouses and 110 families. The total number of residents is about 500 people. Churches from Sibu West District now take turns to conduct worship service there once a month. The average adult attendance is 90-120. Children Sunday school has about 35.

Winnie
Connection
15 May 2009

Contents

Page 4-5	Bishop's Page The Self-Giving Son – Redeeming Us From Pain and Sin
Page 6 & 7	News from around the Conferences
Page 8 - 11	Church and Society, Expanding the Horizons of Social Involvement Papers Presented at the 9th General Conference 2008
Page 12	CFM 8th National Christian Conference Congratulations to Rev Dr Ong Hwai Teik
Page 13	Edinburgh 2010 – Witnessing to Christ Today Tokoh Guru 2009 – Mr Phua Seng Tiong

Correction

In the April-May 2009 issue the front cover photo caption referred to houses built in Myanmar as funded by TRAC churches. The funds were from the Cyclone Nargis Relief Fund set up by the General Conference with contributions from other Conferences of the Methodist Church besides TRAC.

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What is Happening in our Annual Conferences?

July

07-09	Tue-Thu	CAC Mission Camp
10-12	Fri-Sun	SIAC District Lay & Pastors Convention, Kapit
13-16	Mon-Thu	SCAC Board meetings
14-17	Tue-Fri	PADERI Conference
15-17	Wed-Fri	SCAC Board of Evangelism – Long House Ministry Forum
21-25	Tue-Sat	SCAC Board of Laity – ILI National Conference

August

07-09	Fri-Sun	TRAC Spiritual Formation & Leadership Weekend 2 - Penang
13-15	Thu-Sat	General Conference Executive Committee
22-24	Sat-Mon	TAC Methodist Women Conference CAC Methodist Women Conference
22-26	Sat-Wed	TRAC Methodist Women Conference
24-26	Mon-Wed	CAC Senior Citizens Retreat
25-27	Tue-Thu	SCAC Board of Family Wellness & Counselling - Marriage Enrichment Retreat
27-29	Thu-Sat	SCAC Board of Evangelism - Bahasa Malaysia Ministry Camp
29-31	Sat-Mon	TRAC Young Adults Consultation SIAC District Lay & Pastors Convention, Sibul
25-31	Tue-Mon	TAC Week of Prayer and Self-Denial

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The Self-Giving Son — Redeeming Us From Pain and Sin

In the previous article we looked at the theme of 'The Waiting Father,' the one who meets our deepest yearning for love. We turn our attention now to the Second Person of the Trinity, 'The Self-Giving Son.'

Perhaps the most difficult problem in philosophy is that of evil and suffering! We are all familiar with the cry of the Jesus on the cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' But that is not the cry of Jesus alone but of countless men and women down the ages! Why is there suffering and pain? Why are innocent people dying from poverty, hunger and disease? Why are hundreds of thousands and millions still being killed in senseless wars today? Why do cancer and accidents most unexpectedly take away a husband or wife or a parent, leaving us with unexplainable loss and in excruciating pain?

One of the most famous Cambridge philosophers of the 20th century, Anthony Flew, actually turned the problem of pain into an argument against the very existence of God! If there is God how could he possibly allow evil to exist? The fact that evil exists shows that there can be no God! (Interestingly, Anthony Flew, after a lifetime as an atheist has finally come to believe in the existence of God in his 80s, even though he is still not a Christian!)

Anyone who has tried to answer the question of pain and evil will know that there is no ultimately satisfactory answer—at least not logically! In the end we are still left with the question of why did God not create a world which is like heaven, where we can enjoy all His goodness and bliss without any accompanying pain?

The answers given by some of the great religions of the world also fall short at this point. Hinduism and Buddhism point in the

same direction. This world is not ultimately permanent or real. Everything, including evil and pain, is therefore impermanent and only in the mind! Once we realise this, pain and suffering need not be taken seriously. Some religious teachings take a different approach. They encourage a fatalistic submission to God, even when you suffer. God is all powerful and sovereign. You cannot question his wisdom and power.

The Christian answer however goes beyond these. We have no philosophical answer, but an existential one! We recognise that there are things about God and creation that we do not understand, and which we cannot answer in a logically fully satisfactory manner. Nevertheless, the Christian message tells us of a God who came as a human, shared our sorrows and pains, and eventually died in a most cruel manner to redeem us from suffering, pain and evil! And, when at moments in life, we have nothing left but to cry out 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' we know that this God had gone through that also. Thus at the very least we know that there is a God who knows and shares our pain. He understands—He had been there before!

No other religious faith has a similar answer! None speaks with the same existential power when it comes to addressing the problem of suffering. We will now explore this further.

God created a world that was good and beautiful. But Genesis 3 tells us that sin had entered our world through human disobedience. With sin had come guilt, shame and fear. Thus when God came, Adam and Eve 'hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the tress of the garden' (3: 8). Our relationship with God has become broken. This spiritual problem is what lies at the heart of our human predicament. Sin

gave rise to a broken and messed up world in which evil, pain and suffering abounds. How can humans find their way back to God and to peace and joy?

The Bible's answer can be found in the prophet Isaiah's description of Jesus: 'He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that brought us peace, and by his wounds we are healed' (Isa 53: 5). What do these words mean? What happened on Good Friday? Why the cross?

The New Testament uses a number of metaphors to explain the meaning of what Jesus did for us on the cross. We will look at three of the most important. First, the Bible speaks of our 'justification.' 'For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ' (Rom 3: 23f). Justification is a legal term. To be justified does not mean that you have been made a better person. You are simply declared guiltless or righteous in the eyes of God. It is like paying a traffic fine. Paying the fine does not make you a better driver. It only declares you righteous before the law because the penalty has been paid.

Paul tells us that on the cross, Jesus died 'as a propitiation by his blood' (Rom 3: 25). God's holy anger or wrath is directed against all evil (Rom 1: 18). Our sin has incurred upon ourselves His wrath and we deserve the punishment that is due. There is a moral law of the universe. But Jesus died as a 'propitiation' for us, meaning that through his death he paid our penalty and thereby took away God's wrath from us by absorbing it on Himself. This justifies us before God, that is, declares us as righteous in His eyes. The penalty for sin has been paid! That is the meaning of His cry as He died on the cross,

‘It is finished’ (John 19: 30)!

The great truth of the gospel is that we receive justification ‘as a gift ...by faith’ (Rom 3: 24f). There is nothing we can do to earn our justification, our salvation. The trouble is that many never really understand this. The question is: Do you and I truly grasp this? Do we really know that salvation is by grace and not by works?

The psychiatrist and pastor, John White, tells of one patient he once had who had sunk deep into depression from which nothing, not even antipsychotic drugs and electric shock, could help him. He had been in hospital for weeks. John White then found out that the man was weighed down by a huge burden of guilt. Though he was a Christian and knew in theory that God forgives us because Christ had died for us, in practice he did not believe himself to be forgiven. The reason he gave was that ‘But I’m too bad for that ...I don’t deserve to be forgiven.’

John White goes on to tell of his own anger rising as he responded to the patient: ‘You are darn right you don’t! ... And who d’you think you are to say Christ’s death was not good enough for you? Who are you to feel that you must add your miserable pittance to the great gift that God offers you? Is his sacrifice not good enough for the likes of you?’

As doctor and patient stared in silence at each other, suddenly there was breakthrough as the patient broke down and wept and prayed. ‘God, I didn’t know. I’m real sorry ... I didn’t mean to offend you ... God, thank you ... It’s amazing ... I didn’t know it worked like that ... Thank you. Thanks an awful lot ... God, thank you.’ Within a week he was out of the hospital, completely well!

The second metaphor that the Bible uses is ‘ransom.’ This is the language of the slave market in the Greco-Roman world, whereby slaves can be redeemed by paying a price. In speaking about his death, Jesus said, ‘For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many’ (Mk 10:45). Our rebellion against God not only brought guilt, shame and fear. It

also enslaved us to sin, Satan and death. In dying for us, Christ paid our penalty. We are thereby redeemed. The metaphor is meant to emphasise that it cost Christ something—in fact it cost Him a lot, His very life!

Living in the modern world, we tend to forget that Christ died through one of the vilest and most cruel form of capital punishment ever invented. It was also the most despised in Roman times! Although the cross is often used as an ornament today, it was never used as an art form in the first three hundred years. Only after Constantine made Christianity the religion of the empire, was the cross used as such. Why? Because in Roman times it was the symbol of greatest shame!

That is why Paul reminds the Corinthians: ‘You are not your own. You were bought with a price’ (1 Cor 6:20). Each time we go for the Communion we are reminded of the same: ‘The Body of Christ broken for you. The blood of Christ shed for you.’ The early Christians understood this very well. Because Christ gave Himself for them, they gave themselves to others. Thus, for example, in moments of epidemics in the ancient world, when hundreds of thousands were sometimes wiped out in one go, we have records of Christians giving themselves to nurse patients at the risk of their own lives. Many, including pastors and church leaders died as a result. But the amazing thing was that the church continued to grow until Rome became Christian too!

The third metaphor that the Bible uses is ‘victory.’ In speaking about his impending death, Jesus refers to his death also as the moment when the sinful world will be judged and Satan, the prince of this world, will be defeated (John 12: 31). Elsewhere in the Bible, John asserts that ‘The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work’ (1 John 3:8). The logic of this is simple. Our disobedience and guilt enslaved us to sin and its power. Through the cross Jesus paid the penalty for our sin, and thereby gave us victory over sin, Satan and death!

In the last one hundred years, the gospel had made tremendous headway in all parts of the

non-western world. One crucial element in the rapid advance of the gospel in all these places is the ministry of healing from illnesses and deliverance from demonic powers. It is the victory that Christ won for us on the cross that has made all these possible.

This is something that we need to appropriate and celebrate so that more and more people can be liberated from sickness and the fear and power of Satan! But the church must go beyond this to work towards establishing the victory of Christ over all that is evil and sinful in the world. We can do this through good works and social outreach of every kind to the poor and needy around us. We also do this when we seek through various forms of political involvements to bring about social righteousness and justice and good government in our nation. For in the Lord’s Prayer, we pray, ‘Your Kingdom come! Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven!’

Earlier in this article I suggested that the Christian message of Christ’s dying for us on the cross gives us an answer to the problem of evil and suffering which no other religion gives. I had suggested that at the very least we know that there is a God who knows our pain. He understands because we know that He had been there before!

But if the three metaphors used in the Bible to describe the cross is correct, then the Christian message goes even further than that. It tells us that God not only understands and shares our pain and suffering. It tells us that it is through this pain and suffering endured by Christ on the cross that God seeks to redeem us from our pain and suffering. On the cross he reversed the curse of sin which we brought upon ourselves through our disobedience, and redeemed us from sin and its power. Set free from the bondage to sin, Satan and death, we are called to give ourselves to serve Christ and our fellow human beings, just as Christ gave Himself for us. And as we co-labour with Christ in His work of redeeming this world from suffering and sin, we have the assurance that comes from Christ Himself: ‘In the world you will have tribulation. But have no fear, I have overcome the world’ (John 16: 33).



The side view of the chapel.



President Su cutting the ribbon.

Opening Ceremony of Methodist Grace Memorial Park

Located at the 10th mile Oya Road, Sibü, the first phase of the new Methodist Cemetery has been completed. The opening ceremony was held on 28 April 2009. The President of SCAC, Rev Dr Su Chii Ann, in his sermon said that he has high hopes for the Memorial Park. He wished to see the Park taken good care of and even be seen as one of the best memorial parks in Malaysia.

“The Grace Memorial Park is a serene place. It is a place for us to reflect on our

temporary life here on earth and to think of the goodness of the Lord.” Rev Su added, “When we come to the Park, we can think of our loved ones as well as our best friend, Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus has promised that one day He will come and bring us back to His Father’s house, and we can be with Him for eternity. The only way to heaven is to believe in Jesus Christ.”

The Grace Memorial Park has three phases. The first phase includes a chapel with 150 seating capacity, a resting room, toilets, a

big storage room, a parking lot, 2 hostels, and 176 double tombs. The whole park and the cemetery is eco-friendly, using rain water to do washing and cleaning except drinking water is from the water pipe. The second phase will have more tombs and a mini lake-garden. Once the three phases are completed, there will be 4,000 tombs available.

Winnie
Connection
15 May 2009

SIAC Pastors’ School 2009



Bishop Hwa Yung (r) preaching with Rev. Bonnie Sedau translating.



Praying for all the pastors and church leaders.

The Sarawak Iban Annual Conference (SIAC) held its annual pastors’ school from 16-19 April 2009 at the Iban Centre, Sibü. A total of 55 pastors attended this event. The main theme speaker was Bishop Hwa Yung. Another speaker was Dr Deborah Chan, the Prayer Coordinator of the General Conference.

A Prayer Corner in Every Longhouse

Dr Chan in her talk encouraged all pastors who attended the conference to pray. “Without prayer there will be no power and no fruits. Churches need to wait upon the Lord and at the same time, be obedient to the instructions from the Lord through prayer.” She added, “Church leaders and pastors need to learn how to listen to the word of God and receive visions from it.”

Dr Chan is happy to see that the prayer movement is moving within all the annual conferences. What she desires to see is

that all homes become praying centres and all young and old alike may experience spiritual growth. She also suggested that there should be a fixed time and place for prayer in every longhouse. It should be done once a week. This fixed prayer time will act as a guiding light leading the people to the truth.

Not a Job but a Calling

Bishop Hwa Yung reminded everyone that being a pastor is not just a job. It is a calling from God. “A lot of times, we come to the bottle neck of our ministries and feel that we have nowhere to turn. In fact, if we try to see the situation from another perspective, we will be able to come out from the mist and confusion.”

The Bishop wanted all pastors to upgrade themselves constantly. “We should not be satisfied with our present condition. We should aim higher in our spiritual life.”

The Bishop admitted there was news about pastors who have led an immoral life. This is sad but it is the truth and we have to admit it.

In the light of this, Bishop Hwa Yung called upon all pastors to examine their lives all the time because God calls his servants to love the people and be examples in living a holy life. We should ask ourselves: “Can I be an example for the new pastor to learn from? Do I have enough faith in my ministry?”

At the end, Bishop Hwa Yung emphasized the fact that as pastors we have to do all things in order to glorify the name of the Lord. If we disobey God, we will not be able to glorify Him.

Winnie
Connection
15 May 2009



The MYF of the Chinese Annual Conference had their National Methodist Youth Ministry and Leadership Camp from 21 – 22 March 2009. Among the 87 participants were 14 from the Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference and four from the Sabah Provisional Annual Conference. Editor

全马卫理青年事工交流会 兼青年领袖营

文：林娟

马来西亚基督教卫理公会华人年议会青年团契于2009年3月21日至22日假云顶平安苑 (Peace Heaven) 举办全马卫理青年事工交流会兼青年领袖营。此交流会兼领袖营成功召集了87位全马各地的青年领袖共商讨主圣工，其中69位来自华人年议会，14位来自砂拉越年议会，以及4位来自沙巴临时年议会。出席交流会的牧者有华人年议会青团指导陈志豪牧师、曼绒教区青团指导华维忠牧师、砂拉越年议会青团指导邱智祥牧师及黄春艳牧师，以及沙巴临时年议会青团指导谢世兴牧师。

交流会为期两天，分3个阶段进行，即事工交流、计划未来及成果分享。青年领袖们按着事奉的岗位进行分组讨论，以便能有深入探讨及交流。砂、沙青年领袖事工经验之谈让华人年议会的青年领袖获益不浅。3个年议会青年团在交流会中也达致共识，将持续轮流举办类似的卫理青年领袖交流会，以促进全马卫理青年领袖之间的联系，并共享资源。

交流会的第二天适逢主日，大会安排砂拉越年议会青年团指导邱智祥牧师在主日崇拜中

证道。他勉励青年领袖在事奉的道路上应学习摩西的4颗“心”，即谦卑的心、宽阔的心、真诚的心以及坚忍的心。

这次的交流会将华人年议会青年团推向另一个新里程，也促进了东、西马两地的年议会青年团在青年事工上的紧密交流。愿卫理青年团契继续作盐作光，为主赢得更多的青年人。

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:

Mr Anthony Row from TAC is the Conference Secretary of the Methodist Church in Malaysia. Rev Dr Hermen Shastri is a member of TRAC and serves as the General Secretary of the Council of Churches Malaysia.

CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Expanding The Horizons Of Social Involvement

Mr Anthony Row & Rev Dr Hermen Shastri

INTRODUCTION

Due to the brevity of time, we have structured our paper in three parts. The first builds the case that social action lies at the root of the Methodist movement and the history of the mission of the Methodist church in our country offers many examples of social action among the poor, and participation in the quest for social justice in the national context.

The second part surveys some of the engaging work that Methodist churches are involved in the country. This is done to show that creative society ventures are positioning the churches to raise critical questions about the nature of its social involvement.

The third part attempts to make some recommendations as to how we can build a cohesive social agenda for reform in our nation.

I. OUR HERITAGE

The Methodist way of “being church” has from its inception involved both evangelism and social action. That is how the Wesley brothers led and guided the Methodist movement. It is important to note that in the minutes of the First Annual Conference that John Wesley instituted, he had a series of questions and answers prepared, to which his preachers had to give their assent. One of these speaks about how Wesley conceived the Methodist movement.

“Question: What can we reasonably believe to have been the plan of God in raising up preachers called Methodists?”

Answer: Not to form a new sect, but to reform the nation and especially the church, and to spread scriptural holiness throughout the nation”.¹

It is clear from this that the task of spreading scriptural holiness also entailed the task of reforming the nation. The Gospel has to be spoken and lived. Wesley observed that men and women who are made “new” in Christ by the love and grace of God are able to change the rules and the quality of relationships transforming even social structures. Concentrating mission among the poor and the downtrodden, Wesley was able to advocate social reforms to uplift the people. The strength of early Methodism was precisely its burning desire to seek out and minister to the underclass of eighteenth century Britain.

John Wesley’s ingenious organization of societies provided the space for the unchurched to find salvation and live a life of holiness. This participatory self-help approach invariably empowered the poor to spiritually and physically uplift themselves by exercising self-discipline, temperate living and doing good works through cooperative action for the good of all.

It is not surprising, therefore, that remaining true to our social motivation, our Methodist Discipline puts the Social Creed right after the Articles of Religion and the General Rules. The opening paragraph of the Creed echoes the Methodist social imperative to work for social transformation of societies based on Gospel values, and the promotion of human rights.²

Methodist mission in our country clearly shows that the early missionaries, along with local leaders, reached out to the poor and needy. They established social institutions to sustain their welfare work. Seeking opportunities to provide education for the poor, the Methodist

church established schools throughout the country. Contact with indigenous people saw the establishment of special literacy schools, hostels and roving clinics. Community development projects were also instituted to mobilize the poor to participate in their own social and economic development. Methodists were active among the poor in Chinese new villages and in plantations among the Indians, preaching the Gospel and addressing their social needs.³

On the national level we have had numerous Methodist lay men and women who were involved in politics and non-government organizations in order to pursue a reform agenda in favour of the poor, the disabled and the marginalised.

All these go to show that we have inherited a rich historical legacy of social engagement. To a very large extent, the growth of our church in our country comes from winning converts from our schools, our hostels, our hospitals, our community projects and our welfare homes.

II. PRESENT DAY CHALLENGES

Inspired by our past, we need to ask ourselves, what role and responsibility does the church have in our nation today? We need to take cognizance that in the past fifty years, our nation has transformed into a modern, economically and technologically developed society. This has brought new challenges.

A social analysis of our society shows that not all is well with our national development. Due to unbalanced economic growth, the gap between the rich and poor is wide. The prospect of different ethnic and religious communities

It is clear from this that the task of spreading scriptural holiness also entailed the task of reforming the nation. The Gospel has to be spoken and lived. Wesley observed that men and women who are made "new" in Christ by the love and grace of God are able to change the rules and the quality of relationships transforming even social structures. Concentrating mission among the poor and the downtrodden, Wesley was able to advocate social reforms to uplift the people. The strength of early Methodism was precisely its burning desire to seek out and minister to the underclass of eighteenth century Britain.

living side by side in peace is aggravated by a growing polarisation among races. Corruption is to be found in high places. The Rural-Urban drift is creating substantial pockets of urban poor. Our environment is being affected by uneven development. A host of social ills have plagued the youth by the breakdown of spiritual and social values in an increasingly consumerist society.

Our churches have tried to respond to the many social challenges by engaging in ministries that target the poor, the disabled and the marginalised.

Our churches have been following the worrying trends of social and economic deterioration very closely, and feel that the time has come to join other concerned citizens to voice our concerns, and to engage in social reform to address some of the issues.

We shall now list a number of examples, though not exhaustive, to show some proactive initiatives undertaken by our churches.

(a) Safeguarding civil liberties

A spate of controversial events and court judgements has captured national headlines and has heightened the awareness that civil society must do something to arrest these negative trends.

The first issue that comes to mind is regarding religious freedom, as guaranteed under Article Eleven of our Federal Constitution. Incidences of the demolition of places of worship, the non-issuance of building permits, the issue of conversions and the restrictions imposed on the use of the word Allah, have exacerbated inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations.

There is an erosion of public confidence in the administration of justice by the Executive, the Courts and the Police force.

Other civil liberties like the freedom of expression, assembly and association have also been greatly curtailed by the constant threat of the government to suppress legitimate concerns raised by concerned citizens.

The churches have come to realise that one way to handle such issues is to build strategic

alliances in order to advance our concerns by force of numbers. The churches have decided to act at four levels: ecumenically through the Christian Federation of Malaysia; inter-religiously through the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism; by supporting churches that have decided to take the causes through the courts; and by joining civil groups and NGOs in advocacy efforts.

Surely the dismay of the forty-five per cent of the non-Muslim population at the current state of affairs in the country was expressed most radically at the recent 12th General Elections. The results of the election have ushered in a new political landscape in the country.

As we continue to face many more issues that curtail our rights, the churches should exhaust all avenues to state their position on issues that directly affect the moral health of the nation. They will also have to work with the wider community to call for reforms where necessary.

(b) Islamization of State and Society.

The process of Islamization, that began in the seventies and took greater significance in the eighties, saw the growing influence of Islamic laws, values and practices that were accorded greater emphasis in the state and nation. At the same time, Islamization was used by politicians to assert Malay identity and dominance.

This process has resulted in the emergence of an authoritative elite of politicians backed by theologians (ulama) who have insisted that their interpretation of Islam is the only correct and legitimate one. What has emerged is an Islam that is conservative, orthodox and doctrinaire. As there has been no space created for Christian and Muslims to engage in sincere and frank dialogue, many issues go unresolved.

Although there are groups like INSAF and the Malaysian Interfaith Network (MIN) that try to fill this gap, their efforts are not able to provide the breakthrough that is anticipated.

The churches need to find or create an appropriate platform for genuine Christian-Muslim dialogue. Unless friendship and trust is built up between the two religious communities, there can be no other optimistic avenues for

better Christian and Muslim relations for the future. We need to exhaust opportunities for the dialogue of common action and theological exchange, where as citizens we strive to live in an open society based on democratic principles and where there are collaborative efforts for social development for the good of all.

III. SPECIFIC SOCIAL SERVICES FOR THE UPLIFTMENT OF DISADVANTAGED GROUPS.

(a) In the many discussions we have had with those involved in ministries with disadvantaged groups, the one point that keeps recurring is that the ministries be more comprehensive to include welfare services, empowerment and advocacy.

Our churches in both rural and urban areas have sought out mission opportunities where they have come into contact with the rural and urban poor, the disabled and the elderly.

Although over the past thirty years Malaysia has been successful in reducing poverty through effective intervention programmes, reducing the incidence of hardcore poverty from 3.9% to 1.4, it does not tell the whole story. The truth of the matter is that relative poverty between rural and urban areas has grown substantially.

The Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3) which was tabled in Parliament by the Prime Minister, recognizes pockets of poverty groups among disadvantaged groups such as the Orang Asli community of West Malaysia and other indigenous minorities in Sabah and Sarawak.

What is significant in OPP3 is the recognition of urban poverty. The increase in urban population has resulted in this phenomenon - the expansion of squatter settlements and the emergence of relative poverty among the vulnerable groups seeking a living in an urban jungle.⁴

In rural poverty, people might not see money so easily but nonetheless while they are living there, there is land and a supportive community to work together to engage in some form of economic activity to sustain

themselves. These factors provide the rural community with emotional and social support in a cohesive community.

But this is not the case with urban poverty. The urban dweller has to pay hard cash for anything and everything he touches and his income disparity with his neighbour is a glaring daily experience. Hunger, poverty, crime, gangs, drugs, violence, human trafficking etc. have their roots in people coming to terms with urban poverty.

Related to this is the plight of the disabled and the elderly. Living in urban environments, they lack a supportive community and the financial means to seek a decent living.⁵

We have come into contact with a number of churches involved in urban ministries among disadvantaged groups in squatter dwellings, orphanages, single-mothers homes, homes for the disabled and elderly.

In all of the above a crucial service of welfare is being provided in order to provide the inmates with a spiritually and physically conducive environment.

We wish to highlight two examples, where the specific ministries of the churches have helped to expand the horizon of care to include empowerment and advocacy.

The Chinese Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Malaysia started a caring ministry to the disabled, named "*Beautiful Gate - A Methodist Ministry for the Disabled*", to provide counseling service, in 1993. By 1995 they had expanded their services to provide food, accommodation and training. Subsequently, other centers were set up in Kepong, Kampar, Seremban, Melaka and Klang.

From a welfare service, the work grew to a level of advocacy for the enhancement of the quality of life of people with disabilities and to assist in their total integration into mainstream society. A Foundation was established in 2003, and now Beautiful Gate ministries receive attention and support from a host of benefactors.

At this stage of their expanding Ministry, Rev Sia Siew Chin has asserted; "*Ministry for the disabled community is not only limited to empowering them individually, but it also consists of fighting for social justice and basic rights of disabled persons. Hence, it will be more effective if it is a collaborative effort with other churches and civil groups?*"⁶

In a similar vein is the experience of another Disabled Ministry in Ipoh. The Persatuan

Daybreak is the social concerns arm of the Canning Garden Methodist Church, Ipoh. It was set up in 1992 to provide skills training and job opportunities for the disabled, so that they might be empowered to live meaningful lives and be integrated with mainstream society.

By 2000, the Daybreak Ministry had grown to include a factory-size workshop (18,000 sq.ft.) that allows the disabled to learn trade and to benefit from the products they sell.

Here again the ministry grew to include aspects of empowerment and advocacy for the rights of the disabled. This has attracted the attention of a wider community to their financial and social support.

There are many examples from many other churches throughout the country. Highlighting these two is just to underscore our case that social ministry may begin with welfare work. But for it to be effective it must move to empowerment (living a dignified life) and advocacy (reclaiming their human rights).

(b) Another interesting ministry that has arisen in some churches is associated with migrants. In Malaysia, there are about 2.1 million migrants registered as general workers from about 10 countries.

The main sending countries are: Indonesia (60%), Nepal (10%), India (5%), Myanmar (5%), Vietnam (5%), Bangladesh and others. It is also estimated that we have about the same number of illegal migrants, mostly registered as refugees with the UNHCR.

The Migrant Ministry Klang (MMK) began in 2001 in Klang where an individual, Andrew Ng, from the Chinese Methodist Church took a personal interest in reaching out to migrants. An interesting aspect of the development of the work is that it created an ecumenical network of seventeen churches assisting in the ministry.

An offshoot of this work is the Outreach to Foreigners (O2F), which seeks to network nationally with others in similar ministries. The O2F now works closely with the UNHCR representatives in Kuala Lumpur by assisting with field work.

Andrew feels it is important to see social work with vulnerable groups in society with the eyes of Jesus. "*They should be treated with dignity, and feel empowered to do something in their lives predicaments,*" he emphasised.⁷ Advocacy has helped O2F to move beyond service to the core issues that have to do with the denial of basic human rights.

(c) Our discussion will not be complete without taking into account our work among the Orang Asli.

The Methodist church has an intimate contact with the Semai and Temiar tribes situated in the state of Perak through missionary work that began in the 1930's.⁸ Since then the congregations have grown along with their local leadership. Today it functions as a Mission Conference. Someday in the near future, it is hoped that it will become a full fledged Annual Conference.

In discussions with the Orang Asli pastors, they have emphasised three priority areas for the development of their people.⁹ Safeguarding their land in order to sustain their small communities is their top priority. Second, the protection of their culture. And third, to have greater direct access and to benefit from allocations from State and government for their development.

As a small minority in Peninsular Malaysia, they have also stressed the need to make a larger configuration of indigenous people by establishing closer relationships with counterparts in Sarawak and Sabah.

They are appreciative of the continued financial support for their work from the different conferences of the Methodist Church.

IV. MISSION SCHOOLS

Our Methodist Mission schools have contributed enormously to the growth and development of our country for the last 150 years. Yet, policy changes within the Ministry of Education in the last 30 years have deregulated the status and influence of mission schools, which has resulted in the erosion of the Christian ethos of our schools.

Debate over the current status of mission schools and its viability takes two tracks. There are those who say there is nothing much we can do to salvage the status of our schools as long as the Ministry of Education determines the policy. On the other hand, there are others who advocate that we should engage the Ministry officials to reclaim our Christian status and inspire our people to be more involved in the life of schools by participating in the Board of Governors or the Parent-Teacher Association. Whatever be the case, the legacy of Methodist involvement in the field of education should not be last.

Notwithstanding our continual efforts under the platform of the Malayan Christian Schools' Council and its counterparts in Sarawak and Sabah, to demand more control in policy matters in our mission schools, the Methodists

have launched rigorous efforts in the field of private schools. The Wesley School and the Methodist College, along with Methodist Pilley Institute in Sarawak, have done well in establishing themselves as educational institutions of demand.

We feel such efforts should be multiplied, and more avenues sought to convert and use available property to establish private education.

V. CONCLUSION

In our paper we have been able to show that the Methodist churches have at different times and places engaged in social work. Most of the work has been in response to social needs in rural communities and in urban centers.

The Boards of Social Concerns in the various Annual Conferences play only the role of networking between churches and acts on matters when requested.

In dealing with issues of national policy and governance, the Methodist Church has worked in ecumenical collaboration with other bodies

like The Christian Federation of Malaysia, The Council of Churches of Malaysia and Malaysian Care.

Two general patterns of social involvement of the churches have been the establishment of center-based social service and collaborating with civil society to enlarge the scope of the work and for greater social visibility.

In view of the rapid development of Malaysia, social pressures will mount as the nation grapples with the negative consequences of economic change and modernization.

The Church in the 21st century must be poised to take on more social challenges in a contemporary way.

It may be about time to reactivate and develop the Council of Social Concerns with the mandate to oversee and direct the social work of the churches in a comprehensive manner. There should be a Director with support staff so that research, training and mobilization of funds could be conducted in a more coordinated way. The Council should be

renamed the Council for Social Justice.

There are other different churches out in the field who are also engaged in social services. It may be strategic to work collaboratively and ecumenically so that a single local congregation need not bear the strain of such work by itself.

There are many other marginalised groups in society that need urgent attention. Malaysian Care has built up a network of ministries that target the most vulnerable in our society. Local churches should be encouraged to motivate their members to be involved in some of these social work efforts.

In conclusion we want to say, a whole church is a church that seeks to put into practice:

The Divine Commission Matt. 28:19-20

The Divine Commandment Matt. 22: 37-40

The Divine Example Matt. 25:24-40

End Notes

¹Stephen Gunter, ed. *The Quotable Mr. Wesley*. Atlanta: Candler School of Theology, 1999, P.25. (Original from Thomas Jackson, *Works of Wesley*, Vol VIII. p 299-300)

²“The interest of the Methodist Church in social welfare springs from the Gospel, and from the labors of John Wesley, who ministered to the physical, intellectual and social needs of the people to whom he preached the Gospel of personal redemption.” **The Social Creed (Part III)**. *The Methodist Discipline*. Petaling Jaya: The Methodist Church, 2004, p.28

³Cf. Theodore Doraisamy, *The March of Methodism*. Singapore: The Methodist Bookroom, 1982

⁴Urban is defined as gazetted areas with a population of 10,000 people and more (2001 census) The proportion of urban population is expected to increase to 63.8 percent of total population in 2010. The Malaysian government defines poverty as

lack of monetary ability to procure basic needs. But NGO’s are calling for a more holistic measurement of poverty, which takes the multidimensional nature of urban poverty.

⁵According to the Malaysian Census, in 2007, some 1.8 million (7%) Malaysians are aged 60 or over, and this figure is projected to rise to 3.6 million (11%) in 2020. Cf. the Sunday Star, 6 July 2008, Focus, p.6

⁶Based on an interview with Rev Sia Siew Chin.

⁷Based on an interview with Andrew Ng.

⁸Cf. Paul and Nathalie Means, *And the Seed Grew*. Kuala Lumpur: Council of Missions, 1981.

⁹Based on interviews conducted with Rev Bah Uda and Rev Bah Saha.

✠90. Our Social Creed

We believe in God, Creator of the World; and in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of creation. We believe in the Holy Spirit, through whom we acknowledge God’s gifts, and we repent of our sins in misusing these gifts to idolatrous ends.

We affirm the natural world as God’s handiwork and dedicate ourselves to its preservation, enhancement, and faithful use by humankind.

We joyfully receive for ourselves and others the blessings of community, sexuality, marriage, and the family.

We commit ourselves to the rights of men, women, children, youth, young adults, the seniors, and people with disabilities; to improvement of the quality of life; and to the rights and dignity of all persons.

We believe in the right and duty of persons to work for the glory of God and the good of themselves and others and in the protection of their welfare in so doing; in the rights to property as a trust from God, collective bargaining, and responsible consumption; and in the elimination of economic and social distress.

We dedicate ourselves to peace throughout the world, to the rule of justice and law among nations, and to individual freedom for all people of the world.

We believe in the present and final triumph of God’s Word in human affairs and gladly accept our commission to manifest the life of the gospel in the world. Amen.



Christian Federation of Malaysia

8th National Christian Conference

27 – 28 April 2009

The 8th National Christian Conference was held in conjunction with CFM's Biennial General Meeting. The Christian Federation comprises the Council of Churches Malaysia (CCM), the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) and the Roman Catholic Church.

At the BGM it was announced the formation of a CFM research think tank which is headed by Elder Tan Kong Beng who is also the new Executive Secretary cum Research Officer, taking over from Rev Dr Hermen Shastri, the past Executive Secretary of CFM.

A new Executive Council was also elected. One change to the new Council was an additional Vice-Chairman seat which was to be taken by a person from either Sabah or Sarawak. Bishop Julius Gitom of Sabah was elected to this seat. The main office bearers elected for a two-year term were:

Chairman:	Bishop Ng Moon Hing
Vice-Chairman:	Bishop Julius Gitom Elder Kong Yeng Phooi Rev Dr Thomas Philips
Hon. Secretary	Rev Eu Hong Seng
Hon. Treasurer	Mr Anthony Row

An assistant Secretary and Treasurer including seven committee members representing the three components of CFM were also elected into the new Executive Council.

The NCC discussed many issues concerning the Church in relation to the State, both in Peninsular Malaysia and in Sabah and Sarawak. These ranged from the Constitutional provisions that safeguard religious rights to a better understanding Islam in our country to the engagement with civil society and the Government. In these discussions the specific situations in Sabah and Sarawak were considered besides that in Peninsular Malaysia.

However, in view of these important issues facing the Church in Malaysia, it was recognized that the churches on the ground and the Christian public at large need to be educated and strengthened in their understanding and position in our society. The need to prepare the coming generation of youths and young adults for leadership as well as a theology of social engagement were seen to be crucial for the Church to act on.

From the discussions in the plenary sessions small groups met to look at more specific areas and issues. These groups forwarded proposals and resolutions that were presented for the new Executive Council to implement through programmes and actions that would best meet these resolutions.



Rev Dr Ong Hwai Teik, D. Min.

Rev Ong Hwai Teik, President of the Trinity Annual Conference, received the Doctor of Ministry from Asbury Theological Seminary, USA in May this year. His part-time studies was under the Beeson International Leaders Scholarship.

His dissertation is entitled: "Personal Well Being: Issues vital to longevity and faithfulness in the

pastoral ministry in TRAC, the Methodist Church in Malaysia."

We wish him our heartiest congratulations and God's grace in his life and ministry!



“Edinburgh 2010 — Witnessing to Christ Today”

June 2 to 6, 2010 a worldwide centennial celebration will take place under the logo “Edinburgh 2010 — Witnessing to Christ Today”. The World Methodist Council is representing the Methodists in the network of stakeholders which includes churches, Christian world communions, theological institutions and world mission bodies.

Churches from the Wesleyan tradition were participating in the strong Western missionary movement of the 19th century. So they were also present at the World Mission Conference, which took place in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910. The historic gathering was focused on evangelism, but emphasized cooperation and unity in mission. The voice of some Christians from Asia bringing in new — non-western — aspects to the understanding of Mission was also heard.

So the 1910 Mission Conference was widely considered as the starting point of a new area of world mission and evangelism and also of the contemporary ecumenical movement.

Edinburgh 2010 is planned as a conference of 200–250 delegates. Due to the global financial crisis the number of participants was downsized from over 1,000 to that number. The World Methodist Council has now the invitation to send eight delegates. This is a number equal to the delegations from other Christian world communions.

Key in all the activities towards the centennial is the study process on

nine themes focusing on a contemporary understanding of mission, for example on the foundations of Christian mission, on current forms of missionary engagement, including aspects like interreligious, postmodern and other contemporary contexts in which the missionary endeavor of the churches takes place. The process was launched in 2005 and has developed in polycentric and quite global dimensions. In addition to the main study process a series of events is taking place around the world. These events are encouraged by the Edinburgh 2010 General Council but are planned and executed locally.

The outcome of the study process will be the main input for the centennial conference hosted by the University of Edinburgh. Hopefully it will lead the conference in creative ways into a meaningful expression of repentance, recommitment and celebration.

The culmination shall be on Sunday, June 6, 2010 when the participants will be joined by members of the local churches and gather at the 1910 Assembly Hall for a significant centennial celebration.

Bishop Heinrich Bolleter,
Geneva Secretary,
World Methodist Council



Mr. Phua (centre) with fellow award recipients

Tokoh Guru 2009 Award

Mr Phua Seng Tiong spent 30 years as teacher, Senior Assistant and Principal in our government schools because he wanted to mould young people into useful members of society, to help students succeed academically and in life.

In May this year he was honoured with the national Tokoh Guru 2009 award together with two other fellow retired educationists during the National Teachers Day celebration. Before this Mr Phua had received the Excellence Award from the Ministry of Education in 1992 and the Federal Territory Tokoh Guru award in 2005. These awards were partly in recognition of his success in turning around schools that were performing badly.

He said of his teaching career, “I strove for holistic teaching, to shape students into decent individuals. For me the heart of education is the education of the heart.”

Mr Phua Seng Tiong started teaching in 1970, becoming Senior Assistant at St. Paul’s Institution, Seremban and St. John’s Institution, Kuala Lumpur. Then he became Principal of Sekolah Sri Sentosa in Jalan Kuchai Lama, followed by SMK Jinjang until his retirement in 2000.

However, he said that what was better than the Tokoh Guru award was a phone call he received from a former student of SMK Jinjang. “She called to tell me she scored a First Class at a university in England. I was proud of her. I felt all her teachers had played a small role in her success,” he said.

As he related to me, Mr Phua is still involved in education. He is called by the Education Department to speak to newly appointed principals and invited to schools to address teachers, and sometimes students as well. His church, Sungai Way – Subang Methodist Church, of which he is the Lay Pastor, is involved in bringing education through tuition to the residents in the surrounding areas.

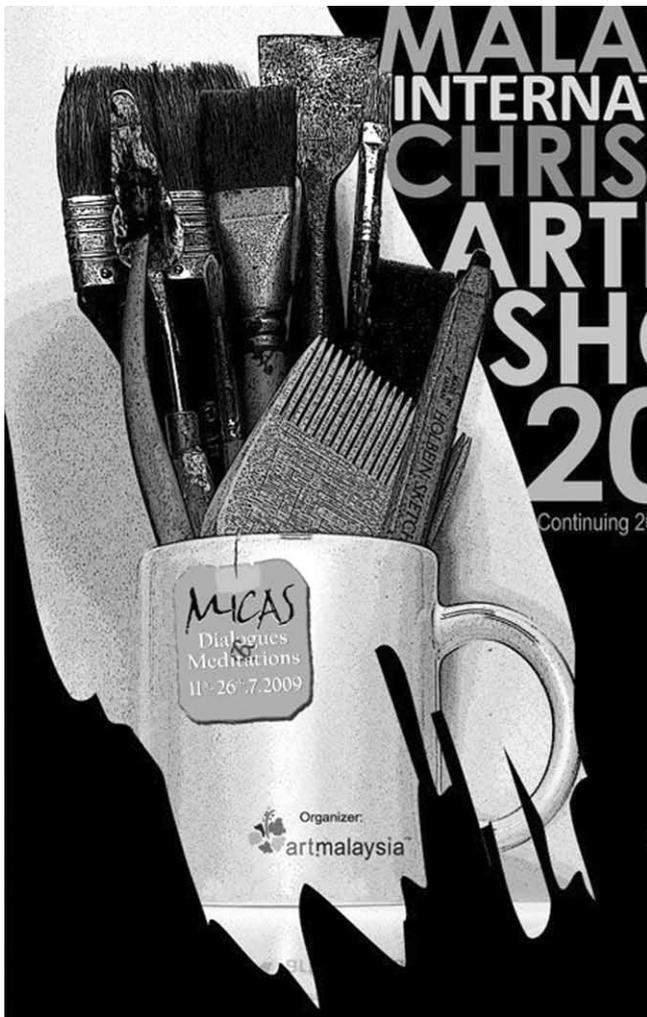
Mr Phua Seng Tiong was almost not accepted as a teacher when he applied. But in God’s purposes the door was opened and he was enabled by Him to make an impact in the lives of many young students.

Christopher Cheah

Also based on reports in the NST and the Star newspapers. Editor

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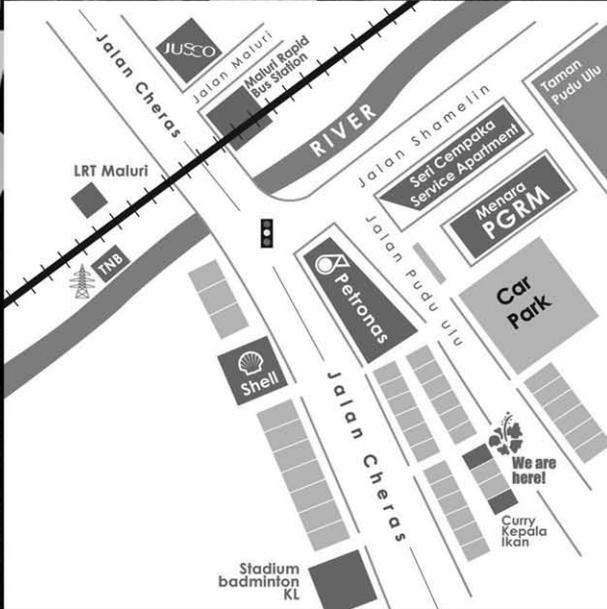
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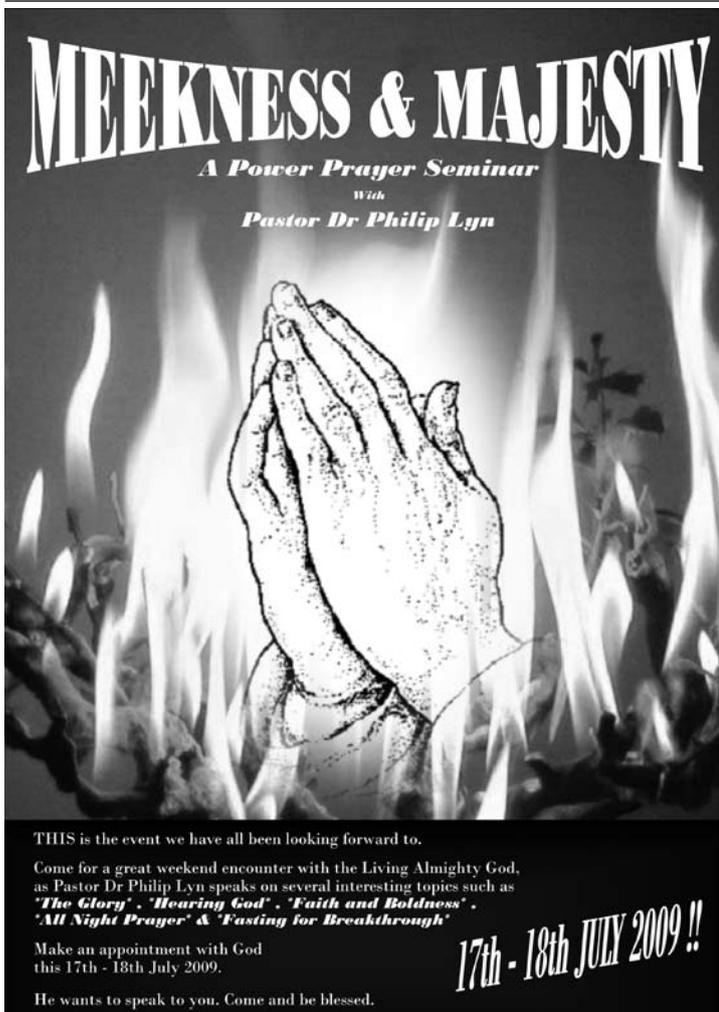
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9.30 - 10.30am		Session 2	
10.30 - 11.00am		Tea Break	Preach at
11.00 - 12.00pm		Session 3	10.45am (open to public)
12.00 - 1.00pm		Lunch	
1.30 - 2.30pm		Session 4	
2.30 - 3.00pm		Tea Break	
3.00 - 5.00pm		Session 5	
8.00 - 8.30pm	Worship		
8.30 - 9.45pm	Session 1		

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Pastor Dr Philip Lyn



He is the senior pastor of Skyline SIB, a city church of some 600 members in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia. He trained in medicine at Oxford, did biblical studies in London and currently works as an internal medicine specialist. He leads a team of eight bi-vocational pastors who are committed to ministry in the workplace and church as one and the same calling. The church has an intentional disciple-making distinctive and also coaches marketplace leaders to make disciples and transform communities by living out God's Kingdom principles in the city and ministering to the poor in the power of the Holy Spirit.

He has a passion to see godly men and women rise up and make the difference in the family and at work. He has spoken at conferences in Asia, Australia and the UK and has also been involved in the national prayer movement and prayer retreats. He is married to Nancy and they have three wonderful children.



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Maktab Teologi Sabah –

Expansion Plans



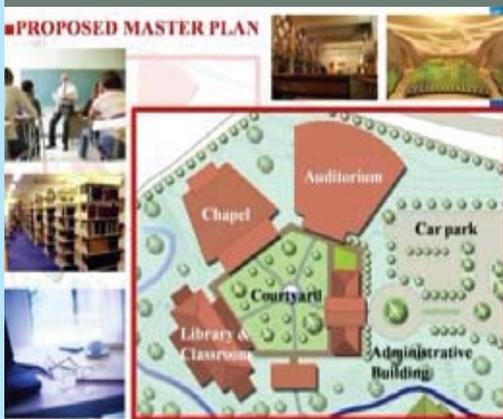
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The campus grounds



Our Purpose: To train pastors, evangelists and church workers



Future development plans

Maktab Teologi Sabah is dedicated to training pastors, evangelists and church workers for the Malay-speaking churches in Malaysia. It began in 1965 and since then more than a thousand students have gone through its training programmes.

Now, it has embarked on a growth phase and has drawn up plans for expansion of its enrollment and the infrastructure that is necessary for its growth. Early this year six Methodist churches partnered with the college in contributing funds for new beds and chairs for students, upgrading of the lecturers' quarters and refurbishing the office. They were (1) Klang Chinese Methodist Church, (2) Kuala Lumpur Chinese Methodist (Hokkien) Church, (3) Mega Chinese Methodist Church, Petaling Jaya (4) Trinity Methodist Church, Kuching, (5) Trinity Methodist Church, Petaling Jaya and (6) Wesley Methodist Church, Seremban.

MTS offers three programmes: A two-year Certificate, a three-year Diploma and a four-year Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.) which are taught in Bahasa Malaysia. These programmes are accredited by the Malaysia Bible Seminary.

It has a modern computerized library of more than 6000 books in BM and English. A computer room with internet access is available to support the students, and wireless access for the office and faculty members. There is also a computer workshop where they learn repairs and maintenance.

A unique facility found at the college is a fully equipped multi-media recording studio for training and preparation of audio and visual materials. Student not only learn to produce these materials but also provide the services to churches and others in making audio-visual recordings for promotional, evangelistic and educational purposes.

This year there are 87 fulltime students enrolled with nine lecturers. Although these are mainly bumiputera from Sabah the college is open and welcomes others from Sarawak and Semenanjung and across denominations.

In their future plans MTS is working towards having a yearly intake of 100 students with a total of 400 students on campus. This will require major upgrading of facilities and also additional student hostels, lecturers quarters and other facilities like expanding the library holdings. Besides infrastructure expansion the college is also looking to add lecturers, facilitate upgrading of current ones and provide in-house training to improve the teaching.

Bishop Dr Hwa Yung hopes that more Methodist churches can enter into partnership with the mission and ministry of MTS in helping to train pastors and workers for the bumiputera church and the much needed ministry workers and evangelists in the rural areas.

Christopher Cheah