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Building Compassionate Communities

If the Christ has instructed us 'to love one another, as I have loved you', then the first place in which this must be demonstrated is in our local churches.

BY BISHOP HWA YUNG

Moment



What is true religion? I was asked to speak at a youth conference on the function and purpose of religions in Malaysia. It is interesting that there is a growing trend on being spiritual but there seems to be a distancing from being 'religious'. One of the most viral youtube posting this year is a video titled "Why I hate religion but love Jesus". This video depicts this growing concern that people seem to dichotomise the spiritual from the religious - "what happens on Sunday is 'religion' and what happens every other day is spiritual". Why

are we differentiating our religion from our spirituality? In this issue of Pelita, we are trying to focus on the social responsibility of Christians. Question that are posed are how do we regard the poor and the oppressed. Since know Jesus as our saviour, should it impact our daily lives? Does our religion impact the social life of Malaysians. "How are we to be salt and light to Malaysia?" Our religious life cannot be confined to just our church life. It has to be in our whole life!

"Is this not the kind of fasting i have chosen to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not turn away from your own flesh and blood?" (Isaiah 58:6,7) Hopefully as the Methodist church in Malaysia we can be truly religious in our lives as we strive to love our neighbours as ourselves.

Video still adapted from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11MDC0f0p0I>

By Michael William

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For In Him We Live And Move And Have Our Being. (Acts 17:28)

Malaysia National Prayer Network

BELOVED (A living stone & a holy people) Pray That

| Our motive in serving and ministries is love to God.
| We may grow into the a full experience of salvation, and show others the goodness of God.
| We keep away from worldly desires, and be careful to live properly among our unbelieving neighbours, that they will give honour to God.
| Our spiritual leaders to promote the kind of living that reflects wholesome teaching, the integrity and seriousness of their teaching, and be good example (Titus 2)
| We continue to lift up our brothers and sisters who face injustice and suffer for the name of Christ:



Continue to Pray

| For righteousness and justice to be the foundation of this nation.
| For the leadership (present & future) to understand signs of the time and know the best course for Malaysia to take, that the nation may progress, do justice and love mercy.
| For the people to be intrigued by Christ and enthralled by Him, and worship Him as Lord and Saviour.
| For religious freedom for the people in Iran
| For responsible communities and commitment of the governments to combat human trafficking.

Vacancy

POSITION OF CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Applications are invited from suitably qualified applicants for the post of CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR in Wesley Methodist Church, Kuala Lumpur. Applicants must satisfy the following prerequisites:

Malaysian Citizen who is of the Christian faith; Preferably below the age of 50; Preferably possess a Graduate Degree; Working experience in a similar capacity; Computer Literate; Able to work independently and as a team member; Good interpersonal and communication skills to work well with staff, church leaders, members and the public; Able to work beyond normal working hours and weekends when the need arises; A sound knowledge of financial procedures relating to financial management

JOB DESCRIPTION

Administer and supervise the implementation of policies and procedures to support the programmes and Christian activities of the church. Supervise the Accounting function of the church

relating to the collection, disbursement and Banking of church funds. Plan and organise the resources for all programmes of committees and church organisations. Perform the Human Resource management and development functions. Manage and supervise all church office employees. A resource person for all activities of the church.

EMOLUMENTS

An attractive salary package is offered and it will commensurate with experience. Interested applicants are requested to send their detailed resume, names of 2 character referees with a recent passport size photograph not later than 30.4.2012 to

The Chairman,
Staffing Committee,
Wesley Methodist Church,
No. 2 Jalan Wesley,
50150 Kuala Lumpur.

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Building Compassionate Communities

If the Christ has instructed us ‘to love one another, as I have loved you’, then the first place in which this must be demonstrated is in our local churches.

BY BISHOP HWA YUNG



Stores
Wheelchair and sleeping bags are stored in a church for usage in the care and concern ministry usage.

One of my favourite mission stories is about Ida Scudder, the granddaughter of the first medical missionary sent by the American church. John Scudder, her grandfather, went to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1819, and later to India, as a missionary doctor. Ida was born in 1870 and, after finishing school in the United States, returned to India to be with her sick mother. But Ida's mind was made up: She would never be a missionary. She planned to go to Wellesley College, one of America's leading women's universities, and marry a rich man instead!

One night, three men in succession knocked on the door of her parents' home in South India. Each came with the same request: ‘My young wife is dying in childbirth. Can you please come and save her?’

To each, Ida gave the same reply: ‘I know nothing about doctoring. My father is the doctor. I'll be glad to go with him to see your wife.’

All three men—a Brahmin, another high-caste Hindu, and a Muslim—gave the same reply: ‘In my religion, no man outside the family is allowed into the women's quarters.’

Ida couldn't sleep that night. Morning brought news that all three women had died in the night. Ida was never the same again. She graduated from Cornell Medical School in the first class open to women. Returning to India, she started a clinic for women, then a nursing school, then, finally, a medical school. Today Christian Medical College in Vellore remains one of the finest medical schools in India, having produced thousands of nurses and doctors to minister to millions in South Asia.

Most of us are familiar with our Lord Jesus' teaching about the Great Commandment: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets” (Mat 22: 37-40; ESV). This has always been the key driving forces behind Christian social concern and responses in our broken world.

All around us are men and women in suffering and need. I am not speaking here about tsunamis, earthquakes, wars and millions dying of hunger, all of which sometimes seem so far away. I refer to human needs before our very eyes. The media regularly report of neglected parents, homeless old folks, children battered or even chained like dogs by thoughtless

parents or relatives, deserted single mothers and children, and the like. These are rarely the product of criminal activity. Rather they are generally the result of people who just don't care, even when the suffering are their own children, spouses or parents!

Then there are human needs caused by drug or alcohol addictions, human trafficking and the sex trade, exploitation of the weak, the poor and foreign migrant workers. There are also those suffering from illnesses and diseases, various kinds of physical and mental disabilities, and the like.

Over and above all these, many of us are probably not aware of the fact that there are still many living today in extreme poverty. The latest figures available shows that, as of 2007, 3.6% of the nation's population are classified as ‘poor’; and of these, 0.7% are classified as ‘hardcore poor.’ (Malaysia: Measuring and Monitoring Poverty and Inequality [Kuala Lumpur, UNDP, 2007].) With a population of 28 million, this means that fully one million still live in poverty in our country today!

In our present national context, the danger to think that nation-building is always about politics. We forget that nation-building involves, among other things, the building of compassionate communities as well! And no compassionate communities can be built unless there is a genuine concern for our neighbour's welfare, and real efforts are made to be a neighbour to the ‘other,’ irrespective of race, class or religion!

Jesus' emphasis on the Great Commandment merely sums up what the Bible teaches as a whole. Elsewhere, he reminds us that the Love Commandment applies even to those who mistreat and oppress us. ‘But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven’ (Mat 5:44f; ESV). Similarly, the writer of Hebrews urges his readers to ‘keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering’ (13: 1-3; NIV).

The Early Church took the Bible's teachings seriously. For example, Adolf Harnack in his book, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, (Harper, 1962, pp. 147-198) lists ten ways in which the Early Church demonstrated

her concern for needy people. These included giving alms to the poor, support widows and orphans (the 3rd century church in Rome alone supported 1500 widows and needy persons regularly), care of the infirm, poor, disabled, prisoners and slaves, and nursing the weak and sick in times of famines and epidemics, even at risk to one's own life. Many of these were included in the list of duties of the deacons in the Early Church. (I think we should put this into our church Discipline as well, under the duties of LCEC members!)

The attitude of the Early Church is well summarised by two quotes. In defending Christianity against attacks from pagan philosophers, Tertullian, the 3rd century theologian, famously said: 'It is our care of the helpless, our practice of loving kindness that brands us in the eyes of many our opponents. "Only look," they say, "look how they love one another"' (Apology 39)! And the 4th century pagan Roman emperor, Julian the Apostate, attacked Christians as follows: 'The impious Galileans support not only their poor, but ours as well, everyone can see that our people lack aid from us' (quoted in Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, 1997, p. 84). Even the non-Christians could see the difference!

In our own Methodist tradition, John Wesley included the same emphasis as part and parcel of 'The General Rules of the Methodist Church' (The Discipline, 2008, p. 27f). All Methodists are expected 'to evidence of their desire of salvation By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men.'

The Malaysian church has done much over the past century in meeting human needs. Our most prominent contribution has been the 451 mission schools (present figure, not counting some that have been closed) that various churches started in our country at a time when there were few schools. There are also numerous old folks' homes, orphanages, clinics and hospitals, street people centres, and homes for the physically and mentally handicapped. Umbrella agencies like the various Catholic Offices of Human Development and Malaysian Care give lots of professional and training support to churches and NGOs doing human relief work. The various Montfort training centres are wonderful examples of providing youths from disadvantaged backgrounds with employable skills and a future. The 40 plus drug rehabilitation centres run largely by Pente-

costal and charismatic churches have a success rate far in excess of anything else in the country. And in a number of significant cases, such as the work of Irene Fernandez of Tenaganita with women and migrant workers, they have attracted international attention and support.

The Methodist Church has also been involved considerably in various ministries throughout the country. There are our 75 mission schools to begin with (not including the private ones). In an earlier period, there was much medical and agricultural work done among the Ibans. Similarly, today we are still doing much educational and agricultural work with the Orang Asli in West Malaysia, Penans in Sarawak, and the Orang Ulu in the Sabah interior. There are centres for the physically disabled like the various Beautiful Gate homes in W Malaysia, outreaches to street people in Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh, kidney dialysis centres in various parts of country, youth ministries in all our churches, and so forth. But much more can and needs to be done! What is the way forward?

The first thing is relatively straightforward, but will require a complete mind-set change among church leaders and pastors. If the Christ has instructed us 'to love one another, as I have loved you' (John 13:34), then the first place in which this must be demonstrated is in our local churches. Are our churches compassionate communities in which the lonely, the weak, the outcast, the poor and nobodies of this world find acceptance and welcome? One of the saddest comments I heard from the leader of a local church is when he told the members, 'This church is not a hospital!' Behind this comment lies the idea that the church has to grow into a megachurch and for that to happen, everyone must pull their weight. So the goal was numerical growth and not community building. But a church which is not a 'hospital' for the spiritually weak, emotionally wounded and socially dislocated simply cannot be a compassionate community. Why would people want to stay when there is no acceptance and sense of belonging? And if the church itself is not a compassionate community, how can we possibly build community in the wider world?

The second thing to remember is that most of those who read this article come from middle-class churches, with little experience of poverty. As already noted, there are at least a million people living below the poverty line in our country, mostly rural folk. This is especially the

case with the Orang Asli and certain bumiputra communities in E Malaysia. But even amongst urbanites there are also tremendous socioeconomic needs within the lower income groups. What is your church doing to minister to such peoples? Space does not allow me to start suggesting what can be done. But let me share the example of what one group of Christians, spearheaded by some Methodists, is doing in Kuching.

Breakthrough was set up in July 2008 with a vision for Christians around Kuching in business and professions to help the weak and poor make breakthroughs in their work and lives. Their ministry includes helping the poor build or renovate houses, providing families with limited resources with food and daily necessities, and connecting them with the Welfare Department for government aid. They have also started education projects to help preschool and primary school children, run by caring teachers, in an effort break the cycle of poverty. A youth centre has also been set up in a new township to provide teenagers with a healthy place to hang out, make friends and have fun. They are also working with farmers to develop natural organic farming which is modern, cost-effective and nature-healing. (For details, see: <http://www.breakthrough.org.my>)

Clearly Breakthrough is touching and changing lives. As you and your church prayerfully wait upon God, I have no doubt He can do something similar through you!

Finally, I suggest that Malaysian churches should be challenged to expand our social outreach ministries within every needy group in our country. The needs are ever present and with an ever increasing population, government efforts will never be sufficient. We have already noted many socioeconomic needs around us. And Christ's command to love our neighbour as ourselves has never changed, and will remain imperative for us until His Return. As Paul reminds us: 'Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith' (Gal 6:9f; ESV).

Nation-building has many facets. None of us can do everything. But building compassionate communities both within the church and in the wider world is something that all of us can contribute towards. It may not seem very significant to those who are always going after headlines, but it will make a real difference.

Presidents' Corner

Note: We are pleased to include a monthly feature from each of the Presidents of the Annual Conferences in the coming issues of Pelita

Trinity Annual Conference

A Summary of the TRAC President's Address, 36th Session TRAC

BY REV ONG HWAI TEIK

This has indeed been an extraordinary year filled with events of "earth shaking impact" Early this year, on 11 March 2011, a devastating 9.0 earthquake and tsunami brought great destruction to the nation of Japan. Other countries like China, New Zealand and Turkey have also experienced earthquakes of gigantic proportion. Thailand, recently experienced severe floods. The newly coined "Arab Spring" uprising, saw the overthrow of autocratic regimes in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. The governments in Syria, Yemen and Bahrain were also rattled. These uprisings powerfully remind us that people yearn to be free from oppression, intimidation, manipulation and corrupt governance!

In the local "Church and State" front, the Malaysian Church had to contend with very serious issues as well. The use of "Allah" issue (2009) is still pending a final ruling from the Court of Appeal, as the Christian community insists that "Allah" has been traditionally used by the Malaysian Church, especially in East Malaysia.

The Catholic publication, *The Herald*, had won the case against the Home Minister's revocation order of its publication permit. The import of the Alkitab, at least for the time being seems to be permissible. This is after strong protestations from the Christian community in March when 30,000 copies were impounded at Port Klang and Kuching. Then there was the "Utusan Malaysia" had reported on the gathering of priests in Penang recently that allegedly discusses making Christianity the official religion of the country" (New Straits

As we pursue lifelong discipleship as an AC - we continue to give priority to spiritual transformation.

Times 13 May 2011) saga. Then came the unprecedented Selangor Islamic Affairs Department (Jais) "search" on the 3 August 2011 of the Damansara Utama Methodist Church premises, when a Thanksgiving Dinner organised by Harapan Komuniti was taking place. The Sultan of Selangor had effectively intervened to defuse the situation. Let us as a community remain vigilant as we are also facing other serious issues such as the implementation of Hudud law in Malaysia.

As an Annual Conference, we continue to pursue our General Conference theme of *Spreading Scriptural Holiness, Transforming the Nation* supported by our own TRAC 4 essentials below. Our 39 local churches are "together on the same page" with the GC vision and goals, albeit variation on emphases and types of action and programs are to be expected.

A. LIFELONG DISCIPLESHIP— Following Christ, Becoming Like Christ
As we pursue lifelong discipleship as an



Pray for the Church
 Rev. Dr. Ong Hwai Teik focuses on his prayer
 during the Methodist Prayer Conference

PHOTOGRAPH BY ISSAC NG

AC - we continue to give priority to spiritual transformation. This is the lifelong process in which Christ is formed in us for the glory of God.

The essential place of **small groups** shall continue to be emphasised in our AC life for training, spiritual health, tracking accountability, renewal, and community building. There was an increase of 7 prayer groups in TRAC as at June 2011 to 119 compared to 2010. The TRAC Pastors Intercession Retreat (#2) with 13 attending also took place. We are also glad that a TRAC Intercession Team has been started in Penang (Northern District) this year.

The ICM continues to spearhead our discipleship and spirituality thrust through the Spiritual Formation and Leadership weekends, Contemplative and Silent Retreats, and the Soul Talk series.

B. WHOLESOME FAMILIES – Growing Strong Families in Christ

More of our TRAC churches are organising Alpha Marriage, Alpha Parenting and Pre-Marital courses.

As an AC we recognise the importance of the family as the cornerstone of society and the church. The Board on Youth work has set - *To empower parents for working with youth and creating an open atmosphere for engagement of youth issues at home - as one of their goals. Let us all be reminded that included in our strategies for this Essential are: **Setting up Family Devotion** in every home and Introduce inter-generational Family Worship services regularly every year.*

C. A VOICE TO OUR NATION – Seeking our Nation’s Welfare in Christ

There is a noticeable increase this year in the number of our churches organising talks by politicians and political analysts, and accompanied by a voter registration exercise.

Let us not underestimate our own position and role as believers in advocating for and **effecting changes in nation building as responsible and proactive citizens.**

D. A VISION FOR THE WORLD - Embracing Local & Global Missions for Christ

We continue to emphasise planting churches as well as migrant community congregations.

TRAC continues to partner the Lower Myanmar Methodist Church in the coming years - helping to rebuild the areas affected by the Nargis cyclone 3 years ago.

The Persidangan Missi Sengoi Method-

John Stott reminds the church:
First duty toward society and its leaders is to pray for them.

ist continues to pursue Wawasan Berdikari 2020. This vision is gaining incremental momentum, in which there is renewed emphasis on praying and planning towards PMSM being self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting.

The PMSM collectively fast and pray on the 1st of every month for WB 2020, even when it is during their Annual Conference Session.

One of the significant ways to strengthen the indigenous Bumiputra Church is to help identify and finance translation projects of Christian education books and teaching materials that will strengthen the majority segment of the Malaysian Church. This is a TRAC mission priority.

Conclusion

TRAC Organisational Leadership Module (OLM) is a significant training module designed to provide basic understanding of our Methodist structure/polity, direction, unity, operational competency and to enhance our cohesion as an AC body.

We are glad that the emphases on the youth and college ministries have begun to bear fruits by the grace of the Lord. This year Kampar Wesley has dedicated a Ministry Home on Easter for KTAR and UTAR students ministry. We have seen our Jeremiah School program started 9 years ago producing Christian vocation workers

and facilitators for our other youth events.

We are glad to share that TRAC has developed and dedicated on 2 Oct 2010 the Parit Buntar Methodist Centre for training, retreats and reflection groups (see <http://www.pb-mc.org>). This is a smaller place that can accommodate up to 78 people. For more information and booking, do contact Mr Stephen Chew (012 5724559 or email pmmcbooking@gmail.com).

John Stott, a great man of faith who had finished the race faithfully outlined 4 ways in which Christians have power to influence the world.

Firstly, there is power in prayer. Stott reminds the Church that our *“first duty toward society and its leaders is to pray for them” (1 Tim 2:1-2)*. He goes on to call the Church to take with *“increasing seriousness the 5 or 10 minutes of intercession in which, as a congregation, we bow down before God and bring to Him the world and its leaders, and cry to Him to intervene.”*

Secondly, there is the power of truth especially the truth of the Gospel that *“brings salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16)*. Stott states thus, *“All God’s truth is powerful. God’s truth of whatever kind is much more powerful than the Devil’s lies... Truth is much more powerful than bombs and tanks and weapons.”*

Thirdly, the Church has the power of example. Stott goes on to say, *“Truth is powerful when it’s argued. It’s more powerful when exhibited. People need not only to understand the argument. They need to see the benefits of the argument with their own eyes.”*

Fourthly, the Church has the power of group solidarity. The power of a dedicated minority is enormous! Stott strikes a common but powerful chord with those of us who believe in the power of *“dedicated godly networks”* – especially for Malaysia. John Stott says, *“There is a great need for dedicated Christian groups committed to one another, committed to a vision of justice, committed to Christ; groups that will pray together, think together, formulate policies together, and get to work together in the community...”*

We may be living in an *“earth shaking”* season both locally and globally, but let us also never forget that our God is the one who can so command that *“the sun stood still, and the moon stopped”*. May we always live to His glory and for His purpose.

Rev. Dr. Ong Hwai Teik
 President
 Trinity Annual Conference
 The Methodist Church in Malaysia

A Miracle-Working GOD

Month of Evangelism: TAC Prayer Newsletter

Praise and thank God for His marvelous and wonderful works of grace and power!! Many of you have been interceding for Mark and Ah Seng (a new believer), two young adults from TMC Teluk Intan who met with a terrible accident on their way back after driving Rev Joy Pandian to her new posting in Raub. According to Rev Joy, Mark's car was a terrible wreck: the top was open, the back was completely smashed up, Mark's door (he was driving) was ripped off! How did the three men in the car escape with their lives? Wilson Dass , seated in front, escaped unharmed. Mark was warded in Temerloh Hospital and Ah Seng in Ipoh Specialist Centre. They have both been discharged. Mark can speak and is functioning well though he is wearing a neck brace.. Ah Seng only has a leg fracture and is on crutches for 3 months. Hallelujah!! What a God we have! Thank You for Praying!



Mrs Rita Vivek – TMC Jerai

Praise God also for the formation of the following District Prayer Teams:

SELANGOR

Pastor Devaraj Baliah - TMC Klang (Prayer Coordinator) Rev James Ravindran - TMC Subang Jaya
Rev Jeremiah Thomas – TMC Puchong
Brother John Jeeva – TMC Subang Jaya

NORTHERN

Rev. Ezekiel Raj - TMC Jerai (Prayer Coordinator) Rev Stephen Gunaraja – TMC Alor Setar
Mrs Lily Moses – TMC Prai

SOUTHERN

Brother Jayaseelan John (Prayer Coordinator) Rev John Simpson
Pastor Vijayadass
Sister Ruth Mary

PERAK

Brother Louis Martin – TMC Ipoh Town (Prayer Coordinator) Rev David Rasahpandy – On Special Appointment
Rev Seenivasagam David– TMC Sitiawan
Brother R Steven _TMC Ipoh Town
Mrs Nesamani David Rasahpandy
Sister Mala (Tasik)

EASTERN

Rev Samuel Periamthamby – TMC Kuantan (Prayer Coordinator) Pastor John Sunder – TMC Jerantut/ Lipis
Brother David Krishnan – TMC Kuantan

CENTRAL

Rev Edwin Rajamoney – TMC Kuala Lumpur
Rev A.E. Joseph – TMC Tg. Malim
Brother Sharveen Rajaratnam – TAC MYF President
Brother Stephen Issac – TMC Sentul
Brother Mark Antoni – TMC Kuala Lumpur
Sister Ruth Ratnam – TMC Sentul
These teams will be visiting & working closely with their District pastors, leaders & intercessors.

To come alongside local pastors to:

1. Consolidate & encourage existing prayer groups in churches.
2. Raise & register new intercessors.
3. Train intercessors for Spiritual Warfare.
4. Motivate prayer for REVIVAL & SOUL-WINNING (The GO Project).
5. Motivate prayer for The NEHEMIAH Project.
6. Raise urgent prayer for MALAYSIA.

EVANGELISM TEAMS & THE GO PROJECT: Evangelism Sunday (5th FEB.)

For all the many Evangelism teams as they travel to all 49 TAC churches to conduct workshops on evangelism: good health, protection, guidance. Pray every church will see monthly baptisms. That every church member will be involved in either tracting, hospital visitation, praying for new souls, lifestyle evangelism, etc.

Thursday 2 FEB : BOARD ON MINISTRY & BOARD ON FI-

NANCE Meeting

Friday 3 FEB: TAC EXCO MEETING

Please pray for God's direction for the whole year, clear vision, stamina , zeal & wisdom. Praise God for President and the two Board Chairmen & their members as well as all EXCO members for their faithful service for The Lord. Pray for God's protection on them & their families as ministry in the end times is getting more challenging than ever before!

Saturday-Sunday 4-5 FEB : TAC MW RETREAT ; Saturday-Sunday 11-12 FEB: TAC MYAF BOARD RETREAT

Please pray for a time of refreshing

Leviticus 19:15
"Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favouritism to the great, but judge your neighbour fairly."

and renewal in the Lord & clear direction for the Ministry.

Monday 6 FEB : WHOLE NIGHT OR EXTENDED PRAYER

Please pray that as this is a public holiday a lot of intercessors will turn up. Pray against obstacles. Also pray for God's mighty anointing on the people & the speakers.

Saturday 18 FEB : BOARD ON LAITY MEETING

Thank God for our lay leaders. Let's intercede for the Board members to settle all unresolved issues & to work together for God's Kingdom.

Wednesday 22 FEB: ASH WEDNESDAY

Let's ask God to help us focus on the Cross as we prepare for The Lent season.

Saturday-Sunday 25-26 FEB : SMALL GROUP LEADERS & PASTORS' TRAINING

Please pray all cell group leaders will attend this training. Please pray for all the speakers and participants for both training sessions.

PRAY FOR MALAYSIA PRAY FOR MALAYSIA PRAY FOR MALAYSIA (Prayer points slightly adapted from '2012 24-7 Year of Prayer For Malaysia')

The Government: 1 Timothy 2:1-2 instructs us that we should pray "for kings and all those in authority". If the powers of darkness are allowed to work undisturbed and influence people, they will get control over gov-

ernments and people in positions of authority. Pray that evil strongholds that control and manipulate people in the political field and positions of authority be pulled down in the Name of Jesus. Pray Christians will have a deep conviction of justice in their hearts and will rise up to pray for their nation's leaders.

Ask God to protect Christians who hold high positions in government; that God will give them wisdom, understanding and competence beyond their natural abilities, so they can use their positions to transform Society; for courage & boldness in their witness & to keep them unspotted, honest and true to God.

Pray for oppressors & godless leaders that they will lose their positions of power.

Pray for the salvation of our nation's leaders, for conviction of sin, that they be reconciled to GOD.

The Justice System: For God –fearing judges who uphold justice, especially in cases involving powerful organizations, individuals or government.

Pray for our police and court systems, that they will protect the weak & vulnerable people in our nation. Pray against any form of discrimination.

Pray that our lawmaking be reformed and based on love for justice.

For more Christians to speak up for the poor & oppressed.

Pray for the salvation of prisoners & their families that they can experience God.

Pray for the abolishing of laws that threaten our freedom of belief & other rights

Living

And Jesus answered him saying, “It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (Luke 4:4)



Photo taken during the Federation of Methodist Women (WFMW) Assembly

Appreciation of Bishop C.N. Fang. We must thank the Lord for giving us Bishop C.N. Fang

BY TAN MAY LIAN

May 5th, 2002 was the date that Bishop C. N. Fang went to be with the Lord. In those ten years I have not read about Bishop Fang being given any recognition or being appreciated. I feel that I must write about Bishop Fang for what took place in 1981, that is 30 years ago for something which I appreciate and remember to this day. Bishop C. N. Fang is a good example of a servant leader. Although he was President of the Chinese Annual Conference and Bishop of the Methodist Church which included the five Annual Conferences he

was willing to help one of his flock from the TRAC conference without any hesitation.

The World Methodist Conference was held from 21st July to 28th July 1981 in Hawaii. That was preceded by the World Federation of Methodist Women (WFMW) Assembly which was held for a week from 14th to the 21st of July.

Some 458 women from 57 countries attended the Assembly. Mrs. John Ho of the CAC represented Malaysia while Violet Dass was the official observer of TAC. I was the official observer from TRAC. The World Methodist Conference was open to

observers and so we had representatives from TRAC, TAC and CAC. Bishop C.N. Fang was the only official delegate to the World Methodist Conference.

Bishop Fang was a caring and forward-looking leader. He wanted to widen and deepen the knowledge and experience of the CAC Methodist Church and he encouraged a group of members of the CAC who could afford to pay for the trip themselves to attend the Conference as observers. Bishop Fang also arranged for those representatives from Malaysia to visit places of interest.

I remember the grand mother-in-law



Bishop C.N. Fang and his wife.

(who celebrated her 100th birthday in 1999) of Betty Tan (President of SCAC MW from 1996 to 2000 and from 2005 to 2009). She wore a *sarong kebaya* and was the life of the party. We were visiting a high point on the coast when a gust of wind blew up from the sea and her sarong was blown up to cover her face, to the merriment of those around her.

We also visited the USS Arizona Memorial built to commemorate the attack on

Pearl Harbour. Of the 1107 sailors killed 1102 were left entombed in the ship and the Memorial was built over the sunken ship. As we were walking around the place we saw a man aged between 60 plus to 70 plus standing before a plaque with names of those who died in the attack. He was sobbing his heart out. We guessed he must have been a survivor crying for his buddies who died in the bombing.

In Honolulu we also visited the Acres of Honour where the Punchbowl Cemetery was situated in the Puowaina Crater which had been filled with earth. It was a beautifully kept, peaceful and serene place.

In the 1980's travel was expensive and few people in Malaysia travelled. So after the Conference was over Bishop Fang arranged for the members to travel to the mainland of USA by organising the group to tour the west coast. The majority of the Malaysian representatives and observers were travelling to the mainland of the US after the assembly and conference but I had to take a plane home a day earlier to go back to work (as a teacher). I had to be at the airport by 11.30 p.m. and since I was 47 years old and had never travelled on my own before, I was fearful of taking a taxi alone in a strange country. So I went around asking my fellow Malaysians to accompany me to the airport but no one

offered to help me. Finally I had no choice but to go to Bishop Fang for help.

He was our Bishop, the Malaysian delegate who was very busy attending meetings, yet without hesitation, the servant leader “wrapped a towel around his waist...poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet”(John 13:4-5)

He personally arranged for a taxi to take me to the airport. Not only did he do this, together with Mrs Ho, he accompanied me to the airport. They saw me off safely, and to this day I remember what Bishop Fang did, a great man who cared for one of his flock.

Recently, I read Francis Schaeffer's book *The Mark of a Christian*. I now understand what he meant by “observable love” of a Christian. Bishop Fang was a person whose love and concern and care for others could easily be observed. Bishop Fang, being the Bishop of the Methodist Church, was an ex-officio member and a counsellor of the General Conference WSCS. He was serious about serving the LORD, encouraging us to do our duty. His very presence at all our committee meetings was enough to give us confidence to carry out our duties as members of the Women Society of Christian Service/Methodist Women.

Breakthrough Network Centre

For In Him We Live And Move And Have Our Being. (Acts 17:28)

Breakthrough Network Centre Bhd. (Co. No. 826560-H) is an organisation based in Kuching whose emphasis is on Christian values in serving the community. Breakthrough which started in 2008 has members who include businessmen and women, professionals and working adults. Breakthrough will help the weak to find a breakthrough in their business and career, including their personal lives. Breakthrough will work with the faith-based and secular organisations to assist the the poor, marginalised and dispossessed. It is a non-profit, non-political organisation.

Directors

Ms. Alma U. Niges / Mr. Hong Bong Swee / Mr. James Lee Tin Hoon – Chairman / Ms. Lau Mee Yieng / Mr. Lau Yeo Koo / Mr. Neduncheliyan Adaikalam / Ms. Ivy Pan. Secretary : Mr. Wong Yü Chiong – Chartered Accountant

Breakthrough's work includes care ministry, Pre-school & primary school education, Youth development, Natural farming and rural community development

1. Care Ministry

Care ministry's purpose is to assist and help poor families around Kuching, Bau, Serian and Lundu through frequent visitation (by staff, volunteers and care groups), providing food aid & basic necessities, helping in house repairs and also building houses for the hard core poor (if necessary). Our care ministry also channel individuals, churches, care groups and even companies to help and foster some of the poor families that we are assisting. We



Helping who is living in poor condition.

hope to improve the condition of the poor not only through physical needs but also spiritual. We also help them to apply for aids from the Welfare Department.

2. Children Education

Breakthrough partnered with Pusat Jagaan Kanak-Kanak D'Wira to extend help to the poor community children around Stapok, Desa Wira & Kampung Pasir Hulu, Lundu by providing an avenue for receiving quality education coached by good and caring teachers with the hope to help them breakaway from the cycle of poverty.

3. Youth Development

Breakthrough recently opened a Youth

Centre to provide an avenue for youths to get together to learn skills, to have healthy fellowship with one another and also to learn and improve themselves through training, sports and talks. We hope to reach out to youth and young adults around MJC and hopefully change and empower these young people for the future. The centre also provides facilities such as library, internet, indoor games, music and café.

4. Natural Farming

Breakthrough organized and introduced natural farming to rural farmers in Lundu, Kuching and Serian. Natural farming is a new, modern, eco-friendly and cost effective way of farming that will help generate more income for poor farmers by eliminating the usage of chemicals in farming. We also help the farmers to market their organic products in Kuching and we hope that in future these farmers can improve their livelihood.

5. Community Development

Breakthrough encourages poor families to set up small businesses in their neighbourhood to improve their standard of living. We assist them by giving training, monitor the development of their business as well as helping them to start up their businesses. Currently we have one successful grocery business started by one family in their kampong.

For more information please log on to www.breakthrough.org.my or like us at our facebook page. (facebook/breakthrough network centre bhd.)

"Yes, I have few acres of land but cannot plant because the soil is no more fertile. Can you help us to plant and sell our produce at better prices in Kuching"



SMALL BUSINESS

Breakthrough encourages families to set up small businesses in their neighbourhood to improve and maintain their daily living. Gira and Melaka is one such family where Breakthrough has helped to start the grocery business.



"Can you help me because my husband had already passed away and I need help to set up a small business so that I can support my family."

A total of 90 families from as far as Serian, Samarahan, Sematan, Lundu and Kuching are being cared for by Breakthrough currently.



www.breakthrough.org.my

A little donation can make a big difference to someone's life so **ACT NOW! MAKE THE DIFFERENCE TODAY!** Donations can be made directly to **Breakthrough Office**



For further enquiries, contributions and donations please contact us or email us at

BREAKTHROUGH NETWORK CENTRE BHD,

P1-3-1(A). Chonglin park, 93100 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. Tel: +6082 427478
Email: admin@breakthrough.org.my

Touching LIVES!

Breakthrough Network Centre Bhd was formed 3 years ago, as a non-profit and non-political organisation. Its members make up of selfless individuals with the clear vision to help the weak, marginalised and the poor to break-off from their unfortunate situations so that they can help themselves to pursue their dreams that was once destroyed and to bring hope to their next generation.

As the country progress, there will be some who will be left behind due to their already broken homes, and shattered lives. Most of them are born into that environment, which they did not ask for. So what Breakthrough does, is to provide that beacon of light to uplift their status quo and to give them an opportunity to be part of the Nation Building. Even if it takes one child at a time, one youth at time, one unemployed person at a time, one addict at a time or even if it may takes years, Breakthrough will be a part of their lives to find a "Breakthrough" in their unfortunate environments.



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