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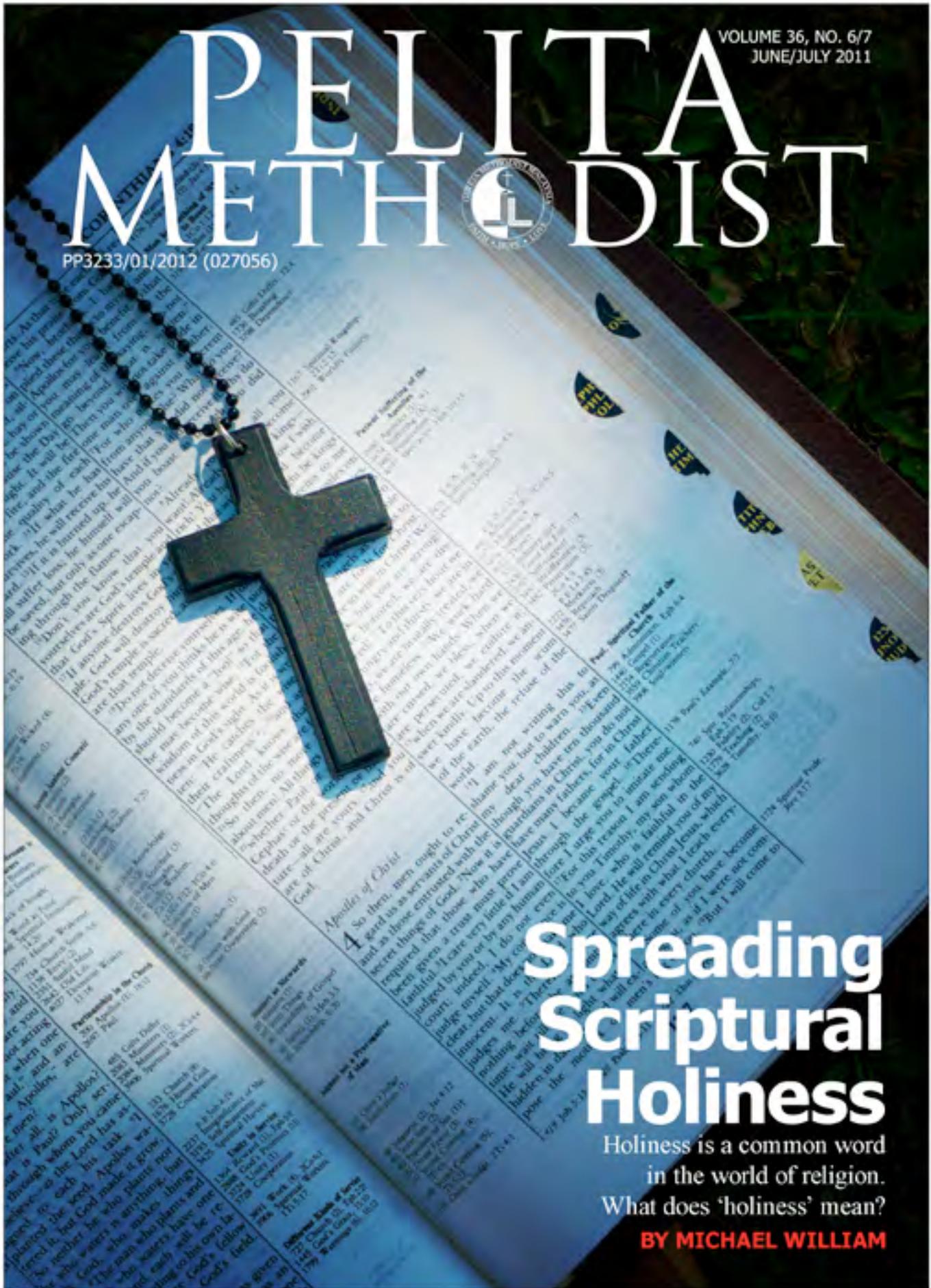
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Spreading Scriptural Holiness

Holiness is a common word
in the world of religion.
What does 'holiness' mean?

BY MICHAEL WILLIAM



Redevelopment

By Jenny Qua

Port Dickson Methodist Centre Redevelopment

Quick Facts about the Project: Total build up area for Convention Hall Block: 5078 m²; Convention Hall with capacity of 550 - 600 persons; Dining Facility with capacity for 490 persons; 2 function rooms with a total of 80 person capacity; Exhibition Foyer & Secretariat and Break up Rooms. Total build up area for Residential Block: 8795 m²; 160 twin sharing rooms, 26 quad sharing rooms, 2 meeting rooms of 100 sitting capacity. The centre is also equipped with 101 car park bays and 3 bus parking bays. Anticipated completion on December 2012.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LIM CHENG HIN

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Malaysia National Prayer Network

Church (Worship the LORD because He is holy)

*Sing a new song to the LORD!
Let the whole earth sing to the LORD!
Sing to the LORD; praise his name.
Each day proclaim the good news that he saves.
Publish his glorious deeds among the nations.
Tell everyone about the amazing things he does. (Ps 96:1-3, NLT)*



| We pray for the Church to stand firm in doing God's will, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with the Lord.

| We cry out for our brothers and sisters who face injustice and suffer for the name of Christ, may God's steadfast love hold them up and His consolations cheer their souls; may justice be returned to the righteous.

| Pray for the Christians in Nuba Mountains, North Sudan, who are under the control of Muslims.

The LORD will not reject his people; he will not abandon his special possession.

Judgment will again be founded on justice, and those with virtuous hearts will pursue it. (Ps 94:14-15, NLT)

1MALAYSIA

*Let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice!
Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise!
Let the fields and their crops burst out with joy!
Let the trees of the forest rustle with praise before the LORD, for he is coming!
He is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with justice, and the nations with his truth. (Ps 96:11-13, NLT).*

Continue to Pray

| For clean and just governance
| For positive change and transformation
| For the government to honour our constitutional rights to peaceful assembly.

John Wesley's Quote



“The sea is an excellent figure of the fullness of God, and that of the blessed Spirit. For as the rivers all return into the sea; so the bodies, the souls, and the good works of the righteous, return into God, to live there in his eternal repose.”
John Wesley, 1777

COVER BY ISSAC NG; PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIM GUEON MIN, ISSAC NG

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The Methodist Church In Malaysia



TRAC Methodist Women Conference: "Bring The Fragrance of Christ to Everyone"

The venue of the 2nd TRAC Methodist Women's Conference was held in Penang, from 5-6 June 2011. It was led by Chita R. Millan and the theme was "The Fragrance of Christ: The speaker said that God holds the victory. He has victory over all our weaknesses. In Him we have victory too. Thus, the speaker urges the participants to have an intimate relationship with God that will bring fragrance. The people of the world need this saving fragrance of Christ to bring them peace. We have the responsibility to preach this message that Jesus Christ is our only hope.



The Church of Christ in Thailand's (CCT) Delegation Pays Visit

Rev. Boonratna Boayen, the Moderator of CCT and Rev. Syam Muangsak, the General Secretary of CCT paid a visit to the Methodist Church in Malaysia (MCM). MCM and CCT have a joint venture partnership in mission work in Malaysia and Thailand.



SCAC Introducing BM Gospel Leaflet

Under the trend of 1Malaysia, Bahasa Melayu is no longer the common language for the indigenous people but also the second language of some Chinese. Thus, the board of mission has produced a BM gospel leaflet, entitled "Jika Aku Dapat Menyentuh Jubah-Nya". It is free for all churches who enquire them.

Annual Conferences of Methodist Church in Malaysia

CAC - Chinese Annual Conference
SCAC - Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference
SIAC - Sarawak Iban Annual Conference
SPAC - Sabah Provisional Annual Conference

TAC - Tamil Annual Conference
TRAC - Trinity Annual Conference
SMC - Sengoi Mission Conference

Vacancies: Seminari Theoloji Malaysia (STM)

Communications Officer

Qualifications: A mature Christian, highly motivated and proactive. STPM qualification or higher with relevant experience. Good command in both written and spoken English and Chinese languages. Ability to do translation from English to Chinese and vice versa. Computer literate and proficient in Microsoft Office programs. Literacy in desktop publishing is an advantage.

Requirements:

- | To work in consultation with the Principal and the Director of Communications.
- | To attend to all forms of communications and promotions especially fund-raising and donors including "STM Friends & Partners".
- | To maintain and update mailing database (Microsoft Office Access).
- | Responsible for the publication of all STM publications and promotional materials, including design and layout, liaise with suppliers and printers, etc.
- | To collate information from various sources for publication.
- | To coordinate the distribution and dissemination of all STM publications and promotional materials.

- | To keep stock of all STM publications and promotional materials.
- | To assist the IT Officer with the maintenance and updating of STM website.

Administration & Finance Manager

Qualifications: A mature Christian, highly motivated and proactive. Diploma qualifications or higher with relevant experience. Possess the necessary administrative and management skills. Good command in both written and spoken English. Working knowledge in Bahasa Malaysia. Computer literate and proficient in Microsoft Office programs. Knowledge of theological education and operation in a seminary setting is an advantage.

Requirements:

- | Responsible to the Principal and work very closely with the two Deans.
- | Responsible for all administrative matters concerning STM office, finance, budget, staff, security, kitchen, student and faculty accommodation in the campus.
- | Overall responsible for the maintenance of STM properties and vehicles.
- | Overall responsible for STM purchases.
- | Supervision of all STM staff in consultation with the respective heads of departments.
- | Liaise with the company secretary and auditor, banks and statutory authorities on STM matters.

Interested applicants are to send or email your applications accompanied by a passport-sized photograph (non-returnable) to: The Acting Business Manager, Seminari Theoloji Malaysia, Lot 3011, Taman South East, 70100 Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. Email: ckkee2001@yahoo.com



SCAC New Church Building in Sibujaya

The Jaya Methodist Church has just signed an agreement with the contractors from Anchor Harvest S/B. The witness was Mr. Yang, Chairman of the SCAC Board of Property. The construction started on 1st July, 2011, and is expected to be completed after 18 months. Jaya Methodist Church will hold a bazaar on 31st of August to help raise funds. The church started in 1998 and it was located in the centre of the low cost residential area. Due to the limited space in the shop lot, and the increasing number of members, the church needs a new church building which will cost them 3.5 million ringgit. To date, only 1 million ringgit has been collected.



SPREADING SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS,
TRANSFORMING THE NATION

Council of Education



Wesley Methodist Schools Summit Meeting

The meeting took place on July. The Working Paper on the Restructuring of Private Methodist Education was discussed. There are two phases to that: 1. Rebranding initiatives of the schools, initiating and standardizing quality. 2. Restructuring the system of governance in schools, and restructuring of financial management.

Methodist Malaysia Youth Fellowship (Persaudaraan Belia Methodist Malaysia)



World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches Youth Conference

500 youths from Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong attended the four days three nights conference which took place in Malacca. The purpose of the conference was to explore and discover the works and contributions made by the missionaries in 16-18th centuries. Rev. Boh Che Suan, president of CAC urged the youths to have the passion of the missionaries, who had left the comforts of home and contributed to God's kingdom work in China.



Spreading Scriptural Holiness

Holiness is a common word in the world of religion. What does 'holiness' mean?

BY MICHAEL WILLIAM

In this quadrennium, the Methodist Church in Malaysia is using the theme mooted by John Wesley, "Spreading Scriptural Holiness, Transforming the Nation" as its theme. In the next two issues of Pelita Methodist, we will be focusing on the two components of the theme – Scriptural Holiness and Transforming the Nation.

Scriptural Holiness

Holiness is a common word in the world of religion. What does 'holiness' mean? Many of us would think it is an ethical word – living in such a way that is 'right' or 'good'. To make it Christian, we would add the phrase "according to the way and will of God". And since we use ethics, many people would then judge holiness on the lifestyle of a person. For example, one would say "he is holy because he lives righteously" or "he is unholy as his ways are evil". Thus there seems to be a certain standard that one has to achieve to be called 'holy'.

The Bible has a very different concept of Holiness since it bases its definition mainly on God and not man. This difference comes from the fundamental assertion that the righteousness of God is not the same as the righteousness of man. Therefore what we may think is right in our eyes may not necessary be right in the eyes of God. Romans 10:3 clearly states this difference: "For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness".

To understand the term 'Holy' then, we must know how it is used in the bible. "God is Holy". This phrase is not an ethical term but rather a phrase that describes the very nature of God. James Boyce in his book 'Foundations of the Christian Faith' explains the term "holiness" as "the characteristics of God that sets him apart from his creation". God is holy and there is none like Him.

Boyce goes on further to note that there are four elements in the biblical understanding of 'Holiness'.

Firstly, it is 'Majesty'. This is the supreme attribute on the One who is above all other and it gives the idea of grandeur and 'stateliness'. A human example to this element is the Agong for Malaysians. We all know that though he may just be a symbol of power in this country, there is this elegance and dignity within him that calls us to respect and honour him. There is none like him in this country. He is our King.

Secondly, there is this element of 'will,

the will of a personality'. God wills to proclaim himself as the "Wholly Other", whose glory must on no account be diminished because of human arrogance and wilful rebellion. This is an active definition. God is not passive. He wills and acts to see that his glory is recognised.

Thirdly, there is this element of 'wrath'. The 'wrath of God' is not like human reaction to something. It is 'the stance of God to all that oppose Him'. God will not allow anyone to oppose him or stand in His place. If we do, judgment would befall us. This includes sin. God who is Holy would never tolerate sin and he would deal with sin as it opposes his nature.

Finally there is this element of 'righteousness'. Righteousness takes into consideration the three elements, Majesty, Will, and Wrath' into account. In knowing who God is in his majesty and seeking his will, one then knows how to live rightly. Our lifestyle is based solely on the ways of God. There cannot be any other standard, other than that of God himself.

We are ambassadors, seeking to bring His message of holiness to all in order that people might be able to live according to His ways and His will as Creator of all.

The Holiness of God is clearly displayed in the Bible through his interactions with the different people of the bible. Clearly in all creation there is none as majestic, powerful and sovereign as Him. And as a 'jealous Husband', God will not allow anyone or anything to take his place. His Holy love will do whatever He wills to protect His

creation from harm.

This is our Holy God who calls us to be holy as well. We are called to live our lives as people who follow no other, who "wills" no other and who worships no other but only God Himself.

Jesus, The Example of Holiness

I am always have been intrigued by the story of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus to ask how he could obtain eternal life (Luke 18:18-30). What intrigued me most was the call of Jesus to follow him as a means of obtaining eternal life. Yes we all know Jesus as God simply because we have the advantage of history. This young ruler did not and this caused him to leave Jesus with a sorrowful heart. I sometimes would like to imagine what it would have been like if he did follow Jesus.

He would have seen the dignity of God in the life of Jesus. He would have seen how Jesus, who though had every right to be crowned King by the people did not follow the footsteps of popularity and power mongering. In obedience to God his Father and His love for all mankind, Jesus showed that there is none like Him. He willed it in his life to go the narrow path simply because that was the way of God.

In seeing this path, the rich young ruler would have seen the astute resoluteness of Jesus in following the will of the Father. He would have heard stories of the prayer of Jesus at Gethsemane. Though the path he chose was a difficult and painful path, Jesus willed in in his heart and mind that he will stick to the Father's will.

As he would have followed Jesus, he would have had the opportunity given to Jesus' disciples to understand the reason for his impending death. He would have understood the wrath of God in dealing with rebellion and sin. And greater to this, he would have also learnt about a love that would never let go. I can also imagine the moments he would have had hearing from Jesus in the weeks after his resurrection. He would then understand the will and plan of God from Scripture and exclaimed that Jesus is truly God.

Lastly, he would have then waited with eager expectation for the Holy Spirit promised to Jesus' disciples. In that encounter he would have had the powerful awakening that would have given him strength and courage to live in God's righteousness.

If only he had understood that Jesus was calling him to a life of Holiness that day when Jesus invited him to follow him!

He would have exclaimed that eternal life he longed for was life lived in Holiness.

Spreading Scriptural Holiness

The onus then is with us, Christians who have the benefit of Scripture, the revealed word of God to be holy just as how God has been revealed to us. This revelation of God is seen in greater depth in the life of Jesus our Lord who came as a man and showed the disciples God. These disciples then revealed Him to others who also spread this knowledge to others. And really, that is the reason why we are followers of this Holy God as well. Our call has to be likewise as well. We are to spread scriptural holiness to others.

We are called to live in such a way that would reveal this Holy God we worship. We are ambassadors, seeking to bring His message of holiness to all in order that people might be able to live according to His ways and His will as creator of all.

To become effective ambassadors of Christ, we need to show the world that we

too are called to be holy. We need to live in such a way that would not only be different from the ways of the world but also according to the will and love of God. Our motivation should be that of living in such a way that would show the world that our God is the only true God and there is none like him. We should not just be going after worldly pursuits but to go after matters that concern God. We should also be concerned for the things that our God hates – people, systems and powers that seek to replace God as God. And finally we are called to live righteously in the example of our Lord Jesus Christ in order to show the world that in living this way, we find eternal life. In being this ambassador for Christ, we then light up the world with His light and bring people to glorify this Holy God we worship. May we be people that seek to spread scriptural holiness in this land that we live in.

Quick Survey on Holiness

We did an impromptu interview on holiness. Two questions were asked: “What does holiness mean to you?” and “How do you practice it?”



Close Relationship

Having quiet time and pray everyday. Obey His commandments. Honor our parents, keep away from adultery. Do communicate with God more often, having a close relationship with Him.



“Prayer & Devotion as my daily routine”

Chang Chung Hon, Student

“Living, knowing that God is present in our lives... and living for Him!”

William Kwong, Youth Worker

With God Alone

Talk to God as a friend. Anytime and anything you want. It can be as simple as a hello or as complex as a long prayer. Meditate with the bible verses. If you don't have time, reflect at the end of the day. During quiet time, you may want to reflect on the day whether you had carried our Christ-like living. In city, we have to consciously withdraw from gadgets, internet, work, and entertainment and find time to be with God alone.

“Set apart for God to use”

Margaret Khoo, Small Group Director

Quiet Time

Spend quiet time with God everyday, read and meditate scriptures, seek His will. It is up to us, individually, that we have to take the initiative to have quiet time. Have your quiet time early in the morning. If you can't wake up early, have it at night time. We have to set ourselves apart from our busy schedule. Put our yoke on God, and we follow His ways and guidance.

Judicial Council Sitting On Question of Law Raised at the 35th Session of Chinese Annual Conference

CORAM

Rev. Dr. Ezra Kok, JC President
Rev. Dr. Tie King Tai
Mr. George Lau
Rev. Ting Moy Hong
Ms. Jess Ling Jye Sing
Rev. Dr. Lau Hui Ming
Mr. Tan Foong Luen
Mr. Chang Jih Ren
Mrs. Daphne Sebastian Gopal

Question

“Whether on the true interpretation of Para 310(1) of the Methodist Discipline and the other relevant provisions of the Methodist Discipline a Local Preacher is precluded from conducting the Sacraments of the Holy Communion and Baptism?”

This question was raised at the 35th Session of the CAC and the reply to this question was given by the President of the CAC in the following terms:

“According to the traditional practice of the church Para 310(1) which says “A Local Preacher has authority to preach and conduct divine worship” refers to preaching and chairing in worship services and conducting prayer meetings etc. Traditionally, to conduct “divine worship” does not include conducting the sacraments of Holy Communion or Baptism. Therefore I hereby conclude that a local preacher has no authority to conduct the sacraments of the Holy Commun-

ion and Baptism, unless he/she is appointed as an approved supply pastor of a local church (Para 317[1]).”

This Question is brought before the Judicial Council for a ruling as to whether the decision of the President of the CAC is correct.

Ruling

The Judicial Council ruled that a local preacher has no authority to conduct the Sacraments of the Holy Communion or Baptism save when provided under the Methodist Discipline (hereinafter referred to as the Discipline).

In order to answer this question, the Council approached the issue not just from the viewpoint of practice and tradition, but from perusing the relevant rules in the Discipline.

We found that Para 310 referred to a local preacher per se. Such a definition does not include him as an approved supply pastor unless he is appointed as such and thereby by definition becomes an approved supply pastor. (See for example Para 310[3] and Para 313 of the Discipline).

As a local preacher what can he do? He can “preach” and conduct “divine worship.” We then went on to examine what “divine worship” meant in the Discipline. There was no definition of “divine worship” as such but we derived from Para 325 of the Discipline that the Discipline

makes a distinction between “divine worship” and the administration of “baptism” and the administration of “the Lord’s Supper”, the other word for “the Holy Communion”. These three facets of the Christian life are mentioned in Para 325 distinctly and separately from each other. This, by normal rules of interpretation, means that they cannot be considered as coming under one umbrella word which in this case would be “divine worship”. Divine worship means just that, and no more.

Also it is clear from Para 325 that local preachers who are ordained deacons “can exercise ministerial functions only in the charge to which he is appointed or in which he resides”. Therefore local preachers per se, who are not ordained deacons have a limited scope of functions which are described in Para 310(1) as “preaching” and conducting “divine worship” not including “the sacraments of the Holy Communion or Baptism”.

Ruling of the Judicial Council

The Judicial Council thereby ruled that “local preachers” have no authority to administer “the Sacraments of the Holy Communion and baptism” save where they have met the requirements set out in the Discipline, an example of which is found in Para 325.

Daphne Sebastian Gopal
Secretary,
Judicial Council of The Methodist Church in Malaysia. 21 July 2011

Declaratory Orders sought by Petitioner:

1. Whether on the true interpretation of the Constitutional provision of Para 21 Article VI of the Methodist Discipline, a member of the Methodist Church who is not less than

21 years of age but aged 70 years and above is eligible to be a lay delegate to the General Conference.

2. Whether on the true interpretation of Para 1104.2, the said Para 1104.2 says that a member of the Methodist Church is ineligible to be a lay delegate to the General Conference by virtue of his/her age being 70 years.

Issue raised: What is the governing criterion in deciding whether a member of the Methodist Church in Malaysia is eligible to be elected a lay delegate to the General Conference?

Sub issues:

1. What is the meaning of “agency”
2. Is it constitutional to allow a person aged 70 years and above to be a delegate to the General Conference?

Declaratory Orders made by the Judicial Council of the Methodist Church Malaysia:- 1st Declaratory Order.

1st Declaratory Order

That on the true interpretation of Para 21 of the Constitution Article VI of the Methodist Book of Discipline, a member of the Methodist Church who is not less than 21 years of age is eligible to be a lay delegate to the General Conference although he may have attained the age of 70 years and above.

2nd Declaratory Order

That on the true interpretation of Para 1104.2, read in the light of Para 21 Article VI of the Constitution of the Methodist Book of Discipline, a member of the Methodist Church who has attained the age of 70 years and above is eligible to be a lay delegate to the General Conference.

Grounds Decision

Having heard the submissions of Mr. Peter Chen, Counsel for the Interested Party, the Judicial Council came to the following conclusions:

On a true reading of Para 21 Article VI of the Constitution as found in the Methodist Book of Discipline (hereinafter referred to as Para 21), it is clear beyond doubt that the said Para 21 imposes only a minimum age limit of 21 years for lay delegates from the Annual Conference to the General Conference and there is no mention of an maximum age limit insofar as restrictions on age is concerned. The issue became complex due to the inclusion

of Para 1104.2 in the Methodist Book of Discipline (hereinafter referred to as Para 1104.2) which reads as follows:

“A member of any agency is eligible to serve provided that during the quadrennium for which he is elected to serve, his/her 70th birthday does not fall within it.”

There appears to be, therefore, an apparent contradiction within the Methodist Book of Discipline.

In the course of submissions, Counsel addressed the issue of whether Annual Conferences are primary bodies or agencies within the Methodist Church. This was due to the fact that Para 1104.2 bars members of an agency from being eligible to serve if they had attained the age of 70 years in the quadrennium for which they are elected to serve.

Para 1102 of the Methodist Book of Discipline (hereinafter referred to as Para 1102) was referred to in support of the argument that the Annual Conference is not an agency as it is not included in the description of “agency” within the said Para 1102.

Counsel also submitted that since Para 21 is a constitutional provision, no rule can contradict the said Para and if it did it would be **ultra vires** the Constitution.

The Judicial Council came to the following findings in law after having perused the relevant Para as stated above as well as having heard the submissions of Counsel for the Interested Party and having received clarification from the Interested Party on relevant issues.

Findings

It is obvious that Para 21 deals with members from an Annual Conference who are elected as lay delegates to the General Conference. Whereas, Para 1104.2 deals with members from agencies which are described in Para 1102, but the said Para 1102 makes no mention of an Annual Conference as an agency.

The question arose whether the Annual Conference is not an agency for the purpose of Para 1104.2 and therefore the said Conference is not caught by the restriction on age found in Para 1104.2?

The Judicial Council firstly approached the issue from the perspective of a consti-

tutional provision, that is Para 21, versus an administrative (and non- constitutional) rule which is Para 1104.2.

The Judicial Council concluded that Para 21 is a constitutional provision that allows lay members from the Annual Conference to be elected to serve as lay delegates to the General Conference provided they are not aged below 21 years of age. Para 1104.2 is an inferior law to the constitutional provision and cannot override the said constitutional provision. Judicial Council Decision 3 is a precedent which recognises that the Constitution is supreme and any inferior law which is inconsistent with the Constitution cannot be allowed to stand to the extent of its inconsistency.

Against this background of the legal standing of the two provisions, if in law and in fact the word “agency” in Para 1104.2 is defined to include Annual Conferences, such a conclusion will activate the use of the precedent of Judicial Council Decision 3 as Para 21 which is constitutional in nature will supersede Para 1104.2 and will render null and void Para 1104.2 to the extent it is inconsistent with Para 21.

But if the word “agency” in Para 1104.2 is defined as not including Annual Conferences, then there is no conflict between Para 1104.2 and Para 21 and the requirement on age limit will not apply to lay delegates from Annual Conferences.

However, the age limit in Para 1104.2 may apply to others who are by definition caught under the term “agency” as found in Para 1102. The question is, who are the “others” who may be affected by Para 1104.2?

It appears that everyone must of necessity belong to an Annual Conference. Some persons who belong to an Annual Conference may be the persons coming within Para 1102 because they fulfil the descriptions found in Para 1102 of being members of the bodies described in the said Para 1102, and thus eventually they may be termed to come within the term “agency” as described in the said Para 1102. Would these “others” be barred from holding posts in the said agencies if their 70th birthdays fall within the quadrennium, due to the imposition of the age limit imposed under Para 1104.2? On a simple reading of Para 1104.2 it would appear that they would be barred.

By logical inference, it would be illogi-

Sitting of the Judicial Council for Petition 1/2011

CORAM

Rev. Dr. Ezra Kok, JC President
Rev. Dr. Tie King Tai
Mr. George Lau
Rev. Ting Moy Hong
Ms. Jess Ling Jye Sing

Rev. Dr. Lau Hui Ming
Mr. Tan Foong Luen
Mr. Chang Jih Ren
Mrs. Daphne Sebastian Gopal

Declaratory Orders Sought

cal to allow the age limit in Para 1104.2 to stand against those who fall within the term “agency” as defined in Para 1102 as these very individuals sitting on councils, boards etc, may at any time be picked to represent the Annual Conference at the General Conference level as lay delegates as long as they meet the qualifications in Para 21. Are these individuals who became ineligible to serve these councils, boards etc, because they have turned 70 years of age, suddenly become eligible to be elected as lay delegates of the Annual Conference to the General Conference despite their age being 70 and above due to the present ruling made by this sitting of the Judicial Council?

The problem becomes more noticeable

when it is realised that when members of “agencies” are barred from service because of the age limit in Para 1104.2, it will result in a reduction of candidates from the 70 year old age group to be selected to be lay delegate from the Annual Conference to the General Conference, although this was never the intention of the makers of the Constitution, as evidenced by Para 21.

The more valid argument from a perspective of constitutional law would be that there is no intelligible differentia between those serving on “agencies” and those chosen to be lay delegates to the General Conference, for an age limit to apply against those in “agencies”, as both categories serve the church and all are equal in the sight of God and man. In this

regard, the Judicial Council perused Paras 87(7) and 90 of the Constitution of The Methodist Church in Malaysia as found in the Methodist Discipline and found it consistent and clear in promoting the rights of the elderly and their dignity and this can only be done if they are treated equally with others who are allowed to serve the church.

Hence, both declaratory orders were allowed by this Council.

Daphne Sebastian Gopal
Secretary,
Judicial Council of The Methodist Church
in Malaysia. 21 July 2011

Sitting of the Judicial Council for Petition 2/2011

CORAM

Rev. Dr. Ezra Kok, JC President
Rev. Dr. Tie King Tai
Mr. George Lau
Rev. Ting Moy Hong
Ms. Jess Ling Jye Sing
Rev. Dr. Lau Hui Ming
Mr. Tan Foong Luen
Mr. Chang Jih Ren
Mrs. Daphne Sebastian Gopal

Declaratory Orders Sought:

a. Whether on the true interpretation of the Constitutional provision of Para 16 Article 1, Sub Para 4 of the Methodist Discipline and taking into consideration Judicial Council Decision No. 3, the provision in disqualifying church members who are 70 years old and above from being elected as Lay members/lay delegates to the Annual Conference in Para 150 of the Rules of Organisation and Administration of the Methodist discipline is *ultra vires* the Constitutional provision of Para 16 Article 1 Sub Para 4 and members of the local church who are 70 years old and above are therefore eligible to be elected as Lay members/Lay delegates to the Annual Conference having satisfied the requirements for election.

b. Whether in the event of the phrase “nor more than 70 years of age” in Para 150 being held *ultra vires* Para 16 Article 1 Sub Para 4 and of no effect, the said phrase in Para 150 is invalid not only against the ex-officio steward, the Lay Delegate, but also invalid against (1) other ex-officio stewards who may be affected by the age limitation of 70 years old within the said Para 150 and (2) other provisions which contain a similar clause “not more than 70 years of age” such as Para 149.2, Para 701.2(a), Para 701.3(a) and Para 1104.2 are therefore also *ultra vires* on the same arguments as in (a) above. Otherwise there will be inconsistencies and discriminations against members by age existing in the Methodist Discipline.

Issue: Whether there is a conflict between the Constitution of The Methodist Church in Malaysia as found in the Methodist Book of Discipline and the Rules of Organisation and Administration of the Methodist Book of Discipline in relation to age limits.

Preliminary issue: Whether the Petitioner had the legal standing to make this Petition

to the Judicial Council.

The Judicial Council decided the preliminary issue in the affirmative and went on to hear the Petition.

Orders Made:

(Order (a) made unanimously)

a. That on the true interpretation of the Constitutional provision of Para 16, Article 1, Sub-Para 4 of the Methodist Discipline it was held that Para 150 of the Rules of Organisation and Administration of the Methodist Discipline is *ultra vires* the said Constitutional provision and it was further held that members of the local church who are 70 years old and above are therefore eligible to be elected as Lay Members/ Lay Delegates to the Annual Conference having satisfied the requirements for election.

(Order (b) made by a majority of 5:4)

• For: Rev. Dr. Ezra Kok, Mr. Tan Foong Luen, Mr. Chang Jih Ren, Ms. Jess Ling Jye Sing, Mrs. Daphne Sebastian Gopal
• Against: Rev. Dr. Tie King Tai, Mr. George Lau, Rev. Ting Moy Hong, Rev. Dr. Lau Hui Ming

b. Having held that Para 150 of the

Rules of Organisation and Administration of the Methodist Discipline is *ultra vires* Para 16, Article 1, Sub-Para 4 of the Methodist Discipline, the Judicial Council further holds that the phrase “not more than 70 years and above” in the said Para 150 is invalid not only against the ex-officio steward, the Lay Delegate, but also invalid against other ex-officio stewards who may be affected by the age limitation of 70 years found in the said Para 150, and any other provisions not being constitutional in nature such as Para 149.2, Para 701.2(a), Para 701.3(a) and Para 1104.2 which contain words of a similar nature which contain limitations of age such as found in Para 150, are also held to be *ultra vires* based on the arguments against Para 150.

Grounds of Judgement

The Judicial Council firstly decided that the Petitioner had the legal standing to bring this Petition to the Judicial Council. Para 714.2 of the Methodist Book of Discipline (hereinafter referred to as the Discipline) supports this finding.

The Judicial Council then perused Para 16 Article 1 Sub-Para 4 and Para 150 of the Methodist Book of Discipline.

Para 16 Article 1 Sub-Para 4 of the said Discipline provides as follows:

“The lay members other than those listed by office, shall be at least twenty one years of age, and shall have been for the four years preceding their election, members in good standing of The Methodist Church in Malaysia.”

Para 150 of the said Discipline provides as follows:

“The following officers, if members or affiliate members of the local church, shall be ex-officio stewards during their respective terms of office, and shall exercise all the rights and privileges which belong to the steward in the Methodist Church: the Church Lay Leader, the Lay Delegate of the Annual Conference, the Church Treasurer, the Church School Superintendent, the Chairpersons of the Committee on Stewardship and Finance, Christian Education, Christian Social Concerns, Membership and Evangelism, Missions, Worship and

Music, Property Management, and the President of the Methodist Women, the President of the Methodist Seniors Fellowship, the President of Methodist Men, the President of the Methodist Youth Fellowship, the President of the Methodist Adult/Young Adult Fellowship, the Captain of the Boys Brigade, the Captain of the Girls Brigade and the Coordinator of small groups. These officers shall not be less than 21 years of age nor more than 70 years of age with the exception of the Methodist Seniors Fellowship.”

Para 16 Article 1 Sub-Para 4 of the said Discipline falls within Part 1 which constitutes the Constitution of the Methodist Church in Malaysia whereas Para 150 of the said Discipline falls within the Rules of Organisation and Administration of The Methodist Church in Malaysia (hereinafter referred to as the said Rules). Both the Constitution and the said Rules come within the Methodist Book of Discipline.

The Judicial Precedent 3 which was cited before us established that any non-constitutional provision that is in conflict with a provision/provisions of the Constitution will be *ultra vires* the Constitution and will result in the non-constitutional provisions being declared invalid to the extent of its inconsistency with the provision/provisions of the Constitution. The said Precedent also cited Judicial Precedent 1 wherein it was held that Part 1 of the Methodist Book of Discipline contains the Constitution of The Methodist Church in Malaysia whereas Parts II to VI are rules for the Organisation and Administration of the said Church.

The Judicial Council was satisfied that Para 16 Article 1 Sub-Para 4 and Para 150 referred to the same categories of persons. Para 16 Article 1 Sub-Para 4 did not impose an upper age limit but Para 150 imposed an upper age limit of 70 years. The inconsistency between the two Para had to be resolved by the use of Judicial Precedent 3 which incorporates a fundamental principle in constitutional law that determines the issue in favour of the constitutional provision.

The Petitioner referred also to Paras 82, 87(1), 87(7) and 90 which deal with, inter alia, equality, rights of the elderly and to the rights and dignity of all persons. Thus, apart from the issue of constitutional inconsistency, Para 150 falls foul of the So-

cial Principles which the Constitution maintains for all. Therefore, on this second premise too, Para 150 was found to be *ultra vires* the Constitution of The Methodist Church in Malaysia.

Clearly, the provisions in Para 149.2, Para 701.2(a), Para 703(a) and Para 1104.2 that were raised by the Petitioner in the second declaration, save for Para 16 Article 1 Sub- Para 4, are against the tenor of the Paras 82, 87(1) and 90 that highlight the Social Principles that seek to place the elderly in a position of equality as well as dignity. Para 150 and all other similarly worded Para detract from the principles of equality and dignity by putting a fetter on persons who are aged 70 years and above.

As the Petitioner had also requested for a second declaration making all provisions such as those mentioned in the second declaration that contain limitations on the upper age limit to be declared *ultra vires* the Constitution, the Judicial Council found it necessary to allow the second declaration on the same grounds that it found Para 150 unconstitutional. Thus even if the second declaration makes mention of only a few additional Para that fall foul of the equality Paras that have been highlighted, this Council would state that any other Para in the Methodist Discipline that contains an upper limit on age would fall foul of the equality provisions in the Constitution in the same way that has been decided for Para 149.2, Para 701.2(a), Para 703(a) and Para 1104.2. This ruling will prevent further questions of a similar nature being raised in the future insofar as the second declaration is concerned. For now, it will assist the Petitioner in its work as the Judicial Council agreed that the Petitioner’s future work could be hampered by these provisions that are unconstitutional in nature.

Daphne Sebastian Gopal
Secretary,
Judicial Council of The Methodist Church
in Malaysia. 21 July 2011



Borderless Spiritual Leader
Rev. Boonratna Boayen, the Moderator of The Church of Christ in Thailand.



Historical Tribe
Akha tribe in illustration.

Now, We Work Together

Malaysian - Thailand Mission Partnership

BY MICHAEL WILLIAM

Have you ever heard of the Akha tribe? They are a minority tribe living in the hilly areas of Chiang Rai and Chiang Mai of Thailand. Currently they have a population of close to 80,000. They are relatively poor and not favourably viewed by the mainstream Thai people due to their lifestyle and ethnic differences. Thus they are largely marginalised.

Missionaries from Taiwan began work within this tribe initially but due to financial constraints, they had to leave this work. There were 6 churches built at that time. In the year 2000, the Chinese Annual Conference (CAC) began to send teams to the area to carry on the work amongst the Akha. The mission work included reaching out to the people through evangelism and social and economic development. Today, the Methodist Church in Malaysia has setup 24 churches within these areas. The key person from Malaysia coordinating the work in Thailand is Pastor Richard Wong who is the Chairman of the Board of Mission for the CAC. As the mission work grew, the Methodist Church in Malaysia decided to join with a local Thai Church in developing it. We thank God that He has provided the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT) to form a partnership with MCM in this work. Through this partnership, there will be collaboration in the mission field both in Thailand and in Malaysia through mutual consultation and agreement with each party. CCT and MCM also agreed to

offer opportunities to engage each other and share resources in programs that would enhance the mission of the church. The agreement between CCT and MCM was signed in the 23rd of February 2011. MCM was represented by Bishop Hwa Yung and President Boh Che Suan from the CAC. CCT was represented by Rev. Boonratna Boayen, the Moderator of CCT and Rev. Sayam Muangsak, the General Secretary of CCT.

Rev. Boonratna Boayen is no stranger to our land as in the 1960s he served as a missionary amongst the Iban people in Sibu and Kapit. He worked in the longhouses at Sg. Majau and Paku during those years and he was blessed to see the Christians grow there from 1 family to 28 families last year. He was even happier to note that from the initial family he worked with in 1964, 2 of the children then are now pastors working in these areas.

It is in these developments that has made him excited about this newly formed partnership with the MCM. He is looking forward to working with the SCAC and SIAC especially with the Iban people. When asked where he got his energy since he was already 71 years old, he replied that whatever years he still has on this side of heaven was for the Lord as He had only promised 70 years to human beings to live.

May his life be an inspiration to all of us as we strive to serve together in mission both in Thailand and in Malaysia.

ILLUSTRATION ADAPTED FROM WIKIMEDIA; PHOTOGRAPH BY ISSAC NG



Cheers!
Methodist Bishops from Asian countries toss the glass during closing

Excelling in the Work of the Lord

The 3rd Asian Methodist Conference

BY MICHAEL WILLIAM

The 3rd Asian Methodist Conference (AMC) was held from the 25th – 28th of June 2011 in Hong Kong. It was attended by nearly 200 Methodists from 11 countries throughout Asia. Malaysia was represented by 34 participants from all our different conferences. Prior to the beginning of the AMC, the Fellowship of Asian Methodist Bishops (FAMB) met together for worship, fellowship and reporting of the current situations of the Methodist Churches in the various countries.

The theme for the 3rd AMC was “Excelling in the Work of the Lord – Methodist Mission in Asia Today”. Bishop Hwa Yung, who was the Presiding Chairman of the AMC opened the conference with the call for all Methodists to follow the examples of the Methodist Tradition in mission. This was followed by three plenary sessions on Mission – “Integrating Evangelism, Social Transformation and Spirituality”, “Reaching Migrant Workers” and “Cooperation in Missions”. The partici-

pants were greatly enriched through the sharing of many key people in Missions during these plenary sessions. Mr. John Ling, our very own Malaysian representative in the AMB council also led in a session where all the countries present shared their mission work in their countries. It was a joy and privilege to be invited to pray as an Asian Methodist for all these mission work.

During the AMC, a general election was also held to elect new members to the AMC council for the next 3 years. From this council, an executive council was formed and Bishop Taranath S. Sagar from India was elected as the next AMC chairman. In his acceptance speech, he thanked the former AMC council for their fine work and called on all Methodist movements throughout Asia to close ranks and support each other as we build God’s Kingdom. The participants of the 3rd AMC was greatly blessed by the members of the Hong Kong Methodist Church

President Rev. Prof. Lo Lung-kwong. Through their hard work and great hospitality all participants were treated with utmost care throughout the conference. Apart from the conference, tours to various mission and social care centres by the Hong Kong Methodist churches were arranged for all the participants. A special mention of thanks and gratitude also has to be given to them for the logistical coordination given to all the participants.

At the end of the conference, all the participants were richly blessed with the knowledge that God’s work through the Methodists is growing in Asia. They are greatly encouraged and will keep the fire of God’s mission burning brightly. They will also to keep each other in prayer as they strive to see God glorified through our movements. Friendships were also made across Asia through this conference. In is in this fellowship that assures us that the Kingdom of God is real and vibrant in this region.

PHOTOGRAPH BY KIM GLENN MITN

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)

Mission **Worship** Fellowship | Discipleship | Care & Concern



Having Meaningful Services. Five Tips for Finding Meaning

BY DANIEL

You can read about five million books on ministry, preaching, technique, exposition, worship, music, church grounds, church marketing—whatever. Those books can be a lot of help in ministry. A lot of what happens in ministry, however, just boils down to what happens during your church’s weekly service. For most people, this is the extent of “church.” This is where worship happens. This is where community takes place. So, what are some simple things

that you can do to make your services more meaningful?

First, ask yourself a few questions about your services, just to get things back to the basics. First off, what is the purpose of the church? Why did God institute the church, anyway? What purpose is it supposed to serve? Bore down a bit deeper, and ask yourself about the mission of your own assembly. Second, think about the needs of the people in your church and community? When we consider a person’s “needs,” we are probably talking about something a

little bit more significant than having free WiFi, complimentary coffee, and better acoustics for the back row.

Now, that you’re humming along thinking about things, let me offer five propositions and suggestions that could improve your services.

Church Services Should be All About God

On paper, your service is all about God. How does that practically translate into worship, preaching, etc.? Are people aware

that worship is more than just building up the warmth and fuzzes in themselves? Are you, as a preacher, volunteer, worship leader, musician, or participant focusing on God? This is totally basic, but it’s also totally important. Without the foundation of a Godward service, there is no use suggesting the remaining four tips. Worship services are all about God. Life is all about glorifying God.

Making your services significant is about making your services more than just an event, a checklist item

Church Services Should be About the Word

As Christians, we have one major thing to go off when it comes to our faith. We have the Bible. The Bible is how we learn about God, learn about Jesus, and discover true meaning. If your services are held without mentioning the Bible a whole lot, something is wrong. Regardless of how awesome the music is, how funny the preaching is, or how good your caramel lattes are, the church is pitiful and empty without a strong dose of the Bible. Preach the Bible. Apply the Bible. Live the Bible. Make your services about the Bible.

Church Services Should be About People

The church—the body of Christ—is made up of people. There are hurting people. There are confused people. There are sinning people. There are discouraged people. There are disillusioned people. There are proud people. There are depressed people. The mission of the church is to help these people. Not “help” in a “hey, there put a smile on your face and off you go now” sort of way, but in a real, authentic, and relevant way. Services should be about serving people, helping people. Services

should be about meeting people where they are and introducing them to Jesus. When people complain, “I’m not being fed,” take that claim seriously. Are they not fed because they aren’t eating the food offered, or are they not fed because there is no food being offered? I’m not saying you can never have a business meeting or a cantata or whatever, but whenever you have a service, set the table, and spread the feast.



This isn’t something we made up. “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).

Church Services Should be Something You Prepare For

There is nothing wrong with having a casual style of church service, where people are invited to come as they are. What you wear is not the important thing. What is important is that church leaders and attendees not have a casual attitude about what is going on in a service. In other words, services are something to prepare for. There are two types of preparation. The first is the most obvious kind of preparation.

The preacher has got to make sure he has something significant to say. He’s got to

prepare. The musicians must be practiced up. The bulletins must be printed. The worship videos must be cued. There’s another aspect of preparation that can’t be neglected. It has to do with heart preparation. When you attend a church service, it’s easy to waltz in, do the church thing, and get on with life. If “church” is significant, and the worship service is about God, you may do better to prepare. Prepare by pray-

ing. Prepare by considering Who it is you’re worshipping.

Church Services Should be Prayed Over

Finally, prayer is a significant part of a meaningful service. Without prayer, whatever we do in the service, for the service, before the service, or after the service is pretty much useless. Christians are to pray constantly—to pray without ceasing. As we prepare to engage in worship, prayer should be part of it—a continued conversation and interaction with the one whom we are worshipping.

Making your services significant is about making your services more than just an event, a checklist item. What you’re involved with is something significant, something that has eternal value. It’s something that effects lives. Focus on God, and make it significant.

Come & Enjoy Dinner & a Night of Fun

Theme:
“Precious
Moments....”



Fellowship time

Date: 16 September (Friday) 2011

Time: 6 pm

Contact persons:

**Cynthia 0123547429 (Program
Coordinator)**

**Pastor Marey 0168101044
(Campus Ministry)**



**Our Church address:
Shop lot No. C-24-1, Block C,
Riverside Plaza, Kingfisher, Kuala
Inanam, 88499 Kota Kinabalu,**



Rev. Chua Ming Hua 0168707773
Pastor in charge

“Wesley
Methodist
Chapel,
Kingfisher”

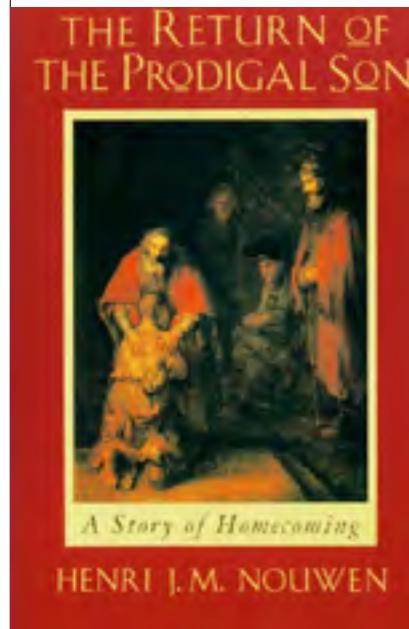
*We welcome students at
University Malaysia Sabah and
Institutes of Higher Education
in Kota Kinabalu*

Regular Church Activities:
Sunday Worship Service: 9am
**Campus Small Group meetings on
Saturday: 7.30pm**

Arts

“The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.” (Deut 7:6)

Books | Movies | Music | Architecture



**The Return of the Prodigal Son: A
Story of Homecoming**

*Author: Henri J.M. Nouwen
Publisher: Image Books / Doubleday
Publishing Group (March 1, 1994)*

BY GRAHAM SMITH

The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming by the Dutch Catholic Theologian Henri J.M. Nouwen is a book based around a painting by the Baroque master Rembrandt. It is the final of three works of arts inspired by the parable of the Prodigal Son, and is entitled The Return of the Prodigal Son. According to Nouwen, the painting is a representation of three stories; Rembrandt's, humanity's and God's.

Through exploring these three avenues the painting ‘becomes a window into the Kingdom of God’ and the source of a great spiritual journey. Nouwen’s thesis is that the aim of our spiritual journey as Christians is to ‘become the compassionate Father’, but that to get there we first need to understand and overcome the struggles of the younger and elder sons in ourselves. It was a journey Nouwen himself undertook after a chance encounter with a poster of the painting and it changed his life.

Nouwen’s inspiration, discovered through artwork and by using his imagination to place himself into the minds of the characters in the painting seems to draw its roots from Celtic Christianity and their love for metaphor, symbols and images. Whilst Nouwen was a Roman Catholic, and so would have an appreciation of the use of icons in worship, his experience and writings based around The Return of the Prodigal Son go beyond what would be expected of the Catholic tradition. It also draws strongly upon the Celtic tradition of faith as a pilgrimage and journey, walking in the shoes of others to ultimately come closer to God. However it would be unfair to limit Nouwen’s sources of inspiration to simply the Celtic tradition. There are clear links with Orthodoxy’s use of icons as a ‘window of perception’, the Desert Father’s desire to share deep intimacy with God, through rejection of worldly riches and desires and Ignatian Spirituality’s techniques of empathetic projection and imaginative engagement. This range of sources is why The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming makes a valuable contribution to the wider topic of Christian Spirituality. By drawing widely on different Christian traditions and combining them into one book, Nouwen opens the eyes of the reader to concepts which

may be alien to them. In doing so he expands their perception of what it means to become more like God and to experience his unconditional love.

For the evangelical culture that I am part of, the use of a painting to discern such deep spiritual truths would be an uncomfortable challenge. This is because we largely base our spirituality around the written word and the preaching and teaching of that word, whether that is the bible itself, or the work of Christian scholars, leaders and authors. There can be a suspicion of the use of art in worship because it is too open to individual interpretation and misrepresentation. Therefore Nouwen’s call to experience the grace and love of God, and share it with others, through a painting would be a difficult one for many to accept.

There is also a tendency within Evangelicalism to place emphasis upon Jesus in terms of worship and of aspiration, i.e. ‘we want to become more like Jesus’ and in absolute commitment to preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nouwen argues that the ultimate destination of our spiritual journey should be that of becoming like God the Father, with Jesus being our model of how to achieve this because ‘all the fullness of God the Father dwells in Him.’ For many in my church culture this focus on becoming like God the Father would be a novel thought, and one which would challenge their understanding of the Christian journey.

It is a book of spiritual discovery and journey which draws upon many different forms of Christian spirituality as it develops and unfolds. Ultimately it echoes Jesus call for Christians to “be compassionate as your Father is compassionate” (Luke 6:36) through drawing near to the father heart of God.



Preachers that are called Methodist

To reform the nation and, in particular, the Church;
to spread scriptural holiness over the land.

