

Pelita METHODIST



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To God Be The Glory

TRAC ~ MSF Annual Camp ~ 27th to 30th March 2007



They came in droves – from as far north as Kedah, and as far south as Singapore – representatives from 14 chapters all over Malaysia and Singapore. They came by the busloads, and individual cars – all descending (or in this case ascending) to a French-styled village – the Colmar Tropicale - up in Berjaya Hills, Bukit Tinggi. The final count was 310 participants!

First impressions of the place were favourable. Medium-sized blocks housing our rooms faced a cobble stoned village square, complete with clock tower, fountain and wishing well.

A delicious welcome tea was provided by Emmanuel Methodist Church. This was then followed by the Orientation and Opening Service taken by Bishop Dr. Robert Soloman of the Methodist Church of Singapore.

Bishop Soloman was the theme speaker on the Glory of God. This was given in three parts:

- 1) The Glory of God that's beyond us and should be reflected in our worship (Hebrews 1:1-3).
- 2) The Glory of God that flows into and transforms us (John 17: 1-5).
- 3) The Glory of God that flows through us and drives us into service (Isaiah 6: 1-8).

After each teaching session the Bishop left us with pertinent questions to ponder over during our personal devotions the following day. Speak of being thorough!

Interjected between these sermons were a variety of other talks. Top on the list

was Dr. Samuel Ong's "A Matter of the Heart", a subject very close to everybody's heart (pardon the pun). It was most interesting and revealing with slides and all. I'm sure that the Q and A period could have gone on and on, if not for the timely tea-break!

The "TRAC Vision and Mission" paper was prepared by Rev. Ong Hwai Teik (TRAC President) in collaboration with Rev. Hwa Jen (TRAC Seniors Ministry Director) and presented by Rev. Hwa Jen.

The talk on Seniors Ministry was by Rev. Peter Goh of GYM (Glowing Years Ministry) from Singapore and Rev. Hwa Jen. A large part of this was taken up by group discussions on two questions posed by Rev. Peter Goh:-

>> continue on page 2



- 1) What are some of the possible challenges that older persons are facing today and how do these challenges impact the church and our society.
- 2) What are some creative ways the church can do to help the older persons within and outside these churches to experience ageing positively.

But meetings and talks were not the only kinds of activities in the programme. Almost the whole of Day 3 was given to various activities to suit everyone's taste. There were games (golf, table tennis, bowling), sightseeing to the Japanese and Botanical Gardens and Rabbit park. There was a line dancing session for those who did not get enough exercise in the outing.

The two nights were one big variety show. The mood of the items presented swung from serious to funny to hilarious! Same goes for the stage props and costumes

– from the most elaborate (obviously brought from home) to the simplest of singing duets or blowing harmonicas. But whether simple or elaborate, it was every chapter's best effort. So what more can we ask?

The Annual General Meeting

This was of course the most important business of the camp, and it was held on our second day there. A talk from Rev. Won En Mein reminded delegates of their responsibilities. Rev. Hwa Jen then took over as the Elections Chairman. Mr Daniel Chan Weng Kay was elected President, with Pauline Looi as Vice-President, Khoo Soo Ghee as Hon. Secretary and Tan Fu Tee as Hon. Treasurer.

Holy Communion Service

The whole camp ended on a reverend mood, as we quietened our hearts to

receive the Holy Communion elements from the two pastors present. Before the new MSF Board members were officially installed Rev. Hwa Jen reminded them not to turn their eyes on human beings, but rather on God, in order to receive God's glory. He also said, "And for those who have been given responsibilities, do use your talents wisely to glorify God, manifesting His glory in your lives." Sound advice indeed!

And so the camp ended on the same note on which it started – using our all to glorify God. Grateful thanks to the organizers for this Retreat, and especially to God who was with us all the time.

To Him be all Glory and Praise!

Janet Yap

MAKE 1957 A YEAR OF PRAYER

This is a reprint from the Jan-Feb 1957 issue of the Methodist Message. This call to prayer was to mark the centennial year of a prayer movement that started in 1857. It is particularly significant that 50 years on the Methodist Church in Malaysia is again calling for prayer in the jubilee year of our nation.

All Methodists are called upon to make 1957 a year of prayer. This was the unanimous action of the General Conference. The resolution invites all people throughout the world to join a great prayer movement in 1957 for peace, brotherhood, and personal commitment to God. A point of interest is the fact that the year 1957 will be the centennial of a great prayer movement that began in 1857.

Let us call the attention of our people at the Watch Night Service to this proposal, and ask them to join with other Methodists

in this prayer movement in 1957. We believe that "prayer changes things." Many things in our own life, in the life of our church, and the world at large are in need of the changes that nothing but earnest supplication could accomplish. Let every pastor, after calling attention to this movement, then lead his people in earnest prayer for peace, brotherhood, and personal commitment to God.

A portion of the resolution of the General Conference follows: "In 1857, a prayer movement started by a single person, and then a group, in the historical John Street Church in New York City, became one of the most vital spiritual influences of the last century. Pray to God that 1957, the centennial year of the beginning of that prayer movement, will find Methodists everywhere on their knees and Christians all over the world praying individually and in groups; until truly there will be a World Wide Prayer Movement that will

help accomplish the will of God and establish the Kingdom of Christ on our earth.

"We call upon the Methodist Church.

1. To reaffirm its faith in the efficacy of individual prayer and in the power of united prayer of persons devoted to the will of God;
2. To urge all Methodists, individually and collectively, to cultivate the prayer habit until prayer becomes natural to them and they pray without ceasing;
3. To go on record as desiring and inviting all people throughout the world 'who name the name of Christ' to cooperate in making the year 1957 the greatest year of prayer for peace, for brotherhood and for personal commitment to God that this world has ever known."

W. S. R.

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What is Happening in our Annual Conferences?

May

20	Sun	Aldersgate Sunday
18-20	Fri-Sun	SIAC Team Ministry with CHEMPRO* in Kapit District
23-25	Wed-Fri	SCAC Marriage Seminar
24-28	Thu-Mon	Council of Archives & History ~ Workshop on Oral History
25-27	Fri-Sun	GC Youth Conference ~ Christian Careers With A Difference
25-27	Fri-Sun	TRAC Church Planting Conference
27-3/6	Sun-Sun	SCAC International Leadership Institute National Conference
28-30	Mon-Wed	TAC Pastors' School
31-2/6	Thu-Sat	TAC Local Preachers Training Institute
31-3/6	Thu-Sun	SCAC Singles' Camp

June

1-2	Fri-Sat	SCAC Sunday School Teachers Training
4-5	Mon-Tue	SCAC Christian Teachers Training
5-11	Tue-Mon	TAC MYF Korean Trip
6-9	Wed-Sat	SCAC MJYF Delegates Conference
10	Sun	Methodist Education Foundation Sunday
15-17	Fri-Sun	SIAC Team Ministry with CHEMPRO* in Balingian
17-23	Sun-Sat	TAC Christian Home and Family Week
21-25	Thu-Mon	World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches (WFCMC) Mission Conference (Sibu)
27-29	Wed-Fri	SCAC Missionaries Retreat

* Community Health Education & Motivation Programme
(SIAC Health Programme)

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14. The Church

the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints

Some Christians may wonder what it means to declare that 'we believe in the Church'. The statements so far refer to faith in the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But what does it mean to say that we have faith in the Church? It is extremely important that the significance of this statement is understood, for in its formulation this statement is vulnerable to misinterpretations that will yield unhealthy consequences.

For instance, this statement could be read as an invitation to put confidence in the Church. This way of reading and understanding the statement is evident in some circles, and even among some evangelical Churches. 'We believe in the Church' is understood in the same sense as 'I believe in you', which means essentially 'I have confidence in you'. When this statement of the Creed is understood in this way, the Church is essentially asserting its own self-confidence.

Evangelicalism today has witnessed many instances of such ecclesiastical triumphalism or colossalism, and theologians like David Wells, Martin Marty and Mark Noll have written extensively in criticism of such approaches. A Church which expresses such self-confidence has already taken leave of God. It is drawn inwards and is excessively and unhealthily pre-occupied with its own collective ego. A Church that expresses such titanic self-confidence and seeks after its own fame is guilty of the most insidious form of idolatry.

The statement 'We believe in the Church' points in exactly the opposite direction, and serves as an antithesis to the interpretation expressed above. For to say that we believe in the Church is to confess that the Church is a creature of grace, and to say that only by faith can

the Church as Church be recognised. Of course empirically we can talk about the 'Church' as a gathering of like-minded people who claim to be followers of Christ. Or we could say that the 'Church' is a society of people who adhere to the Christian religion.

In other words, outside of faith we can provide a whole array of sociological, historical, and phenomenological definitions of the Church. But it is only in faith that we can say that the Church is a justified people of God, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Outside of faith, the keenest sociologist or phenomenologist of religion could at best say that the Church merely claims to be such.

In this way, 'We believe in the Church' belongs to all the other articles of faith that we have examined thus far. The Church is a reality that can only be seen by the eyes of faith. Only those who hold the preceding statements of the Creed to be true can perceive the reality of the Church as Church, that is, as the people of God. Thus those who declare 'we believe in the Church' can never place their confidence in themselves. Rather, those who truly understand what this declaration means will place their confidence in God, who has brought the Church into being. They will know that the Church is totally dependent on God for its existence. And they will recognise the fact that the reason for the Church's existence is not its own glorification, but the glory of God.

The Nicene Creed describes the Church as 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic'. These four adjectives bring to expression the self-understanding of the Church. The New Testament teaches that unity is the basic characteristic of the Christian community. In Matthew 23: 8-11 Jesus told his disciples, 'You are not to be

called "Rabbi", for you have only one Master and you are all brothers'. In John 10, the Church is said to be one flock because she has one shepherd.

It is perhaps in 1 Corinthians 12 that the clearest teaching concerning the oneness and unity of the Church is to be found. There the Apostle Paul asserts that although in the Church there can be found a diversity of gifts and ministries, there is but one Lord: 'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men' (1 Cor 12: 4-5).

In the same way, the New Testament testifies to the holiness of the Church. Although this attribute of the Church is well attested to by Scripture (see Mark 1:1-8, 14; Eph 4:1, 25; 5:1; 1 Pet 1:14-16), what it means by this is not always very clear. In the Bible, holiness is an attribute of God alone. Holiness, when applied to the Church therefore does not refer primarily to the moral and religious behaviour of its members. In fact, holiness cannot be said to stem from the Church herself – it cannot be an intrinsic quality that she possesses.

The Church is holy because of the will and the word of God. It is God who sanctifies the Church and makes it holy.



God has called the Church into being from before the foundation of the world, set it apart as his very own, and God will bring his people to perfection when his kingdom is consummated.

To say that holiness is not primarily about the Church's behaviour does not of course mean that the concept has nothing to do with Christian conduct. Paul continually exhorts Christians to holy living, that is, to conduct their affairs in a way that is in keeping with their calling to be God's holy people. This truth is given unequivocal expression by Peter when he wrote thus to the Christians in Asia Minor: 'But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy"' (1 Peter 1:15).

The third attribute or characteristic of the Church is catholicity. For many Protestant Christians, the word 'catholic' wrongly connotes 'Roman Catholic'. In some versions of the Apostles' Creed, which are gaining currency especially in Lutheran Churches, 'Christian' has been used to replace 'Catholic'. However, I question the wisdom of this move. In the first place, replacing one term with another simply because of the historical baggage that that term happens to carry is a short sighted approach to resolving the problem. The new term may lack the history and tradition that the previous term enjoys. In this particular case, I think to clarify what we mean by the term 'catholic' is more constructive than replacing it. Clarification entails education and a sense of history: it is a process by which the tradition is recovered and restored.

The term 'catholic' simply means 'universality plus identity' and 'universality plus continuity'. By professing faith in the 'catholic' Church we are asserting the permanence, stability and multi-cultural nature of the Church of God. The Church cannot be parochially defined in the framework of one denomination (e.g., Methodist) or one

ethnic group (e.g., the Chinese Church), or even one tradition (i.e., the Roman Catholic tradition). When we confess faith in the 'catholic' Church, we confess also the ecumenicity of the Church. But the catholicity of the Church does not simply transcend denominations; it also transcends time. By this profession we are asserting faith in the whole people of God – past, present and also future.

Finally, we come to the Church's apostolicity. The Church is apostolic because the apostles and prophets are affirmed as the foundation of the Church through whom the revelation of God is received (Eph 2:20; 3:5). There has been much controversy regarding the question of apostolic succession, and this issue has impeded the progress of much of modern ecumenical relations. Who is the true successor of the apostle – the Roman Pope, the Patriarchs of the Eastern Churches, or the Reformers?

When apostolic succession is seen in this way, connected inextricably to ecclesiastical office, then the problem will be irresolvable. But if apostolicity is understood in light of faithfulness to the message and ministry to the one and only true Apostle, Jesus Christ, then perhaps a way to surmount the present conundrum will begin to present itself. According to this perspective, the apostolicity of the Church is dependent on the Church's faithfulness to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the true Apostle.

Reflection on these characteristics will surely leave some of us disappointed, if not disillusioned. For it does not take a careful observer to notice how far the empirical Church falls short of the high ideals that are presented in Scripture and expressed in the Creed.

The empirical Church is anything but one, holy, catholic and apostolic. The disunity of the Church is clearly evident – that, after a century of ecumenical efforts. The Church is scarred by moral failings and scandal, and at times appears to have acted more dishonourably than secular institutions. The catholicity of the Church remains an abstract notion: that which is clear for all to see is the discontinuities and the fragmentation. And, in a world which despises truth, the claims to apostolicity evaporate and appear ludicrous. Today, there are no more heretics. This is not because everyone embraces the truth. Rather it is because the truth is no longer taken seriously.

But these empirical realities should not detract us from the fact that faith holds the Church to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

This brings us back to where we began. To say 'I believe in the Church' is to say that I believe that the God who has set aside his people has a special plan and purpose for the Church. It is to say that no matter how things may look, God will in the end fulfil his purpose, and his Church will be presented as a spotless and unblemished bride to the Bridegroom. To say 'I believe in the Church' is in the end to put our confidence and trust in the God who has called us out of darkness into his light.

追本溯源，迎接八十

南钟创刊80系列活动 ~ 近打教区

文：编辑部



3月17日下午2时许，近打教区长余自力牧师为文字营主持开幕时说，起初报名者寥寥无几，深感该区如文化沙漠，后来人数增至16人。他盼望以后该区再办写作营，参加人数加倍，成为沙漠中的绿洲。

基督徒作家杨百合受邀主讲如何写好散文，他提出了5大要点，一是擅用手，捧书勤读；擅用口，讲纯正的华语；擅用脚，踏在生活的泥土上，因写作题材来自生活；擅用手，勤于写作，多写便会熟能生巧；最后擅用心，把写作放进心里，如鱼钩放进水里一样。

谈及散文写作技巧，他提到要“真”和“实”。所谓真就是写真实的生活经验；至于实，就要写得具体，多用意象，并加上明确的价值观。

第二个讲座是“欣赏文章三部曲”，由《南钟》主编简永裕牧师主讲。他所提的三部曲就是题目的处理、语言的解析和主题的掌握。他说，题目是主题的指标，因此不可轻忽；主题又是文章的灵魂，那是作者要在文章中表达的核心内容。内容再好，也要有

好文字来承载，因此语言的运用和写作技巧变得非常重要。决定文章好坏的，不是写什么或表达什么，而是怎样写（技巧）。要学会欣赏文章，需要掌握这三部曲，当然少不了反复操练，日久必见效果。

晚上，进行南钟之夜。约有70位来自近打教区数间教堂的弟兄姐妹参加。当晚的节目包括介绍《南钟》的历史和演变。《南钟》创刊于1928年10月，这七十多年来曾在实兆远、怡保等地编辑，因此，分享后，怡保一带的信徒对《南钟》多了一份感情。

《客厅有棵树》，南钟80丛书的第一本新书，是当晚的重头戏。

仪式虽简单，但意义深远。在此要谢谢余自力教区长为此书主持推介仪式。《客》作者杨百合弟兄来自近打教区的金宝，是名多产的作家，也是《南钟》“百合小语”专栏作家。他的作品非常生活化，许多人看了他的文章后得到帮助和鼓励。

聚会中，举行了一场座谈会——“忙碌生活中的灵修”，由简永裕牧师主持，余自力牧师及杨百合弟兄主讲。

忙碌已是现代人的通病，借此座谈会，弟兄姐妹得着方法持守每天的灵修，并能时时与神亲密相交。

18日早上是怡保堂的文字主日，简永裕在证道前再次播放南钟的历史及演变。简牧师说，文字的影响力不但大而且很广，想到每期的《南钟》能牧养三千名读者，多辛苦也是值得的。他呼吁每位弟兄姐妹都以祷告与奉献参与文字事工。

令我雀跃万分的是，在众多信徒中，读《南钟》超过三十年的也有好几位，有一位还是南钟第三任主编殷文宗牧师的儿子殷镜源弟兄。

《南钟》创刊至今，一路走来，皆是神的恩典。我们会继续秉着“醒灵卫道”之使命，与时并进，不断求新。



Rediscovering Wesley, The Church Growth Strategist.

By George Hunter III

The foundational conclusions from the Church Growth Movement's first half century of research are more true than we thought, but not as new as we thought. Church Growth people have largely rediscovered what many great apostolic leaders knew and practiced throughout Christian history, although the current body of lore is more extensive than ever before - with more "historic gold" yet to be discovered.

It is not fashionable today to regard some of history's greatest Christian leaders as "strategists" who conceived, planned, led and achieved "the impossible." We give all the credit to God, assuming He achieved great things like the exodus from Egypt or the evangelization of the Roman Empire through people who loved Him with their hearts, but not their minds! We regard historic Christian leaders, customarily, as desk theologians, or church reformers, or parish preaching models, or models of spirituality, or as evangelism practitioners. However, some of them were also leaders of powerful movements - who planned great achievements, knew what they were doing, mobilized people and resources to attain their goals and could show this generation how trails are blazed.

Our blindness reflects a wider conceit ~ which assumes that "strategy" is a twentieth century discovery of, say, industrial barons, management gurus and social movement leaders. We may recall that several ancient military leaders were sophisticated strategists - as the film "Patton" reminded us. And Roland Allen reminded us of Paul's strategic consciousness. But when straining to find the way forward today, we do not often stand on the shoulders of Patrick, or Boniface, or Carey, or even Moffatt or Taylor to inform our cross-cultural missionary challenge. Nor do we learn from Augustine in preaching, or Francis in peacemaking, or Wilberforce and Garrison in the advocacy and legislation of justice, or Charles G. Finney or John Wesley in evangelization. True,

some writers briefly allude to Wesley as "a good organizer" - as profound an insight as declaring Einstein a "good mathematician" or Mozart a "talented composer!" Indeed, the prodigious strategic mind of John Wesley can show some ways forward for today's Christian movement, and his wisdom can illuminate today's "Church Growth" discussion.

"TO SPREAD THE POWER"

Pieces of John Wesley's unusual lifestyle are widely known and appreciated. He traveled by horse some 225,000 miles, preached 40,000 sermons, surviving hostile mobs and treacherous weather in carrying out his obsession. Some achievements are almost as well known ~ such as 140,000 converts in his lifetime, the establishment of Methodism as an apostolic (and reform) movement within Anglicanism which became a distinct Church after his death. He also planted and cared for a vast network of "classes" and "societies" governed by an annual "conference," and out-posted a growing movement in America.

But, more deeply, what did Wesley intend to achieve by all this activity? Some of his goals are fairly widely recognized today. A fair number of Methodists and a handful of other Christians will recall that Wesley wanted to "renew the Church," and "spread scriptural holiness," and "reform the nation."

But Wesley's more apostolic goals are not as widely recognized. He basically sought no less than the recovery of the truth, life and power of earliest Christianity, and the expansion of that kind of Christianity. He singlemindedly managed the movement for 50 years by those objectives. He communicated these objectives to the growing ranks of Methodist people and leaders. He wrote and spoke frequently of the "increase," the "spread" and the "advancement" of this apostolic movement and believed that its expansion was expressing "the design of God." The movement purposed to

"save souls," which Wesley explains in "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion":

"By salvation I mean, not barely, according to the vulgar notion, deliverance from hell, or going to heaven; but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity, a recovery of the divine nature, the renewal of our souls after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy and truth." (The Works of John Wesley, Vol. VIII, p.47.)

For Wesley, the ministry of evangelism towered as a moral imperative: "We cannot with a good conscience neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live ..." (Works, VIII, 310). As the apostolic Protestant Reformer, Wesley did not, as did Luther and Calvin, believe that the Great Commission was intended for the original apostles only. Rather, that Commission points the way for the whole Church, in every generation, until the peoples of the earth are reached. Accordingly he taught his growing cadre of lay preachers that "you have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore, spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most. Observe: It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord." (Works, VII, 310.)

Wesley regarded his growth objective for mission as no innovation. Indeed, he believed he had rediscovered the driving force of the earliest Church. He championed basic "scriptural Christianity, as beginning to exist in individuals; as spreading from one to another; as covering the earth." (Works, V, 36.) He believed that the expansion of true faith is "the work of God" ~ an oftused

phrase which, he assures us, “*is no cant word,*” but means “*the conversion of sinners from sin to holiness,*” a work he saw as both “*widening and deepening.*” (*Works, XIII, 329.*) He believed this work of God was so crucial that the leaders of Methodism in future generations must maintain a “*single eye*” in the service of its advancement.

The mission’s goal lodged in people’s hearts through Charles Wesley’s hymnody:

*When He first the work begun,
Small and feeble was His Day;
Now the Word doth swiftly run,
Now it wins its widening way
(in Hildebrandt, 1956, p.43)*

Their hymnody involved a bold expectation:

*Saw ye not the cloud arise,
Little as a human hand?
Now it spreads along the skies;
Hangs o’er all the thirsty land;
Lo! The promise of a shower
Drops already from above;
But the Lord will shortly pour
All the Spirit of His love!
(Methodist Hymn Book, #263.)*

Another Charles Wesley hymn reflects the extravagant hope with which the early Methodists yearned for and expected their movement’s powerful growth:

*Savior, we know Thou art
In every age the same;
Now, Lord, in ours exert
The virtue of Thy name;
And daily, through Thy Word increase
Thy Blood-besprinkled witnesses.
Thy people, saved below
From every sinful stain,
Shall multiply and grow
If Thy command ordain;
And one into a thousand rise,
And spread Thy praise through earth
and skies.
In many a soul, and mine,
Thou has displayed Thy power;
But to Thy people join
Ten thousand thousand more,
Saved from the guilt and strength of sin,
In life and heart entirely clean.*

SANCTIFIED PRAGMATISM

John Wesley brought to Christian evangelization a sophistication that, perhaps, had not been seen for a thousand years. And his approach to informing the ministry of evangelism was remarkably close to that of today’s Church Growth Movement. For instance, he was an unapologetic pragmatist in the choice

and development of strategies, models and methods. The supreme standard for evaluating any evangelism approach was its outcomes, i.e., whether or not the approach helped to achieve the perennial apostolic objectives of the discipling of people and the growth of the true Church. He wrote: “*I would observe every punctilio or order, except when the salvation of souls is at stake. Then I prefer the end to the means.*” (*Quoted in Ensley, 1958, p.39.*)

To be more specific, Wesley was a man of one Book, the Bible, and from that Book he received his message, the objectives of the mission and the ethical guidelines for its expression, i.e., he would employ no approach prohibited by Scripture. But he parts company with other would-be restorers of Christianity who try to imitate the forms and methods of the early church in its age and culture. Wesley developed (or borrowed) approaches that fit his target culture and were attended by God’s clear blessing. He taught, in *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*, that “*the Scripture, in most points, gives only general rules; and leaves the particular circumstances to be adjusted by the common sense of mankind.*” (*Works, VIII, p. 255.*)

Wesley probably came to this pragmatic stance through experience consistent with his acceptance of “*experience*” as one source (with Scripture, tradition and reason) of theological truth. For instance, in 1739 Wesley observed George Whitfield’s experiment in field preaching to miners at Kingswood, near Bristol. In the first meeting, Whitfield preached to about 100 miners. By the fifth meeting, only a week later, he was addressing 10,000! The two men perceived the approach as a clear winner! They did not cast about for additional warrants, biblical or theological. Wesley’s approach became so rigorously pragmatic that the following guidelines appear to have shaped his practice:

1. If an approach or method ought to achieve your apostolic objectives, but does not, scuttle it - even if you like it!
2. If your employment of a method or approach is effective, use it to the hilt - even if you do not like it!
3. There is no perfect method which, like magic, will do the job for us. Rather, Christians evangelize, empowered by the Spirit, through culturally appropriate methods.

Wesley’s bold pragmatism stands as a

needed corrective to two widespread assumptions in today’s ministry: (i) That I do what I enjoy, what “*turns me on,*” and thus gives me vocational satisfaction; (ii) That I do not do something that “*turns me off*” or with which I am not “*comfortable.*” Mr. Wesley would suggest that some people are too easily “*turned off,*” and that one’s comfort or enjoyment level has little to do with the validity of any ministry. Indeed, the test of our faithfulness may be our willingness to employ a demonstrably effective method that we may not enjoy.

Both Wesleys passed this test, and their passing made possible a contagious movement. Charles was a cultured poet and musician with high church aesthetic tastes, but he shelved his preferences, condescending to write hymns in the “*low-brow*” music genre being sung in England’s public houses! And John, after 33 years of open-air field preaching to the unchurched, confessed that “*to this day, field preaching is a cross to me. But I know my commission, and see no other way of preaching the gospel to every creature.*” (*Journal, Sept.6, 1772.*)

STRATEGY FROM RESEARCH

Wesley’s pragmatism corresponded remarkably to today’s Church Growth Movement. Wesley’s approach even became “*research based,*” employing rudimentary versions of what became “*qualitative behavioral science research methods.*” For instance, Wesley practiced rigorous observation. His power for observing crowds (even while preaching) astonishes. He observed classes, societies, towns, hecklers and detractors, leaders, human behavior, parish churches, etc. He also gathered data through thousands of interviews with local Methodist leaders, new Methodists, local opinion leaders, people with needs and so on. He welcomed and received reports from Methodist leaders from across the movement. And over the years, Wesley recorded, in a *Journal*, his observations, interview learnings and many reports from others. These recorded studies stretched into multiple volumes.

Wesley reviewed his journal from time to time, to assimilate what he had learned, to analyze trends in various towns and regions, to perceive where receptivity was increasing, to anticipate what to expect and prepare for in return visits, to make mid-course corrections, to map itineraries of traveling preachers, to inform strategy development. He took

data seriously, and on crucial matters took no one's word for it and checked on the specific accuracy of data.

So, for instance, when his 1748 itinerary took him to Dublin, *"I inquired into the state of the society. Most pompous accounts had been sent me, from time to time, of the great numbers that were added to it; so that I confidently expected to find therein six or seven hundred members. And how is the real fact? I left three hundred and ninety four members; and I doubt if there are now three hundred and ninety six! (March 16, 1748.)"*

"I returned to Norwich, and took an exact account of the society. I wish all our preachers would be accurate in their accounts, and rather speak under than above the truth. I had heard again and again of the increase of the society. And what is the naked truth? Why, I left in it 202 members; and I find 179." (March 21, 1779.)

Wesley's research was intended to answer such basic questions as the causes of growth, decline, and stagnation in churches. At times he employs a very McGavran-like historical analysis, discerning causes of both growth and decline by using the ups and downs of a "graph of growth" to dig out the reasons. In his Journal entry of October 12, 1764, he records available membership data in the recent history of the puzzling and volatile Norwich society which can be tabled (or graphed):

Year	Members
1755	83
1757	134
1758	110
1759	760
1760	507
1761	412
1762	630
1763	310
1764	174

Wesley then delineated the known causes behind the fluctuations in this society's history.

As Wesley then reflected upon this data, his powerful inductive mind developed an impressive body of church growth causes, barriers and explanations for the movement's trends.

ON GROWTH AND QUALITY

Mr. Wesley brings needed depth and perspective to today's controversy on the relation between "quantity" and "quality" in church membership strength. He challenges today's widespread

assumption in "mainline" denominations that the relation is inverse, i.e., as churches get smaller, they get "better." Of course, such a case is possible; his Journal even records one such case in his first twelve years of itineration and analysis (the society in metropolitan Mount-Mellick, England, May 26, 1750.)

However, Mr. Wesley observed that normally a persistent correlation exists between quantity and quality. As a church grows, it becomes stronger and better; as a church declines it becomes weaker and less healthy. He also found a correlation between growth and depth; the societies in which members thirsted for and expected their own sanctification were also experiencing growth. To be sure, Mr. Wesley had no interest in puffed statistics and he tolerated no "number games." In reflecting upon a case of the society in Dublin, he interpreted as *"a warning to us all, how we give in to that hateful custom of painting things beyond the life. Let us make a conscience of magnifying or exaggerating anything. Let us rather speak under than above the truth. We, of all men, should be punctual in what we say; that none of our words may fall to the ground."* (Journal, March 16, 1748.)

His 1761 observation of the work at Bristol notes the correlation of membership growth and of quality growth, and typifies many such observations: *"Here likewise I had the satisfaction to observe a considerable increase in the work of God. The congregations were exceedingly large and the people hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and every day afforded us fresh instances of persons converted from sin, or converted to God."* (Journal, October 1, 1761.)

To be sure, Wesley perceived problems in the experiences of growing churches. For instance, in London *"I found the work of God swiftly increasing here . . . Meantime, the enemy was not wanting in his endeavors to sow tares among the good seed. I saw this clearly, but durst not use violence, lest, in plucking up the tares, I should root up the wheat also."* (Journal, August 22, 1761.)

But he saw that declining churches and societies have problems too, and his wide experience persuaded him that the problems connected with growth were far preferable! In cases where the tares took over or had pathological influence in a society, Wesley knew and exercised appropriate interventions, frequently

including the removal of unfaithful or unserious members from membership. Mr. Wesley preferred growth to decline, and saw that quality and depth typically accompany growth, because God is at work in "the work of God."

"I observed God is reviving his work in Kingswood; The society, which had been much decreased, being now increased again to near three hundred members; many of whom are now athirst for full salvation, which for some years they had almost forgot." (Journal, October 11, 1761.)

Evangelism efforts need God's blessing and power for church growth to take place: *"In the afternoon I preached at Alemouth. How plain an evidence have we here, that even our outward work, even the societies are not of man's building! With all our labour and skill, we cannot, in nine years time, form a society in this place; even though there is none that opposes, poor or rich. Nay, though the two richest men in town, and the only gentlemen there, have done all in their power to further it."* (Journal, May 15, 1752.)

As late as 1777, he observed that *"in most places, the Methodists are still a poor despised people, laboring under reproach and many inconveniences; therefore, where the power of God is not, they decrease. By this then you may form a sure judgement. Do the Methodists in general decrease in number? Then they decrease in grace; they are a fallen, or, at least, a falling people. But they do not decrease in number; they continually increase. Therefore, they are not a fallen people."* (Journal, May 8, 1777.)

TO RECEPTIVE PEOPLE

As the knowledge-leader of Methodism, John Wesley anticipated every major universal "mega-strategy" that I have identified from existing Church Growth research. He practiced and advanced several of them, and taught them to other Methodist leaders.

For example, Wesley discovered the principle of priority outreach to receptive people while it is "harvest time." He pursued the principle even more avidly than Dr. Donald McGavran. For Wesley and the early Methodists, there were always "fields white unto harvest," because, in every season, God's seeking prevenient grace moved through the events and circumstances of some people's lives to open their hearts to the gospel. Wesley learned to perceive

whether people were hostile, resistant, indifferent, interested or receptive. Even before the 1738 experience at Aldersgate Street, which assured him of his justification and empowered him for apostolic ministry, Wesley had attempted to communicate the Christian religion to native American Indians in Georgia but came home, “*there being no possibility, as yet, of instructing the Indians; neither had I as yet found or heard of any Indians on the continent of America who had the least desire of being instructed.*” (*Journal, October 30, 1737.*) So he learned early to appreciate and respond to receptive people wherever he found them. He also learned to expend disproportionate time and energy where there was harvest to be gathered.

MULTIPLICATION OF UNITS

John Wesley pioneered and mastered the church growth principle called today (for want of a better general term) “*the multiplication of units.*” He was instrumental in the spawning of many hundreds of classes, bands, societies, and other groups with their distinct agendas, and he labored to develop the indigenous lay leadership this growing vast network of groups would need. He was driven to multiplying “*classes,*” for these served best as recruiting groups, ports of entry for new people, and for involving awakened people with the gospel and its power. Much of his entire strategy can be summarized in four maxims: 1. Preach and visit in as many places as you can; 2. Go most where they want you most; 3. Start as many classes as can be effectively managed; 4. Do NOT preach where you cannot enroll awakened people into classes.

You see how important class multiplication was in Wesley’s thinking by observing how he concluded a field preaching session. Seldom (if ever) did he invite people to accept Jesus Christ and become Christians on the spot! This is partly because, as Gerald Ensley reminded us: “He depended less on one grand effort than on the cumulative effect of many sermons. ‘To preach in one place and no more,’ he said, ‘very seldom does any good.’ He never cherished the delusion that the war with evil can be won by a blitzkrieg. He knew it is a war of attrition, where victory goes to the force that holds out the longest. He never conceived of evangelism in terms of a solitary appearance that would sweep thousands into the Kingdom at a stroke. Rather, he counted on the power of many successive small blows to bring the citadels of evil down. He visited tiny

Wales 46 times on preaching missions; Ireland, 21 times; Scotland, 22 times. He embodied in his preaching strategy a wisdom gathered from a conversation between his father and mother about himself. ‘*Sukey,*’ said Samuel to his wife, ‘*I wonder at your patience. You have told that child twenty times the same thing.*’ ‘*Had I satisfied myself with mentioning the matter only nineteen*’ replied Susannah, ‘*I should have lost all my labor. You see, it was the twentieth time that crowned the whole.*’” (*Ensley, 1958, p.45.*)

Then how did Wesley conclude an open air session? Sometimes he announced that he would remain for those who wanted to converse personally. Often, to test the actual receptivity of apparently interested people, he announced a service the next morning at 5:00 a.m.! Most often, he invited people to join a class - sometimes a new class, that would meet that evening. He explained the one condition that people had to meet to join a class - simply the desire “*to flee the wrath to come,*” to know God’s acceptance, and live a higher life. (See Wood, chXIV, 1967.)

An entourage traveled with Wesley, and during open air services they scattered among the crowd, studying faces, conversing with persons, and inviting them to join a class. The salient objective in much of the field preaching was the starting of classes. Wesley’s rationale for this practice is rooted in his understanding of the process, by stages, in which people become Christians, and upon which he based his practice of evangelism. In brief, he believed that you:

1. Awaken people ~ to their lostness, their sins, their need for God.
2. Enroll awakened people into a class.
3. Teach awakened people to expect to experience their justification.
4. Teach justified people to expect to experience their sanctification in this life.

John Wesley, as one apostolic genius of the Christian past, offers still more strategic gold for this generation’s confused Church. He reminds us that many wheels do not have to be reinvented, and that we may stand on the shoulders of the achievers of the past and discover yet another piece of “*the communion of the saints.*” And he is no sectarian Methodist; his “*catholic spirit*” affirmed, celebrated and would advance every Christian tradition.

Most of the proof, however, of Wesley’s published ideas for informing church growth is found in Methodism’s experience. British Methodism’s period of greatest growth came in the generation after Wesley’s death - a generation with him no longer at the helm, but one in which the leaders were soaked in his normative writings and ideas. Wesley had few (if any) Church Growth secrets. In his voluminous writing he shared, somewhat piecemeal, virtually everything he knew.

Wesley’s general diffusion of Church Growth principles enabled Francis Asbury to emigrate to America and duplicate Wesley’s achievement in the new country. Indeed, by Wesley’s death American Methodism had already grown to the strength of British Methodism. Though Asbury is commonly thought of as Wesley’s “*apprentice,*” there is no evidence of any extensive tutorial relationship. The achievement was informed by Asbury’s having become “*possessed of Mr. Wesley’s writings, and for some years almost laid aside all other books but for the Bible, and applied himself exceedingly closely in reading every book that Mr. Wesley had written.*” (Quoted in Baker, 1976, p. 116.) Indeed, Asbury’s sophisticated grasp of Wesley’s ideas enabled him strategically to adapt them to the different challenge the American mission field presented.

The day for John Wesley’s strategic wisdom is not over, for many of his principles have perennial validity. As Wesley the “*strategist*” is rediscovered, he will become one of the strategic fountainheads of the Christian movement facing the twenty-first century.

Dr. George Hunter is Dean and Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth at Asbury Theological Seminary. As a trainer, pastor, and consultant, countless ministry leaders have benefited from Dr. Hunter’s work. He is a graduate at Florida Southern College, Emory University, Princeton Theological Seminary, and Northwestern University (Ph.D.). He has authored ten books, including To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit (1987), How To Reach Secular People (1992), Church for the Unchurched (1996), The Celtic Way of Evangelism (2000), Leading and Managing a Growing Church (2000), and Radical Outreach (2003) - all with Abingdon Press.



• Methodist participants.

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONSULTATION ON HIV/AIDS

The first national consultation on HIV/AIDS for Christians was held 5-7 March 2007. In collaboration with the Christian Federation of Malaysia, 157 people came together to address the issue of HIV/AIDS for the church. Bishop Paul Tan, Chairman of CFM, officiated the opening.

Pastors and leaders, people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, groups helping these people, care givers, practitioners, and volunteers met in plenary and workshop sessions to look at the many different aspects of this problem. It adopted a set of Resolutions for Christians in Malaysia to consider.

Mr. Pax Tan, of Malaysian CARE, and the organizing chairman, writes, "We pray and hope that these Resolutions will help us to ably respond, initiate and increase our commitment to love our neighbours as ourselves, both in words and deeds especially to people who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS."

Below is a slightly condensed version of the Resolutions.

1st National Christian Consultation on HIV/AIDS 5th – 7th March 2007 Full Gospel Assembly, Kuala Lumpur

The reality of AIDS in Malaysia is reflected by the statistics that as of June 2006, there is an accumulated total of 73,427 known cases of people who are infected with HIV. It has been a consistently increasing total since the early 1990s.

While the majority of known HIV/AIDS cases are drug dependents, transmission through sex is on the rise. Gender wise, the HIV+ women population have increased from 1% in 1991 to about 12% in 2005. This means that there are more children who are born with the virus.

AIDS is in the Church – a fact that is indicated by the clients we are helping, some of whom have experienced negative and unpleasant reaction from the churches. The Body of Christ is called upon to love and care, to represent the Just, Compassionate and Healing Christ.

RESOLUTIONS

1. It is mandatory that the Church becomes involved with the contemporary issues of HIV/AIDS.
2. Pastors and Church Leaders must provide vision and leadership in pastoral care to people who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
3. Church Leaders are to be knowledgeable and show initiative in a positive commitment to the HIV/AIDS agenda.
4. AIDS Information and Awareness is to be promoted and made available, accompanied by Prayer.
5. The Church is to be equipped to teach, engage and respond to sexuality issues especially amongst the youth.
6. We are to involve the children, youth and families in advocacy; as well as in the decision making processes.
7. Prayer Initiatives could coincide with the AIDS Memorial Day or International AIDS Day.
8. Every Church should have a HIV/AIDS policy which reflects a Biblical mandate.
9. Emphasis in prayers, support and finance should be given to caregivers who are an integral part of AIDS care.
10. The Church must be involved in

sharing and contribute resources towards the fight against AIDS; and for the support and care of People Living with HIV/AIDS; which can be done via strategies partnerships with other Churches and organizations involved in the ministry.

11. The Church must accept the reality of People Living with HIV/AIDS in the Church and should have a non-judgmental attitude towards all.
12. The Church must encourage positive actions to facilitate consultation and dialogue amongst leaders and people concerned, and promote networking. HIV/AIDS is to be on the Church Agenda.
13. Prevention and Risk Minimisation at its various levels of efficacy will depend on the Churches' responsibility towards its 'at risk' communities. Therefore, the Church needs to seek and find the 'at risk' communities – to visit, reach out, bring the good news, do prevention and awareness programmes.

Training Programmes by Malaysian CARE

For people involved in this ministry Malaysian CARE is offering some training programmes this year. Please contact their office for more information. Tel: 03-79819857; email: dic@malaysiancare.org

26 May 2007 HIV/AIDS Awareness - Basic Programme (Level 1)

9.00 am ~ 12.00 noon

HIV/AIDS Awareness

- Women and Children

2.00 pm ~ 5.00 pm

24-26 October 2007

HIV/AIDS Training ~ Levels 1 to 4

9.00 am ~ 5.00 pm

Thousands Attend First-Ever Global Chinese Alpha Conference

by Claudia Cheng, Christian Today Correspondent

Posted: Monday, April 30, 2007

HONG KONG - Around 2,000 Chinese pastors and believers of all denominations from over 25 countries witnessed the opening of the first ever Global Chinese Alpha Conference in Hong Kong.

At the Hong Kong International Trade & Exhibition Centre in Kowloon, the British Alpha Chaplain Rev Nicky Gumbel, Bishop Joseph Zen of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, General Secretary of the Hong Kong Anglican Church the Rev Paul Kwong and many denomination representatives were present at the ceremony.

The occasion was one of the most memorable occasions in Hong Kong Christianity as all Catholic, Anglican and Protestant leaders united in one heart to support the conference.

As Chinese Christians around the world commemorate the bicentenary of the first western missionary Robert Morrison bringing the Gospel to China, the conference has become a unique opportunity for Chinese Christians worldwide to celebrate the grace of the Lord upon China and open up a new era of mission by pulling their strength together.

Rev Paul Kwong commented that believers from different denominations might have already experienced the benefits of Alpha Course for mass evangelism; he now hopes that Alpha can help lead more Chinese non-believers to Christ.

While Alpha Invitation is based on the table fellowship setting where seekers can freely share about the concerns in their lives, Bishop Joseph Zen said that the strategy is especially suitable for the Chinese community. The Catholic Church in Hong Kong has tried to run Alpha course for training the faith of believers.

Rev Gumbel said that the Alpha team loves Chinese people very much, and that he wished the team could greatly serve the Chinese church through this conference.

The conference was a global Chinese gathering, which allowed believers from mainland China to be included in spite of political sensitivities. Among the attendees were believers from both the official and underground churches.

Though the conference's organizer refused to tell reporters about the number of mainland Chinese attendees and whether Alpha Course was available in

mainland China, he did mention that the conference was open to all those who are interested in knowing about this efficient evangelism strategy.

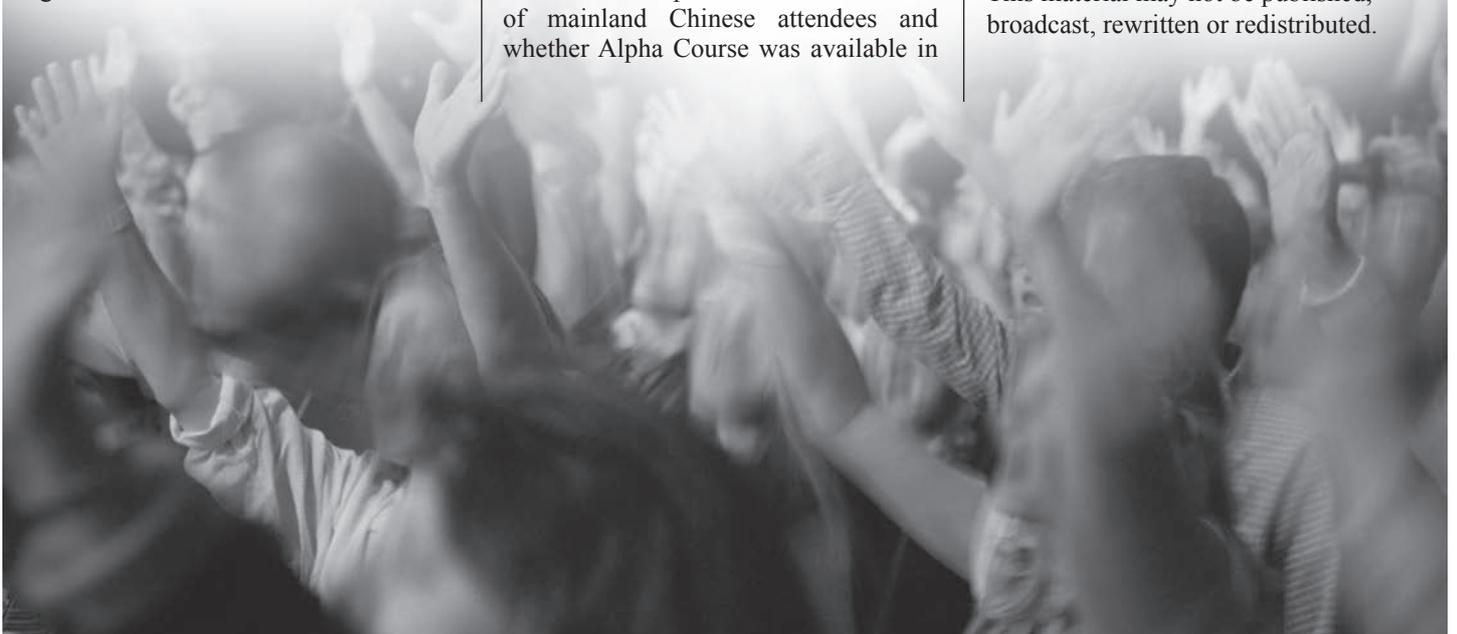
A native missionary from China told the Gospel Herald newspaper that he was very glad that he had accepted the invitation to join the Alpha Conference, and testified that the atmosphere for evangelism in mainland China had become more open than often seen in the past.

The Global Chinese Alpha Conference took place from 10 to 11 April. The two-day conference included seminars, as well as an introduction on how to start running the Alpha Course. In addition, delegates were able to look into the theology behind the Alpha Course and discover ways to promote the Alpha Course among the Chinese community.

[Editor's note: Carol U contributed from Hong Kong for this article.]

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www.christiantoday.com.my

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Rediscovering Christ's call to unity is 21st century church challenge, Kobia says

Churches rediscovering the biblical call to unity and caring for life together is the World Council of Churches' vision for re-invigorating ecumenism in the 21st century, according to Rev. Dr Samuel Kobia, the general secretary of the WCC.

Speaking to leaders of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) in Birmingham on 2 May, Kobia outlined his understanding of what faces the global ecumenical movement in the 21st century, and how the World Council of Churches intends to respond.

In the contemporary ecumenical landscape, it seems that the original "vigour, energy and commitment to ecumenism got lost," Kobia observed. "The search for visible unity of the church is no longer a priority for churches and Christian World Communions who centre on their particular identities," he said. Nevertheless, he argued, "We cannot compromise or hide our conviction that Christ himself wants the churches to be one so that the world may believe."

Given this biblical call behind the churches' search for unity, the WCC needs to assure those who have lost confidence and trust in 'conciliar' ecumenism in general and the World Council in particular that "we respect their needs and want to facilitate the best possible ways for them to discover and to develop the ecumenical dimension of Christian faith within their own communities and in fellowship with other churches".

New programmes, activities

With that in mind, the WCC reshaped its work after its Ninth Assembly in 2006. Kobia noted that the WCC's programmes now have three main foci:

Living out Christian unity more fully. WCC member churches are called to seek unity and to work and witness together. The Council's activities for the years ahead are focused on working together for visible unity, new forms of mission, and providing space for deepening relationships and broader participation.

Being neighbours to all. This phrase in the Ninth Assembly's message conveys the idea that, in the WCC, churches advocate for the good of all and, with their neighbours, address threats to the human 'household'. Efforts will focus on working together to overcome threats that divide the human community, and on the pursuit of peace and the common good through living out shared values of justice and equality.

Taking greater care of creation.

Churches in the WCC are committed to protecting the earth as well as its peoples. In this area, churches will work together to promote the culture and the practices of sustaining life.

World Council of Churches Website
www.oikoumene.org

>> from page 16

"I suppose I had always wanted to be a teacher, which would explain why I never thought of venturing into any other profession," he said in a recent interview.

The journey for Peter began in 1958 when he was selected to undergo teacher training in Brinsford Lodge, Britain.

On his return in 1960 he was posted to Pontian, Johor. He taught in various secondary schools until 1970 when he entered Universiti Malaya to do his degree.

"As some of my ex-students were in my class, I had to work extra hard to ensure I did better than them in the exams!" he quipped.

Upon graduation, he returned to teaching and his last posting in government service was as principal of ACS Klang. He retired from government service in 1993.

But that wasn't the end of his career. Due to his reputation as an administrator and people-manager, he was headhunted by various educational institutions, including the Methodist Council of Education which he ultimately joined.

Among those who Mr. Peter counts as his former students is Tan Sri Ismail Adam, director-general of the Public Service Department. "He joined Sultan Abdul Aziz School, Kuala Selangor, in 1965 when I was in Form 4," Ismail says in the souvenir programme for Peter's retirement.

"We were all kampung boys and girls. I am grateful to him for building my confidence and helping to develop my character," he adds.

While in government service, Peter held various other posts, such as chief examiner of the SRP and SPM English papers. Though his plate may have seemed full, he somehow found time to be actively involved in the community,

being a member of numerous charity organizations, and adviser to the Klang Juvenile Court.

Mr. Peter has done much for Wesley Methodist School and will be remembered for all that he is leaving behind – the high disciplinary levels and the remarkable academic results being just two of them.

"Wesley Methodist is head and shoulders above the rest." We are arguably among the top private schools in the country. Our academic results and the long waiting list of applications for places attest to that.

For all his dedicated service to the teaching profession, Mr. A.R. Peter was awarded the Tokoh Guru Kebangsaan in 1995 – the highest award any teacher can hope to get for his services.

Kathrine Stanley
Wesley Methodist School

Harry Haines

(1917 - 2007)

The Rev. Dr. J. Harry Haines passed away on 29 March 2007 in Eugene, Oregon. He was 89 just three months short of his 90th birthday.

Rev. Haines served in Malaysia from 1951 to 1960 and would be best remembered in Wesley Methodist Church, Ipoh (1951 – 1955) and Wesley Kuala Lumpur (1956 – 1960). He was “very much of an extrovert, ebullient and good humoured, always ready with a smile and handshake ...”

Before coming to Malaysia he served as a missionary in China in the 1940s.

After Malaysia he worked in the division of interchurch aid, refugees, and world service of the World Council of Churches. And from 1966 to his retirement in 1983 he was the Director of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

Born on 29 June 1917 Rev. Haines was a native of New Zealand but studied in Australia, England and the United States. He and his wife Loma Housley, the daughter of missionaries, married in 1944. He is survived by his wife and two sons.



Rev. J. H. Haines and family
(from the Haines family album)

HO SENG ONG SCHOLARSHIP LOAN FUND

Applications are invited from those interested in pursuing teaching as a career for study loans from the Ho Seng Ong Scholarship Loan Fund. Applicants must have obtained admission into courses leading to a degree/diploma in education in local universities.

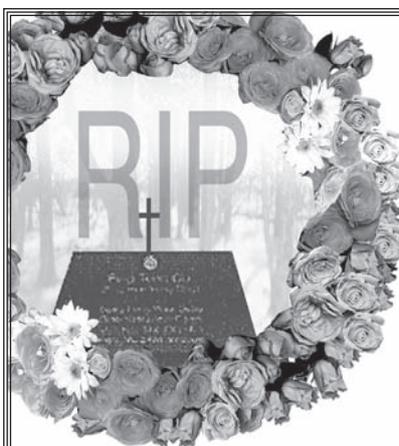
Application Forms may be obtained from:-

The Chairman,
Ho Seng Ong Scholarship Loan Fund,
Methodist Council of Education,
67, Jalan 5/31,
46000 Petaling Jaya.

Please enclose a stamped (50 cents), self-addressed envelope with your written request for application forms.

The closing date for the submission of application is:
31st May, 2007.

Shortlisted applicants only will be called for interview at a date to be fixed by the Chairman of the Fund.



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Mr. William Phua

Methodist Prayer Convention 2007

The Logistic Challenge

The MPC 2007 is the first ever gathering of Methodists in Malaysia on such a scale. 3000 to 3500 Methodists from all the Annual Conferences are expected to congregate at Sunway Convention Centre on 31 August and 1 September.

If this is not already a serious challenge for the logistic committee the closing session on Sunday morning (2 Sept.) will be held at the Shah Alam indoor stadium which has a capacity of 11,700. This time of celebration and thanksgiving will be opened to all the Methodist congregations, especially those in the Klang Valley, to fill that stadium for a historic gathering of Methodists in Malaysia.

Taking up the challenge is the logistics committee headed by Mr. William Phua. When he was approached to lead this committee, and after prayerful consideration he was convicted to go ahead being assured by God to do it.

“Everything is possible with faith in God,” he said.

“It would be quite shameful if we cannot get 3000 plus Methodists to attend the convention,” he said. But when the idea was mooted to have the closing session at the Shah Alam stadium, it was thought to be impossible. When approval came for its use it was an occasion of great joy. By then thinking of 3500 at the convention centre was nothing compared to the logistical challenge of 11,000 people.

Providing 11,000 communion cups for that morning highlights the kind of things the committee needs to resolve, the scale of which has not been attempted before. But they are working together in a well coordinated structure.

Working together with him are two people in the Conference Secretariat – Major Tan Hock Hin and Ms. Chang Meng Chien - a Chief Coordinator in Steven Sekhar, with eight sub-

committees covering all aspects of the physical organization ~ registration, guests, security, transportation, stage, ushering/Communion, medical and refreshment.

It is wonderful that representatives from the three Annual Conferences in Peninsular Malaysia are working together. Because the organizational work is done in KL, practically it is not possible for those from Sarawak and Sabah to be part of the committee.

What does the committee need in prayer? William is thankful for the smooth working relationships among committee members since they began in January 2006. He asks for prayer to guard against the attempts of the evil one to disrupt the work.

“What is most important is that the work is done for Jesus who is the Head and Master, and that it is done with love and care.”

MR A.R. PETER - MORE THAN 50 YEARS IN EDUCATION



An educationist par excellence with a caring personality. That, to put it simply, is Anthony Reynolds Peter, or better known as A.R. Peter.

A man of caliber and action, Mr. Peter retired fully from the profession on 31 March 2007, after clocking in more than 50 years in the education field. He retired officially on 31 Dec 2006, as principal of Wesley Methodist School, Kuala Lumpur. About 450 guests, including VIPs, parents and past students, came to his retirement dinner on 12 November 2006 at the Legend Hotel to bid farewell to the man who had played a part in shaping their lives in some way. Bishop Dr. Hwa Yung graced the occasion.

At school level, teachers and students of Wesley Methodist bade him goodbye on 14 November 2006. Peter was driven out of the school grounds in a vintage Jaguar – driven by a parent! The visible legacy that he leaves behind is the school’s new five-storey block which he oversaw from

conception to birth.

After retiring as principal of Wesley Methodist School, he was made a consultant and his service extended till March 2007, as the Council of Education wanted him to oversee the construction and handing over of the school’s new five-storey block.

What cannot be seen outwardly though, and took longer to achieve, is the caring nature he inculcated in the students. This was mainly due to his ability to reach out to all he came into contact and to bring out the caring nature in them.

Even for most of those who were at the receiving end of his verbal onslaughts they would agree on one thing: His heart is in the right place.

Born in Tapah, Perak, in 1938, Peter started his career in Slim River, as a temporary teacher.