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The
"Sign" of Hope . . .

in
Christmas



By
Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik

Moment

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Remembering GRACE, Pray!

"The Word became a human and lived among us. We saw his glory—the glory that belongs to the only Son of the Father—and he was full of grace and truth... Because he was full of grace and truth, from him we all received one gift after another." (John 1:14, 16, NCV)

Our Father is called the "God of all grace" (1 Pet 5:10). God's grace is His love and goodness towards mankind. God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom 5:8). He demonstrates grace by sending Jesus to the cross for human sin, making it possible for Him to forgive sinners, and opening wide the gate of salvation for sinners to find access to His forgiving and redemptive grace.

And then He demonstrates grace by Jesus' resurrection, giving us a

living hope. Jesus, reigning as Lord, launches the age of grace. We, followers of Jesus, are the children of grace, living in the age of grace with eternal hope.

Salvation is an act of grace. God's grace has made me what I am (1 Cor 15:10a). "For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast" (Eph 2:8–9).

The call to a life of grace goes beyond our initial response to God's gift. God's grace manifested in Jesus Christ also makes it possible for us to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit, that we may have the power to live our lives according to God's will, and be united as children of God, the body of Christ.

Finally, God's grace manifested in Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to reflect His grace in our character and relationships. Jesus' life itself manifests grace in seeking the lost sheep of Israel, the poor, social outcasts, women and children. He calls us to extend God's grace by loving for our enemies and praying for those who persecute us (Matt. 5:43–44; Luke 10:27ff.)

If God expresses His grace unceasingly and continuously in every aspect of my life, what should I, the recipient of His grace, do? In this Christmas season, churches are busy with many activities, but individually, we can take time to quieten our hearts, reflect on God's grace manifested in Jesus Christ, seek to reflect such grace on a daily basis, and pray for those who have yet to know the truth to see His glory that they may be saved.

"But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God." (John 1:12-13, NLT)

Father in heaven, thank You for Your grace manifested in Christ, that I may become child of God. Pray for those who have yet to know You, or know You superficially, or oppose You, that their hearts and minds be enlightened to see the truth and Your glory, that they too may be saved by Your grace through faith.

- Read John 1:1-18

Give thanks

Pray for others and ask God for wisdom in relating to people who oppose Him and reject Christ

Issues:

- Malaysia
 - pray for the urban poor living in our midst
- (July 2014) an article on a local newspaper reported that there were about 2500 homeless people in Kuala Lumpur alone [See more at: <http://www.nst.com.my/node/9994>]
- (May 2014) Putrajaya's subsidy cuts may lead to a higher incidence of poverty among the Malays and Bumiputera in Malaysia, with the urban poor expected to be the hardest hit, a study by University of Malaya (UM) said today. - [See more at: <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/study-urban-poor-bumiputeras-likely-hardest-hit-by-subsidy-cuts#sthash.yFf05i2y.dpuf>]

The “Sign” of Hope ... in Christmas

^{ESV} **Isaiah 7:14** Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

We thank the Lord for yet another memorable year of blessings as a Methodist Family. For me personally, I want to say as the psalmist did - ^{KJV} **Psalm 68:19** “Blessed *be* the Lord, *who* daily loadeth us *with benefits, even* the God of our salvation.” In the more contemporary version it would be “Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation.”

As I reflect on the year 2014, I thank the Lord for the precious and many blessings He has bestowed upon the Methodist Family, for example, the Methodist Prayer Convention 2014 in which He met with us and commissioned and empowered us to join the national 24/7 Prayer initiative that will involve the whole Malaysian Church praying for Malaysia for the next 2 years.

He has given us growth in our various ministries such as the increasing inter-Annual Conferences synergy in the area of ministering to the indigenous communities in our land and in overseas mission. In a very real way, our General Conference has mindfully pursued being a Church after God’s own heart. This we do by “keeping the main things the main things”, as we focus on proclaiming and preaching the Word, being true to our “Confessions of faith”, and being a Church that serves others locally and globally.

As I attend this recent round of October-November 2014 Annual Conference sessions, it is a joy to see all these “main things” being intentionally and actively pursued. These “main things” are being translated into prioritizing worship, prayer, discipleship, evangelism, mission and social outreach – as we seek to be a people of godly and lasting consequence in our generation.

Of course this year has been fraught with challenges as well, that manifested God’s sovereign hand and the deepening of our faith, such as the confiscation of the Alkitab on 2 January and their subsequent release on 14 November this year. But all these have been divinely overseen to heal the people of God in Malaysia from their lack of unity and move us towards love and synergy; to be awakened to a deeper reality of God experienced when we have no other recourse but to call on Him; gain a deepening spirituality of returning to God by humbling ourselves in prayer and fasting; and recovering our passion of fulfilling our responsibility for the welfare of our beloved nation.

The nation of Judah was facing a “double barreled” threat from Syria and the northern state of Israel at the time of King Ahaz in the 8th century BC. That was the context of Isa 7:14 which is famously associated with Christmas. It speaks of a baby that is to be born to a yet-to-be married young woman within the royal house, who will shortly marry and conceive. Her son would be called “**Immanuel**” (ie “God with us”).

The “**sign**” of this child focuses on the fact that God Who is all-sovereign and all-knowing has the threatening situation completely in

hand, and this sign is also a censure on king Ahaz for his lack of faith in the living God.

He had failed to honour the incomparable God, Maker of heaven and the earth, the One Who “makes known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please” (Isa 46:10). The all-knowing God had declared that Syria and Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, will be destroyed before this child is old enough to partake of the characteristic adult food of this nation, the Land of God’s Promise. This did take place as prophesied by Isaiah.

However, this prophecy from Isaiah 7:14 has a double fulfillment. The first fulfillment is the birth of a son who is a sign to King Ahaz of judgment for his folly in not trusting in the all-sovereign and all-knowing God. But the child also foreshadows Christ. This prophecy that was given to the “house of David” (v 13) - was not limited only to the person and time of King Ahaz alone (“you” in v 14 is plural). There is a second fulfillment – that in the fullness of time the messianic Christ Child will be born of this house. Then He will be the symbol of God’s complete salvation of His people from humankind’s ultimate enemy of “sin and death”, beyond just the physical survival threat posed by physical foes.

This Peace Child of the second prophetic fulfillment will have a mother who was a virgin at the time of her conception, unlike the mother of the first prophetic fulfillment, who was only a virgin at the time when the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 was first given.

This Christmas as we remember and anchor our celebration on **Isaiah 7:14** *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel* – let us never forget this all-sovereign and all-knowing God Who “makes known the end from the beginning” IS WITH US.

Whatever the political turbulence and religious turmoil there may be in Malaysia or in Syria, whatever the challenges and restrictions the Church in Malaysia may have to face, whatever the new year holds for us personally and as a family – let us not be like King Ahaz who puts his trust on powerful but merely human and finite forces like Assyria. Instead, let us each declare unwaveringly that our trust is in our Lord Immanuel.

We shall as a Methodist Family join the rest of the Body of Christ in Malaysia in living out this trust in the “God who is with us” - being committed to the M24/7 Prayer Initiative for the next 2 years; we shall ask the Lord for the grace to be “*A Church after God’s own heart – Growing deep and strong inside, Standing with Christ’s Body nation wide, Giving God glory from every side*”.

***May the peace, love and joy of our Lord Immanuel be with you,
your household, our churches and our nation
as we celebrate Christmas and look forward to the New Year.***

Bishop Ong Hwai Teik

FCCMSM Symposium 2014

The National Education Symposium organized by the Federation of Councils of Christian Mission Schools, FCCMSM, was held on the 18th and 19th of September 2014 at Methodist College Kuala Lumpur, Brickfields in Kuala Lumpur. The theme was “Mission School Aspirations and the National Education Blueprint”.

It was attended by 173 people from throughout the nation composed of Clergy and lay representatives from the Mission Authorities, FCCMSM representatives, Educationists from Mission Schools and other Educational Institutions, Parents, School Board of Governors, Mission School Alumni and others who are concerned about Mission Schools in this country.

There were many distinguished representatives from the various Mission Authorities: Catholic Archbishop Julian Leow said the Opening Prayer. FCCMSM Chairman Rev Moses Chin (Anglican Sabah) gave the Introductory speech. The Closing Prayer was said by Bishop Datuk Dr Thomas Tsen of the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia. Methodist SCAC President, Datuk Dr Su Chii Ann shared a devotional message on the second day.

Deputy Minister, YB Datuk Mary Yap

graced the occasion. She said: *“The historic contribution of Mission Schools in the educational development of Malaysian society is well-known. This historic contribution and the continuing role that mission schools can play today and in the future have never really been forgotten by the Government. Admittedly, in the rapid educational development during the last 20 years or so, mission schools were somewhat left in the backwaters. Inadvertently, this has, in part contributed to their decline and caused much unhappiness among those who cared deeply about the future of mission schools.”*

However, many positive changes have taken place over the last few years. Without much fanfare, high level officials of the Ministry have been engaging in consultation with mission school representatives on many of the issues faced by mission schools. As a result, the Government has been able to address many of these grouses.”

There were 2 forums conducted on the 2 mornings. The excellent speakers enabled a lively open discussion on the topics.

1st day Moderator Mr Yap Kok Keong linked the theme Mission School Aspirations with the key areas of focus in the Blueprint: Shift 2 “Proficiency in the English Language, Ba-

hasa Malaysia and a future third language” and Shift 3 “Values Driven Malaysia”.

Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam – “Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia dan Memperkasakan Bahasa Inggeris”. He emphasized that the Mission Authorities must with missionary zeal, soldier on for a better future, play a greater advocacy role, not give up.

Datin Noor Azimah Abdul Rahim “What Does English Medium School Mean to Me” was an inspiration to us all to pursue teaching and learning in English.

Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria “Ethnic Diversity in School” said that the Mission Schools have always stood for social inclusion of ethnic, cultural, religious, gender and socio-economic diversity and the under-achiever. We must continue to move with appreciation of the other.

2nd day theme: The National Education Blueprint and the future of Mission Schools Moderator Rev. Moses Chin mentioned some breakthroughs the Mission Schools have managed in the recent years: fund allocation, maximum consultation for appointment of Heads, ethos and character of Mission Schools, Clubs and Societies (including Christian Fellowship), 10% intake of students by Board Of Governors, Bible





who want / can – that the school have a free hand to do so. Another respondent mentioned about the urgency of the hour and asked why we are moving so slowly – Mission Schools should take the initiative.

At the last Plenary Session, Mr Yap Kok Keong presented a list of Resolutions garnered from the various sessions and discussions. These will be presented to the relevant authorities.

The Symposium ended on an upbeat note. FCCMSM representatives continued with their AGM which agreed that a Secretariat be set up to take Mission School aspirations forward.

Praise the Lord for a meaningful and fruitful Symposium. To God be the Glory!

By Tay Choon Neo

Knowledge allowed to be taught on school premises, take up to 12 subjects for SPM.

Bro. Anthony Rogers “Key Elements in Transformation of Mission Schools”

Tan Sri Bernard Dompok “Public Private Partnership”. He said that after 51 years it was time to re-set things and that there must be readiness on the part of the Mission Authorities.

Encik Wan Saiful Wan Jan gave an interesting presentation of “Trust Schools: An Alternative Model”.

Greater awareness was brought about the status of education and mission schools. FCCMSM, Mission Authorities and the stakeholders must be more willing to en-

gage constructively on important issues which affect quality education and mission schools. There were several people who spoke up about various issues; Mr Gerald Lee proposed that PPSMI be open to those



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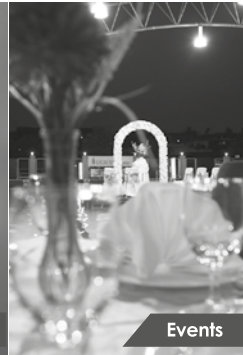
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古晋卫理公会晋光堂设堂 五十周年感恩庆典



古晋卫理公会晋光堂於二零一四年十月廿五日欢庆设堂五十周年感恩庆典。当天中午,晋光堂佈道探访队以登门方式邀请来自双溪亚榜新渔村,和平路南段,朋岭高原,实仁甲等社区之大约百多位佈道对象前来新教堂停车场与牧者及教会弟兄姐妹同进午餐,以同欢共享设堂五十週年的喜悦。

感恩崇拜会于下午二时正开始,以严肃的进殿仪式揭开序幕,首先由马来西亚卫理公会会督王怀德牧师,砂拉越华人年议会会长拿督苏慈安牧师,古晋东教区长陈石兴牧师和年会会友领袖姚锡祺弟兄率领进圣殿,接着是八位曾于一九六三年前来古晋市参与开荒布道的卫理神学院神学生,历届牧者,本堂献身的牧者和神学生及现任牧者陆续进殿。

感恩崇拜会程序,包括历史回顾、百人诗班献唱、舞蹈、会长证道并且由马来西亚卫理公会会督王怀德牧师,首任主理邓炳昕牧师和东教区教区长陈石兴牧师分别致词。在历史回顾环节中,有呈现短剧述说当年八位神学生被彭若羔教授安排下到来古晋市(七层楼社 区)进行布道探访的事工,并演出用闽南语向福建人传讲福音的画面。接着有人物专访, 回顾



开始在民达华渔村筹建晋恩堂的工作,身为兴化人的陈玉凤姐妹道出当初在兴化人社区植堂的艰苦历程。接着又呈现一段短剧,回顾在婆罗洲发展区设立晋圣堂的经过。起初 由已故郑瑞宝弟兄献议并由执事会通过 在店屋设立布道所。郑瑞宝弟兄当时虽然已证实罹患癌症,仍然不遗余力的促成这项事工。

由起初八位神学生在古晋市七层楼社区的主日学开始到如今,晋光堂建造了三座设备齐全的建筑物,目前约有九百人参与国语和华语聚会。这真让人由衷的赞美上帝在这五十年来赐予晋光堂的恩典和伟大作为,确实是超过我们所求所想的。

当晚七时正,晋光堂于古晋帝宫大酒店设感恩晚宴 121 桌以庆祝设堂五十周年纪念。感恩晚宴以迎宾舞与晋光堂执事献唱设堂五十週年主题曲《為主攀高峰》莊嚴隆重地开始。晚宴间举行颁发捐款予福利团体及教育机构,受益单位包括古晋卫理真光洗肾中心、古晋卫理关怀中心、救世军(昔加马)、砂拉越雲南善堂、自閉症协会、特殊儿童中心(PIBAKAT)、砂劳越儿童癌症协会、古

晋中华第一中学、古晋中华第三中学和古晋中华第四中学。

陳朝強牧師在貴賓致詞時,以百感交集的“感恩神在”、“感激人情”、“感慨人生”和“感動 生命”的四个“感”,表达对上帝恩典的回顧與前瞻及激励赴会者。当晚有精彩的助兴节目,如青年团契的歌舞剧、乐龄团契的原住民舞蹈,以及造型舞蹈等演出,舞姿生動而獲 得掌聲如雷。晚宴庆典在年议会会长拿督苏慈安牧师的祝福声中圆满的落幕。





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CALL TO ACTION

PART II

FOR THE WORLD WE SERVE

The Cape Town Call to Action

**II C LIVING THE LOVE OF CHRIST
AMONG PEOPLE OF OTHER
FAITHS****1 'LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS
YOURSELF' INCLUDES PERSONS
OF OTHER FAITHS**

In view of the affirmations made in *The Cape Town Confession* section 7(D), we respond to our high calling as disciples of Jesus Christ to see people of other faiths as our neighbours in the biblical sense. They are human beings created in God's image, whom God loves and for whose sins Christ died. We strive not only to see them as neighbours, but to obey Christ's teaching by being neighbours to them. We are called to be gentle, but not naive; to be discerning and not gullible; to be alert to whatever threats we may face, but not ruled by fear.

We are called to share good news in evangelism, but not to engage in unworthy proselytizing. Evangelism, while it includes persuasive rational argument following the example of the Apostle Paul, is 'to make an honest and open statement of the gospel which leaves the hearers entirely free to make up their own minds about it. We wish to be sensitive to those of other faiths, and we reject any approach that seeks to force conversion on them.'⁶⁷ Proselytizing, by contrast, is the attempt to compel others to become 'one for us', to 'accept our religion', or indeed to 'join our denomination'.

A We commit ourselves to be scrupulously ethical in all our evangelism. Our witness is to be marked by 'gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience.'⁶⁸ We therefore reject any form of witness that is coercive, unethical, deceptive, or disrespectful.

B In the name of the God of love, we repent of our failure to seek friendships with people of Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and other religious backgrounds. In the spirit of Jesus, we will take initiatives to show love, goodwill and hospitality to them.

C In the name of the God of truth, we (i) refuse to promote lies and caricatures about other faiths, and (ii) denounce and resist the racist prejudice, hatred and fear incited in popular media and political rhetoric.

D In the name of the God of peace, we reject the path of violence and revenge in all our dealings with people of other faiths, even when violently attacked.

E We affirm the proper place for dialogue with people of other faiths, just as Paul engaged in debate with Jews and Gentiles in the synagogue and public arenas. As a legitimate part of our Christian mission, such dialogue combines confidence in the uniqueness of Christ and the truth of the gospel with respectful listening to others.

**2 THE LOVE OF CHRIST CALLS US
TO SUFFER AND SOMETIMES TO
DIE FOR THE GOSPEL**

Suffering may be necessary in our missionary engagement as witnesses to Christ, as it was for his apostles and the Old Testament prophets.⁶⁹ Being willing to suffer is an acid test for the genuineness of our mission. God can use suffering, persecution and martyrdom to advance his mission. 'Martyrdom is a form of witness which Christ has promised especially to honour.'⁷⁰ Many Christians living in comfort and prosperity need to hear again the call of Christ to be willing to suffer for him. For many other believers live in the midst of such suffering as the cost of bearing witness to Jesus Christ in a hostile religious culture. They may have seen loved ones martyred, or endured torture or persecution because of their faithful obedience, yet continue to love those who have so harmed them.

A We hear and remember with tears and prayer the testimonies of those who suffer for the gospel. We pray for grace and courage, along with them, to 'love our enemies' as Christ commanded us. We pray that the gospel may bear fruit in places that are so

hostile to its messengers. As we rightly grieve for those who suffer, we remember the infinite grief God feels over those who resist and reject his love, his gospel and his servants. We long for them to repent and be forgiven and find the joy of being reconciled to God.

**3 LOVE IN ACTION EMBODIES
AND COMMENDS THE GOSPEL
OF GRACE**

'We are the aroma of Christ.'⁷¹ Our calling is to live and serve among people of other faiths in a way that is so saturated with the fragrance of God's grace that they smell Christ, that they come to taste and see that God is good. By such embodied love, we are to make the gospel attractive in every cultural and religious setting. When Christians love people of other faiths through lives of love and acts of service, they embody the transforming grace of God.

In cultures of 'honour', where shame and vengeance are allied with religious legalism, 'grace' is an alien concept. In these contexts, God's vulnerable, self-sacrificing love is not something to be debated; it is considered too foreign, even repulsive. Here, grace is an acquired taste, over a long time, in small doses, for those hungry enough to dare to taste it. The aroma of Christ gradually permeates all that his followers come into contact with.

A We long for God to raise up more men and women of grace who will make long-term commitments to live, love and serve in tough places dominated by other religions, to bring the smell and taste of the grace of Jesus Christ into cultures where it is unwelcome and dangerous to do so. This takes patience and endurance, sometimes for a whole life-time, sometimes unto death.

**4 LOVE RESPECTS DIVERSITY OF
DISCIPLESHIP**

So called 'insider movements' are to be

found within several religions. These are groups of people who are now following Jesus as their God and Saviour. They meet together in small groups for fellowship, teaching, worship and prayer centered around Jesus and the Bible while continuing to live socially and culturally within their birth communities, including some elements of its religious observance. This is a complex phenomenon and there is much disagreement over how to respond to it. Some commend such movements. Others warn of the danger of syncretism. Syncretism, however, is a danger found among Christians everywhere as we express our faith within our own cultures. We should avoid the tendency, when we see God at work in unexpected or unfamiliar ways, either (i) hastily to classify it and promote it as a new mission strategy, or (ii) hastily to condemn it without sensitive contextual listening.

A In the spirit of Barnabas who, on arrival in Antioch, ‘saw the evidence of the grace of God’ and ‘was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord,’⁷² we would appeal to all those who are concerned with this issue to:

1. Take as their primary guiding principle the apostolic decision and practice: ‘We should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.’⁷³
2. Exercise humility, patience and graciousness in recognizing the diversity of viewpoints, and conduct conversations without stridency and mutual condemnation.⁷⁴

5 LOVE REACHES OUT TO SCATTERED PEOPLES

People are on the move as never before. Migration is one of the great global realities of our era. It is estimated that 200 million people are living outside their countries of origin, voluntarily or involuntarily. The term ‘diaspora’ is used here to mean people who have relocated from their lands of birth for whatever reason. Vast numbers of people from many religious backgrounds, including Christians, live in diaspora conditions: economic migrants seeking work; internally-displaced peoples because of war or natural disaster; refugees and asylum seekers; victims of ethnic cleansing; people fleeing religious violence and persecution; famine sufferers - whether caused by drought, floods, or war; victims of rural poverty moving to cities. We are convinced that contemporary migrations are within the

sovereign missional purpose of God, without ignoring the evil and suffering that can be involved.⁷⁵

A We encourage Church and mission leaders to recognize and respond to the missional opportunities presented by global migration and diaspora communities, in strategic planning, and in focused training and resourcing of those called to work among them.

B We encourage Christians in host nations which have immigrant communities of other religious backgrounds to bear counter-cultural witness to the love of Christ in deed and word, by obeying the extensive biblical commands to love the stranger, defend the cause of the foreigner, visit the prisoner, practise hospitality, build friendships, invite into our homes, and provide help and services.⁷⁶

C We encourage Christians who are themselves part of diaspora communities to discern the hand of God, even in circumstances they may not have chosen, and to seek whatever opportunities God provides for bearing witness to Christ in their host community and seeking its welfare.⁷⁷ Where that host country includes Christian churches, we urge immigrant and indigenous churches together to listen and learn from one another, and to initiate co-operative efforts to reach all sections of their nation with the gospel.

6 LOVE WORKS FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR ALL PEOPLE

Upholding human rights by defending religious freedom is not incompatible with following the way of the cross when confronted with persecution. There is no contradiction between being willing personally to suffer the abuse or loss of our own rights for the sake of Christ, and being committed to advocate and speak up for those who are voiceless under the violation of their human rights. We must also distinguish between advocating the rights of people of other faiths and endorsing the truth of their beliefs. We can defend the freedom of others to believe and practise their religion without accepting that religion as true.

A Let us strive for the goal of religious freedom for all people. This requires advocacy before governments on behalf of Christians and people of other faiths who are persecuted.

B Let us conscientiously obey biblical

teaching to be good citizens, to seek the welfare of the nation where we live, to honour and pray for those in authority, to pay taxes, to do good, and to seek to live peaceful and quiet lives. The Christian is called to submit to the state, unless the state commands what God forbids, or prohibits what God commands. If the state thus forces us to choose between loyalty to itself and our higher loyalty to God, we must say No to the state because we have said Yes to Jesus Christ as Lord.⁷⁸

In the midst of all our legitimate efforts for religious freedom for all people, the deepest longing of our hearts remains that all people should come to know the Lord Jesus Christ, freely put their faith in him and be saved, and enter the kingdom of God.

NOTES (Part II)

67. *The Manila Manifesto*, Section 12

68. 1 Peter 3:15-16. Compare Acts 19:37

69. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; 4:7-10

70. *The Manila Manifesto*, Section 12

71. 2 Corinthians 2:15

72. Acts 11:20-24

73. Acts 15:19

74. Romans 14:1-3

75. Genesis 50:20

76. Leviticus 19:33-34; Deuteronomy 24:17; Ruth 2; Job 29:16; Matthew 25:35-36; Luke 10:25-37; 14:12-14; Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2-3; 1 Peter 4:9

77. Jeremiah 29:7

78. Jeremiah 29:7; 1 Peter 2:13-17; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Romans 13:1-7; Exodus 1:15-21; Daniel 6; Acts 3:19-20; 5:29

Miracles in the Estate (2)

Several months ago, while sharing God's Word in a home prayer meeting in an estate off Karak, Pahang, I met up with Ananthi. She was born in that estate, grew up in the estate, and at a young age had become a rubber-tapper like her mother.

When she was 18, she had accepted Christ. Her faith and her Christian values brought much ridicule and opposition from her family and the large community of non-believers among whom she lived and worked. The daily persecution and torture made her cry much before the Lord. Under immense pressure, she finally decided to leave the estate and move into a 'Taman' nearby. In April 2014, she fasted and prayed seeking God for a rented house in the Taman. One day, while walking around the Taman looking for a house for rental, she saw a nice house that was up for sale. She stood outside the house and with no money but faith in Jesus, called the telephone number dis-



Ananthi's home and the pulpit she had made

played on the gate. The house-owner asked to see her in 2 days' time.

She asked God to help her get that house and that she will use that house to reach out to the large Indian population there. Though it was a low-cost housing area, that house with 3 bedrooms and a large kitchen, was tastefully done and well-furnished. The price was RM120,000. With much prayer it was brought to RM110,000 and God worked amazingly to get her a bank loan.

The house-owner wanted to hand over the keys only in August but because Ananthi had to give notice to her estate management and leave the estate quarters where she was staying, by May, she prayed to the Lord that the house-owner will give the keys by 1st June. The Lord answered and on 1st June

she got the keys and moved in.

When I visited her in her new home in August this year, she held a prayer meeting and invited many non-believers she had made friends in that Taman. She had a special pulpit made and as I stood there and shared God's Word and prayed for the many who came to get a touch from the Lord, I saw her faith and God's faithfulness. Her home is truly striking and shining bright. She continues to have prayer meetings in her home every Thursday so that many will come to hear the Gospel message of salvation.

The faith that was born in the estate is now shining in the Taman

By Lila Chelliah



Lila praying for Ananthi and her husband



B

ut blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.

Jeremiah 17:7

China's Tribute in the Present Crisis

By Madame Chiang Kai-Shek

(EDITOR'S NOTE : This is the text of an address made by Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, China's "first lady," before a group of American and British missionaries in Hankow on April 6, announcing the repeal of government restrictions of Christian teaching in schools.)

I am speaking to you this afternoon personally. I want to bring you a message from the Generalissimo. You may take it to be a personal tribute to your courage, your undaunted valour, and your self-sacrificing spirit in helping our people in this war.

You all know what has happened in Shanghai, in Nanking, in Hangchow, in Wuhu and in other places in the fighting area. And you know how missionaries have succored the wounded, have helped our refugees, and have faced the bayonets, cannons and bombs, and the unbridled lust of the Japanese troops on our soil, and how they have stood their ground.

The Generalissimo and I feel that no words which we could speak could sufficiently express our debt of gratitude to the missionary body all over China who have been a help to the distressed and the best of friends to the hundreds of thousands of refugees.

You may remember a few years ago it was the fashion to decry missionary efforts. There was even a commission sent from America to investigate mission work because there was a general feeling that missionary efforts had been a failure. There were also people who asked where were the successors of Livingstone, Morrison and Young Allen, "Is the missionary spirit dead?"

If we are really impartial and look around us at what has happened in the last nine months, I would say their successors are right here. Every one of the missionaries

possesses the same valour and the same undaunted spirit that the missionaries of old had.

I would go a step further. When we picture old Dr. Morrison in a sampan with his Chinese teacher working under the heat of the tropic sun on the translation of the Bible into Chinese, while edicts had been issued by the Emperor for his arrest, we think of that as being very heroic. But when we think of what the missionaries have done during the last nine months, I would say that missionaries have not been one with less heroic.

You have asked me to come to tell you how you can co-operate to help us in this national crisis. My answer is, "Continue your efforts in the same direction in which you have been working."

What do I mean by this? One day one of the cabinet ministers in the Government, a man who is a non-Christian, remarked that he was studying the Bible. Someone asked him, "Are you a Christian?"

"No," he replied, "but I see that the people in the country who are most self-sacrificing are the Christians; therefore, there must be something in Christianity."

There was another high official who said that the spirit to defend our soil, to defend our fellow men, and to defend our women is exactly the same spirit which actuated Jesus Christ when he went to face the Cross in the Garden of Gethsemane. There are non-Christians, yet they feel that way.

When I was last week at the front with the Generalissimo, I heard the story of a woman missionary at her station thirty miles away, alone in a village in a bandit-infested region. She was the only foreigner in the district. Fifty miles from the place where I was there was another woman carrying on alone

in her station. Another story told of two women going up the Yellow River in a sampan. When they arrived at a certain place, they found the Chinese soldiers destroying all the available boats so that the Japanese could not cross the river. These missionaries willingly gave up their sampan to be demolished, one of them remaining to work with the people in that village. I could go on giving one after another of such instances.

One could make a long list of what missionaries have done in the past along educational, medical, social and agricultural lines. The best fruits we get in China are the Chefoo apples and grapes—the result of missionary efforts. Shantung peanuts, which run into millions of dollars worth of trade in China, are also the result of missionary effort. Cross-stitch and filet lace, Swatow drawn work hair nets—who started all these industries? Missionaries! They have brought us both material and spiritual help!

It was the missionaries who foresaw the need of Refugee Zones which have saved hundreds of thousands of people, men, women and children. Here in Hankow you have started refugee camps, and your International Red Cross Committee has organized help for our wounded soldiers. In Kaifeng they have well organized plans for establishing a Refugee Zone whenever the need arises. From all over China come reports of work like this.

It may be said that Christians, because they have not been faithful enough to the spirit and teachings of Christ, are responsible for the present war. But there is also this other side of the question. Those of you who are here now have done much for our people. We do appreciate it.

But, noteworthy as your work has been, I want to add one thing. The most effective and worthwhile contribution you have

made to my country is not so much in the work itself as in the spirit in which you have worked. Why do I say this? A few years ago our own Chinese people were very much against Christianity and the Government promulgated a law whereby religion was forbidden to be made a compulsory study in any school. Many of you felt that policy to be unfair, and contrary to the principles of missionary effort. Many of our colleagues wrote to me and asked to have the law rescinded. Even if I could have had it rescinded, which I could not, I did not think it was wise to make a move in that direction, because unless a rule has the general consent of those ruled, that rule will only be obeyed in the letter and not in the spirit.

I sympathized with your point of view. My sister, Madame Kung, went one step further, and I agreed with her. We said not only should this law be amended, but all institutions of higher learning should have the Bible put into their course of study, so that our students could have a chance to find out what Christianity means, and also what other religions mean. There should be study of comparative religions in our schools. We can let Christianity stand on its own feet. We feel that Christianity has something to offer which no other religion has. Let it speak for itself.

I am very glad to tell you that those who criticized you and criticized Christianity in years past are the ones who are articulate now in their praise of Christianity. You have won these men over by the work you have done and by the spirit in which you have done it. When the missionaries wrote to me, I said that God works in mysterious and inscrutable ways, and let us pray that God's will may be made known to the Government and that action may be taken in God's good time.

It gives me great pleasure to tell you that because our people and the Government have come to appreciate the results of your efforts and the spirit that underlies your work, the Generalissimo has now found it possible to have the law amended so that now the Bible can be taught in registered mission schools. You have all had a leading share in making this change in the law possible, because you have shown what true, practical Christianity means in its widest sense.

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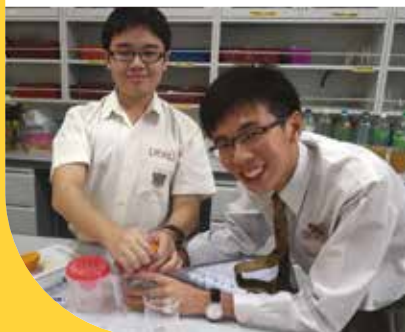
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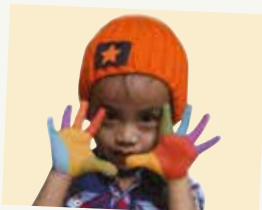
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