

# PELITA METHODIST

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## The **Necessity** of **Intimate Prayer -**

As 'A Church after God's Own Heart'

By Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik



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## MPC PRAYER LETTER 03/May2014

### MPC 3 - A Time for Refreshment

The Rev John Wesley described the 18<sup>th</sup> Century revival, as "a Little Pentecost" that took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1739 while about sixty people were praying. Wesley says, "About 3 in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground." With that began the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Revival. Time and time again God has revived His people and brought new life to HIS Church in answer to prayer.

In the book of Nehemiah chapter nine we are told that for three hours the people of Israel stood for the reading of the Word of God. The reading of the Word then prepared their hearts to pray, and they spent another three hours praying. The two important ingredients for revival are the Word of God and prayer.

What we see in this passage is that there has to be discipline in prayer. The people of Israel during Nehemiah's time intentionally set aside time and came together for prayer. We need to discipline ourselves to read the Word and pray. If you wake up in the morning and say, "Sometime today I will pray" – it just won't happen. At the age of 86, John Wesley wrote in his journal, "Laziness is slowly

creeping in; there is an increasing tendency to stay in bed after 5:30 in the morning...." No wonder he was a spiritual giant. We must be disciplined and intentional about private and corporate prayer.

That is what MPC seeks to do. It is our hope that the three days of teaching will help us take corporate prayer seriously. It is hoped that MPC will help us understand the importance of prayer and help us bend our knees in prayer. It is hoped that Christians, especially the people called Methodists, will come together to pray on a significant day like our National Day.

If you look at Nehemiah chapter nine, you will also notice that the people of God knew so much about God. There is a constant mention of God's greatness, goodness, and faithfulness. Those who had gathered knew the greatness of God. Thus they could bring their petitions to God. Great thoughts of God can bring us to make great supplications.

Wonderful times of refreshment can be a present reality if God's people will cry out to HIM again. God changed the heart of the king when Nehemiah prayed. God may change hardened hearts if HIS people would pray today. God gave victory to the people of Israel when Nehemiah and the people of Israel prayed. God will defeat the foes today if HIS people would pray. God sent rain and ended the drought upon the land of Israel when Elijah prayed. God may still remove dark forces that hover over this nation and send us rainclouds of blessings today if HIS people would pray. God opened her womb when Hannah prayed. God may still open shut hearts of people and shut doors of nations if HIS people would pray. What would God not do in HIS church, in our lives, in our business, and in the nations, if you and I pray?

It is not just my hope, but my earnest prayer that God will pour a spirit of prayer upon His people, that we may pray at this MPC like we have never prayed before. As a result of coming together to pray at MPC, we may be inspired to be in prayer alone and be in prayer with others. May we receive a little Pentecost that will help us experience a wonderful time of refreshment!

### Prayer Points

1. **Pray for a spirit of prayer to be sent upon all who would attend MPC 3.**
2. **Pray for unity of hearts and minds for all who are labouring hard to make MPC 3 a blessing.**
3. **Pray that the promotional video clip and brochures will invoke interest to participate.**
4. **Pray that the little choirs that are practising throughout the country will converge to raise a thousand voices as a symphony unto the Lord.**

Rev Dr T. Jeyakumar  
Vice-Chairman  
MPC 3, Organising Committee

# The Necessity of Intimate Prayer - As 'A Church after God's Own Heart'

By Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik

*"Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray".*

*Mark 1:35*

All of us live out our lives where both the public and private sides are seen as distinct. It is the same with the Lord Jesus. The Gospel writers were most emphatic about the importance of the private, interior life of Jesus, which lies behind the public ministry, activity and controversy vis-à-vis the needy people, and the religious and political leaders of His day.

It is this interior life that He zealously guarded, and that discipline was preserved to the finish. He never wavered nor was He distracted from His true identity, call and mission as "the Lamb of God that was slain before the foundation of the world." In Mark 1: 11 – the Father's voice from heaven declared - *"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."*

The Lord Jesus thrived on the fact of His Father's acceptance, affirmation and affection by keeping daily private times of meeting with His beloved Abba, Father. It kept Him unwavering in His true identity and role when the world wanted to give Him false ones. In Luke 9: 18 – 21 He asked His disciples "Who do men say that I am?" – the reported answers were flattering; but the right one which the Lord Jesus affirmed was given by Peter – *"You are the Messiah sent from God!"* Again preceding this in vs 18 is *"One day Jesus left the crowds to pray alone."* Once again the interior life of the Lord Jesus precedes the exterior busy public life of activity, controversies and public expectations and perceptions that had been formed.

We have just observed Lent and celebrated Easter, and we in the Church remember with gratitude the painful but unflinching determination with which the Lord Jesus **"stayed on course"** in facing the Cross. Many of us would naturally avoid death at all costs, especially if we knew of such fatal consequence in advance eg. boarding an ill-fated ship, aeroplane or a vehicle if we knew it would lead to certain death. And yet for the Lord Jesus "stayed on course", even though He knew the fatal ending in advance - as the Son of God, sent as the suffering Christ to die for the sake of a world lost in sin.

The Lord Jesus was the Son after His Father's own heart because He kept His private interior times with His Father disciplinedly and regularly. This imperative example and critical truth is not only necessary for us individually, but also collectively as one body unit called the Methodist Church in Malaysia. His total dependence on His Abba, and in knowing and doing His Father's will, was captured by His deep and regular private praying habit. This "without fail" interior practice was noticed by His closest followers as His obvious source of sustained direction, authority and power.

We, the Methodist Church in Malaysia, as a united single body unit also want to keep our interior "private" time with our Father through the **Methodist Prayer Convention 2014**. Hitherto, we have attempted to faithfully and dutifully carry out our public ministry in this land and the regions beyond. But we need to come together opportunely as one single body to pray so that we are sustained to remain true to our identity as God's children/people, fulfilling our call and mission faithfully as a Church after our Father's own heart in this generation.

We as a people called Methodists, must intentionally and sincerely humble ourselves collectively before the Lord, seek His face and pray, and turn from our wicked ways. The **MPC 2014** is a key, rare and opportune way in which we do this at the "highest level" as a Methodist Family, although we must seek the Lord at all levels in the life of the Church.

Together we must heed the Lord's warning in Matthew 21:18-22 of the barren fig tree that was cursed. That fig tree was full of foliage but no fruits (this type was expected to produce figs before or at the sprouting of leaves, no matter the season); it was full of "promise" but had no true "performance"! May the Lord have mercy on the Methodist Church in Malaysia that overall we should appear to "look good but have no fruits"! In the words of Paul – "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power." [2 Tim 3:5]

Let me now share what the Lord has laid on my heart as we, together in the Methodist Family began pursuing being "A Church after God's Own Heart" since last year. [Many Methodist members, leaders, and intercessors resonated with this theme, as we felt the same conviction from the Holy Spirit]. In this context, I had felt the Spirit laying upon my own heart the following issues that came from four sets of words which I now share for the prayerful consideration, discernment and response of our Methodist Family:

- **"Encultured blockages"** – to sincerely and intentionally seek the Holy Spirit concerning things that grieve the heart of our Father that we no longer notice, because it has "become a part of us"/ our daily faith community culture. I was awakened to this recently when in the midst of our Task Force set up by the GCEC to look into ministry among our indigenous communities – that we need to conduct our meetings more in the language that our indigenous brethren can understand - which is not English!
- **"Communal identity as the Church in Malaysia"** – that the season is now here for the total Church in Malaysia to genuinely, authentically and demonstrably show our unity as the body of Christ in this land. We, in the Methodist Church in Malaysia, do this by having the will, sincerity and taking "do-able" steps to

transcend ethnic, denominational, geographical, monetary divisions and differences etc – among God’s people in this land who are not like us.

- **“Suffering cleanses and authenticates”** – that trials, tribulations and persecutions will define us as true believers, followers and disciples of Christ. We are continuing to feel the escalation of the *beginnings of birth pangs*. These “labour pains” are inflicted upon us by those opposed to Christ and His Church in this land, but when responded to rightly, will herald the birth of a holy, authentic and powerful life of witness of the Church in Malaysia.
- **“Disentangle the eternal from the temporal”** – that the Church of God was conceived from eternity to be a cosmic witness “that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.” [Eph 3:10]. Let us never put our ultimate hope in temporal powers, parties, personalities and politics. Instead, we are to be salt and light that actively engage the world, society and state, for God’s greater purpose and glory.

Let us come together at the **MPC 2014** to seek God further for the reality of the Methodist Church in Malaysia to become “A Church after God’s Own Heart”. Let us prepare ourselves, as we make it a priority to personally spend time with God “privately” each day in an intimate relationship with our Father.

May He through the Holy Spirit so grant His people called Methodists a desire to seek Him, and anointing us with “faith that move mountains”; faith that comes when like the Lord Jesus we offer to our Father the time to deepen our private and personal relationship with Him. Then we shall collectively and communally become the

Lord’s “mountain movers” of our time and generation, no matter how huge the mountains appear to be in this land and the regions beyond.

## PRAYER POINTS FOR THE MPC 2014

As we look forward to the MPC 2014, let us pray that by the gracious and powerful work of the Holy Spirit that ...

1. Our Methodist Family will be increasingly set free from **“Encultured blockages”** especially in the area of prayer...from lack of spiritual appetite and zeal... from scepticism... misplaced priorities... discouragement and disappointment... that we will want to come together to seek God in this gathering.
2. Our Methodist Family, *as we gather together*, will receive a greater empowerment and a deeper desire to resolutely do our part to demonstrate unity with all other believers in this nation in actualising **“Communal identity as the Church in Malaysia”**.
3. Our Methodist Family will be willing, for the glory of our Father, to endure hardship, persecution and tribulation as **“Suffering cleanses and authenticates”** us as God’s cosmic witnesses in turbulent times in this nation.
4. Our Methodist Family will always know how to **“Disentangle the eternal from the temporal”**- and *live in obedience to Ephesians 3:10* – in our individual as well as community life as God’s people called Methodists in Malaysia.

## Devotion

# DEVOTION

## The Necessity of Prayer

*Prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to Satan.*  
(John Bunyan)

### IN WORD:

As followers of Jesus, we do well to embrace the mission to which we’re called. But if we don’t understand what makes the mission effective, we’re destined for frustration. Every step of the way in Acts, after Jesus told His disciples they would be His witnesses, we find people praying. Behind all of the amazing works of the Holy Spirit in that book are prayers of people filled with the Spirit. The prayers and the works are inseparable.

We forget that sometimes. We pray a little and work a lot, then wonder why God hasn’t blessed our efforts. We need to remember that the work of the Spirit cannot be done in the strength of the flesh; only God can accomplish His mission. He uses us in that mission, but He doesn’t depend on our ingenuity and our talents. He breathes life into what we are able to contribute. The effectiveness is His.

## One Year at the Cross Devotional by Chris Tiegreen

That should drive us to our knees. If we are on a mission with Jesus, fulfilling His calling to be witnesses, living a ministry of reconciliation, we will soon realize how utterly dependent we are on His power. Nothing we do in itself can accomplish God’s purposes if it isn’t backed by His Spirit. And the way to make sure we are backed by His Spirit is to commune with Him often.

### IN DEED:

Take a look at what prompted the first missionary journey in Acts 13:2-3. It was the voice of the Spirit in response to worship and prayer. It was a God-ordained mission. Paul and Barnabas didn’t decide to go evangelize, asking the Spirit to bless them on the way. They got directions first. The trip was inspired and anointed.

Do you want your mission to be inspired and anointed? Then pray. Pray often, pray deeply, pray dependently. Everything you do depends on the Spirit’s work.

*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*

Acts 4:31

# A Place of Ministry

By Mok Shi-Lynn

The Council of Churches of Malaysia took advantage of its strategic location by creating premises to serve as a place of ministry and outreach to the surrounding community.

The Office of the Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM) has been located at Jalan Universiti for as long as most can remember. According to the General Secretary of CCM, Rev. Dr. Hermen Shastri, CCM decided on the location due to its proximity to University Malaya (UM), which provided opportunity for student ministry. At that time, the premises consisted of two bungalows. As the decades went by, the two buildings became run down.

“We considered a number of ideas, such as selling the bungalows and renting a shoplot elsewhere,” Shastri shares. “In the end, we decided that we may as well stay put. After all, this property belongs to us. God must have put us here for a reason. There’s a hospital and university just next door. We should respond to ministry challenges here in this location.”

Once it was decided that a purpose-built building would be erected on the property, it took years of planning, negotiation and fund-raising before construction could begin. CCM had to get approval from the local town council, appease concerned neighbours, alter their building plans and approach member churches and philanthropists for funds.

Finally, after two years of construction, the new building was officially open on April 23 this year.

## Well-designed Facilities

On the ground floor, directly ahead of the main entrance, is the chapel. As you enter, the eye is drawn to the stained glass windows of modern design, which was imported from Germany. In the centre is the communion table-cum-baptistery in the shape of a boat, made out of stone from Iran. A side door of the chapel opens to a small, walled

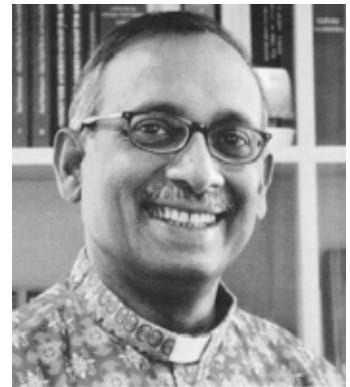


garden with benches. A meditative, ecumenical worship is held at the chapel every Sunday at 5 pm.

An exhibition hall lies to the left of the chapel. At the other end is a cafe and bakery called ‘Bread of Life’, which is open to members of the public, who may wish to park in the underground car park with 50 parking bays.

On the first floor are located CCM’s offices. A plush and fully-equipped boardroom that seats 30 is located within the office area. Meeting rooms and a library sit side by side. One more floor up is the multi-purpose hall, which seats 350 in theatre style or 220 with round dinner tables. With its high ceiling and raised stage, the multi-purpose hall is suitable for concerts, conferences and even weddings.

A large portion of the building is dedicated to lodging facilities. There are 22 rooms, consisting of single, twin and suite, all with attached bathrooms and wireless access. Rooms share common pantry facilities along the corridor.



Rev. Dr. Hermen Shastri,  
General Secretary of CCM

Even the roof has been made use of: the roof terrace is designed for casual gatherings such as barbeques or parties. It can even be the location for tea breaks in between conferences and meetings.

The three-storey building is not just functional, but beautifully designed. Art depicting ecumenism graces the walls throughout the building; some of these were gifts by churches overseas. The building is also wheelchair-friendly.

## A Building with a Purpose

All the rooms are available for rent at a reasonable cost, as CCM is a non-profit organisation. As part of CCM’s ministry to the community, the accommodation rooms in particular were designed to serve the families of patients at UM hospital. “Some of the family members of patients come from outstation to visit or care for their loved ones,” Shastri says. “These people have nowhere to stay or cannot afford a hotel. Now they can stay here, which is just directly opposite of the hospital.”

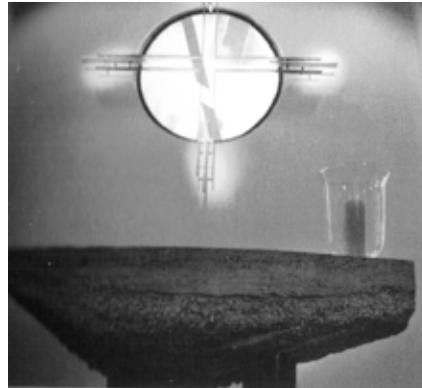
Since the building opened, Shastri says that there has been interest from the surrounding community. “Some hospital interns working the night shift have stayed with us. Some nurses who just started work and needed a temporary place to stay have also put up here. One church group used our premises for a spiritual retreat. Another group of nurses have a regular prayer gathering here. I think the faith seed is beginning to grow new shoots,” he shares.

According to Shastri, congregations rallied to raise funds for building the new premises and because of that, there is a collective sense of achievement. “The churches came forth to give, offer loans and make pledges. For example, the Methodists gave the



boardroom, the multipurpose hall is from the Anglicans, and so on. As such, I think there's a sense of shared achievement from our member churches that we have this place of fellowship and ministry."

Shastri invites churches and Christians to visit the new building, hold events there or join the worship service on Sunday evenings. "This place is something we're leaving for the next generation. We didn't build this place to show off our new office," he laughs. "So come and get involved here. This building is for all of you."



**For more information or to enquire about rates, call CCM at +603-7956 7092.**

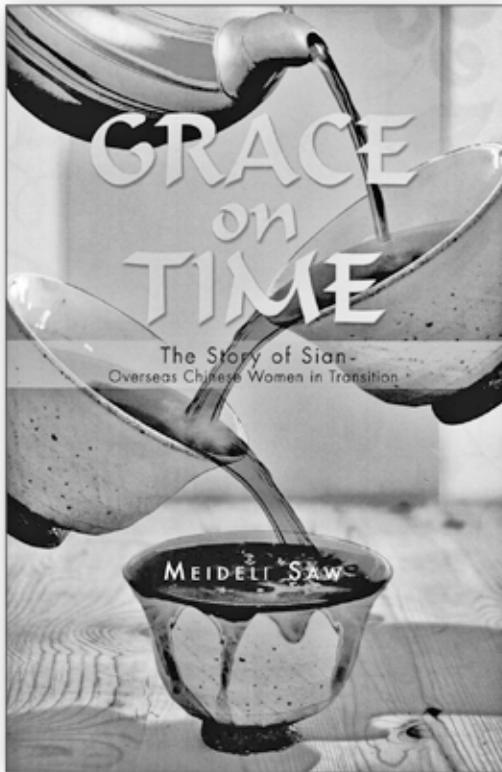
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**The Cafe and Bakery on the ground floor of the CCM building boasts healthy, tasty breads and pastries. The owners - two Christians based in Penang who have 12 years of experience in the bakery business - say that they use mostly natural ingredients. "We use better quality flour, avoid margarine and use butter as much as we can," says Mr Teoh Seng Lee, one of the owners.**



*The* grass withers and the flowers fall,  
but the word of our God endures forever."

Isaiah 40:8



## Grace on Time

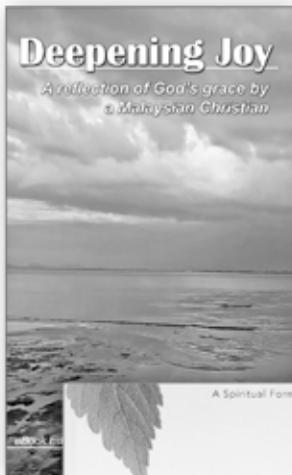
The Story of Sian - Overseas Chinese Women in Transition  
by Meideli Saw

“An amazing story well told, as real and as dramatic as it can be, even if written in *ingonito*. Reading *Grace on Time - The Story of Sian*, we are immediately transported into the broad world of the overseas Chinese diaspora, yet are immediately pulled back into intimate, personal accounts that resonate with our personal, family, church, and national life.”

Soo Ewe Jin  
Senior Journalist, Malaysia

*Grace on Time - The Story of Sian* is the story of an overseas Chinese couple whose lives were intertwined in the fast moving history of British Malaya, Malaya and then Malaysia. Though subconsciously and consciously rooted in the deep culture of ancient China, this brave couple faced life challenges of poverty, illiteracy, prejudice, injustice, critical illness and betrayal with a courage many of today's couples shy from. Through thick and thin they soldiered on to provide their best for their seven children born and bred in the milieu of rapidly modernizing and developing Malaysia. Short and vivid, this book is hard to put down once started. It will also speak to your soul. Do not judge a book by its size!

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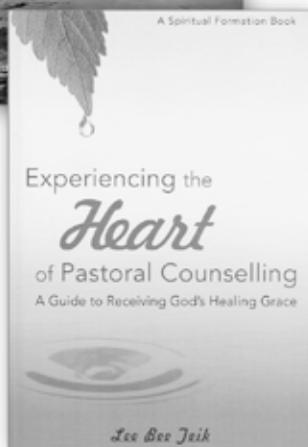


## Deepening Joy

A reflection of God's grace by a Malaysian Chinese (Lee Bee Teik)

The Christian, not uncommonly, begins his walk with the Lord in a burst of joy. The love of God fills his heart and he revels in his new friendship with his Redeemer. As time passes, that initial joy may fade and, at several points, seems to disappear altogether. This book reflects a renewed understanding of God's grace through the eyes of a Malaysian Christian.

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## Current Affairs

### CHRISTIAN FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA (PERSEKUTUAN KRISTIAN MALAYSIA)

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7 May 2014

#### SEMINAR AT UNIVERSITY CLEAR ABUSE OF TRUST AND STEWARDSHIP

CFM supports academic freedom, and the right of a public university such as the Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) to organise a public lecture on any topic, but academic freedom and public university facilities should not be used to present and promote skewed statements with no opportunity for rebuttal of facts. That is a clear abuse of trust and stewardship.

If there is to be sincere and genuine academic freedom, then let us have an intellectual exchange with integrity instead of a one-sided presentation with arguably inaccurate information being disseminated as fact.

Otherwise, yesterday's seminar at UiTM would be nothing more than hate speech and sectarian religious propaganda thinly disguised as academic freedom, which causes a great diminution of scholastic integrity, greater disservice to intellectual honesty, and greatest discredit to the reputation of the public institution.

Yours sincerely,



Rev. Dr. Eu Hong Seng,  
Chairman and the Executive Committee,  
The Christian Federation of Malaysia

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## Mission Statement: “Growing in Christ, Our Living Hope. Touching Lives, Bringing Hope”



I was called to attend a meeting on 29th August 2013 at Simon & Michelle’s home to discuss the possibility of setting up a church in Kota Kemuning. There were only 14 of us and we were briefed by the TRAC President, Rev. Jeyakumar. He had been praying for six years about setting up a preaching point here.

As Kota Kemuning is a well-populated area with many Methodists living here, we decided that we should start a family-friendly church and minister to every generation. In order to do this, we should begin with a Children and Youth Ministry. We would look for the ground floor unit of a shop-lot to cater to those who find it difficult to climb the stairs. We targeted for a congregation of 40 people. Rev. Jeyakumar told us to unite our hearts and minds, to set our hands to the plough, and pray every Thursday at 10pm.

At a second meeting on 29th September 2013, with 23 people present, Pastor Soh Tian Soo of Trinity Sungai Buloh gave us an insight into how they started a preaching

point there with a covenant group. We were advised to appoint 8 to 10 Ministry Heads and draw up a roster for preachers, worship leaders and musicians.

We identified a shop-lot opposite Aeon Big, Bukit Rimau and confirmed that we wanted to rent the ground floor together with the first floor to start our church service in February 2014.

Eleven people attended the third meeting on 27th October 2013. Nine core ministries were identified (Property – Tan Teik Beng /Simon Chan; Administration – Margaret Khoo; Treasurer – Ida Khoo; Children – Ian Lau/ Janice; Youth – Lester Lim; Worship & Music – Roy Lim; Small Group – Dr Chan Chee Yan/Archie Sither; IT – Cheah Lu Hsun; Publications – Joel Lye through Rev Jeyakumar).

Our fourth meeting on 1st December 2013 was attended by 15 people. We discussed the need to set up the renovation team as the tenancy agreement had been signed and a bank account opened with 3 signatories

(Ida Khoo, Archie Sither & Koh Ai Lin). We agreed to hold our church service from 10am to 11.30am with the Children and Youth Ministry on Saturdays from 3pm to 4.30pm. At this meeting, our Vision/Mission statement was born: “GROWING IN CHRIST OUR LIVING HOPE. TOUCHING LIVES BRINGING HOPE”

Rev Jeyakumar sent out email to appeal for financial help from the District Churches. Sponsors gave generously in cash and kind (e.g. air-conditioners, carpets, tables). With God at the helm, other churches also gave their best. The main contractor was identified and Margaret and Jenny tirelessly coordinated the renovation works beginning from December 2013. We got the keys early as we had to complete the renovation before Chinese New Year (31 January 2014) as January was the official rent-free renovation period given by the landlord.

We had our pre-inaugural service meeting at the church on 26th January 2014 with 18 people attending. Many things were discussed, including whether we needed to erect little directional signs with arrows to the location. We were still missing our sign-board for “Living Hope Methodist Church” but true to her word, Jenny Qua managed to get it done for us on time.

We formed the Executive Team for decision-making comprising the Ministry Team together with Dr. Chan Chee Yan (Chairman), Archie & Dorita Sither, Mary Chan, and Koh Ai Lin.

We had our inaugural church service on Sunday, 9th February 2014 attended by 130 people, along with our generous donors. Our 8th worship service was held on 30th March 2014 with a congregation of 42 people.

I have written a chronological sequence of events leading to the birth of LHMC to show that God truly wants this church (after six years of prayer) to exist for His Ministry according to His plan:-

# World Methodist Council: Family Life



1. The premises are highly visible. We were able to get both the ground floor and the first floor together. The timing of the confirmation of rental, handing over of the keys and the rent-free renovation period was simply remarkable.
2. The Bank account was opened without hassle as the Branch Manager understands that we are a church.
3. Funds were obtained from sponsors for renovation and many items were contributed.
4. The target date of 9th February 2014 was met promptly owing to the co-operation & teamwork of all (although some had to bear a greater burden than others). It was a wonder how God transformed the bare premises into a cozy, user-friendly church by guiding the human hands at work.
5. Our congregation reached 40+ after two months – I was worried but my sister told me that our job is to get the church ready and God will bring the people in!
6. We have a team from different churches working together–Wesley Klang, Trinity PJ, EMC PJ, Wesley KL, SSMC, and a student from STM Seremban but we only have one head–God Himself.

We look back to see how wonderfully God put together this simple church and now we look forward to see more of His wonders as He fills His church with Life and Hope and pours His blessings on all who come to this church.

By Ida Khoo

There are over 15 million children in domestic work in the world today who feel they are invisible. They work behind the closed doors of their employers, most are girls and many of them suffer abuse and exploitation at the hands of their employers, working long hours, for little or no pay and denied the opportunity to go to school.

A small charity named 'Children Unite' has been working with NGOs in various countries of the world to provide advocacy and support for these vulnerable children. Methodist Women in Britain engaged in a two year partnership with 'Children Unite' campaigning for national governments to ratify the International Labour Organisation's Domestic Workers Convention, 2011. We believe this convention will help end the abuse and exploitation of child domestic workers.

### Interview with a child domestic worker

The following is an extract from an interview between Helen Veitch (Children Unite) and Anali Baltazar Sanchez (from Casa de Panchita, Peru).

Helen: Why did you start working as a child domestic worker?

Anali: I started working when I was 9 years old as a domestic worker but I wasn't paid for this work. I have 5 brothers and sisters and my mum is a single mother so we all had to work to bring in enough money for the whole family.

Helen: how did your employers treat you and how did that make you feel?

Anali: My mum told me not to trust my employer, particularly the male employers because many domestic workers are sexually abused by the male employers so I didn't trust any of my employers. They treated me like a nobody. One time when I was looking after two children one of the boys hit me, his mother was watching but she didn't say anything. I was hurt and humiliated by this – if it had been anyone else that her son had hit she would have said something. But

she didn't reprimand him at all and it made me feel like I wasn't even human — no-one deserves to feel like that.

Helen: what are the most important issues facing child domestic workers in Peru?

Anali: Child domestic workers need to focus on their education, many children drop out of school because they can't manage to do their homework and they are too tired at school from all the domestic work they have had to do. So, we need to find a way to get child domestic workers to school.

Also many children work away from their families — they work in a house in the city and their families live in the country. You are not protected if you do not live with your family.

Finally, being a child domestic worker you miss out on your childhood, you don't have friends, you don't play... you just work. Children need a childhood.

### Resources:

Methodist Women in Britain resource pack on Child Domestic Workers <http://www.mwib.org.uk/about-us/partnerships/item/171-child-domestic-workers.html>

Children Unite, 33 Skipworth Road, London E9 7JR [www.childrenunite.org.uk](http://www.childrenunite.org.uk)



## CONFESSION OF FAITH

### PART 1

# FOR THE LORD WE LOVE

## The Cape Town Confession of Faith

### 9 WE LOVE THE PEOPLE OF GOD

*The people of God are those from all ages and all nations whom God in Christ has loved, chosen, called, saved and sanctified as a people for his own possession, to share in the glory of Christ as citizens of the new creation. As those, then, whom God has loved from eternity to eternity and throughout all our turbulent and rebellious history, we are commanded to love one another. For 'since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another,' and thereby 'be imitators of God...and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.' Love for one another in the family of God is not merely a desirable option but an inescapable command. Such love is the first evidence of obedience to the gospel, the necessary expression of our submission to Christ's Lordship, and a potent engine of world mission.<sup>49</sup>*

**A** Love calls for unity. Jesus' command that his disciples should love one another is linked to his prayer that they should be one. Both the command and the prayer are missional — 'that the world may know you are my disciples', and that 'the world may know that you [the Father] sent me'.<sup>50</sup> A most powerfully convincing mark of the truth of the gospel is when Christian believers are united in love across the world's inveterate divisions — barriers of race, colour, gender, social class, economic privilege or political alignment. Few things so destroy our testimony as when Christians mirror and amplify the very same divisions among themselves. We urgently seek a new global partnership within the body of Christ across all continents, rooted in profound mutual love, mutual submission, and dramatic economic sharing without paternalism or unhealthy dependency. And we seek this not only as a demonstration of our unity in the gospel, but also for the sake of the name of Christ and the mission of God in all the world.

**B** Love calls for honesty. Love speaks truth with grace. No one loved God's people more than the prophets of Israel and Jesus himself. Yet no one confronted them more honestly with the truth of their failure, idolatry and rebellion against their covenant Lord. And in doing so, they called God's people to repent, so that they could be forgiven and restored to the service of God's mission. The same voice of prophetic love must be heard today, for the same reason. Our love for the Church of God aches with grief over the ugliness among us that so disfigures the face of our dear Lord Jesus Christ and hides his beauty from the world — the world that so desperately needs to be drawn to him.

**C** Love calls for solidarity. Loving one another includes especially caring for those who are persecuted and in prison for their faith and witness. If one part of the body suffers, all parts suffer with it. We are all, like John, 'companions in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus'.<sup>51</sup> We commit ourselves to share in the suffering of members of the body of Christ throughout the world, through information, prayer, advocacy, and other means of support. We see such sharing, however, not merely as an exercise of pity, but longing also to learn what the suffering Church can teach and give to those parts of Christ's body that are not suffering in the same way. We are warned that the Church that feels itself at ease in its wealth and self-sufficiency may, like Laodicea, be the Church that Jesus sees as the most blind to its own poverty, and from which he himself feels a stranger outside the door.<sup>52</sup>

*Jesus calls all his disciples together to be one family among the nations, a reconciled fellowship in which all sinful barriers are broken down through his reconciling grace. This Church is a community of grace, obedience and love in the communion of the Holy Spirit, in which the glorious attributes of God and gracious characteristics of*

*Christ are reflected and God's multi-coloured wisdom is displayed. As the most vivid present expression of the kingdom of God, the Church is the community of the reconciled who no longer live for themselves, but for the Saviour who loved them and gave himself for them.*

### 10 WE LOVE THE MISSION OF GOD

*We are committed to world mission, because it is central to our understanding of God, the Bible, the Church, human history and the ultimate future. The whole Bible reveals the mission of God to bring all things in heaven and earth into unity under Christ, reconciling them through the blood of his cross. In fulfilling his mission, God will transform the creation broken by sin and evil into the new creation in which there is no more sin or curse. God will fulfil his promise to Abraham to bless all nations on the earth, through the gospel of Jesus, the Messiah, the seed of Abraham. God will transform the fractured world of nations that are scattered under the judgment of God into the new humanity that will be redeemed by the blood of Christ from every tribe, nation, people and language, and will be gathered to worship our God and Saviour. God will destroy the reign of death, corruption and violence when Christ returns to establish his eternal reign of life, justice and peace. Then God, Immanuel, will dwell with us, and the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign for ever and ever.<sup>53</sup>*

**A** Our participation in God's mission. God calls his people to share his mission. The Church from all nations stands in continuity through the Messiah Jesus with God's people in the Old Testament. With them we have been called through Abraham and commissioned to be a blessing and a light to the nations. With them, we are to be shaped and taught through the law and the prophets

to be a community of holiness, compassion and justice in a world of sin and suffering. We have been redeemed through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to what God has done in Christ. The Church exists to worship and glorify God for all eternity and to participate in the transforming mission of God within history. Our mission is wholly derived from God's mission, addresses the whole of God's creation, and is grounded at its centre in the redeeming victory of the cross. This is the people to whom we belong, whose faith we confess and whose mission we share.

**B** The integrity of our mission. The source of all our mission is what God has done in Christ for the redemption of the whole world, as revealed in the Bible. Our evangelistic task is to make that good news known to all nations. The context of all our mission is the world in which we live, the world of sin, suffering, injustice, and creational disorder, into which God sends us to love and serve for Christ's sake. All our mission must therefore reflect the integration of evangelism and committed engagement in the world, both being ordered and driven by the whole biblical revelation of the gospel of God.

'Evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God... The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his Church and responsible service in the world... We affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and humankind, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ... The salvation we proclaim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.'<sup>54</sup>

'Integral mission is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world, we betray the Word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we

ignore the Word of God, we have nothing to bring to the world.'<sup>55</sup>

*We commit ourselves to the integral and dynamic exercise of all dimensions of mission to which God calls his Church.*

- *God commands us to make known to all nations the truth of God's revelation and the gospel of God's saving grace through Jesus Christ, calling all people to repentance, faith, baptism and obedient discipleship.*
- *God commands us to reflect his own character through compassionate care for the needy, and to demonstrate the values and the power of the kingdom of God in striving for justice and peace and in caring for God's creation.*

*In response to God's boundless love for us in Christ, and out of our overflowing love for him, we rededicate ourselves, with the help of the Holy Spirit, fully to obey all that God commands, with self-denying humility, joy and courage. We renew this covenant with the Lord — the Lord we love because he first loved us.*

## FOR REFLECTION

The Cape Town Confession of Faith is fashioned in the language of love because God is love, and our response to him is born out of loving obedience to a gracious heavenly Father.

1. For each section 1-10, take time to ponder how this loving obedience should be (i) lived out, (ii) planned out; (iii) prayed for in ourselves, and in others.
2. Are there aspects of God's mission which, in your view, need re-energizing in your church? What are they? How can you contribute to this aspect of church life and ministry?
3. If you serve with a mission agency or other Christian initiative, which aspects of this Confession of Faith would be good for your team to study in greater depth, as a basis for what you do?
4. There are many calls to thanksgiving and to prayer in *The Cape Town Commitment* – for the Church, and for nations. From your study of Part 1, what will you pray for *yourself*?
5. Christ's final command on earth was to make disciples. Think of your friends, neighbours, family who do not believe

in Christ. Have they ever read a gospel narrative? Would they be willing to, if invited?

Your further personal reflections:

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## NOTES (Part 1)

49. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 1 John 4:11; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 4:9-10; John 13:35
50. John 13:34-35; 17:21
51. Hebrews 13:1-3; 1 Corinthians 12:26; Revelation 1:9
52. Revelation 3:17-20
53. Ephesians 1:9-10; Colossians 1:20; Genesis 1-12; Revelation 21-22
54. *The Lausanne Covenant*, Paragraphs 4 and 5
55. *The Micah Declaration on Integral Mission*

# People of the Book

**P**EOPLE OF THE BOOK is the term used to refer to Muslims, Jews, and Christians alike. No wonder, for they believe the record of God's communication with people at specific times and places in history is contained in the BOOK. The norms of the faithful have their roots in the BOOK. This BOOK is the Koran in the case of Muslims, the Old Testament for Jews, and the Old and New Testaments, i.e. the Bible, for Christians. The word "Bible" comes from the Greek **'biblia'** which means "books". That is what the Bible is: a collection of books.

The Bible is the story of mankind in a sense, for it contains legends and myths which go all the way back to the time when civilization was just taking shape in the alluvial plains of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and in the fertile delta of the Nile. Its oldest poetry is from victory songs after bloody battles; not unlike the **sangkah** of headhunting festivals. Its laws are cached in the terms of legal codes set out by the great Mesopotamian king Hammurabi. Its riddles and sayings show the influence of the wisdom school of thought which circulated throughout the fertile crescent. Its festivals portray the vested interests of nomadic shepherds and settled tillers of the land. Its contracts and agreements come straight from the market place and village square. The stories of kings are filled with intrigue, assassination, and suppression. The sufferings of the early Christians are linked with the eclipse of the Roman Empire as they became the scapegoat of fanatic emperors and governors vainly trying to hold on to a decaying empire.

In a very different sense, the Bible is not just another volume of secular history. It is unique in that those who wrote these events down and those who have preserved the writings for 2,500 years saw God's activity in the events themselves. These are not merely ordinary stories of wars, population movements, and epic heroes. God is working out his purpose on the stage of human history. The Bible is the narration of God's action—what he has done, is doing, and will do. Here the ultimate meaning of human life is disclosed. However, the theme running throughout the Bible—in both Old and New Testaments is that God's disclosure of himself must be perceived in terms of faith. God's acts of deliverance are in unexpected ways, not according to human patterns of power. He

chooses an obscure, hodge-podge, and ornery confederation of slave decedents to become the community to receive and bear his message. The long-expected messiah himself comes not as a princely figure but as a teacher of lowly birth who criticized the religious establishment more severely than he opposed the colonial masters. How odd of God to choose the Jews!

Ever since they were written down, individuals and organized groups have continued to read about these events and to understand them in terms of faith as relevant to their own times. Through the reading and hearing some have been able to discover and work out their own faithful response in their particular circumstances. On the other hand, some have twisted the meaning to justify their own actions and desires.

### Translation becomes necessary

Unfortunately, the Bible has not always been readily available to God's people. Some 200 years before Christ the community of Jews living in Alexandria, Egypt could no longer read the scriptures and understand the ancient Hebrew tongue, so the Old Testament was translated into Greek—the common trade language. This Greek translation was the Bible the early Christians used and frequently quoted when they wrote the New Testament in popular Greek.

Yet, within a few hundred years Latin had become the most widely used language and more Bible translation took place. Most notable was the work of Jerome. The Latin Bible was used throughout Europe until after A.D. 1522 when Martin Luther translated into vernacular German and William Tyndale into English.

It has been more than 350 years since King James of England commissioned the authorized version. That Bible and its companion, the Douay Version, have enjoyed complete acceptance in the English-speaking world right up to the present, in spite of the fact that once excellent style and vocabulary have been out-dated for a very long time. No-one would dare speak in such an archaic manner today unless he were talking to God. Only during the past decade have good modern-English translations such as the *New English Bible*, *The Jerusalem Bible* and *Today's English Version* become available.

Of more than 2,000 languages presently being used on this planet, the entire Bible exists in only 220 of them. The New Testament by itself has been published in 275 others, and selected parts have been printed in nearly 700 more. In this part of Asia, the Tamil Bible was the first to appear—in 1727. The Chinese Bible was published early in the 1800's and the Indonesian Bible only in the middle of our century. All three of these have undergone revisions, and new translations of the latter two are in process.

In East Malaysia, the entire New Testament already exists in Biatah, Dusun, Iban, Kayan, and Murut. In addition, parts have been translated into Tagal, Penan, Kenyah, Saban, and Kelabit. The Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, and Sidang Injil Borneo are now working together to produce the entire Bible in Iban.

Why is so much time and effort spent in translating the Bible into so many languages and then retranslating a generation later? Because the contents of this old book are always new and current. Therefore, the language and literary style must always be new and current. We are living in a world that is changing at a faster rate of speed than at any previous time. In only 29 years and 25 days most of the readers of this page will have entered the 21st century. But by that time the population of the world will have doubled again, living conditions will be even more crowded than now. People will be moving about more, they will have less control over their personal lives, and the forces which diminish our humanity will be greater. Then the message of the Bible will be even more crucial for it has to do with the purpose and meaning and value of human life. Then more people will be able to read than ever before in the history of mankind.

Is the Bible going to be available to them in a language which they can understand? Will it be written in a style which is alive, interesting, and clear? Indeed, the Bible is the Book of the People—not just the church people, not just the pious, not just Christians, but for all people.

**STANLEY BAIN**  
*Methodist Message*  
April 1971

*(Mr Bain, a Methodist missionary, is a member of the Iban Bible Translation Working Committee.)*

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