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Bishop Ong Hwai Teik

Rev. Dr. Ong Hwai Teik is elected as the
bishop of the Methodist Church in Malaysia
for the 2013-2016 quadrennium.

Moment



10th Session General Conference, Kuala Lumpur

The 10th Session of the General Conference was held at the Grand Seasons Hotel in Kuala Lumpur on the 17th to the 22nd of September 2012. The General Conference meets once every four years to discuss, plan and decide on matters concerning the Methodist Church in Malaysia. Each of the 6 conferences was represented by 14 delegates – 7 members of the clergy and 7 lay representatives. Visitors comprising of Bishops and Presidents from various Methodist churches around the world also graced this special occasion as guest of our church.

During this conference there were elections for the office bearers of the General conference, namely the office of the Bishop, Secretary and the Treasurer of the Methodist Church in Malaysia. There were also elections for the Judicial Council and the Discipline Review Committee. Bishop Hwa Yung chaired the conference. Though the elections of all the posts went on fairly smoothly, the election for the New Bishop took a fair bit of time. After many ballots taken, a two third majority required for election was not obtained by any of the proposed candidates. It was

then decided by all the delegates that a one month period be given to all the delegates and the members of the Methodist church in Malaysia to pray and seek the Lord for discernment on His choice for the bishop. The General Conference was then reconvened on the 22nd to the 24th of October 2012. In this extended session, Bishop Robert Solomon of the Singapore Methodist Church chaired the election for the Bishop. And through God's grace, Rev. Dr. Ong Hwai Teik was elected as the Bishop of the Methodist Church through a fairly smooth and fast election.

It was really an experience for me to witness the church and God at work in the elections of the office bearers, especially for the post of the Bishop. Seeing the church pray, fast and deliberate amongst themselves on who should lead the church showed me the seriousness of our leaders in being sure of God's choice for the leader of the Methodist Church. Though some may have thought that the church was disunited, the unity of prayer, struggling together to discern God's voice and of companionship for the church was very evident throughout the Conference. And

when the election was concluded, all the delegates went to Bishop Ong Hwai Teik to pray and congratulate him.

The two other office bearers elected were Mr. Anthony Row and Mr. Tan Swee Aun as the General Secretary and the Treasurer of the General conference. At this conference, the delegates unanimously agreed to confer the title of Bishop Emeritus to Bishop Hwa Yung for his service to the Methodist church in Malaysia.

The consecration of the new Bishop, Bishop Ong Hwai Teik was held on the 24th of October 2012 at the Chinese Methodist Church in Kuala Lumpur. Bishop Hwa Yung, the Presidents of all the Annual Conference and Bishop Robert Solomon from the Singapore Methodist Church presided on the Consecration Service. In the presence of God, delegates and visitors from various churches in Malaysia, Bishop Ong Hwai Teik was consecrated as the Bishop of the Methodist Church for 2013 -2016

Our Methodist Church has new leaders for the next four years. May God bless them with wisdom, strength and fervour as they serve the Church and the country!

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Correction

Few words were missing in the last issue of Pelita (Volume 37, No.8). On page 6, the article should begin as "Such things have been repeated throughout the history of the church," then continues with "This is certainly true of Methodism..."

We apologize for the mistake we have made.

BELOVED (Follow Hard after God)

"I cling to you; your right hand upholds me."

"Let us acknowledge the Lord;

let us press on to acknowledge him.

As surely as the sun rises,

he will appear;

he will come to us like the winter rains,

like the spring rains that water the earth."

(Psalm 63:8, TNIV; Hosea 6:3, NIV)



Pray that

| We may be obedient to God's will, working with Him and doing what He told us to do; that we may be filled with longing and be made more thirsty still.

| Our spiritual leaders

for strength and wisdom when they are challenged; for joy of the Lord when they feel unappreciated.

| Christian community in Malaysia will not be made the scapegoat for political expediency.

| Our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world

Pakistan: the blasphemy laws that work against the religious minorities.

"Pray to the Lord for the city where you are living, because if good things happen in the city, good things will happen to you also." (Jer. 29:4-7, NCV)

Continue to Pray

| For fair and clean elections.

| For an honest and upright nation who values good ethics and moral standard.

| For the Rural and Regional Development Ministry and all government departments: "cekap, bersih dan amanah" and to be responsible.

| For the people who suffer poverty and who are in distress.

| For those who are blinded and deceived, that their eyes be open and their hearts be enlightened.

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Quarter Page	RM 150	RM 400

Cover



Photograph by Issac Ng

Methodist Church's New Bishop

By Soo Ewe Jin

Rev. Dr Ong Hwai Teik has been elected the new Bishop of the Methodist Church in Malaysia and will begin his term of office from Jan 1 next year.

The election and appointment of Rev Ong was made official at a consecration ceremony held at the Chinese Methodist Church in Kuala Lumpur recently.

The consecration was held at the Chinese Methodist Church in Kuala Lumpur in the presence of the presidents of the six annual conferences of the Methodist Church in Malaysia, pastors, senior leaders of the various Methodist churches and leaders from other churches around the country.

The consecration was led by the outgoing Bishop Rev Dr Hwa Yung and assisted by Bishop Robert Solomon, the Bishop of the Methodist Church in Singapore. Bishop Solomon also delivered the sermon for the solemn but meaningful occasion.

Rev Ong said he is both "humbled and honoured" to be entrusted with the responsibility to lead the Methodist Church in Malaysia.

"My prayer is that by God's sovereign grace and empowerment through the Holy Spirit, the Methodist community will sincerely seek to live as authentic disciples of

Christ that love God wholeheartedly and love our neighbours as ourselves.

"May the Methodist flock connect effectively and relevantly with others in the Malaysian Church, and also with other genuine parties, in continuing to make a difference in our beloved nation and the world – especially at this time in history," he said.

At the same event, it was announced that Rev Hwa Yung, who served for the past eight years, has been conferred the title Bishop Emeritus. Under the Methodist Church regulations, the Bishop is elected by the General Conference held every four years. Rev Ong has served in various capacities over the years. His last position before being elected Bishop was as the President of the Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC), which comprises mainly English-speaking congregations in all states in the peninsula except Terengganu and Kelantan.

Rev Ong joined TRAC in November 1983 after serving with the Chinese Church in London, and was ordained as a travelling elder of the Methodist Church in Malaysia in 1988.

He obtained the B.A. in Theology (1981) from the London School of Theology, UK and the M.A. in Missiology (1999) from Fuller Theological Seminary, US.

He received the D. Min. from Asbury

Theological Seminary, USA in May 2009 (under the Beeson International Leaders Scholarship). He has also received training in Spiritual Direction (Life Direction Team in Singapore (1999-2000)). Rev Ong served as pastor of a number of TRAC churches (in Grace Sentul, Teluk Intan, Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur) from 1983-2003. He was District Superintendent of Perak District from 1996-2001 and also served as the Chairman of the Board of Evangelism from 1992-2000. Since 2000 he has been the TRAC Prayer Director.

Rev Ong was involved with the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship as Hon. Secretary of Discipling A Whole Nation (DAWN) National Committee (1992-1995).

He serves as the Chaplain to the Girls' Brigade Malaysia and also Regional Chaplain of the Girls' Brigade Asia Fellowship. He is a member of the Malaysian Lausanne Fellowship Committee.

He is married to Mun Kean, and they have a daughter, Hannah Ong.

[This article first came out in The Star , Metro (1st November 2012). It is reprinted with permission from The Star, Malaysia. Mr. Soo Ewe Jin is also a member of The Emmanuel Methodist Church in Petaling Jaya.]

Special

10th General Conference & Consecration Service

1. Holy Communion | Bishops and presidents officiating the holy communion during the opening of General Conference. From left, Rev. C. Jayaraj (TAC President), Rev. Ling Heu Uh (SPAC President), Bishop Hwa Yung, Bishop Emeritus Dato Dr. Chuo Sing Ching, Rev. Su Chii Ann (SCAC President) and Rev. Steward Damat (SIAC President).

2. Keynote Speaker | Patrick Suckdeo, the main speaker during the General Conference.

3. Meeting | Rev. Hwa Jen, delegate from TRAC making a remark during the meeting proceeding.

4. Consecration | Bishop Solomon (Methodist Church in Singapore), Bishop Hwa Yung and the Presidents consecrating Rev. Ong Hwai Teik for service.

5. Bishop and Bishop Elect | From left, Rev. Dr. Dato Su Chii Ann (SCAC President), Rev. Steward Damat (SIAC President), Rev. C. Jayaraj (TAC President), Bishop Hwa Yung, Rev. Ong Hwai Teik (Bishop Elect), Mun Kean (Mrs. Ong), Bishop Solomon (Methodist Church in Singapore), Rev. Boh Che Suan (CAC President), Rev. Ling Heu Uh (SPAC President).







Celebration Dinner

1. Farewell Love Gift | From left, Rev. Steward Damat (SIAC President), Rev. Boh Che Suan (CAC President), Rev. Su Chii Ann (SCAC President), Rev. Ong Hwai Teik (TRAC President), Rev. C. Jayaraj (TAC President) handing a love gift to outgoing Bishop Hwa Yung (right most).

2. Singspiration | Singer Juwita Suwito was invited to perform her own composed song in the celebration dinner.



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

Barriers to Friendship with God

We must view God’s discipline positively as a necessary process in becoming conformed to the image of God once more since Genesis

BY DR. Lee Bee Teik

Introduction

If the Christian life is all about friendship with the holy yet gracious God, then why do not more of His children (including our fellow local church members and families) enjoy His promised abundant life more evidently? By abundantly, as directly or indirectly expressed in the four gospels, Jesus means the life which is able to let go of self-fulfillment in order to have Christ-fulfillment; to decrease our self-will in order to have God’s will in small and big matters in our daily life. Having watched and listened to various types of church members over the last few decades, allow me to share some of my findings in the hope that, together, we will enjoy His life of joy and peace, restfulness and yet purpose in our earthly journey towards Him. This will not be an exhaustive list but enough to set us thinking about God’s abundant life for us. There is much work for a believer to plough on, by God’s enabling, even as Paul reminded us, in Philippians 2:12-13, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Much of this work, workable only after God’s Spirit is in us, is to put off our old self and put on the new life of Christ. Some people call this the process of spiritual formation which is not passive or static but active and progressive till

we meet Christ face to face.

Colossians 3:1-14 reads...

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly thing. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord

forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unit.

Further, the writer of the Hebrews urged the believers in 12:1-3...

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Hence, we must view God’s discipline positively as a necessary process in becoming conformed to the image of God once more since Genesis 3. In fact, we may ask for it so that we will ultimately be found loyal to this one Friend alone for He is our all in all. There is no other reason for a disciplined Christian life on earth. So the writer to the Hebrews continues in chapter 12...

In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says,

My son, do not make light of the Lord’s

discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one He loves...

Therefore, we can truly lift up our feeble arms, strengthen our weak knees and make level paths for our feet, so that the lame may not be disabled but, rather, healed. We must not sell our birthright in God's family through refusing to submit our wills to God's will alone, even if through suffering.

Then we can move on from the mountain of fear of meeting with God to the mountain of truth and grace before Him while still on earth. Then we can enjoy His friendship which is abundant life!

I believe that the truth of His grace and

guilty of wrong thoughts of who the true God really is. Why is it so important that we have a right view or thinking of the one and only true and living God?

It is because He desires that we know Him as He is and what and how we see of God affects our whole life i.e. our view of self, others and our environment i.e. our worldview. For example, if I believe that Our Lord Jesus is my Elder Brother, then my fellow church members are my brothers and sisters of one heavenly Father. As a result, I will be able accept them more willingly whenever we disagree just like we do not stop being brothers and sisters in our earthly temporal family. We do not stop

God's word day by day, little by little, here and there. It is a long journey of putting off our old way of thinking so that God will enable us to put on His new way of thinking and feeling. However, God's word to us may be distorted in several ways, e.g. through :

*what we inherit from our parents and may pass on to our children

*our social environment, especially those in authority over us during our tender years of childhood e.g. extended families, Sunday School teachers, pastors, the education system, increasingly so, the media

* our mistakes and sins.



friendship will not make us take His statutes lightly; instead, it will encourage us to obey Him as much as we can for the time being, before we are made perfect in Christ, precisely because we realize He loves us so much (John 3:16).

However, we need to know what it is that we need to put to death or put off.

Three Common Barriers to Enjoying God's Friendship

A. The cataracts in our eyes – wrong theology.

Theology means the knowledge of God or the study concerning the knowledge of God. Everyone has a certain idea of who God is, as everyone is made by Him. But what we are concerned with, as His adopted children, is to know Him as He is not as what we or others think He is. All of us are

being God's children just because we like to do things differently. However, if I view God as a harsh and unrealistic Boss who orders me around and does not really care for my welfare, then, when I disagree with my fellow church members, there is not much need to stay around longer than I can tolerate. We are merely colleagues in the same company.

To know God is:

- to receive His grace
- to think His thoughts
- to feel His heart cries and joys
- to know His will and
- to go obey Him in His power.

Nevertheless, knowing God is not an instantaneous event, or a one off event. It is a process needing the renewal of our minds by reading or hearing and meditating on

All these different ideas of God act like cataracts in the lens of our eyes of faith. If we see God with distorted views, we may still obey Him, but grudgingly, but IF we see God as He has revealed Himself to us in Jesus Christ and in His written word, then we will obey Him out of gratitude and love in response to His great love for us.

B. The Boils in our Lives - Bruises and Weaknesses

All of us have been wronged by someone else at one time or another in our lives. Even being spoilt is a wrong done to us as spoilt kids, if unchanged, become selfish adults who are one of the most difficult to counsel or treat! Most of the hurts that we receive from these wrongs hit us unintentionally. Nevertheless, we feel the injury in us, though often subconsciously, as the actual event could have happened many years

ago. But the longer such hurts lie buried in our minds and feelings, the more difficult it is for us to discover them. They act like the pus in the boils that I used to see in my patients. Unless the boils are drained of pus, the strongest of antibiotics may not bring about complete healing in the patient's body. So, these hurts need to be brought out before trusted friends, if they are the cause of our life problems, so that the pus can be drained from us once and for all through forgiving the person who hurt us, even if he or she has passed away. Why is this so?

The reason is that if we harbour those hurts, they often act as food for fermentation that leads to the sin of resentment. This in

demning, Giver of good gifts, loving and All-Powerful? The key to the putting off of those hurts is forgiveness of the person who hurt us, whether he knows it or not, when the Holy Spirit brings them into our conscious awareness.

Forgiveness is like the therapeutic prick to the boil of our damaged emotions. If we wish to be healed, the good news is that God is on our side. In Isaiah 53:1-6, God says that He sent His Son not only to forgive us our sins but also to take away our weaknesses caused, in one way or another, by the consequences of living in a yet broken world.

failure. In a similar manner, when the spiritual arteries in our life in Christ are blocked by sins, the love and power of Christ, like oxygen, is hindered from flowing to many parts of our lives. We are thus unable to bear much of His fruit of love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, humility and self-control. We cannot enjoy His promised abundant life as we get entangled in our human relational conflicts.

Whether sins are intentional or unintentional, they are decisions we make or do not make and actions we take or do not take before the righteous and holy God of mercy. Therefore, sins need to be confessed and washed away by the appropriation of



turn tends to cause weaknesses in our lives that may lead to other specific sins at the right opportunity e.g. a revengeful attitude, competitiveness, laziness, indulgences in the flesh, overprotection of our children to the detriment of their future families, love of money or neglect of our elderly relatives.

For example, a surgeon with an unhealed cut on the palm of his hand will hurt each time he reaches out for His surgical tools to operate on his patient. Hence, he is unable to treat his patient effectively.

In a similar fashion, he says, if we have unhealed wounds in our lives, try as we may to do God's work, we are unable to do so fruitfully because each time we reach out to draw on God's power and love, we hurt because of the conscious or subconscious misconceptions in our minds about who He really is. For example, Is He really forgiving, holy, gracious, gentle, patient, uncon-

C. The Fat in our Arteries – Sin

Sometimes, certain weaknesses tend to make us sin in certain ways. For example, if I have a phobia (an irrational fear, which is a weakness, not sin) of meeting people for prolonged periods, and the boss keeps asking me to entertain customers, I may first oblige. However, if I have to oblige too often and I get burnout emotionally, I may well blow up on my boss publicly one day over a most trivial matter, without even realising what I am really doing. And if I refuse to apologise, I may be blacklisted. Such sins may be likened to the eating of excess fats ignorantly.

However, there are also many sins that we deliberately commit, likened to the overeating of excessively unhealthy food. This causes the arteries of our physical bodies to clog up in our vital organs causing, for example, a heart attack, stroke or kidney

His precious blood shed on the cross for us. Once we are born again into God's family, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is available to us all the time. The obstacle to the availability of God's grace and strength is not on His side but ours. Unconfessed sins prevent Christ's life from circulating and bringing power into every part of us to forgive, cleanse, heal and restore us into the image of God again.

Reflection:

1. Do I want to deepen my friendship with God? The freedom make a personal choice is also a gift from God to be used wisely.
2. What are some barriers in my life that may be hindering me from Him?
3. How may I remove the known barrier(s) so that the joy of the Lord shall be my strength each day, come what may?

தனித்த தாய்மார்களுக்கான இல்லம் - சுங்கைப் பட்டாணி

சுங்கைப் பட்டாணியில் தனித்த தாய்மார்களுக்கான இல்லம் தொடங்குவதைக் குறித்து நீண்ட நாட்கள் கலந்துரையாடப்பட்டது. பல பெண்களுக்கு தங்குமிடமும், பாராமியும் தேவைப்படுகிறது. திருச்சபையானது சமுதாயத்தோடு தொடர்பு கொள்ள சிறந்த வழிகளில் ஒன்று மக்களின் தேவைகளைப் பூர்த்தி செய்வது என்பது என்று கண்டறிதலாகும்.

நீண்ட காலமாக த.மெ.தி.சுங்கைப் பட்டாணி பொருத்தமான விட்டை அடைய்ந்து தேடி வந்தார்கள். இறுதியில் ஒரு தரை வீடு கிடைத்தது. இருப்பினும் இது ஒரு தற்காலிக ஏற்பாடு ஆகும். ஏனெனில் மே மாதம் பட்டத்தில் உள்ளது போல் ஒரு பெரிய பங்களா விடயற்குச் செல்ல திட்டமிட்டுள்ளனர்.

கடந்த 1 ஏப்ரல் முதல் ஐயிய முறையில் இல்லத்தில் பணிகள் தொடங்கப்பட்டது. தற்போது 3 தனித்த தாய்மார்கள் உள்ளனர். இவர்களுடைய பிள்ளைகள் இவர்களுடன் இல்லை. சுங்கைப் பட்டாணி திருச்சபையைச் சேர்ந்த திருமதி சூத் நோயல் முழுநேர அழிபராக அலுவலகத்தில் இருந்து பணியாற்றி வருகிறார். திரு.ஜெயசீலன் (மாஸிபர்) அவர்களும் அலுவலகத்தில் வாகன ஓட்டுனராகவும், இல்லத்தின் பாராமியும் பணிகளையும் கவனித்து வருகிறார்.

இல்லத்தின் மாதாந்திர செலவுகள் ஏறக்குறைய ரிங்கிட் 2, 500.00 ஆகும் என எதிர்பார்க்கப்படுகிறது. எதிர்காலத்தில் இங்குத் தங்கும் தனித்த தாய்மார்களின் எண்ணிக்கையைப் பொறுத்து செலவுகள் அதிகரிக்கக் கூடும்.

நமது மாநாட்டின் மெதுஷன்ட் பெண்கள் பொருத்தன்மையுடன் இதன் பற்றியது உடல் பங்களாளர்களாக இருக்க ஒத்துக் கொண்டள்ளனர். மாதந்தோறும் ரிங்கிட் 600.00 கொடுத்து உதவுபவர்களை ஒப்புக்கொண்டுள்ளார்கள். இந்தத் தொகையானது இல்லத்தின் வாடகைக் கட்டணத்திற்குப் போதுமானதாக இருக்கும். இது செலவுகளுக்கு நெ.மெ.சி.மா திட்டத்தில் மூலம் திரட்டப்படும் நிதியிலிருந்து கொடுக்கப்படும்.

சமுதாயத்தில் இந்தத் தேவை அறிகரிந்து வருவதால் வளர்ச்சிக்கான சாத்தியக்கூறுகள் மிகவும் அபரிமமாகக் காணப்படுகிறது. பல குடும்பங்கள் உடைந்து விட்டன. குடும்பங்களில் நெருக்கடி அதிகரித்து வருகிறது. இத்தருணத்தில் திருச்சபையானது ஆதரவும், அடைக்கலமும் கூடும் இடமாக விளங்க வேண்டும்.

சுங்கைப் பட்டாணி திருச்சபைக்காகவும், இல்லத்தின் முன்னேற்றத்திற்காக ஒருங்கிணைந்து செயல்படும் அநுந்திந. துரைசீலன், திருமதி.சூத் மற்றும் திரு.ஜெயசீலன் இவர்களுக்காகவும் ஜெயிபுங்கன், சபையானது பங்களாளர்களாய் இருப்பதற்காகவும், சிறந்த தலைமைத்துவம் அளிப்பதற்கும் எங்களது பாராட்டுகளைமூட, நன்றியையும் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்ளுகிறோம்.

வம் மத்தியிலுள்ள பெண்களைச் சென்றடைய இந்த இல்லம் ஒரு கருவியாக செயல்பட தேவன் கிரியை செய்ய வேண்டுமென ஜெயிபுங்கன்.

அநுந்திந. சி.ஜெயராஜ்
தலைவர், தமிழ் வருடாந்திர மாநாடு
ம.மெ.சி.மா மெதுஷன்ட் திருச்சபை

English Translation

Home For Single Mothers - Sungai Petani



The plan to start a home for single mothers at Sungai Petani has been in discussion for a long time. Many women are in need of shelter and care. One of the best ways for the church to connect with the community is to see how it can meet the needs of the people.

TMC Sungai Petani has scouted for a suitable house for a long period. They have finally found a terrace house. This is a temporary measure as they plan to move to a bungalow house from the month of May.

The home has begun operation in a small way as from 1st April. Presently there are 3 single mothers. The children are not with them currently. Mrs. Ruth Novel, a member of TMC Sungai Petani is a paid full-

time worker in the home. Mr. Jayaseelan (a young man) would also be a paid worker to drive the van and look into the maintenance of the home.

The monthly expenses for running the home is expected to be about RM 2,500.00. It may increase in future depending on the number of single mothers residing in the home. Methodist Church in Malaysia.

The Conference Methodist Women has graciously consented to be partners in this project. They have agreed to contribute a sum of RM 600.00 monthly. This will cover the payment for the rental of the bungalow house. The balance would be contributed by the funds raised for the Nehemiah Project.

The potential for the growth is tremen-

dous as needs in society in this area is on the increase. More and more families are broken. Crisis in families is escalating. The church needs to emerge as a place of refuge and comfort.

Do pray for TMC Sungai Petani and especially for Rev. Doraiseelan, Mrs. Ruth and Mr. Jayaseelan as they work together to see the progress of the home. We thank the church for their partnership and the excellent leadership they give.

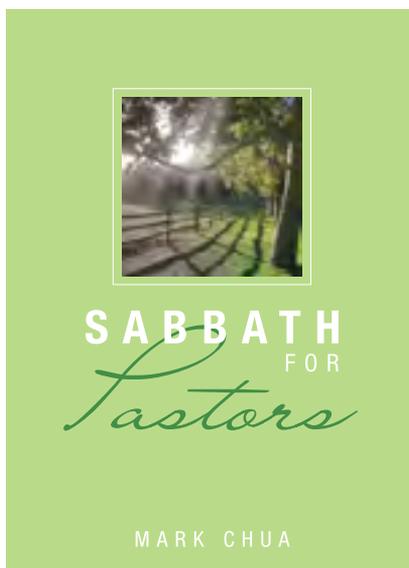
Pray that God would use this home as an instrument to reach out to many women in the Northern Region.

Rev. C. Jayaraj
President, Tamil Annual Conference

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)

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Sabbath for Pastors

Author: Mark Chua

Publisher: Graceworks

BY HWA HUI-EN

Ask any pastor's spouse, and they will tell you that pastors are as human as you and I. And being human, pastors need rest as much as any of us. In his new book *Sabbath for Pastors*, Mark Chua explores the challenge that pastors and Christians in general face in finding that rest.

Mark first takes a wide-angle look at the factors in Western and Asian society that influence our practice (or lack thereof) of Sabbath. He then unpacks the biblical understanding of the Sabbath and draws out the core purposes of this God-ordained rhythm. Finally, he looks at the implications of Sabbath for pastors. He refrains from guilt-tripping pastors into squeezing "rest" into their packed schedules, but shows how practising Sabbath is essential if our lives are to be God-centred.

Sabbath for Pastors deftly tackles the objections that both pastors and churches may have towards pastors taking rest days and

sabbaticals by pointing out the pitfalls of burnout, and reminding us that we are not justified by our works but by the grace of God.

Being a pastor himself, Mark is clearly aware of the unending demands of pastoral ministry, and he shows how it is possible to practise Sabbath in our daily lives. He also addresses the issue of numerous church programmes and activities in a chapter on "Sabbath and the Congregation".

Mark draws from various local and international writers and thinkers in his writing and supplements each chapter with a blend of theological and practical questions for reflection. If the book seems slightly repetitive towards the end, it is only to deepen our understanding that truly, we can rest because God is always at work. *Sabbath for Pastors* calls us to receive God's gift of Sabbath with joy and in freedom. [Rev. Mark Chua serves as the pastor of the English service in the Chinese Methodist Church Kuala Lumpur.]

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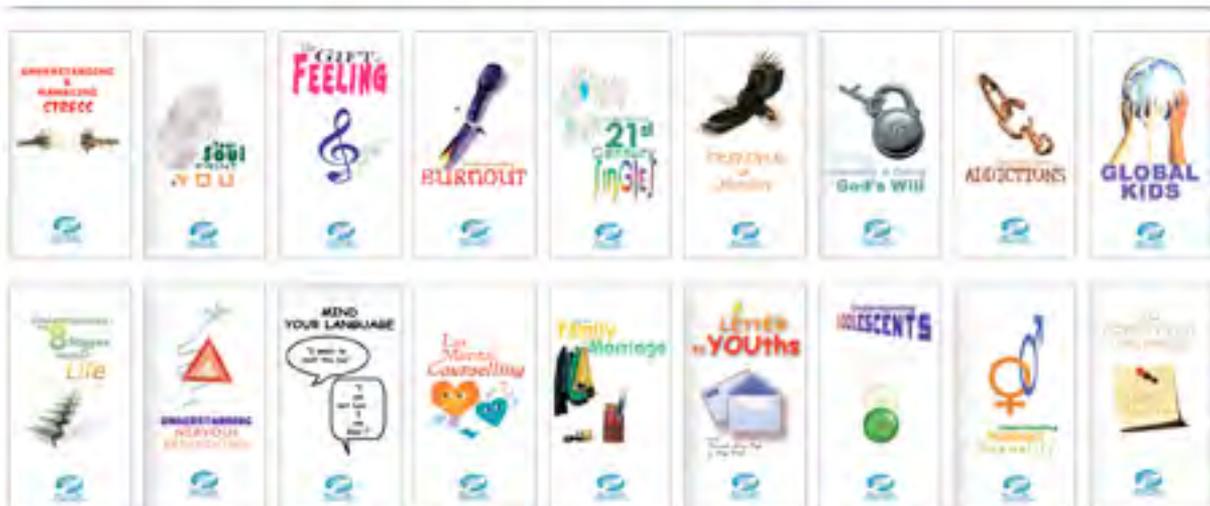


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