



A New Beginning

Christmas season is upon us again. Most of us look forward to it as the end of year celebrations. We enter into its festivities, bright lights, shopping and events to draw out the feel good desires before gearing ourselves for a new year. For some there is much to be happy about the past year; for others they just want to leave it all behind and hope for a better year.

Interestingly, in the church calendar the advent season is the beginning of the church year. Christmas is celebrated as the beginning of God's blessing to the world through the giving / coming of His Son Jesus Christ. It is a new beginning such as the world has never known before in all its history. Jesus' birth was celebrated by the company of the heavenly host saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:13-14)

But as momentous as Jesus' birth was for the future of the world, God did not splash it across the skies of Israel for all to see. The host of heaven appeared to shepherds in the fields, and the news to wise men who could

read the portents in the sky. In fact this 'great work of God's salvation' was birthed through the consent of one girl, Mary, to be part of this work of God.

Mary was a young girl, perhaps sixteen or seventeen years, when the angel Gabriel came to her with the news that she will bear this baby who will be given the throne of David and a kingdom that will never end. How much did Mary understand the full extent of what that meant? Certainly she did not know the pain and sorrow that awaited her at the foot of the cross.

Yet Mary understood that God had chosen her, shown His favor, was 'mindful of her humble state', and was going to do something that was not impossible with God. She realized that God was doing something tremendous for her people, fulfilling the promises, the hopes and longings of the people for His presence and rule. And she understood that God was asking her to be part of that work.

Mary answered, "I am the Lord's servant." She consented to what God wanted to do

through her. "May it be to me as you have said." (Luke 1:38)

When we look back on this year or forward to the next, in our personal life or the life of the nation, we may wonder if life can really be different from what we have experienced, or if God can really bring a real change. This advent season reminds us God has given the world the greatest gift to meet its deepest longing. But it is also a story of God's personal mindfulness of each of us, to whom He shows favor and grace.

Like Mary, we can see what the Lord is doing in our midst and consent to be part of this and allow Him to work through us.

Christopher Cheah

The Spirit of
Christmas is ...

The Blessing of
Christmas is ...

The Heart of
Christmas is ...

Peace
Hope
Love

Bishop Hwa Yung & Family
together with all the staff
at Methodist HQ
wish you a

Blessed
Christmas



President Su (l) giving a token of love to Rev and Mrs Ting Daik Choung.

Rev Ting Daik Choung Retired A Faithful Servant of God after 43 Years

Rev Ting Daik Choung and his wife Pastor Ling Shoung Ing have been serving God all their lives. Their faithfulness and their love for the Lord and people are examples to all who are in the ministerial service. On the last day of the 34th Session of SCAC, 20 November, an inspiring and meaningful ceremony was specially held to honour these two faithful servants of God.

Rev Ting became a minister-on-trial in 1967. He was ordained as an elder in 1971. Since then he has been serving God faithfully for 43 years. Rev Ting was a District Superintendent for two times (12 years) and served as the President of SCAC for two terms (8 years). He is an author and a poet. He and his wife have one son (also a pastor in USA) and two daughters.



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Contents

Page 4-6	Whole Gospel, Whole Church, Whole World A Global Conversation of the Lausanne Movement <i>Christopher J. H. Wright</i>
Page 7	TRAC Young Adults Convention
Page 8	34th Session SIAC 60 Years of Iban Work
Page 9	34th Session SCAC
Page 10	6th Session SPAC
Page 11	Methodist Theological School Graduation Agape Methodist Church Sabah - 10th Anniversary
Page 12	Awards Aplenty MCKL students win study awards
Page 14	CFM Press Statement on withheld Bibles Methodist Youth Council AGM

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A Gift For Jesus

They bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh (Matthew 2:11).

Lord Jesus,

I give you my hands to do your work,

I give you my feet to go your way,

I give you my eyes to see as you do.

I give you my tongue to speak your words,

I give you my mind that you may think in me,

I give you my spirit that you may pray in me.

Above all, I give you my heart that you may love in me, your Father, and all mankind.

I give you my whole self that you may grow in me, so that it is you, Lord Jesus, who live and work and pray in me.

I hand over to your care, Lord my soul and body, my mind and thoughts, my prayers and hopes, my health and my work, my life and my death, my parents and my family, my friends and my neighbours, my country and all men. Today and always.

Lancelot Andrewes, *Private Prayers*

Taken from *Christian Classics Day By Day*, compiled by Robert Backhouse (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), p. 372.

Whole Gospel, Whole Church, Whole World

Christopher J. H. Wright



We must believe, live, and communicate all that makes the Christian message staggeringly comprehensive good news.

For 35 years one of the simplest ways to define evangelical Christianity has been to refer to the Lausanne Covenant, the document that emerged from the International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974. Convened by American evangelist (and Christianity Today founder) Billy Graham and British clergyman John R. W. Stott, the congress brought together 2,300 church and missionary leaders from 150 countries, including a substantial number of leaders from the then-nascent evangelical communities of Africa, Latin America, and Asia. The Lausanne Covenant became a milestone in evangelical history, confidently proclaiming the continued need for evangelism

when much of mainline Protestantism had lost confidence in biblical faith, while also reclaiming social responsibility when many fundamentalists disdained justice as a “liberal” concern. (Read the Lausanne Covenant at Lausanne.org/covenant.)

In October 2010, the Lausanne Movement will convene another congress, this time in Cape Town, South Africa. The majority of participants will be from the Majority World, where evangelicalism is now thriving dramatically. For the next year, Christianity Today, in partnership with the Lausanne Movement and fellow Christian publications around the world, will address some of the principal issues that confront the contemporary church as we seek to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel in all its historic depth and breadth. We are calling these articles the Global Conversation.

As someone else has said, “It’s not that God has a mission for his church in the world, but that God has a church for his mission in the world.”

Taking the gospel to the ends of the earth, in obedience to the Great Commission, is an inescapable imperative. A definition of world evangelization that has won assent from Christians of all stripes was memorably summarized in the Lausanne Covenant—the document substantially crafted by John R. W. Stott and affirmed by the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974: “Evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.”

The “three wholes” in this ringing phrase had been part of Christian discourse for some years before Stott drafted the covenant. Indeed, they go back to the apostle Paul, if not to the patriarch Abraham. But to keep the conversation within living memory, a stirring statement by the Dutch theologian Willem Adolf Visser’t Hooft makes the point:

The command to witness to Christ is given to every member of his church. It is a commission given to the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world. When the church recognizes that it exists for the world, there arises a passionate concern that the blessings of the gospel of Christ should be brought to every land and to every man and woman.

This quote is all the more striking since Visser’t Hooft was writing in 1961 on behalf of the World Council of Churches. Yet he seems to use the word whole primarily in a quantitative sense. For Visser’t Hooft, the whole church means “every member.” The whole world means “every man and woman.” The whole gospel means all “the blessings of the gospel.” That is surely better than some missionaries taking some blessings of the gospel to some people in some parts of the world. But the three wholes have more substantial, qualitative implications, implications that are worthy of a global conversation.

The whole gospel

The phrase the whole gospel suggests that some versions of the gospel are less than whole—partial, deficient, or (most important) not fully biblical. We must give full weight to all the dimensions of sin

and evil that the Bible in both testaments portrays. And we must evangelistically proclaim the glories of God’s redemptive achievement in the Cross and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth—as God’s victory over evil in all its dimensions. There would be no gospel without the Cross. Indeed, all blessings of the gospel, from personal salvation through Christ’s death in our place to the reconciliation of all creation, flow from the Cross. The Cross stands at the heart of the Lausanne Movement; the key scriptural text for Cape Town 2010 is “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor. 5:19).

If the whole gospel must be drawn from the whole Bible, in both testaments, then we must ask what contribution the social, economic, and political dimensions of the Old Testament make to Christian mission. Century after century, the God of the Bible revealed his passionate concern for social issues: political tyranny, economic exploitation, judicial corruption, the suffering of the poor and oppressed, and the evils of brutality and bloodshed. So passionate, indeed, that the laws God gave and the prophets God sent addressed these matters more than any other issue except idolatry (in fact, they regarded such things as idolatry’s tangible manifestations). Meanwhile, the psalmist regularly cried out in songs of social protest and lament.

Unfortunately, one can still detect a subtle (or not so subtle) sense that somewhere between Malachi and Matthew, all that changed. Is it possible that such things no longer claim God’s attention or spark God’s anger? Or, if they do, that they are no longer our business?

The church condemned this disdain for the Hebrew Scriptures in the second-century heretic Marcion. It makes the alleged God of the New Testament almost unrecognizable as the Holy One of Israel. This alleged God shed the passionate priorities of the Mosaic Law and jettisoned the burden for justice that he had laid on his prophets at such cost to them. The implications for mission are dramatic. For if the pressing problems of human society are of no concern to God, they have no place in Christian mission—or at most a

decidedly secondary one. God’s mission, in this view, is simply getting souls to heaven, not addressing society on earth.

I find such a view of God and of mission to be unbiblical and unbelievable, if one takes the whole Bible as the trustworthy revelation of the identity, character, and mission of the living God.

The great Christ-centered, Cross-centered redemptive truths of the New Testament do not nullify, but rather complete, all that the Old Testament reveals about God’s comprehensive commitment to the wholeness of human life, God’s relentless opposition to all that oppresses, spoils, and diminishes human well-being, and God’s ultimate mission of blessing the nations, destroying all forms of evil, and redeeming his whole creation, for his own supreme glory in Christ.

The gospel as a whole, true to the Bible as a whole, shows us God’s heart for his broken, suffering, wicked world. For the last and the least (socially, culturally, and economically) as well as the lost (spiritually)—not that these can be separated, since human beings are whole persons. For those who are dying eternally in their sins, but also for the causes of their preventable premature dying in this world. For those who are without Christ, without God, and without hope in the world, but who also suffer all kinds of other lacks—the landless and homeless, the loveless and limbless, the family-less and state-less. For the creation itself, frustrated in its supreme goal of giving glory to its Creator, and groaning under the onslaught of human greed and violence.

As gospel people we must believe, live, and communicate all that makes the gospel staggeringly comprehensive good news.

The whole church

In a quantitative sense, of course, the expression the whole church insists that mission is the task of all Christians, not just of the clergy or professional missionaries, and that is a necessary reminder. Mission is far too important to be left to missionaries. But there are

other dimensions of wholeness we need to include in the conversation.

Missional church. First of all, we need to see that biblically, mission is integral to the existence of God's people in the present age. The church is "called out" in order to be "sent out," as the Lausanne Covenant puts it. The vogue expression missional church is really nothing new. What other kind of church is there than the one that God created for mission? A friend said to me recently, "To me, missional church sounds like talking about female women.' If it's not missional, it's not church." As someone else has said, "It's not that God has a mission for his church in the world, but that God has a church for his mission in the world."

Scandalous lack of wholeness. Second, we need to contrast the ideal of a whole church with the rampant lack of wholeness that fractures the church everywhere. How can we bring the wholeness of the gospel to our broken world unless we demonstrate some of its healing power among ourselves? Yet the church is torn by conflict over race, caste, tribe, gender, material goods, and so many other things.

There is a potentially serious misunderstanding in this Lausanne Covenant sentence: "World evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world." Read without referring to what the covenant says about the church's need to examine itself, this sounds like the church is nothing more than the bearer of the message, like a postman delivering a letter. It doesn't really matter if the postman who delivered my letter this morning was committing adultery last night. So long as I get the letter, the moral behavior of the carrier is irrelevant.

But the church is not just the mechanism delivering the gospel. It is also the *product* of the gospel, and is to be the living, visible *proof* of the ethically transforming power of the gospel. So the failures and abuses in the worldwide evangelical community are, in the literal New Testament sense of the word, a massive *scandal*—a stumbling block to the gospel being seen, heard, and accepted. For that, the only answer is repentance and reformation. It is vital that Cape Town 2010 gives space and voice to that need.

The global Christian community. That very repentance will require invoking a third sense of *the whole church*. We need the whole *world* church, working with

much greater levels of mutual cooperation and partnership, north to south and east to west. There is much listening to do, a lot of learning and unlearning. Our task across borders and boundaries is, in Paul's words, to accept one another, counting others better than ourselves and looking to their interests more than our own.

The whole world

Of course, we can take *the whole world* in a purely geographical sense—meaning every corner of the planet—and that is still urgently true. Nowhere is not the mission field, including our own countries. There are still many unreached peoples, many languages that have no portion of the Bible, many places where the name of Christ has never been heard. These are still urgent priorities for Christian evangelistic mission. The ends of the earth are still waiting. And today the ends of the earth may also be our next-door neighbor or the migrant in our midst.

But we need to consider other dimensions of our whole world that biblical mission must address:

The world story, as God tells it in the Bible, of the world's origins, history, and ultimate destiny. According to Paul, we are not going to be saved *out of* the created world, but *along with* it. But if our Bibles begin at Genesis 3 and end at Revelation 20, we are in danger of missing the point of God's great story of the redemption of all creation. We will think only of saving fallen sinners from the final judgment—not about living in the present creation as those who, by being in Christ, already bring the transforming values and prophetic truth of the new creation to the here and now.

The world of worldviews, philosophies, and faiths. What are the gods that surround us, and what is the Christlike and neighbor-loving response to those who worship them? We must not confine this to thinking only about the great mega-bloc "world faiths." The ideologies of secularism and atheism need to be engaged, along with the idols of consumerism, patriotism, and hedonism that are happily thriving on the worship of those who claim to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

The world of creation, and our responsibility to the earth God entrusted to us, which God has reconciled to himself through the Cross (Col. 1:20). If the planet was created by Christ, sustained by Christ, and belongs to Christ as his

inheritance, the least we can do is to look after it properly. Biblical responsibility for stewardship of the earth should have been an evangelical theme long before the threat of climate change turned it into a matter of self-preservation.

The world of globalization and the public square. What kind of missional engagement should we have with globalized economic trends and forces, massive migration, the Internet and new technologies, and all that goes on in business, politics, education, media, journalism, medicine, and the whole of human work?

The world of violence, war, and terrorism. We are surrounded by myths and countermyths that generate violence and justify violence in return. Apart from addressing the appalling scale of death and destruction these idols produce, do we not have a responsibility to also challenge and expose their falsity and ask what gospel reality Jesus implied when he said, "Blessed are the peacemakers"?

The world of human need and suffering. If the gospel is good news in relation to all that sin has turned into bad news, then the gospel must be big enough, and our mission wide enough, to include the power of God to transform disease, hunger, brutality, human trafficking, slavery, gender violence, poverty, injustice, ethnic cleansing, and all forms of tribal, caste, and ethnic hatreds and oppression.

In such a world of need, the followers of Jesus are called to bring good news and to be good news. No single one of us can be engaged in everything that a holistic mission demands. The same thought doubtless occurred to God, which is why he created the church with a multiplicity of gifts and callings, so that we can, as a whole church, bear witness to the whole gospel in the whole world. May this global conversation generate more intelligent understanding and more focused action as we participate with God in his global mission.

Christopher J. H. Wright is international director of the Langham Partnership International (John Stott Ministries in the U.S.), chair of the Lausanne Theology Working Group, and author of the ct award-winning book The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative.

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TRAC Young Adults Convention

29-31 August 2009



After being 'dormant' for five years, the TRAC Young Adults made a comeback through a recent Convention from 29 to 31 August 2009 at Empress Hotel, Sepang. With the theme 'In Christ, Together, Out There', 62 participants from 10 TRAC churches including our TRAC President, Rev Dr Ong Hwai Teik and Conference Lay Leader, Dr Samuel Ong, attended the Convention. Dr Leong Tien Fock from Campus Crusade for Christ was the invited speaker. The aim of the Convention was to address the concerns of young adults in the TRAC churches and help them in connecting with one another.

Day 1: The Convention started with a welcome briefing and ice breakers cum 'get-to-know-you-session'. Next, Noel Jeyaratnam a.k.a. 'the big brother' shared a brief history on the organization and activities carried out by the national TRAC Young Adults group. Some of the more 'senior young adults' seemed to be more excited about this Convention as it was like a reunion for them.

In the evening, the Kampar Wesley group led in worship, followed by Dr Leong's message on '*Identity in Christ*'. He discussed our identity in Christ and the dilemma of young adults responding to God's calling versus advancing their careers. The day ended with vespers led by Michael Gong where he made everyone look at a bowl of apples and a bowl of coins. The passage for reflection was on how to live by grace versus harsh laws.

Day 2: The day started with a worship session led by two sisters from Taman Ujong Methodist Church. Subsequently, Dr Leong shared the message on '*Community in Christ*', where he discussed the concept of community as well as ways to cultivate an atmosphere of faith, hope and love.

Later on, all participants were divided into groups for two workshop sessions. The groups discussed Dr Leong's messages. Many shared their various struggles when faced with temptations and conflicts in their workplaces as well as in the community of faith. It was encouraging to see each group offering their views on how to support each other during difficult times.

After a sumptuous buffet dinner, there was the highlight of the night called 'Chill Out' session. Game masters - Noel, Connie and Monica, helped the participants play creative games like e-Bay sale, '*Defend the Egg*' and '*Make a Rod or Fish Me Not*' which involved fishing for toys in the swimming pool. We had great fun trying to out-do each other in ways we could never have imagined. The best part was all of us received a prize in the end. Lastly, the day ended with vespers by Dr Lai Thian Seong.

Day 3: The young adults from Canning Garden Methodist Church led the morning worship. After that, Dr Leong shared the message on '*Community in the World*' which dealt on the unique position of the church community in the

world and being the 'salt and light' for Jesus (Matthew 5:13-16). In the group discussion, we talked on how to be a good witness and influencer in society without succumbing to worldly ways.

Dr Samuel Ong led the forum and summary session, '*Moving Forward*' where he started us singing 'Pops Got a Head Like a Ping Pong Ball' in parts (the song is still playing in my mind as I am writing this). We discussed some practical ways in helping the young adults to stay connected through related activities, forums or blogs, with the aim of building each other in faith. Many also agreed with the idea for pastors to be actively involved in spearheading the young adult groups in the local churches. Rev Dr Ong summarized the session with the following words: that our Young Adults community in TRAC should strive to operate from the following basic emphases:

C - Connecting networks

G - Growth in all aspects

M - Ministry internal and external

C - Community near and far

Finally, we left the Convention renewed with the word of God and a deeper sense of belonging to our community of faith. Of course, this is just the beginning of a spiritual revival for the young adults as we stay united and connected. Thanks be to God for this wonderful Convention!

Foong Pui Hing

34th Session Sarawak Iban Annual Conference

SIAC has 4 districts: Sarikei, Kapit, Sibü and Bintulu with a total membership of 58,694. This year, they had 396 adult baptisms and 656 children baptisms. Two elders (Rev Jatan ak Badi and Rev Albert Allan) and two deacons (Rev Resa ak Nyalu and Rev Jubin ak Jamat) were ordained by Bishop Hwa Yung. Two pastors retired this year as well. They are Rev Jerry Rabbu and Rev Andrew Mangka.

The 34th session of SIAC was held on 13 -14 November 2009. A total of 140 delegates and pastors participated in the conference. At the closing service, President Steward Damat preached from Romans 12:1-3 urging the participants to be a living sacrifice to God. Rev Damat said, "The old religious act gives little

(e.g. the chicken head and feet) to their god while keeping the chicken body for themselves. God wants us to offer our whole self to him. If we practice little giving (time, talent, money, etc.) to God, we will also receive little from him. We should let go of the ideas of hoping to receive more from the church but learn to give more."

In his final remark at the 34th SIAC, Bishop Hwa Yung said he was much happier with the situation of SIAC this year. He once again urged the participants to catch the vision of mission and to extend their blessings to other indigenous communities of Sarawak.

Urgent Need to Build Churches
SIAC is in urgent need to build 5

churches in 5 strategic places. They are Bintulu, Miri, Sibü Jaya, Johore Baru and Bintangor. The following are the estimates for each project:

1. **Bintulu Town** - land cost RM 80,000, building cost RM 300,000, amount collected RM 40,000.
2. **Miri Town** - shop house cost RM 380,000, amount collected RM30,000.
3. **Sibü Jaya** - building cost RM 300,000, amount collected RM 28,000.
4. **Johore Baru** - shop house cost RM90,000, amount collected RM 3,000.
5. **Bintangor Town** - building cost RM 300,000, amount collected RM 70,000.



President Steward Damat of SIAC receiving a love gift of RM 50,000 from Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference (SCAC). SIAC also received RM 3,000 from Sabah Provisional Annual Conference (SPAC) and RM 10,000 from Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC), Singapore.



Senior and retired SIAC pastors sharing great memories of the early struggle during the 60th Anniversary Dinner. L-R: Mrs. Jawan, Mrs. Joshua, Rev Jawan, Rev Joshua

SIAC 60th Anniversary

On 14 November 2009, the Sarawak Iban Annual Conference (SIAC) celebrated its 60th anniversary with joy and thanksgiving. Bishop Hwa Yung encouraged the Conference to see themselves in the eyes of God, to know nothing except Christ and His cross because "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one will boast before him. (I Cor. 1:27-29)."

"Do not look down on yourself as the

conference. Do not say our church is poor; our pastors have no degrees, there are no doctoral degree among us. Remember you are God's precious children; walk with your head held up." Bishop Hwa Yung said this during the thanksgiving service held at the Methodist Iban Centre at Fong, Sibü. The Bishop further said in his sermon that he rejoiced to see the work God has done among the Ibans in Sarawak. He reminded them to obey God, to lead a holy life in Christ and God will bless their church and make it strong.

Towards the end of the service, there was the launching of the SIAC homepage. Their address is: [http://www.](http://www.sarawakibanmethodist.org)

[sarawakibanmethodist.org](http://www.sarawakibanmethodist.org).

The Humble Beginning 60 Years Ago

The Methodist mission to the Ibans first began in 1912 through a Batak missionary, Willie Galung. Two years later, William Shellabear reported two Iban boys being baptised. After that there was not much progress. In 1939, two other missionaries were sent, P. S. Schmucker and Lucius Mamora. However, the work was again interrupted by the Second World War. Finally, after years of sowing, the breakthrough came in 1949. On Christmas Day, 29 Ibans were baptised in Kapit. This marks the official growth of the Iban Methodist Church.

Commissioning Service Family of Five Going to Africa



Bishop Hwa Yung and President Su commissioning Rev. Sia Bik Sing and Tan Seow Ping.



Wong Hia Ching sharing her thoughts at the service.



Rev. Sia Bik Sing and his family. Wong Hia Ching at the far left.

This year SCAC commissioned Rev Sia Bik Sing and his family to be the overseas missionaries to Africa and Wong Hia Ching (Elise) to Ulu Belaga to work with the Penans.

Rev Sia thanked the Methodist Church for moulding him, using him and accepting him as who he is and give him opportunity to serve in different aspects. Sia said, "I ended my pastoral ministry in the Methodist Church here and I shall start my introductory paragraph on my new chapter of life, my journey to Africa. I am thankful for all the people who have impacted me in one way or another."

Together with his wife (Tan Seow Ping, a registered nurse) and three children (Joseph, Eunice and Stephen), Rev Sia will go to Singapore for 3 months' cross cultural training next year. After that, they will enter into the mission field.

Tan Seow Ping shared during the Commissioning Service that in 1992,

while she was still training as a nurse, she attended a missions camp and was very touched by the needs of Africa. She prayed to God to allow her to go there to serve and as years went by, she got married and began to raise a family. However, she and her husband have never forgotten the calling of God. While Rev Sia's burden is to work with the Chinese people, Seow Ping's burden is Africa. And the Lord has miraculously combined these two together and even their children are willing to go.

Another missionary to be commissioned was Wong Hia Ching. Wong will be working with the Penans in Ulu Belaga. She is the first person who responded to the call and Ulu Belaga needs a total of 12 missionaries to work there. They are still in need of 10 more full time missionaries. Wong said that God gave her the promise of being with her and she was not afraid. She urged all the participants to pray at least once a month for the work of the Penans.

34th SCAC Ordination Service

Rev Ting: Dare to Take Up the Responsibility

Rev Ting Daik Choung, former president of Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference (SCAC) said that as pastors we need to dare to take up the responsibility, be willing to take it up and be joyful to accept it once we entered into the covenant of the itinerary ministry. Rev Ting said this in the Ordination Service of the 34th session of SCAC held on 18 Nov in Masland Church, Sibiu. He further explained, "Itinerary system is a strategic system. Every pastor is being appointed or selected to serve accordingly in a local church, a mission field or other ministerial area. The needs of the Connectional church should be the premise. The personal desires and needs of the individual pastors are to put as second."

"We need to follow the example of Jesus. Jesus knew that it was a difficult journey but he boldly entered Jerusalem even to face crucifixion at the end. In Acts 20: 17-21, Paul gave his farewell speech to the elders of the Ephesians. Paul said that the Holy Spirit has warned him that there would be hardships and prison waiting for him in every city, but Paul moved forward." Ting urged all the ordained pastors to take up the charge.

Ting added that character plays an important role in a person's life. If a pastor has great talents and gifts but tarnished character, no one will respect this person. "We should see sin as great shame because sins bring shame to the name of God, to the name of the Church and to the name of a ministerial role.

We should strive to be above reproach: do your best to stay away from sins, do your best to do good works and do your best to obey the laws and ordinances of God."

Bishop Hwa Yung ordained 7 elders and 13 deacons during the service. More ordination photos can be found inside.

Winnie Tie
Editor of *Connection*



6th Session Sabah Provisional Annual Conference.



Visiting the former Chinese workers and singing praises together with them.

6th Session Sabah Provisional Annual Conference 6-7 November 2009

Under the leadership of President Ling Heu Uh, SPAC has seen steady growth. In his presidential address, Rev Ling said that although SPAC might be a small annual conference, it carries the responsibilities to minister in three languages, that is, Chinese, English, and Malay. He reminded all to preserve unity and see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ despite the differences.

Slim Down the Structure

President Ling said that as a whole, churches have many activities and meetings. This takes up a lot of time of church members and as a result, church members are busy and limit themselves to the church, neglecting the possibility of outreach ministry. Rev Ling said that since SPAC does not need to carry traditional baggage, they should consider re-organizing and "slimming down" the structure. According to the strengths of the individual church, the ministries should be focused and simplified. It is to allow people to have more space and time to make an impact in families and society. He gave an example of the possibility of combining prayer meeting, small group gathering, disciple course and even outreach into one night's event. He also suggested another example of one church concentrating on one ministry like children or youth or even community service.

Be Still in Him, Renew to Serve

2010 is the Year of Reformation for SPAC. The main theme of 2010 is "Be Still in Him, Renew to Serve". The vision of SPAC is to be upgraded as a full annual conference in 2016. The goal is to have 10% growth in the number of church members per year. Its priority is to make disciples and rebuild life. Church planting should be in strategic and potential areas.

Chinese Ministry

SPAC has a special ministry reaching out to the Chinese workers and Chinese students in Sabah. There are about 110 Chinese students studying in University Sabah Malaysia. This year SPAC arranged a missions trip to China to visit those who have gone back home. The mission team visited seven churches, a Bible School and 23 former workers and their families. This played a significant role in strengthening their faith.

Attendance Drops, Offering Increases

As a whole, SPAC has 13 churches and preaching centres. This year there was a drop in the number of Sunday worshippers, from 1,934 in 2008 to 1,733 in 2009. Sunday school attendance also dropped from 405 to 353. But prayer meeting attendance has a slight improvement, from 319 to 322. There were 2 child baptisms, 61 adult baptisms, and 51 new

membership. Offering to SPAC also increase by 13.72%.

Bishop Hwa Yung Ordains 6 Elders, 1 Deacon

Bishop Hwa Yung ordained six elders and one deacon during the 6th session of Sabah Provisional Annual Conference (SPAC).

The six newly ordained elders are Rev Sia Pei Lian, Rev Xia How Ling, Rev Sia How Ding, Rev Markus Sigar, Rev Cecelia Ukang, and Rev Jaraning Sampani. And the one newly ordained deacon is Rev Lim Yee Ping.

SPAC welcomed three new pastors this year joining the conference. They were graduates from Methodist Theological School (MTS), Sibuan and they are Peter Woo, Ten Fook Seong, and Wong Chung Yiing (Worship and Music Program). SPAC has a total of 24 ministers - one retired pastor: Rev. Siew Chiew Huo, 11 Elders, six Deacons, three Ministers-on-Trial, and three newly accepted pastors.

Winnie Tie

Winnie Tie is the editor of Connection, the English station of the Chinese Methodist Message published by SCAC.

Building Up Godly Men and Women with Virtues

MTS 11th Graduation cum 55th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service

A total of 29 students received their degrees and diplomas at the 11th Graduation Ceremony cum 55th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service of Methodist Theological School (MTS), Sibuan on 31 Oct in Masland Methodist Church Sibuan. Bishop Hwa Yung was invited to give the address during the graduation ceremony.

The Bishop started with a question for the audience: What is the ultimate goal of ministerial formation? A leader or a servant leader? Using the text from I Tim. 4:7-8, 11-12, 25-26, the Bishop reminded the graduates to strive to be a servant leader and train themselves in godliness.

He said, "Godliness involves the worship of the one true God, living a virtuous life, living a life according to the word of God. Inwardly we live a life that fears God and outwardly a life with virtues and character."

He concluded that in ministry, the most important is character and a life totally surrendered to God. It is a heart issue and we must consistently seek God's work in our lives. Bishop Hwa said the goal of ministerial training is not to train leaders but to train godly men and women. "When God raises up godly people among us, we will rejoice to see effective leaders."

President Su Chii Ann, of SCAC, gave his charge to the graduates in three points:

1. Exercise your body regularly.
2. Increase your wisdom by studying God's word even harder.
3. Increase our love to God.

The graduation dinner cum 55th anniversary thanksgiving dinner was held on the previous night,



Long Anak Sanggau receiving her Bachelor of Theology from the Principal of MTS, Rev Tie King Tai.

30 Oct at Blue Splendor Restaurant. More than 800 people including church leaders, family members of the graduates, friends and well-wishers attended the night of thanksgiving.

Winnie Tie
From *Connection*
15 November 2009



Cutting the 55th anniversary cake. From left to right: Rev Steward Damat, President of SIAC, Rev Dato' Dr Su Chii Ann, President of SCAC, Rev Dr Tie King Tai, Principal of MTS, Bishop Hwa Yung of Malaysia, Rev Ling Heu Uh, President of SPAC.



Installation of LCEC (Local Church Executive Committee) 2009-2010.

In the late 1980s, a few English speaking members from Shern En Methodist (Sabah) Chinese speaking congregation mulled the idea of forming an English Fellowship to provide for the spiritual growth of English educated members. By 1990, the members desired to grow from a fellowship group into a full fledged English speaking church. The Sabah Methodist English Preaching Centre was formed in 1997 and a church building committee in 1998 to spearhead the development of their own place of worship. Sabah Methodist English Preaching Centre Dedication service was held on 11 April 1999. By 2001 it was upgraded as the Agape Methodist Church.

Sabah Agape Methodist Church 10th Anniversary

To Build a Church with 600 Members by 2010

On 10 October Agape Methodist Church celebrated its 10th anniversary in Shern En Church. "Like Joshua, what we did was merely to seize the moment and rise to the occasion when duty called. We marched forward a step at a time, remembering God's promises and claimed them by faith," said Rev Dr Hii Kong Hock during the service. "We at Agape must always remember two things: God's word and unity. We must trust in God's word and his leadership. Let God go before us to lead and not vice versa."

Rev Hii continued to point out that the Lord will do amazing things and lead the church into a new journey. "Let our service be not merely an instance of zeal but a lifetime journey of faith, hope and love."

Agape's vision 2010 is to build a church having a 600 strong congregation, with 50% church members participating in the weekly prayer meeting. Agape aims to become a missionary sending and multiplying church having at least one missionary to a foreign country and 10 members joining the short term missions. Agape also aims to have at least 60 baptisms and 30 confirmations per year and become a church of loving and caring, teaching and equipping. The church also works towards being a church of small groups.

Winnie Tie
From *Connection*
15 November 2009

Awards Aplenty *by Tan Ee Loo*

Students from a small institution prove they have the credentials to attract study awards from a large number of organisations.



Ashley says that the scholarships will help in pursuing her undergraduate studies in Biology.

ASHLEY Teo Shu Wen was thrilled when she won not one but six scholarship awards to pursue her tertiary education in the United States.

Feeling excited and relieved, the former student of Methodist College Kuala Lumpur (MCKL) said the awards would help her achieve her ambition of becoming of a stem cell researcher.

Ashley, whose father is a retired headmaster in Bintulu, was a social worker with the Malaysian Care and Malaysian Association For the Blind, as well as an active volunteer of World Vision during her college years.

“My parents had to work hard to support the family. Therefore, the scholarships would help me strive towards my goal by pursuing my undergraduate studies in Biology,” said Ashley, a freshman at Colby-Sawyer College in New Hampshire, United States (US).

MCKL chief executive officer Moey Yoke Lai described Ashley as “a very intelligent student”.

“We opened a window of opportunity for this young lady from Bintulu to the world of higher education. Ashley will reach for the stars and get what she wants in her career,” she said.

The awards that she received were Wesson High Honours Scholarship, Early Action Award, Leadership Merit Award, Colby-Sawyer College Award and AMCHAM-MACEE Scholarship 2009. She was also given the Opportunity Grant Award by Malaysian-American Commission on Educational Exchange (MACEE), that covered the upfront costs before leaving for the US.

Former MCKL student Julian Leong Se Yang was another lucky one who was awarded scholarships to pursue tertiary education abroad.

He received three scholarships — the University of Alberta Malaysia Partnership Scholarship, University of Alberta Academic Excellence Scholarship and Faculty Engineering Academic Excellence Scholarship — to study chemical engineering at the University of Alberta, Canada.

“The scholarships helped relieve the financial burden of my parents who also have to support my other siblings. It also enabled me to study abroad and experience the Western culture,” he said. Julian, 19, was active in extra-curricular activities in high school.

He was involved in the St John’s Association, English Language Society, tennis club, and the prefect board.

“My ambition is to become a successful chemical engineer. I would like to contribute back to the society by improving the quality of their everyday life,” he said.

He said MCKL had prepared him well for his tertiary education.

“The lecturers are experienced and they look after the students’ welfare. The college is small in ‘quantity’ (the number of students) but big on ‘quality’.

“MCKL is a campus with the small college atmosphere, but has the credentials and reputation of much larger institution. With the help of the faculty members and the staff, I was able to develop the knowledge and skills needed for a smooth transition from college to studies abroad,” added Ashley.

To ensure an all-rounded development, Moey said extra-curricular activities were an important aspect at MCKL.

“Our lecturers ensure that the students know what is required of them in the syllabus of each subject.

“There is a no-nonsense approach to studies,” she said.

*The feature above appeared in **The Star Malaysia** on 1 November 2009 in the Education Section.*



Devotional time to start the day.



A test of our ingenuity and hand skills.



Outing in the afternoon.

Methodist HQ Staff Retreat

Staff from the Methodist HQ took time out for fellowship over the weekend of 25 – 27 September. Not everyone could make it but nine of us from the office and two from the Council of Education went up to the Methodist Bungalow in Fraser's Hill on the Friday afternoon. Bishop Hwa Yung joined us on Saturday morning.

The last time staff went away together was three years ago. So this was a good time to spend with each other outside of the office setting, enjoy the food and surroundings, and to have some fun in friendly games and outing around Fraser's Hill.

Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC), The Methodist Church in Malaysia is looking for suitably qualified people for the following positions:

TRAC Missions Director

A committed Christian who is a highly motivated individual who possess a genuine interest in local and global missions.

Primary Task

To assist the Board of Missions to strategize, develop, mobilize and coordinate the work of Missions within TRAC.

Specific duties:

- Be an ex-officio member of the Missions Board
- Be accountable to the TRAC President's Office and the Chairman of the Board of Missions
- Be present at relevant meetings and consultations.
- Attend meetings of mission bodies that TRAC may be affiliated to or is a member of when required.
- Attend to the development of Missions Strategy in consultation with the Missions Board and the coordination, training and implementation required.
- Plan and coordinate training programs.
- Visit local churches of TRAC throughout the country for further networking mobilization and training purposes, to enhance the ministry of missions in TRAC
- Help set up a resource and information network to enhance the ministry of missions in TRAC.
- Carry out related duties as directed by the President or the Board of Missions

If you are to be considered you must possess the following:

- Possess a degree or its equivalent. Theological education will be an advantage
- Leadership skills and Qualities
- Independent and confident to network and establish good

working relationships with Pastors and Churches

- Good communication skills
- Team work ability
- Good command of English
- Computer-literacy

Salary and remuneration will be based on the TRAC Schedule for ministry workers and will be adjusted according to qualification and experience.

Team Assistant

Job Description:

To perform general and administrative duties for the Directors of ICM (Institute of Christian Ministry), Missions and Prayer.

Requirements

- STPM, Diploma or its equivalent
- 3 years working experience
- Possess organizational skills and able to work independently
- Proficient in English, good communication and interpersonal skills
- Possess a mature attitude and a good team player
- Computer-literacy; MSOFFICE

Salary will be based on qualification and working experience

Interested applicants for positions 1 & 2 can write in, enclosing a resume to:

Office Administrator

TRAC

2, Jalan 5/39, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

CFM Calls For Immediate Release Of 15,000 Bibles

The Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) calls for the immediate release of the 15,000 Bibles in Bahasa Malaysia currently being withheld by the authorities.

To withhold the use of the Bahasa Malaysia Bibles is an infringement of Article 11 of the Federal Constitution which gives every Malaysian the right to profess his/her faith as well as to practice it.

This constitutional right is rendered illusory if Christians in Malaysia are denied access to Bibles in a language with which they are familiar.

This action of withholding the Bahasa Malaysia Bibles deprives Christians in Sabah, Sarawak, and in Semenanjung, a large majority of whom use Bahasa Malaysia, the right to use the Holy Scriptures in Bahasa Malaysia, to practice and profess their faith and, to nourish themselves spiritually.

It is baseless to withhold the Bibles in Bahasa Malaysia on the ground that they are "prejudicial to public order". Bibles in Bahasa Malaysia have been used since before the independence of our country

and has never been the cause of any public disorder.

Since the 1970s and in consonance with the government's policies in education and the national language, Christians in Malaysia have received their education in Bahasa Malaysia. To deny the same Christians in Malaysia the right to read and study the Bible in Bahasa Malaysia is thus ridiculous and offensive. In fact, it is this action by the authorities themselves which is an affront to good public order.

We call on the relevant government officials who have neither the authority nor the right to act in this unconscionable manner to explain their action to the church leaders and to the public.

Church leaders and the Executive Committee of the CFM in "An Affirmation to the Churches in Malaysia" (6-8 Sept 1989, the Kuching consultation) and then later in "A Declaration to Churches in Malaysia" (30 January 2008) have stood on their commitment to Bahasa Malaysia as our national language and have used and continue to use Bahasa Malaysia in the life and witness of our Churches and Christian organizations.

The government and CFM have exchanged letters on this matter previously and we have a written agreement in December 2005 that Bahasa Malaysia Bibles can be distributed so long as the symbol of the cross and the words "A Christian publication" are printed on the front page.

We call on the government to walk the talk of its 1Malaysia policy and vision and not to curtail or impose conditions on the freedom of citizens to worship, pray and read the Holy Scriptures in Bahasa Malaysia. How can the first pillar of the Rukunegara i.e. Belief In God, be made a living reality in the lives of Malaysians if the government imposes restrictions and conditions on the constitutional and fundamental right of citizens to freedom of religion?

We ask that the relevant authorities resolve this matter promptly and release these Bibles for the use of Christians without any further delay or excuse.

Bishop Ng Moon Hing,
Chairman and the Executive Committee,
The Christian Federation of Malaysia
Dated : 4 Nov 2009

Methodist Youth Council AGM

On the 20th October 2009, representatives from the Youth fellowships of the General Conference of the Methodist Church in Malaysia met at the Methodist Headquarters to hold their inaugural Annual General Meeting to elect Council members to the Persaudaraan Belia Methodist Malaysia (PBMM). These members would take over from the Pro-tem committee that was in place to register the fellowship with the Registrar of Youth Societies, Malaysia. The newly elected members are as follows:

President	Mr Ong Jen Tak
Vice President I	Mr Edwin Selvanesan S.
Vice President II	Mr Tang Yew Hwang
Secretary I	Mr. Julian John
Secretary II	Ms Samantha Tan
Treasurer	Mr. James Ong
Advisor I	Mr Ronald Yap
Advisor II	Rev Jonathan Jesudas
Advisor III	Pastor Chieng Yu Hoo



Amidst all the discussions and relationship building that the council members need to do, they have also planned to hold the following projects in the near future: Young Leaders Conference, Youth in Prayer Conference, and a Survey of Youth Ministry in our Methodist Conferences. The PBMM Council is also in the midst of launching its website on www.methodistyouth.org.my. Stay tuned for future updates.

Ronald Yap
Wesley Methodist Church
Kuala Lumpur



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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.

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