



From right - Mr Park Seung-Ho (Mayor of Pohang City), Mr. Yogarajan a/l Packrisamy (Principal of SMK Methodist, Tg. Malim), Pn Lau Yoke Yin (Mentor and teacher advisor), Wong Shun Yi, Nur Hazirah Mohd Razali, Michael Goh Joon Seng and Datuk Zulkifly Mohd Wazir (Education Ministry's School Management Division Director).

On 13 January 2010 Dr Lim Boon Hock, Executive Director of the Council of Education of the Methodist Church, presented certificates of appreciation and souvenirs to the students and Madam Lau on behalf of Bishop Dr Hwa Yung.

He said, "We realise that these are but mere tokens of appreciation, and can hardly reflect the sheer number of hours, days, weeks, and months of dedicated hard work you have all put in to achieve this much coveted victory. You did not rest complacent when you won the Silver Placing in Yokohama, Japan in November 2008. That 2nd placing motivated you to strive even harder to achieve the World No.1 placing one year later! You are a model of inspiration to the students of Tanjong Malim Methodist English School (MES), and indeed to all students in Malaysia!"

Dr Lim also informed us that MES Tanjong Malim has been performing well in many areas in recent years and has drawn increasing numbers to the school. For this year enrolment reached more than 1300 students, with 39 classes. The already over-crowded school has only 14 classrooms resulting in every available space used as 'floating classrooms'. But thankfully the Tamil Methodist Church Tanjong Malim has just made available four additional classrooms it has for the school to use.

The experience and example of SMK Methodist Tanjong Malim is the kind of development of its schools that the Methodist Church envisions for the long term contribution and impact for nation building and mission in the country.

Methodist School Wins Gold at World Robot Olympiad

Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Methodist Tanjong Malim did the nation proud when its team won the gold medal in the Senior High School Open Category at the World Robot Olympiad 2009 held in Pohang, South Korea from 5 – 9 November.

Another school, SJKC Jalan Davidson, Kuala Lumpur also won the gold medal in the Primary School Open Category. The winning teams also received a special award as recognition for outstanding performance, creativity, and competitive spirit for intelligent robot technology development. With two gold medals and two Special Awards the Malaysian contingent was the overall champion of the Olympiad. Altogether six teams from Malaysian schools took part in the competition which had participants from 32 countries.

This was not the first win for SMK Methodist Tanjong Malim. At the Olympiad 2008 in Yokohama, Japan the school won the silver medal. This time round they did one better.

The school represented Malaysia in that category after winning the National Robotics Competition held earlier in September. The team comprised of Michael Goh (team leader), Wong Shun Yi and Nur Hazirah Mohd Razali. Their entry was on the theme: Artist Robot.

The teams were welcomed in Putrajaya by Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin where they demonstrated their robot creations.

Madam Lau Yoke Yin, the Mentor and teacher advisor and also the mother of team leader Michael, believes it is the Lord who has given them this victory and gives thanks and praise to Him. "Our victory belongs to Christ our Lord!" she says and refers to one of many verses that gave inspiration to her.

If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever (1 Peter 4:11b)



Unveiling the plaque. Dato' Ong (centre), Bishop Hwa Yung and Mr Khor Hong Yin, Principal of MBS Penang.

A New Milestone for MBS Penang



Ground Breaking Ceremony Of New 6th Form Block Methodist Boys' School Penang

MBS Penang created a milestone in its school history when it finally managed to garner enough funds to start the construction of the proposed 6th form block in its premises. The new 6th form block comprises 3 storeys and 15 classrooms at a cost of RM1.34 million. Through many fund raising efforts like the sponsorship of classrooms by old boys, MBS fund raising dinner, MBS Food Carnival, donations from well wishers and the federal government, the MBS Board of Governors has managed to collect RM1.15 million which is still short of the actual cost of construction.

The school is most fortunate to have prominent and distinguished old boys who are ever ready to answer their alma mater's call like Dato' Ong Boon Kheng, the managing Director of Electcoms Berhad, from the class of 1954 who has agreed to underwrite the remainder of the building costs for the school. According to the Principal, Mr. Khor Hong Yin, the whole project would still require another RM200, 000 or more to cover other expenses that include fixtures, fittings, wiring, furniture and so forth. The school is hopeful that it would be able to receive a significant contribution from the state government in order to cater to the growing needs of the sixth form students of MBS which incidentally has the largest number of 6th form classes in Penang. At the moment, the students have to squat at the canteen, at the laboratory or float from class to class and the situation gets worse

when the afternoon session comes in and the 6th formers have to congregate at the school hall to carry out their research projects.

Construction of the new block began in December 2009 and is scheduled to be completed in October 2010. The ground breaking ceremony on 18 January 2010 saw the arrival of the guests of honour, Rev Dr Hwa Yung, the Bishop of the Methodist Church in Malaysia, also an ex-MBSian and Dato' Ong Boon Kheng who were welcomed by the school kompong and bunga mangga group, the uniformed bodies guard of honour, the Indian stick dancers and last but not least the lion dance troupe from MBS.

The dedication ceremony by the Bishop began at 10.30 am followed by presentations by the school orchestra, the school choir, and the school Christian Fellowship. This was followed by speeches by the Principal and the guests-of-honour. The highlight of the event was the declaration and the act of consecration led by the Bishop and finally the laying of the foundation stone by Dato' Ong Boon Kheng culminating in hymn singing and the closing prayer.

All invited guests were then ushered to Suffolk House for lunch at the closing of the event.

Wong Chiew Lee
MBS Penang

Malaysia National Prayer Network (MNPN)



The National Leaders' Prayer Consultation, 7-9 Dec 2009, was attended by about 60 people including heads and leaders of different denominations.

We adopted the vision: The Church in Malaysia - united, prayerful and disciple making and Malaysia - a land of liberty, justice, love and Godly rest.

This vision is to be disseminated to ALL Malaysian Christians. Different network leaders prayed together and asked the Lord for

plans to increase the temperature of prayer in their respective circles of influence.

The Consultation adopted the MNPN committee's proposal to hold a nationwide Prayer Convocation in three strategic places on Sept 15 -16 (Malaysia Day) for year 2010 - 2012. This year the Convocation will be in Sibul, Sarawak. The call is to all Malaysian Christians to gather and pray for revival and transformation of our beloved nation.

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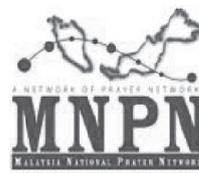
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Malaysia National Prayer Network (MNP)

Praise God for His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning (Ps 30:5).

1. The Church (1 Col 1:9-12)

- we will be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding
- we will live our lives honouring and pleasing Him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, increasing in the knowledge of God
- we will be strengthened with His power so that we will not give up when trouble comes but will be patient
- we will joyfully give thanks to our Father, the living God, always
- we will compassionately reach out to the youth who are facing identity crises, who are lost in their moral pursuit

2. Pray for the maturity of our national leaders, ministers, members of Parliament, representatives of rakyat, and all those who serve in the federal government and the state governments: men and women of good moral standing and discernment, humble and sacrificial, hate evil, love good and establish justice.

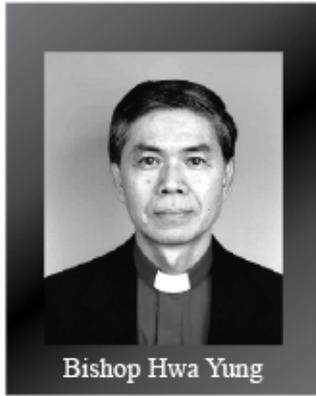
- They will walk in integrity and serve diligently
- They will not perverse in their speech, their lips will bring peace not strife, their mouths call for harmony not blows. They will not show partiality to the wicked nor thrust aside righteous in judgment.
- They will not politicise issues nor manipulate public sentiment
- that they will place the wellbeing of the nation above all else and discard their own political agenda for personal gain.
- that the wicked and greedy ones will be removed.

3. Pray that all related departments and personnel will commit to reducing crime, fighting corruption, improving education, raising living standards of low-income households, improving rural basic infrastructure and urban public transport.

4. Pray that Government will have wisdom and expertise to work out comprehensive and wholistic strategies; it will be effective in implementation and prudent in public spending and management

- In June 2010, Government is expected to introduce the 10th Malaysia Plan, outlining new reforms.
- It is reported that although the rising cost of fuel and strained finances have forced the Federal government to reduce subsidies, Malaysia has profited from higher world energy prices as an oil and gas exporter.





Bishop Hwa Yung

Truth Matters – Especially for Such a Time as This

‘For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise ... from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this (Esther 4:14)?’

Introduction

At the 2nd Lausanne Congress in Manila, 1989, over 4000 international delegates were being welcomed by Senator Jovito R. Salonga, then President of the Philippines Senate. Speaking soon after the collapse of Marcos’ dictatorship, he reflected on the difficulties they had just lived through. He said, ‘During the twenty-year rule which ended in February 1988, we were also described as the most corrupt nation in Asia But let me add that our people are not easily fooled. During the days of dictatorship, we believed only three things printed in the newspapers: the classified ads, the death notices, and the comics!’¹ In recent years, as I read the newspapers, I often find myself musing over again and again Senator Salonga’s words, and wonder to what extent it has now become true of Malaysia?

There are three ways by which truth becomes inconsequential. The first is the age-old problem of ignorance which can be removed by education and learning. The second is of more recent vintage, caused by modernity and post-modernity. And the third is perhaps the most sinister, a cynical disregard for truth that springs from self-seeking expediency and sheer dishonesty.

A good example of the first is my earliest experience of the eclipse of the moon. My initial childhood years were spent in a small fishing village off the coast of Hong Kong. Among the superstitious villagers, there existed the belief that a lunar eclipse occurs because the dog of the heavens was trying to eat up the moon! The way to save the moon

was to make as much noise as possible to frighten off the dog. So on the night of my first lunar eclipse, all the villagers brought out their gongs, their pots and pans, and whatever else they could find to make a racket, and beat them as loud as possible. Of course, eventually the dog got scared and ran off, and we got our moon back. That was the truth for me then!?

The second way by which truth is cast aside is best illustrated by the story of Harvard’s motto, *Veritas*, which is the Latin for truth. For more than 200 years, it was followed by reference to John 8:32. Actually the original full motto was ‘Truth for Christ and the Church.’ Years ago the words, ‘for Christ and the Church’ were dropped. Today, Harvard does not even believe that there is such a thing as truth in religious and moral beliefs. Indeed, one website on the motto even asserted: ‘It remains to be seen, however, how soon the word *Veritas* would disappear from the shield. “Truth” is simply not a concept favored by our postmodernist society.’²

Much of western culture today, strongly influenced by the philosophies of the Enlightenment, affirms that modernity no longer believes in truth in religion and morality. Truth is found only in science, logic and mathematics. Post-modernity, built on modernity goes even further: Everything is a matter of perspective. You choose what you want to believe! It is important that we understand what this means. It is not that truth and falsehood exist, and that we prefer falsehood to truth. Rather, post-modernity asserts that there is no such thing as truth and falsehood. Everything is relative!

This is a modern western problem. Traditional societies of whatever culture have always affirmed the concept of truth, especially religious and moral truths. This is so with Chinese and Indian philosophies, as well as Islam, etc. But the cultures of modernity and post-modernity reject these categorically. It should be noted however, that although this began as a modern western problem, it has increasingly infected the younger generations in the non-western world today, including those in our own country.

The third way by which truth is cast aside, as earlier indicated, is through a total disregard for truth rooted in sheer expediency and utter self-seeking. The difference between this and the second is that actually truth is affirmed in this case, but conveniently ignored in practice for one’s own gain. Perhaps the best example here is Pilate, the deeply corrupted Roman governor who condemned Jesus to the Cross. At his trial, Jesus said to him, ‘Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.’ Down the ages, Pilate’s cynical reply has been repeated ad infinitum in every society and every culture: ‘What is truth’ (John 18:38)? As the Prophet Isaiah (59:14f) describes it, the results are deadly serious:

*Justice is turned back,
And righteousness stands afar off;
For truth has stumbled in the public squares,
And uprightness cannot enter.
Truth is lacking,
And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.*

Whatever may be the reason for setting aside truth in our lives, all of us

know that this will often have disastrous consequences for our lives and our societies. If moral truth does not exist or is ignored, there can be no place for honesty and integrity in personal and public life. As one cynic in the Brenda Starr comic strip states it with stark simplicity: 'Ethics is like Mercedes, babe. Nice to look at but totally unnecessary!'

Could this be at the very heart of the financial crisis in the west today? A few years ago it was the collapse of Enron, MCI and Arthur Anderson. In the last one and a half years, we went through the largest financial crisis that the world has ever known. If the western governments had not stepped in with bailouts to the tune of \$1.2 trillion, the City of London and Wall Street in New York would have sunk permanently into the Thames and Hudson Rivers respectively! And much of the blame lies with bankers and financial executives who brought this on the whole world through their greed, self-seeking ambitions and empire-building, with little regard for integrity and public responsibility.

'The Truth Shall Set You Free'

It is against this background that we need to look again at Jesus' words in John 8:31f: 'To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."' The context of the passage is somewhat complicated but the key point of what Jesus said is fairly straightforward. If sin is the root of our human problem, then only through Jesus can we overcome its power and find our way back to God. In Christ, we will know the truth and 'the truth will set you free'!

Clearly the words of Jesus have a wider application. What Jesus says here speaks directly to the issue with which we began: What is truth? Is there such a thing as truth? What blessings would truth telling bring into human life? And what tragic consequences would result from its denial and rejection?

The Christian answer to these questions is simply that truth exists. It has been affirmed in every culture and society since time immemorial, with the exception of modernity and post-

modernity. It is embedded deeply in our human conscience, and required by the simplest laws of logic. Without truth, relationships, life, communication, commerce and everything else which makes us human become impossible. To give but one example: Traders in Antwerp, the world diamond trade centre, traditionally seal their deals of diamond fortunes with a 'mere handshake and the Yiddish words "*mazel und broche*"-- "luck and blessing,""³ without recourse to any written contracts. Try doing that in a world where truth does not exist! Do we still wonder at all why the banking crisis of 2008-9 happened?

The above answer would be shared by all who affirm and love truth, both Christian and non-Christians alike. However, the Christian would go one step further. Like Harvard's original motto, he believes that truth is ultimately found in Christ!

What is the relevance of Jesus' words 'the truth will set you free'?

What is the relevance of all these? The answer is that, not only will the truth in Christ set us free from sin and its power over our lives, truth in all its fullness sets us free to become truly human and all that God intends us to be! Indeed, whether Christians or not, all men of good will are agreed that without truth we will forever be enslaved to falsehood and superstition, sloppy arguments and muddle-thinking, lies and political manipulation, and ultimately demonic deceptions and follies of the highest order. These inevitably lead to the loss of integrity in life, social injustice, economic inequalities, political oppression, and eventually the destruction of all that is good and beautiful through dehumanisation processes of all kinds. It is truth that sets us free! Allow me to illustrate with some examples.

It was scientific truth which set me free from the belief that a dog could eat up the moon. Am I not glad nowadays that I do not have to bang pots and pans every time a lunar eclipse occurs in order to get our moon back?

If scientific truths can help to dispel age-old myths and foolish superstitions like the ones that enslaved the people of the village I grew up in, there are unfortunately also 'scientific' myths and

philosophical dogmas which enslave modern humanity and need shattering in turn! For example, knowing the truth will set us free from the dogma that scientific discoveries such as evolution prove that God does not exist--a myth widely popularised in the last hundred years or so by secularists, Marxists and atheistic scientists of the likes of Richard Dawkins.

Careful study of Darwin, for example, will show that towards the end of his life, he wavered between agnosticism and belief. But certainly he was no atheist! There are indeed outstanding scientists today who actually find that belief in God and evolution at one and the same time is not contradictory but mutually affirming. One of the best examples is Francis Collins who headed the Human Genome project which completed the sequencing of the human DNA only a few years ago. In his book, *The Language of God*, he tells of his own conversion from atheism to Christianity, following his own pilgrimage in his mid-twenties, after a Yale PhD in physical chemistry and while working towards his MD⁴.

Or again, consider the surprise conversion of Anthony Flew to theism in 2004. Flew was the most famous atheistic academic philosopher of the last generation, whose arguments for the non-existence of God is well known to undergraduate philosophy students in universities all over the world. Suddenly he announces in his 80s that he is a believer in God—even though not yet a Christian—because science has come to the point where it shows that you cannot simply explain the origin of life on naturalistic reasons alone⁵!

A third example is that truth sets us free from the belief that man by himself, without God-given ethical values, can build a just and equal world where everyone can have his or her fair share under the sun. In 1989 the world witnessed the spectacular crumbling of the Berlin Wall, and the end of the 20th century Marxist experiment. What brought about the collapse? Harold Berman, the doyen of American legal scholars on the relationship between law and religion, writing soon after the end of the Soviet era, commented as follows:

The collapse of Communism was primarily a moral collapse, a spiritual collapse. Soviet socialism preached altruism, social responsibility, honesty—but practiced self-seeking, corruption, and deception. A primary reason for that failure, it seems to me, was its doctrine of the fundamental goodness, and consequently the self-sufficiency of man and its lack of belief in a transcendent order, personal salvation and eternal life. If honesty is only a virtue and not a divine commandment, it lacks the necessary element of sanctity, and it will be discarded when it becomes inexpedient... Today at relatively high levels of government and among scholars and opinion leaders there is a strong belief that religious faith is essential to the process of democratization in Russia ... the Minister of Justice of the Russian Republic at a talk given recently in Washington ... opened his remarks by saying that Russia needs to rebuild its legal system “with God as the backbone.”⁶

How did some of these ex-Soviet leaders come to such a conclusion? Answer: They saw the worst excesses of atheism in society as a result of the grand Marxist experiment. Stalin alone killed 21 million, and Mao another 10-20 million as well, not to mention others like Pol Pot, etc.!

But the need for truth is not something that is faced by western societies and Marxist (or, ex-Marxist) societies like Russia and China. Falsehood, evil, injustice, and the like can be found everywhere including our own country. Just think of the long list of major corruption cases and bail-outs,

culminating in the latest on the PKFZ! Just think of the public outcry over the death of Teoh Beng Hock, and the numerous other examples like A. Kugan who have died in custody, with much of the public feeling that there is much more to it than meets the eye! One can easily give a whole list of examples of alleged cover-ups and lack of transparency in our society over unresolved judicial cases and the loss of tens of billions of Ringgit in the past 25 years! The consequence is that we find ourselves living in a nation which is increasingly enslaved to lies and more damned lies! ‘Truth has perished’ (Jer 7:28); it ‘has stumbled in the public squares’ (Is 59:15).

How then shall we live?

How then shall we live? The Soviet Nobel Laureate, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who contributed so much to bringing about the collapse of Marxism, died in 2008. In his obituary written in *The Economist*, we read:

PEOPLE knew it was there: the vast amazing country of *Gulag* which, “though scattered in an Archipelago geographically, was, in the psychological sense, fused into a continent—an almost invisible, almost imperceptible country.” Trains went in, and people were sent to administer it from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. But until Alexander Solzhenitsyn had spent eight years there, laying bricks and smelting metal in the intensest heat and cold, hearing fellow-inmates, like rats, stealing his food in the dark, wearing wrist-crushing handcuffs for the least infraction, this land was not fully revealed to the outside world.

“The Gulag Archipelago” was a book carried out of the camps “on the skin of my back”, to bear witness on behalf of everyone still inside.... Its appearance, in 1973, immediately led to his expulsion from the Soviet Union. But his work was done. He had exposed the fissures in the system, a truth-telling that had begun, 11 years earlier during the Khrushchev thaw, with the publication ... of “One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich”... after this ... the disintegration of the Soviet state was only a matter of time.⁷

Solzhenitsyn was not alone in his expose of the lies of the Soviet system. But he was certainly the most important figure! Few of us, if any, will ever rise to the stature of a Solzhenitsyn. But if each of us could resolve at least to do an Irene Fernandez in truth-telling, there will indeed be hope for our nation. And in this aspiration, we can take heart in that we are joined by many others who may not be Christians, but are nonetheless equally passionate for truth to prevail both in private and in public!

Many of us are aware that the stakes are extremely high, both for ourselves and our nation. For if we do not play our part and do what God calls us to do, I fear the day will come when suddenly another huge major scandal blows up in our faces, with tens of billions of Ringgit being siphoned away into off-shore accounts. And all our citizens will know or can do is to get everyone to bring out their pots and pans and bang them as hard as possible, in the hope that we can frighten off the big buaya from eating up this beautiful country of ours!

End Notes

¹Jovito R. Salonga, ‘Welcoming Remarks,’ in *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes—Calling the Whole Church to the Whole Gospel to the Whole World*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1990), p. 46.

²‘Harvard’s motto and the limits of knowledge’ (Oct 25, 2007); <http://www.inrebus.com/index.php?entry=entry071025-233814>

³Cecile Low, ‘A Deal on a Handshake,’ *New York Times* (July 13, 1997); <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/07/13/opinion/1-a-deal-on-a-handshake-110230.html?pagewanted=1>

⁴Francis S. Collins. *The Language of God: a Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2006).

⁵See e.g. Anthony Flew, ‘My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Theism,’ (2004); <http://www.biola.edu/antonyflew/flew-interview.pdf>

⁶Harold Berman, *Faith and Order—The Reconciliation of Law and Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: 1993), pp. 400f.

⁷Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Economist* (Print Ed., Aug 7, 2008); http://www.economist.com/obituary/displaystory.cfm?story_id=E1_TTRRDTRJ



34th

Session Tamil Annual Conference 26 – 30 November 2009



The conference took place in Kuantan with all pastors and delegates from the 48 churches represented there. The Full Ministerial Session took place on the morning of 26 November.

The Conference President, Rev C. Jayaraj, declared open the conference after the opening worship service. Rev Jayaraj gave an inspiring message and Bishop Hwa Yung administered the Holy Communion. The morning services were edifying with challenging messages by Reverends Dennis Raj, Joseph Kumar and A. E. Joseph.

During the Presidential Address he gave a precise account highlighting the strengths and concerns of the conference. He emphasized on renewal, prayer, discipleship and dedication. "Vision 2015 – Absolute Double" was highlighted again. All the reports from the District Superintendents, Boards and Agencies were well received.

These are some of the items for praise and prayer reported at the Conference.

- There is marked growth in the youth ministry, evangelism and missions. All the churches were faithful in their giving. The missions budget is exceeding RM600,000 and money is given by all our local churches.
- The total full membership has gone up to 8787 as of 30 June 2009. The Statistician gave a good report of all the facts and figures.

- The Cheras Outreach ministry will become a local conference in 2010.
- 5 young people have committed for full time ministry and they will do pre-seminary exposure ministry in 2010.
- Even though we receive new people and full time workers, concern was raised about the situation of pastors and lay people leaving. There was a call for greater loyalty to the Conference.
- The Tangkak/Sagil church was struggling for the last few years. In 2010 it will become a circuit church/conference with Jasin/Asahan church.

The President also mentioned the difficult conflicts that happen from time to time in the churches. This does affect the ministries and he called for more love, humility and patience to be exercised.

At the Conference it was announced that Rev M. G. Thana Raj will be taking early retirement after 25 years in the ministry. And Approved Supply Pastors Krishnan and John Mathuni was to retire at the end of 2009, but will continue to serve as retired pastors. Rev P. Tevaraji will serve as the District Superintendent of Selangor District from 2010. And Mr Issac Nathan was ordained Approved Supply Pastor.

The Local Organizing Committee under Rev Mark Subramaniam did an excellent job of the arrangements, accommodation and meals.

第三十四届 华人年议会报导

报导：杨证强

年议会是一个庆典，是教会努力耕耘一年后丰收的时刻。教会借着丰收，庆祝和激励，共同计划来年圣工的发展，共赴一个传福音的使命，开拓天国的疆土。张焕祥牧师于第三十四届年议会圣餐礼上如是指出。

是届年议会于11月11至13日假吉隆坡联邦酒店举行，共有322位牧者同工与代表出席参加。华人年议会2010年的主题为：扎根主道，迈向成熟。较早时，年议会圣餐礼于11日下午1时正假吉隆坡福建堂举行。过后众人移步至卫理大厦，一同见证卫理大厦“整装待发”装修重新启用礼。

三天两夜的议会中，除了各部门的报告外，年议会宣教部也安排泰北宣教区包括盘忠昌传道夫妇在内的六位传道人出席观摩。莫泽川在会议上提议将泰北宣教事工提升并成立泰北阿佻宣教区。莫会长表示，这次观摩主要目的是要让泰北宣教区的传道人学习进行议会，以便将来能有效地组织泰北的教会。出席并主持议会的华勇会督也对华人年议会的宣教工作成绩感到欣慰和鼓舞。

今届年议会适逢甲洞堂卫理公会庆祝25周年，因此按立牧职典礼和闭幕礼也移师该教会举行。华勇会督在给予勉励时，提醒教牧同工们，不要效法这个世界，为争取领导的位置，追求自己的利益，倒要学习耶稣所教训的，大的要服侍小的，做首的要成为众人的仆人（可10：43-44）。他以保罗劝勉提摩太为例，劝勉教牧同工尤其毕业的年轻传道人，要在敬虔的生活上操练自己（提前4：7-8）；不可叫人小看你年轻，总要在言语、行为、爱心、信心、清洁上，都做众信徒的榜样（12-13节）；也不要轻忽所得的恩赐（14节）。

今年，高秀来牧师被按立为长牧，被按立为副牧的则有叶建顺、余国铨、詹友训及黄雪凌牧师。方既顺牧师今年申请转会至三一年议会，而张焕祥牧师也届满65岁荣休。新委派的教区长是北部教区长黄约辉牧师、曼绒教区长郭进吟牧师、雪兰莪教区长方既志牧师及南中教区长陈添喜牧师。

年议会结束后，甲洞堂在其会所开席招待众牧者和代表们。为了让每个人尝到新鲜美味的海鲜餐，该教会特地特从适耕庄请来著名厨师，使人大快朵颐。年议会在一片热腾的欢乐声中圆满落幕。

34 Sessions Chinese Annual Conference

The 34th Session Chinese Annual Conference was held 11-13 November 2009 at the Federal Hotel Kuala Lumpur. It was attended by 322 ministers and delegates. The opening Holy Communion Service was held in the Methodist Hokkien Church after which the Reopening Ceremony of Wisma Methodist took place.

There were six pastors from northern Thailand who came to observe the Conference Session. It was the 25th Anniversary of CMC Kepong. The Ordination and Closing Service was held after the end of business.



Pastors from northern Thailand presented a song in the Aka language

来自泰北宣教区的传道们在年议会上以阿佻语唱出《一切歌颂赞美》。



Everyone was delighted when awarded the 10% Growth Banner

获得教会10%增长的旗帜，个个喜上眉头。



Mr Richard Wong, former Conference Lay Leader and present Chairman of the Board of Missions, was ordained as Supply Pastor. He was welcomed by Rev Yau Kah Fatt, Chairman of the Board of Ministry.

前年会友领袖，现任宣教部主席黄敬映弟兄献身成为辅助传道，牧职部主席饶家发牧师上前表示欢迎。



Rev Boh Che Suan presenting an appreciation plaque to Rev Teoh Huan Seong on his retirement.

张焕祥牧师（左二）退休，莫会长给予奖状嘉许。

卫理大厦装修 竣工启用礼

整理报导：杨证强

耗资4百50万令吉装修费的卫理大厦于2009年11月11日星期三下午2时30分重新启用。当天，三百多位出席参加第三十四届华人年议会的牧者和代表们在吉隆坡福建堂圣餐崇拜后，移步至卫理大厦前。马来西亚基督教卫理公会会督华勇博士及华人年议会会长莫泽川牧师一起为焕然一新的大厦主持装修竣工启用礼。

于1975年建峻的卫理大厦乃由已故华人年议会方中南会长推动兴建，由绘测师何约翰先生设计，当时的建筑费已高达惊人的一百六七十万元。按卫理大厦兴建之目的有三，其一为借租出部份楼位而有固定之收入，以代前外国教会之资助，维持及发展宣教圣工，其次可供年议会各部会团契组织有适当之办事及活动处所。

2005年，莫泽川会长在第三十届华人年议会上首次向所有的教牧及教会领袖提出卫理大厦“整装待发”工程的建议。莫会长提出此建议，主要是卫理大厦外观已显得非常陈旧，硬体设备如冷气

系统、电话、厕所及客房都需维修或更换，这是卫理大厦成立30年后第一次的大装修。

卫理大厦“整装待发”装修工程于2008年3月1日动土兴建，并于今年2月28日竣工。为了让年议会属下各部门及教会能在卫理厦举行中型会议、进修会或家庭营，大厦腾出三层楼作为客房用途。届时客房将增到48间，可供约100人住宿。另外，大厦也包括一间可容纳120人的礼堂。为了配合时代的需求，装修后的卫理大厦设有小餐厅和大厅，让来者有宾至如归的感觉。

卫理大厦整装待发工程象征着年议会的新里程碑：“整装”——全新的面貌、“面对”——全新的挑战、“建向”——全新的旅程。

当天何约翰先生一家人也难得出席观礼。礼毕后，莫会长华勇会督与何约翰先生一家人到其办公室及四处参观巡视。华勇会督打趣说，“这是第一次莫会长邀请他进会长的办公室。”

Reopening Ceremony of Wisma Methodist, Chinese Annual Conference

Wisma Methodist was reopened on 11 November 2009 after a RM4.5 million renovation. The service was attended by more than 300 people.

The building was constructed in 1975 on the proposal of the late Bishop Emeritus C. N. Fang. In 2005 Rev Boh Che Suan, President of CAC, suggested

the project, the first major renovation after 30 years.

The work started on 1 March 2008 and was completed on 28 February 2009. It has a reception lobby. Three floors are used as guest rooms. And there is a chapel that can accommodate 120 people.



Bishop Hwa Yung (2nd row middle), President Boh Che Suan (2nd Row 7 from left) and Mr Lim Shi Qiang, Chairman of Renovation Project Committee (2nd Row 7 from right) officiating the Reopening Thanksgiving Ceremony together with the DSs and members of the Committee.

华勇会督（第二排中间者）、莫泽川会长（第二排左七）及装修工程委员会主席林志强先生（第二排右七）率领众教区长及工程委员会一同为大厦举行装修竣工启用礼。



MSF Choir of Methodist Hokkien Church KL presenting a song during the Holy Communion.

吉隆坡福建堂乐龄诗班在圣餐礼上献诗。



Cutting the ribbon by Bishop Hwa Yung, Rev Boh Che Suan and CAC Conference Lay Leader, Brother Lim Shi Qiang.

华勇会督、莫泽川会长及年议会友领袖林志强弟兄一同为卫理大厦重新启用礼剪彩。



34th Session Trinity Annual Conference

21 – 24 November 2009, Melaka



Gathered around the swimming pool.



Conference speaker Dr Steve Seamands

Ministers and lay delegates from our TRAC churches came together for the 34th Session TRAC Annual Conference held at the Everly Resort Hotel, Melaka. That Session was significant for it marked the last of the “quadrennial working year” and the beginning of another with a new theme, “Spreading Scriptural Holiness, Transforming the Nation.” Its accompanying four essentials are:

1. Lifelong Discipleship
2. Wholesome Families,
3. A Voice to Our Nation
4. A Vision for the World.

This is in line with the General Conference’s Road Map Emphases for the next few quadrennials and all churches are to work in tandem with these essentials.

At the Opening Worship and Communion Service, Conference President, Rev Dr Ong Hwai Teik spoke on the topic: “More Beyond: The Call and Challenge to go Deeper” based on the scripture text, Luke 5:1-11. He called on us to go deeper in the faith, in commitment and in submission to Christ; to go deeper especially in the area of the spiritual disciplines leading to transformed lives. As TRAC launches out with a new vision, the Sengoi Mission Conference is moving into deeper waters as well, as they have launched “Wawasan Berdikari 2020” with the goal of becoming a Provisional Annual Conference. The confidence is that the Lord is with us when we walk into deeper waters.

The Conference speaker was Dr Steve Seamands who gave three talks. He reminded us that God wants our wholeheartedness in our love and deep relationship with Him. He wants to give us the best gift but as we receive the best from Him, we must be mindful that we do not idolize that gift and forget the Giver.

In the second talk Dr Seamands used the passage Joshua 5:1-12 to explain how God wants to release us of the areas of shame, disgrace, failures in our lives so that we can go deeper in our relationship with Him. “Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.”

And the final talk he pointed out the power of praise. We can praise God in the midst of difficult times and when we do that, we are putting

God in charge. “My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long.” Psalm 71:8

For our workshop sessions, Mr Peter Yew gave a power point presentation on the work being carried by the members of Wesley Seremban, through Persatuan Berdikari Seremban Its vision statement is “To teach the trainees to be self reliant, giving them the right to live meaningful and full lives, with a hope to move towards independent living and to be competent members of society.” The TRAC President called on all TRAC churches to support this worthy cause.

Ms Irene Chan from EE Malaysia introduced the exciting new “product” called XEE to the conference. XEE is an adaptation of the Evangelism Explosion training ministry which is designed to reach primarily Generation X (25-40 age group) and younger.

A memorial service was held for Rev Eugene McGraw (17 May 1909 – 6 July 2009) and Dr Larry Cheah (21 May 1935 – 29 January 2009). Family members of Dr Larry Cheah were present at the memorial service.

At the Closing Service, Bishop Dr Hwa Yung delivered the message “Train yourself in godliness” based on the Scripture text 1 Timothy 4:7-16. We are called to train ourselves in godliness which means that we are to externally reflect Christ-like character and to have the fear of the Lord in our hearts. He reminded the pastors that lay people want 3 things from pastors: that they are godly, that they work hard and that they love those put under their charge.

We cannot help but notice that our Conference Sessions have evolved by the grace of God. As we bathe our Conference sessions in prayer, indicating our total dependence on Him, God will guide and bless with His presence. It is heartening to see more of our conference participants (30-40) coming together at 6 am in the morning to praise God and commune with Him. The Business Sessions went on smoothly as reports from the various Boards and Districts were received.

Mrs Lily Ch’ng
Trinity Methodist Church Petaling Jaya

(This is a shortened version of the report Mrs Ch’ng wrote for Berita TRAC)



Tribute to Rev Eugene McGraw (From a grateful student)

The eulogy below, written by Mr Moses Tay, was read by Dato' Daniel Tay at the Memorial Service held during the 34th Session TRAC. Rev McGraw got his nickname Mac

in Malaya and has been known as such since then. Dato' Tay said, "I met the Rev Eugene McGraw when I was a child no more than 10 years of age. It was also my first time hearing English spoken with a strong foreign accent. My father, now in his eighties worked with him for several years and it is appropriate to read what my dad speaks of him."

" He came He saw and He conquered " - Shakespeare

I was very grieved to hear of Mac's demise. Last month he wrote to me to say that he hoped to reach his father's longevity record of 102. Sadly he just missed it.

Mac spent 13 years of his most productive years in the ACS Sitiawan. He took over from Rev D. P. Coole in 1937. The school then consisted of dilapidated classrooms and a hundred students. Mac immediately started work in all directions. He coaxed parents to send their children to the school, solicited for funds, repaired broken pipes and electrical faults. He recruited teachers and preached in church. It was a herculean task and Mac proved very competent in every department.

Mac went on furlough once and the second time he left the school was to flee from the Japanese invasion. He returned in the fifties after the war and it was this third term that he firmly laid the foundation of the school for future expansion.

To enumerate just a few of his achievements - he introduced the teaching of Science and built Science Labs; he started Industrial Arts and Home Science classes which earned government commendation; he renovated classrooms, the school hall and repaired many defunct utilities personally. He held Concerts and School Sports Days. Above all he was very ably assisted by his wife who proved to be an excellent English and English Literature teacher. Her former students unanimously acclaimed her to be the best English teacher they ever had. In short, the school's reputation today owes much to the McGraws.

Mac also played a very important role in the Methodist Church. He started a Pension Fund for pastors and served as a District Superintendent in various parts of Malaysia after he left the school. He returned to America in 1971.

I was most fortunate to serve under him all these years. I lined up to welcome him in 1937 and bade him goodbye in 1961.

As a student, he often disciplined me. As a teacher he and his wife inspired me to give my best. As a Senior Assistant he taught me Administration, Hard Work and Discipline. He taught me to love God and care for the underprivileged. He was my mentor throughout my career and I am most grateful.

So to all members of the McGraw family and to his Church, I say a big Thank You and bid a sad farewell. My only consolation is that I will meet him on the Resurrection Morn.

Moses Tay
Sitiawan

Judicial Council Voids **Sexuality** Statement

By Linda Bloom

Nov. 2, 2009 | DURHAM (UMNS)

There is an official position in The United Methodist Church on gay and lesbian sexuality, and that states the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.

The Judicial Council, the denomination's highest court, in a ruling released Nov. 2 said that the Baltimore-Washington Annual (regional) Conference went too far in adopting its own statement declaring "a more authentic and truthful representation of The United Methodist Church" is that "we disagree" on gay and lesbian issues.

"The effect of the Baltimore-Washington resolution is to negate the church's clearly stated position as reflected in current disciplinary language," the council wrote. "Moreover, the Baltimore-Washington resolution attempts to articulate a new and different standard of church belief using

language that has been specifically rejected by the General Conference."

Meeting Oct. 27-31, the nine-member court considered the statement during a review of a decision of law by Bishop John Schol. The court's ruling reverses his decision that the resolution of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference was in order.

The court said that while such statements can be "aspirational in nature," an annual (regional) conference "may not negate, ignore or violate" the Book of Discipline, "even when the disagreements are based upon conscientious objections."

General Conference upholds teaching

Delegates to the 2008 General Conference rejected proposed changes to the United Methodist Social Principles that would have

acknowledged that church members disagree on homosexuality and instead adopted a report retaining language that describes homosexual practice as "incompatible with Christian teaching."

In its 2009 annual meeting, the Baltimore-Washington Conference affirmed the rejected statement, declaring that it was prompted by the Holy Spirit to acknowledge "that we disagree yet all seek a faithful witness."

Those words went beyond permissible language, according to the Judicial Council, which noted that the Baltimore-Washington statement was patterned after the proposed legislation rejected by the General Conference.

This is a shortened version of the report taken from the United Methodist News Service.

Demand for Bible outstripping supply in China

by Charlie Boyd

The Bible Society has reported a growing demand for copies of the Bible in China where an estimated 500,000 people converted to Christianity in 2009 alone.

Although some four million Bibles were printed and distributed across China last year, the rapid growth of the church year on year means that demand for Bibles is now outstripping supply, according to the Bible Society.

The official number of Christians in China stands at 28.6 million, but it is believed the true figure could be as high as 90 million if the estimated number of worshippers at unofficial house churches is included.

The UK-based Bible Society subsidises the cost of printing Bibles to keep the cost below £2 a copy, vital for Christians living in China's rural heartland, where 70 per cent of churchgoers are found and half the population live on less than \$2 a day.

The Bibles are printed at the state-owned Amity Printing Company, which has printed around 70 million Bibles since it was established in 1987. Around 50 million of them have gone to Chinese believers.

"As more and more people are joining the Church they are asking for a Bible," says Bible Society's China Partnership Co-ordinator Kua Wee Seng.

"Every year we have to raise funds for Bible subsidy. The reason is that in the rural areas where most Christians are found, they are living in relatively poor conditions. In order for them to have a copy of the Bible we have to provide paper so that a Bible is affordable for most of the Christians in China.

"This is a time of opportunity in China. Many of us feel that we mustn't miss this opportunity or people will turn to something else, other than Christianity."

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British Methodists to pray and fast for oppressed Fiji Church

by Brian Hutt

Methodists in Britain and Ireland are being encouraged to pray and fast for the Methodist Church in Fiji as it continues to face oppression from the military government.

The Fijian Church has been banned from holding its annual Conference and choir festivals until 2014 after questioning the democratic credentials of the regime, which came to power by overthrowing the democratically elected government in 2006.

Criticising the regime is a criminal offence in Fiji, as is meeting without the government's permission. Earlier in the month, fifteen Church ministers were arrested and charged with breaking the

Public Emergency regulations by attending an unauthorised meeting last April. It brings the total number of Church ministers facing charges to 24.

Those charged include all members of the Fiji Methodist Church Standing Committee, who were arrested last year.

Methodists in Britain and Ireland are being encouraged to fast and pray on February 25, the day dedicated to Fiji in the Methodist Prayer Handbook. They are being invited to donate the money they would have spent on food to the World Mission Fund, which is offering long-term support to the Methodist Church in Fiji.

The Rev Stephen Poxon, ex-president of the British Methodist Conference and

Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society, said it was easy for believers in the UK to take religious freedoms for granted.

"The Methodist Church in Fiji simply desires to worship God and serve the people of Fiji with their ministry, but the government's unreasonable restrictions are making the Church's daily life almost impossible," he said.

"Through fasting and prayer, we want to show our solidarity with our Fijian brothers and sisters."

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United Methodists give \$11 million to Haiti

A UMNS Report By Barbara Dunlap-Berg



"So we rebuilt the wall, and all the wall was joined together . . . for the people had a mind to work." -- Nehemiah 4:6

United Methodists have set their hearts and minds to work since an earthquake devastated much of Haiti a month ago.

Through individual gifts and special offerings, benefit concerts and other innovative fundraisers, United Methodists

have donated \$11 million to the United Methodist Committee on Relief, according to Melissa Hinnen, the agency's director of communications.

The relief agency's Sager Brown Depot distribution center in Baldwin, La., has collected 350,000 health kits. Near Lexington, Ky., members of First United Methodist Church, Paris, gathered and packed about 1,200 health kits. Similar kit-packing efforts are multiplying across the United Methodist connection.

Even before the earthquake rocked Haiti, many Haitian mothers lacked swaddling clothes in which to wrap their newborns. In the days since the disaster, babies have been born amid rubble, in field hospitals and in rudimentary shelters, and surviving parents are even less likely to have

clean clothes and diapers to welcome them.

Churches, schools and community groups are purchasing items and assembling layette kits. Each kit contains diapers, washcloths, one-piece body suits or shirts, gowns, diaper pins and receiving blankets. The efforts, large and small, are making a difference.

"We need ongoing support and prayers for the partnership in Haiti to stay strong," said the Rev. Paul Doherty, chair of the Michigan Area Haiti task force and an UMCOR liaison.

"The journey to bring relief to Haiti is going to be long and hard. It calls for generosity and sacrifice. Thank you for your financial help, your prayers and your volunteer service. A brighter day will come for Haiti. Thank you, Jesus!"

Grace Methodist Church Sentul ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

General Job Description

To run the church office to support the work of the Pastor and the ministries of the church.

- Worship & other services, meetings/seminars, retreats/camps, visitations.
- Arrange refreshments / meals.

General secretarial work

- Attend phone calls, faxes, emails
- Prepare weekly order of service
- Filing of documents, correspondence, personnel and membership records.

Assist in church finance & accounts

- Oversee the petty cash
- Process and pay reimbursement claims.

Church/Office Organization

- Oversee the proper set up of the church office.
- Purchase supplies for the office and church.

Criteria

- Working experience in similar position preferred.
- Proficient in English. Knowledge of other languages is added advantage.
- Computer literate
- Salary will be based on experience and qualification.

Interested applicants please contact the Church office (03-40436384) or Pastor Tan Chew Mae (016-34770930) at Grace Methodist Church, 22 Jalan Sentul, 51000 Kuala Lumpur or email: grace_sentul@hotmail.com

Position Available at Methodist HQ Accounts Assistant

General Job Description:

- Take charge of payments, i.e. issuance of payment voucher, printing of cheques and forwarding of cheques to relevant parties concerned.
- Handle of bank reconciliation.
- Assist in banking in of cheques, issuance of official receipt and handling petty cash claim in the absence of the other accounts staff.

Criteria:

- Should have at least 2 years working experience
- Should possess a Diploma in Accounting
- Must have language proficiency in English, able to speak other language is an added advantage
- Should be computer literate
- Salary will commensurate with experience

Interested please:

- email to es@methodistchurch.org.my
- post your resume to **Executive Secretary**, No. 69 Jalan 5/31, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, or
- contact Lily Ng at 03-79541811 for interview.

Ekklesia Methodist USJ is seeking for the position of ... YOUTH WORKER!

Function: To assist and co-ordinate all youth ministry of the church! Requirements of "you":

- A matured Christian (between 25-35 Years old).
- Possesses a college diploma or university degree. Related ministry experience will be considered.
- Be able to relate to and engage secondary school youths and campus students.
- Be able to work independently and also with a team.
- Be prepared to work late to facilitate the campus and youth ministries.
- Ability to speak and/or write Chinese will be an added advantage.

Interested, please send all your application to:

The Chairman of LCEC, Ekklesia Methodist USJ
30, Jalan USJ 1/33, 47500 UEP Subang Jaya, Selangor,
or Email to: freemanyuhoo@yahoo.com

Vacancies Available

Sungei Way-Subang Methodist Church in Petaling Jaya has vacancies for the following positions:

位于八打灵再也的双溪威梳邦卫理教会欲邀请以下职位的申请:

1. Full-Time Youth Worker

We are looking for a youth worker to disciple young people from Form 1 to college level. Our youths are organized into age-based Discipleship Groups. The youth worker is also expected to strategize on reaching out to other young people.

2. 全职中文团契同工

我们需要一名全职的中文团契同工来配合团契的成长。申请者必须掌握中文的读与写，能运用华语，广东话和英语交谈，同时也能与年青人和年长者沟通交流。

- The candidates for both the above positions should preferably have theological training and relevant ministry experience. 申请者宜有神学训练和有关的服事经验。
- Enumeration will commensurate with qualification and experience. 薪酬将根据申请者的学历和经验定夺。
- All applications will be treated with strict confidentiality. 所有的申请资料将会保密。

Kindly contact:

Dr Ng Swee Ming

Lay-Leader, SSMC

Email: ssmc.pastor@gmail.com





CFM Strongly Condemns Fire-Bombing Of Churches

The Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) strongly and unreservedly condemns the violent attacks and attempted ones of fire-bombing several churches in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya in the early hours of this morning (8 January 2010).

We are against such actions that seek to intimidate people and also to rend the fabric of peace and goodwill in our country.

Thus far this afternoon, we have been informed that there were three torching and attempted torching of churches. The administrative office of Metro Tabernacle in Desa Melawati was completely gutted. The Molotov cocktail thrown at the Church of the Assumption along Jalan Templer in Petaling Jaya did not explode. But The Life Chapel in Section 17 Petaling Jaya suffered some damage to the church's front porch area.

We call on the Government and all peace-loving Malaysians to stand against such violence and not to give way to extremists in our midst who would want to throw our country into chaos.

We call on the police to continue to maintain the peace and security of our land in which all of us so cherish and love. May the police bring to justice quickly those who have been involved in such acts of torching churches which is a violation of the houses of God in our land.

Christians are a peace-loving people and so we will remain calm and rely on our police officers to investigate and to arrest the criminals involved and to protect all Malaysians against violence and criminal intimidation. We are concerned that the hacking of the judiciary website is an act of criminal intimidation against the judiciary and this shameful act along with the acts of violence against churches must not be condoned.

Let us as Christians and with our fellow Malaysians pray that despite

such atrocious acts perpetrated upon the churches good sense will prevail in us. Let us not allow those who want to foment animosity among the peoples and the religious communities to triumph in their dastardly plans. May we stand together against the tide of violent people and their evil plans.

We will continue to pray for peace in Malaysia.

Dated: 8 January 2010

CFM Outraged By Continued Violation Of Sacred Places

The Christian Federation of Malaysia is outraged that the violation of places of worship continues unabated as has happened this morning to two mosques along Jalan Klang Lama in Petaling Jaya.

We are angry that there are some who want to foment enmity and strife among Malaysians for political mileage or for mischief. These violent acts can divide Malaysians and so we call on all citizens not to fall into such a trap.

We believe that the police will bring swiftly to justice the perpetrators who have done these evil intentioned acts. Let us be vigilant against all suspicious activities around all our places of worship and report such to the police.

As Christians we continue to pray for the peace and well-being of our nation in these troubled moments.

Bishop Ng Moon Hing
Chairman and the Executive Committee of the
Christian Federation of Malaysia

MCSC Holds Press Conference On SPM Subjects



– Mr Yap Kok Keong (sixth, from the left) and members of the Council speaking to reporters.

The Malayan Christian Schools' Council held a press conference on 17 December 2009 at its headquarters. Its press statement said that it was shocked at the Government's decision not to include Bible Knowledge (BK) in its 10+2 formula.

The Council had made repeated representations to the authorities since June for the inclusion of BK but when the additional two subjects allowed was announced they were limited to Bahasa Arab, Bahasa Cina, Bahasa Tamil, Chinese and Tamil Literature. The Council felt this was done hastily and without due consultation.

Speaking on behalf of the mission schools in East Malaysia, the chairman of the Council, Mr Yap Kok Keong, said it was unjust that Bahasa Iban was excluded as this was highly valued by the ethnic community.

Further arguments put forward during the press conference highlighted that subjects like BK added value to education in promoting the "kerohanian" aspect of the educational philosophy. Referring to pure science students, not being able to take English Literature, for example, limited their opportunities for a more rounded education. In fact the question was raised why there should be a restriction of the two additional subjects to only five. The Council called for the Cabinet to leave the choice open to the candidates, while agreeing to the principle of a maximum of 12 subjects to be taken for the SPM examinations.

The Government has since rescinded the restriction with a circular sent by the Director General of Education allowing candidates to take any other two subjects that are offered in the SPM examinations.



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LENT

MEDITATIONS



Pressing on Toward the Goal

Rev. Victor J. Vethamani

47 Meditations based on the Books of Philippians, Jonah and Titus

DAY [1] KEEPING TO GOD GIVEN PATHS

READ: Matthew 16:13 - 23

Ash Wednesday

In a 100 meters race, participants are required to keep to the track allotted to them. They will be disqualified if they move to another. This rule is true to life as well. We need to know what God's intended path is for us and to succeed in life, we must keep on that path. Today is **Ash Wednesday**, the first day in Lent and we remember how Jesus kept to the path set out for Him by the Father.

Today's text shows how Jesus, having established His identity to His disciples, went on to reveal and explain the Father's proposed path for Him. The journey marked out for Him climaxed at Jerusalem. The prophets spoke of it in the Old Testament (Zechariah 9: 9) and Jesus was determined to bring it to fulfillment. Likewise, we need

to be where God intends us to be. So often, though we declare that we are willing to go anywhere for God, yet we make our own plans according to our conveniences and end up being in our own desired secure places.

Jesus knew that going to Jerusalem meant He would have to walk the **painful path** of suffering and death (v. 21). He was determined to go on that path and face them. We cannot fulfill God's will in our lives if every time we see problems ahead, we quickly look for easier alternate paths. If there is a need, we too must be willing to suffer for the sake of Christ and His Church. God would give us the grace to face painful oppositions and struggles in the course of our service to Him. We should not out of fear be quick to opt out.

It is not easy for us to understand or accept the need to walk the hard path. This was also the struggle of the Apostle Peter who was guilty of standing in the way of God's intended

path for Jesus. He was severely reprimanded (v. 23). Jesus knew that the path ahead for Him was a **profitable path**. The profit was the salvation of humankind. Though painful, this was also the joy that was set before Him (Hebrews 12: 2). Sometimes even our family and friends, in their eagerness to ensure that we face no pain in life, could draw us away from the path God has for us. The Lent Season is a good time for us to reflect to see whether we are on the right path that God has marked out for us.

Verse to reflect: "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." (Matthew 16: 21)

PRAYER: Father, help me keep to the path marked out for me, so that I would be blessed and be a blessing to others. Amen.