



Preserving Memories Through Oral History

To have a sense of our history is vital for our identity and understanding of our place in the movement and purposes of God. It enables us to see how God has worked in our midst and to continue to be part of His wider purposes in the world.

The Council of Archives & History is working towards preserving and documenting as full an account of Methodism in Malaysia as possible. Towards this goal, it organized the Oral History Workshop as one of its strategic plans to equip people in local churches to record and preserve the memories and histories of their churches.

Two workshops were held, first in Sibu from 21-24 May and then in Sitiawan from 24-28 May. 38 participants attended in Sibu and 93 in Sitiawan. Although most were from CAC, TAC and TRAC churches, there were others from various denominations and Bible Seminaries interested in writing and preserving history.

The resource person was Dr. Jean Paul Wiest, founder of the Center for Mission Research & Study at Maryknoll, USA presently on research assignment in China. Prof. Wiest has been teaching and practicing Oral History Techniques for over twenty years.

Although many came with the preconceived idea that it would be



The ruins of the first church in the Sitiawan area.

boring, Dr. Wiest proved them wrong with his lively presentations which held their attention and engaged them in active discussions.

He covered topics that were to equip participants for hands-on work in writing a Christian history through recovering the memories and stories of people who formed part of that history. The topics dealt with were (1) Towards a Christian History Relevant to Our Times, (2) Planning an Oral History Project, (3) Pre-Interview & Interview, (4) Transcription, and (5) Thematic Analysis.

The participants felt that this workshop

had given them much knowledge and a handle on how to conduct an Oral History project. However, they realized that this needed a lot of meticulous work, but at the same time would be very interesting.

The final day was given to a Methodist Heritage Tour in and around Sitiawan. Participants were able to see some of the historical sites and hear stories of the earliest Christians who settled there.

This report is based on reports given by Aileen Khoo (Council of Archives & History) and R. Steven (Board of Archives, TAC.)

Pre-Gawai Service Celebrates Unity In Christ



Datuk & Datin Ramsay Jitam (front row) and Temenggong James Jimbun and wife (second row).

It was a celebration of Christian Unity, of a renewal of faith, of repentance, of thanksgiving and, above all, of God's great faithfulness. Indeed, the participation of more than 800 Christians from various denominations at the inaugural Pre-Gawai Service at the Trinity Methodist Church in Kuching on May 18 was an occasion of great joy and renewed Christian resolve.

Jointly organized by the Iban and Bahasa Malaysia Service of Trinity Methodist Church, the Iban Methodist Church and St Faith Anglican Church, the service was held in conjunction with the Gawai Dayak celebration. It was an occasion to offer thanksgiving to the Almighty Lord for the bountiful harvest and abundant blessings He had provided to the Dayak community in the past year.

Conducted in Bahasa Malaysia, the service bore the theme, "Dalam Kristus Kita Bersatu" (In Christ we are United) which was chosen to remind Dayaks of the need to bury their differences, which have caused fragmentation and division in the community, and work towards forging lasting unity through Christ. It was a theme that appealed to the Dayak Christians to return to the way of the Lord and to seek peace and unity in Jesus.

The presiding ministers were Rev Trevor Tinda of St Faith and Rev Asson Ulli of the Iban Methodist Church.

Spiritual Awakening

Many hearts were moved and touched by the message at the service. Soon after the service that night, there were already requests for next year's Pre-Gawai Service to be held on a bigger scale and for churches in the other towns and rural areas to hold similar services.

It was just a beginning, but a good beginning. And the mighty hand of the Lord was at work among the organizers from the two churches from the day they first met as they committed their purpose in holding the Pre-Gawai Service to the Lord.

A lot of prayers remained the prime driving force throughout the preparation time which paved the way for the successful Pre-Gawai Service.

Worship

The evening saw a harmonious blend of traditional and contemporary worship. The service began with a praise-and-worship session, led by youths from St Faith, Iban Methodist Church and Trinity Methodist Church, accompanied by a church band from St Faith and tambourine dancers from the two churches.

The congregation rose to their feet and lifted their voices in deep reverence as they joined the praise-and-worship team in the opening song, "Ku Masuk Ruang Maha Kudus"; and as the title suggests, the song provided a most appropriate curtain raiser to the worship.

Sharing the Word

There was also a time during the service for sharing of testimonies. Representatives from the churches took turns to share about God's greatness and faithfulness through their life-changing experiences to encourage other Christians to renew their faith in the Lord and rejoice in His everlasting love and peace.

The message on unity of God's people through Christ was driven home effectively by Pastor Patrick Taie (BM Service of Trinity Methodist Church) in his 20-minute sermon, based on Psalm 133: When Brothers Dwell in Unity.

The message left behind a searching question and a probing call to the Dayak Christians to rediscover themselves and to rise as a united community in Christ.

Special prayer for Dayak leaders

A special prayer for Dayak leaders (comprising political leaders, leading businessmen, senior civil servants, heads of NGOs and community leaders) was led by Rev Trevor Tinda. It was a solemn and revered moment of communion with God as he prayed for the Dayak leaders to repent and rededicate themselves to serve and glorify God, while beseeching His guidance and blessings to be upon them.



The Congregation at Trinity Methodist Church, Kuching.

The inclusion of the special prayer was a matter of serious significance as it reminded Dayaks that their leaders must be continually supported in prayer so that they can lead the community in a manner that is both progressive and pleasing to our Lord.

Climaxing the service was Holy Communion which was jointly celebrated by Rev Trevor Tinda and Rev Asson Ulli. Worthy of note also is that the collection from the offertory was used to buy Iban Bibles which were later distributed between the Iban Methodist and St Faith Anglican Church.

Communication Subcommittee
Bahasa Malaysia Service
Trinity Methodist Church, Kuching

Contents

Page 4 BISHOP'S PAGE
What's Right With Methodism (3)?
Holiness, the Defining Message of the Revival

Page 6 MMM-TAC
Mission Trip to Bonggi Island

Page 8 FAITH TO LIVE BY
An Exposition of the Apostles' Creed
Part 16 - Resurrection of the Dead

NEWS

Page 10 Bible Knowledge Oral Quiz
Evangelizing Indigenous People in Bintulu

Page 11 Hoover Memorial Garden
Methodist Pilley Institute

Page 12 Christians Too Busy For God
A Christian Today Report

Page 13 Book Review: *Spiritual Leadership*

Page 14 Announcements

What is Happening in our Annual Conferences?

August

8	Wed	SIAC Fund Raising Joggerthon
9-11	Thu-Sat	Council of Presidents + GCEC Meeting
13-19	Mon-Sun	TAC MYF Week
14-16	Tue-Thu	TRAC MOT/Approved Supply Pastors Retreat
17-19	Fri-Sun	TRAC BB/GB Officers Retreat
18-21	Sat-Tue	TRAC MW Conference
18-20	Sat-Mon	TAC MW 32nd Conference
20-22	Mon-Wed	SCAC Marriage Enrichment Retreat No.14
23-25	Thu-Sat	SCAC Church Music Leadership Training Conference
25-31	Sat-Fri	TAC Week of Prayer and Self Denial
26	Sun	SIAC Dedication Service of New Chapel at Lempa Antu, Pakan
31-2/9	Fri-Sun	Methodist Prayer Convention

September

7-8	Fri-Sat	SCAC Pre-Marital Seminar
10-12	Mon-Wed	SPAC Boards Meeting
14-16	Fri-Sun	TRAC Joint Boards/ Executive Board
27-30	Thu-Sun	TAC MYAF Camp

Advertise with Pelita

Organizations and individuals are welcome to advertise in Pelita Methodist. Businesses, Churches, Conferences, events, personal greetings/messages can be considered. The rates per issue are:

	B/W	Colour
Full page	RM500	RM1000
1/2 page	RM250	RM500
1/4 page	RM150	RM400

A discount of one issue is given for a year's advertisement. Please contact the Pelita office.

Tel: 03-7954 1811

E-mail: pelita@methodistchurch.org.my

Subscription Rates

Pelita METHODIST

Pelita Methodist is published monthly, 12 issues per year.

Malaysia

- RM20.00 for 1 year, inclusive of postage

Overseas

- US25.00 for 1 year, US40.00 for 2 years inclusive of Air Mail

For Personal or Church Subscription contact:
Pelita Methodist • 69 Jalan 5/31, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor DE.
Tel • 603-7954 1811
E-mail • pelita@methodistchurch.org.my

Pelita Methodist

Publisher / 出版者
Bishop Dr. Hwa Yung

Chief Editor / 总编辑
Bishop Dr. Hwa Yung

Executive Editor
Mr Christopher Cheah

Editorial Board / 编辑委员会
Rev Ling Heu Uh
Rev Steward Damat Mambang
Rev Bala Subramaniam a/l
Sinnathamby
Rev Khon Weng Joo
Mr Wong Meng Lei
Mr Tung Kam Seng
Ms Lily Ung

All correspondence and enquiries to be directed to:

Pelita Methodist
69 Jalan 5/31, 46000 Petaling Jaya
Selangor Darul Ehsan

E-mail
• pelita@methodistchurch.org.my
Website
• www.methodistchurch.org.my

Designed by
Creative Thumbprint Sdn. Bhd
23, Jalan Radin 2
Bandar Baru Seri Petaling
57000 Kuala Lumpur

Printed by
Percetakan Meiji
45, Jalan PBS 14/2
Taman Perindustrian Bukit Serdang
43300 Selangor Darul Ehsan



• Bishop Hwa Yung

What's Right with Methodism (3)? Holiness, the Defining Message of the Revival

(Explanatory Note: The author began this series in the April 2007 issue of Pelita Methodist. The 2nd in this series was to be on Methodism's passionate commitment to the work of evangelism. However, this theme has been discussed in detail in Dr George Hunter III's article on 'Rediscovering Wesley, The Church Growth Strategist' in the May issue. Hence we will skip this and move on to the third theme.)

In the Large Minutes of 1763 (equivalent to The Book of Discipline) John Wesley clearly stated that Methodism's God-given mission was to 'reform the nation and, in particular, the Church; to spread scriptural holiness over the land.' The first task referred to spiritual revival and moral reform in the church and nation, and the second to holy living in private and public. Clearly both emphasis to go together.

In his account of Wesley and early Methodism, Richard H. Heitzenrater (Wesley and the People Called Methodists, 1995, p.242) asserts that, 'the possibility of perfection in love through grace was the distinctive and defining message in Wesley's revival, and the very organization of the movement itself, as a network of disciplined small groups, was designed to nurture the hope of perfection in the lives of the Methodists.' This is simply another way of saying what Wesley had already stated as Methodism's mission earlier, which is 'to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land,' because perfect love was for him the goal of holiness.

But what is perfect love? Wesley's doctrine has been the subject of intense debates because of his use of the word 'perfect.' It

should therefore be noted that he himself clearly pointed out that his doctrine is not one of 'sinless perfection,' a state of absolute faultlessness and unimprovability, attainable in this life. Rather, as Albert Outler (John Wesley, 1964, p.31f) puts it, for Wesley, 'perfect love' is 'the conscious certainty, in a present moment, of the fullness of one's love for God and neighbor, as this love has been initiated and fulfilled by God's gifts of faith, hope and love 'Perfection' is the fulfillment of faith's desire to love God above all else, so far as conscious will and deliberate action are concerned.'

To put it in another way, Wesley's understanding of perfection is relative to our conscious will, and not to our unconscious or subconscious mind and action. Further it relates only to the laws of God that we are aware of and not to God's laws in totality. Thus to have attained perfection does not mean that we are exempted from 'ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations' or 'involuntary transgressions' (A. Outler, John Wesley, 1964, pp.258 & 287).

For Wesley, 'perfect love' as he understood it, is the goal of sanctification (i.e. the

process of growth in holiness) and a distinct possibility in this life—although he himself never claimed to have attained it. Whether we find Wesley's idea of perfect love fully coherent or not, the important thing is to remember that for him the three fundamental doctrines of Christianity are repentance, justification by faith, and holiness—with sanctification logically flowing out of justification, and holy lives and good works as its fruit.

In practice, Wesley was first concerned that the people called Methodist live lives that were different from those in the world. He therefore required all the converts of the revival to meet regularly in small groups called classes and bands, which primary purpose was to provide for adequate pastoral oversight and to instill holiness in personal lives. (We shall return to a detail discussion of classes and bands in a later article.) And those who were not prepared for such spiritual discipline had to leave. In Newcastle (1743), for example, he expelled sixty-four people from the society: two for cursing, two for habitual Sabbath breaking, seventeen for drunkenness, two for selling liquor, three for quarreling, one for wife beating, three for habitual lying, four for evil speaking, one for idleness,

and twenty-nine for carelessness towards spiritual things. I have often wondered what disciplinary actions Wesley would take if he returns to visit our Methodist churches today!

The result of such discipline and pastoral oversight was that lives were changed. Many of the converts came from a background where poverty was rife, homes were largely dysfunctional, drunkenness was commonplace, and ungodliness and immorality prevailed. But transformed by the revival, they became disciplined and hardworking, and responsible in family matters. Thus the result of discipline and holy living was not just a thriving and growing church, but also a socially upwardly mobile people. Indeed by the time of the second and third generations, the children of the revival had begun to grow rich, and had begun to lose interest in spiritual things as a result. Wesley then had to wrestle with a new problem in the later stages of the revival—how to get the ‘poison’ out of riches which was beginning to be a threat to the revival? His answer is summarized in his little dictum: ‘Gain all you can, save all you can, give all you can!’

But Wesley was concerned not merely to inculcate holiness at the personal level. For him holiness must also be social, that is, what does it mean to love our neighbours as ourselves? This made him, despite his political conservatism, a pioneer of various social reforms in his own day. He and his co-workers did whatever it was within their means to care for the poor and needy, visited prisons, campaigned against alcohol and drunkenness, introduced public health and pioneered public education. And a week just before his death he was still writing to the young William Wilberforce to encourage him in his future long battle in the British Parliament against slavery with the following words: ‘Go on, in the name of God and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before

it.’ The Methodist leaders in the second and third generations built on these earlier efforts and, among many other things, were involved in the early labour union movement that agitated successfully for law reforms that brought greater justice to the working class in British society, in a period when the poor were exploited through low wages and long hours, and child labour was common practice.

This two-sided emphasis on holiness as both personal and social helped Methodists demonstrate that salvation is no mere spiritual pie-in-the-sky, waiting to be claimed only when we get to heaven. Rather it had to be lived out in the here and now of a dog-eat-dog kind of world. In the midst of all the contradictions and pains of its harsh realities, Christians are called to show to the world what loving God and our neighbours mean.

There has never been full agreement among historians about the impact that the 18th century Methodist revival had on Britain. One historian, Harold Perkin (*The Origins of Modern English Society*, 1969) states that ‘between 1780 and 1850 the English ceased to be one of the most aggressive, brutal, rowdy, outspoken, riotous, cruel and bloodthirsty nations in the world and became one of the most inhibited, polite, orderly, tender-minded, prudish and hypocritical.’ Even though the above description of the 19th century English people is not entirely complementary and may be exaggerated, historians are generally agreed that Britain underwent some fundamentally positive changes between the 18th and 19th centuries. Moreover, by the 19th century Britain was by any measure the most powerful nation in the world.

What were the things that brought about such positive changes and gave British society such strength? Historians may provide partial answers. But it is generally accepted today that good governance, integrity and transparency in national

politics and economics, and the ability to minimize corruption in government and public life are the factors that make nations strong economically and politically. Is this sufficient reason to believe that the 18th century Evangelical Revival, together with other reform movements in the 19th century, not least the work of Wilberforce and his associates in the Clapham Sect, had helped to effect the positive moral and social changes that contributed (together with other factors of course) to making Britain politically and economically such a strong nation? The conclusion appears clear.

If this is so, then a simple lesson can be drawn. We all recognize the social and political problems facing our nation, not least the problems of corruption, poor governance, lack of transparency and even the loss of integrity in both the public and private life. Unfortunately, often Christians have been and are no less guilty. But if the church is to be truly ‘salt’ and ‘light’ (Matt 5:13-16) in our nation, there must be a genuine recovery of true holiness in our lives, both in private and in public. But sadly, as I see it, this does not appear to be a priority in many Malaysian churches today. My hope and prayer is that the people called Methodists in our country will have the courage and guts to take the lead!

If and when that happens, three things will result. First, the work of revival in our churches will be greatly enhanced because the holiness of God’s people will give the Spirit freedom to flow! Second, a holy church will then act powerfully as ‘salt’ and ‘light’ in this nation. Thirdly, perhaps then God will be able to use the church to be the one institution which will have the moral courage and strength to redeem our society from the increasingly widespread corruption and power abuses, and turn our country into a more righteous, moral and godly nation! Then we will see right before our eyes a glorious fulfillment of Methodism’s original God-given mission to ‘reform the nation and ... to spread scriptural holiness over the land.’



Villagers gather for a farewell photo.

In recent news the Prime Minister announced a development project for the island of Bonggi, north of Sabah, one of the poorest and least developed part of our country. The Malaysian Missionary Movement of the Tamil Annual Conference has a missions project with the people of Bonggi.
– Editor.

Bonggi Island Mission Trip

Malaysia Missionary Movement – TAC

From 15 - 21 February 2007, MMM-TAC sent a team of 4 to continue the mission task in Bonggi Island. They were Rev. Anthony Panan (TMC Tangkak), Rev S. Jevaretnam (TMC Banting), Mr. Isaac Timothy (TMC Kluang) and Mr.Thangamuthu Rajoo (TMC Asahan / Jasin). The purposes of this trip were mainly to help in the renovation of the Parsonage, distribute food packets, clothes and to visit JIREH HOME in Tuaran and Tamparuli district that cares for the health, education and social needs of the children.

Tamil Methodist Church Banting raised the funds for the MMM-TAC team, led by Rev. Anthony Panan. All the arrangements for the visit – buying of materials, transportation and local labour - were done with the help of Dr. Wilfred John Samuel (Director of Field Education, Sabah Theological Seminary) and Pastor Sintom Taganau (Gembala Parokhi Tinangol) before the mission team arrived at Bonggi Island.

Setting out from Kudat town the journey to the island was long and tiring. During the day the repair work to the parsonage was carried out. One of the nights two groups went out to share the gospel in the village.

On the Sunday (19th) we joined the Bonggi community in a time of worship which was led by the local pastor's wife in Bahasa Malaysia. The message was brought by Pastor Joining. We were given an opportunity to teach some Tamil songs to them led by Rev. S. Jevaretnam. Later, we helped Dr. Wilfred Samuel distribute food packets and clothes.

Our objective now is to work closely with Dr. Wilfred Samuel to reach out and provide love, care and a helping hand to the people on Bonggi Island. Our purpose is not only to serve as a bridge for the urgent needs in the community but to contribute towards the long- term social concerns work there and to bring the good news of Christ to the people.

Currently, there is a dire need amongst the children. They are not well educated and therefore need people to adopt them to provide for them financially, spiritually and to show them loving care.

MMM is looking at starting a Methodist kindergarten there. With the adoption of school going children (especially those after UPSR), MMM can work further with Jireh Home to support them financially every year.



Village house



The MMM-TAC team.



Church service on Sunday

The long-term benefit of this is to develop well-rounded adults who can help their own people. Local people can then be trained to take up pastoral and church leadership as well as for their own community.

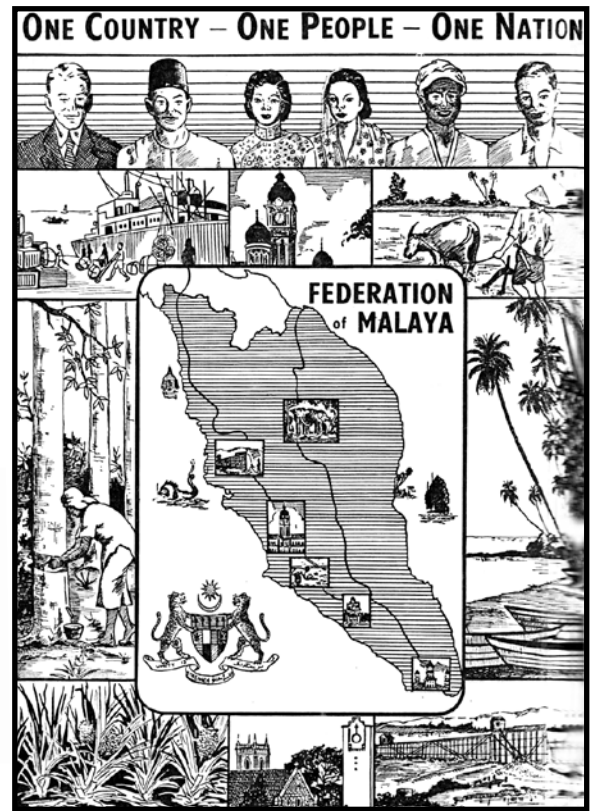
Rev. Anthony Panan
TMC Tangkak

This is an abridged version of the editorial written by Ho Seng Ong in the August-September 1957 issue of the *Methodist Message*. We reprint it here as its message still speaks to important issues we face as a nation after 50 years of Independence.

— Editor

Editorial

Merdeka Musings



Methodists living in the Federation of Malaya including their friends and families in Singapore and other lands will welcome gladly the coming of Independence to Malaya on 31st August 1957. This joy will be all the greater because Malaysians will be able to celebrate the occasion with the happy thought that Independence has been won with a tremendous amount of goodwill and understanding. We specially refer to those who have been responsible for the success of the "Merdeka Mission" — the Chief Minister Tengku Abdul Rahman and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Alan Lennox-Boyd and their associates — who have right from the start carried out their responsibilities not only with skill but also with much sympathy and appreciation of Malayan problems. In our rejoicing we do well to remember the worthy part they played in laying the foundation of our Independent Malaya.

Meaning of Freedom

Independence, Freedom and Liberty — these are concepts which have profoundly stirred and moved the hearts and souls of men throughout the ages and in all lands. At first, man's struggle was to free himself from the limitations and restraints of nature; his progress has been very largely attained by his learning to understand his environment and thereby winning his "freedom" from the privations, difficulties

and terrors of his external life. But it is good not to forget that in many ways man can never be completely free. As philosophers say, it is man's finiteness that binds him. There is no total escape from that.

The Methodist Message

Official Publication of
The Methodist Church, South-
eastern Asia

Vol. 61 AUG.-SEPT. No. 6

HO SENG ONG, *Editor*
ROBERT F. LUNDY, *Associate*
S. T. PETER LIM, *Assistant*

But in the realm of the mind and spirit man can win his finest victories, for freedom, in the final analysis, is a religious and not a political concept. This is not written to belittle the political freedom Malaya is obtaining this month, but because when we think of man, the most significant questions we can ask, and the only questions which really matter, are, "What are the essential and deepest needs of Man?" and closely related to that, "What are the true values of life?" For man possesses an immortal soul which explains why he can never be satisfied with only the physical necessities of this earthly life. Paul Tillich's terse comment that "Freedom makes man man" is therefore much to the point.

The Freedom worth winning refers then to such precious intangibles as freedom of the individual to work out his salvation, freedom of thought, of initiative, freedom to worship God as you please, freedom to choose our rulers - things of the spirit and man's inner self.

On this point, our Bible makes it quite clear that when it speaks of liberty and freedom, it refers to life at its highest and best. Recall John 8:32 — "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." To be free is therefore a moral achievement. Paul's declaration, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" proclaims that there can be no true liberty where the spirit of Jesus is not present. We certainly will not have liberty worth talking about if there is envy, jealousy, distrust and hatred in place of tolerance, good-will, brotherhood and love. Was not John Milton saying the same thing when he wrote, "None could love freedom heartily but good men; the rest love not freedom but licence".

Our hope and prayers are that Malaysians in gaining political independence may strive to win the higher freedom, the freedom to be good and noble and right. For Freedom may lead us downward, just as it can lead us upward, to be the kind of men and women who will make Malaya the country fit for the best of ourselves and our descendants.

Faith to Live By: An Exposition of the Apostles' Creed

Roland Chia

Dr. Roland Chia is Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Lecturer in Historical and Systematic Theology at Trinity Theological College, Singapore.

16. Resurrection of the Dead

the resurrection of the body,

Belief in the resurrection can be traced to the Old Testament. Daniel 12:2 unequivocally declares that '[m]ultitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt'. Hope for the resurrection is alluded to elsewhere in the Old Testament as well. In Isaiah 26:19 we are told that 'Your dead shall live, their corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!' In similar vein, we read these words in Psalm 49:15: 'But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me'.

It goes without saying, however, that the most detailed portrayal of the resurrection is found in the New Testament. There the decisive character of the resurrection of Christ is clearly and powerfully asserted. The NT teaches that the general resurrection of the dead is profoundly and inextricably related to the resurrection of Christ, the 'first-born from the dead'. Perhaps the most elaborate teaching in the NT about the resurrection is found in 1 Corinthians 15, a chapter devoted to discussing the resurrection against the backdrop of scepticism.

In that chapter, Paul makes it very clear that the resurrection of Christ cannot be seen simply as a validation of the hope that is expressed in apocalyptic literature. Rather the resurrection of Christ must be understood as being constitutive of our own resurrection. This is brought home clearly when Paul asserts that 'if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith' (1 Cor 15:14). The resurrection of Christ is the very foundation of apostolic preaching and the Christian Faith. If claims about the

resurrection of Christ are falsified, then the Christian Faith itself collapses like a deck of cards.

But the Creed does not only speak of the resurrection, but the resurrection of the body. In the final state, human beings must not be conceived as having a disembodied existence. The Christian tradition does not hold to the immortality of the soul, but the resurrection of the body the Christian Tradition maintains that God created human beings as a psycho-somatic unity. And it is as a psycho-somatic unity that humans will enter either into eternal life or eternal punishment.

Like many modern people, some among Paul's immediate audience were not convinced about the resurrection. They were influenced by Greek philosophy which taught the immortality of the soul. 1 Corinthians 15 can be read as Paul's defence for the Church's faith in the resurrection. Paul is emphatic that the resurrection is not some curious piece of theological opinion or some clever metaphysical theory. It is central to the Christian Faith. The urgent ring in his words reveals just how crucial belief in the resurrection is for Paul: 'And if Christ

has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men' (1 Cor 15:17-19).

But the Creed does not only speak of the resurrection, but the resurrection of the body. In the final state, human beings must not be conceived as having a disembodied existence. The Christian tradition does not hold to the immortality of the soul, but the resurrection of the body. This claim is very important, for it demonstrates that the Christian faith is not dualistic. It does not teach, as the Greeks do, that the spirit alone is good, while the body is evil. Rather, the Christian Tradition maintains that God created human beings as a psycho-somatic unity. And it is as a psycho-somatic unity that humans will enter either into eternal life or eternal punishment.

But the idea of a bodily resurrection poses some serious problems. In a sense it is difficult to speak of the bodily resurrection without also enquiring about the physiology of the resurrected body. What will the resurrected body be like? Will it be like our earthly bodies – perhaps an enhanced and improved version? Or will it be a totally different body, one which defies our imagination? In what body will a still-born baby, an elderly person, or a person with physical disabilities be raised?

Such questions have long exercised the minds of theologians and philosophers. To reflect on such issues is not to indulge in idle speculation. Theologians have found the discussion important because it has to do with an essential feature of the future

life, namely, the question of identity. The problem can be presented as follows: what constitutes the identity of the human being? If, according to modern anthropology, it is both body and mind (traditionally, the soul) that together constitute identity, what becomes of it when a new body is raised in place of the present corruptible body? How are we to think of identity in this case?

To put the question quite differently, what is it that ensures the continuity of identity of the person who has died and the person who will be raised? If both continuities and discontinuities obtain in the resurrection, what is there to guarantee that the 'I' who died, is the same 'I' who will be raised?

This problem is not new. Theologians through the centuries have reflected on these issues and offered some interesting solutions. One such solution comes from the pen of the formidable Gregory of Nyssa, one of the famous Cappadocian Fathers, who wrote in the fifth century. For Gregory, it is the soul that safeguards the identity of the person in the resurrection. Gregory argued that since the soul is immortal, it will post-exist our earthly bodies. But because the soul is also the essence of the human being, it is in control in some sense of the body.

When a person dies, his body will decompose and its elements dissipate into the environment. But the soul is able to keep track of the dispersed atoms, and at the resurrection, the soul will summon these atoms from some kind of inventory and reassemble the body once again. It is therefore the soul which maintains and ensures the identity of the person in the resurrection.

In modern times, the concept of soul has come under much suspicion and criticism. With advances in neuroscience, the brain has taken the place of the soul. What was traditionally described as soul, modern thinkers describe as 'consciousness'. And consciousness is seen to be the most superior form of brain activity. Drawing from this, and also from modern computer technology, philosophers like Frank Tipler have forwarded the concept of

'cybernetic immortality'. The mind will create a virtual version of our physical body – without its current attending weaknesses of course – and this will be the resurrected body.

The message of our text (1 Cor 15) is that because he is risen, the firstborn from the dead, whatever life throws at us – failure, sickness, bereavement, the manner of our death – there stands over our lives the promise of their transformation into the conditions of the life to come. God will make of our human project something that is pleasing to him.

To many readers, such speculations may appear bizarre and, in the final analysis, quite futile. Paul speaks in the most enigmatic terms when discussing the nature of the resurrected body. For Paul, the resurrection is so wonderfully new and unique that the human mind fails to fully comprehend it and language itself, even when stretched to its fullest, will not be able to describe it. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul uses a carefully chosen set of antitheses to describe the resurrected body, and was quite contented to leave it at that. 'The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body' (1 Cor 15 :42b-44).

This description, enigmatic though it is, emphasises that the resurrection does involve a body, and that this body is radically different to our present physical body. The radical nature of the resurrected body is again emphasised in the description that it will be a 'spiritual body', in contradistinction from the body which we now possess, which Paul

describes as 'natural' (1 Cor 15:44). While such descriptions resoundingly point to the fact that the nature of the new body is radically different, they do not provide a clear sketch of its nature. Not much further help is available in the Gospel accounts of the resurrected Christ, who at times was recognised and at other times was not, and who can be handled and yet can walk through walls.

It would be a grievous mistake to treat the resurrection as a metaphysical theory that invites idle speculation or as an archaic concept that should be rejected in our modern scientific age. Both Paul and the Creed make it very clear that faith in the resurrection is not an option, but constitutes the essence of Christianity: the resurrection stands at the very heart of the Christian Gospel.

Let me end with the words of my late teacher and friend, Professor Colin Gunton, whose sudden death in May 2003 made them all the more poignant. These words are taken from a sermon which Professor Gunton preached on Easter Sunday at the Brentwood United Reformed Church in England:

The message of our text (1 Cor 15) is that because he is risen, the firstborn from the dead, whatever life throws at us – failure, sickness, bereavement, the manner of our death – there stands over our lives the promise of their transformation into the conditions of the life to come. God will make of our human project something that is pleasing to him. Nothing, not the greatest disaster, will thwart God's project. That is why we can say, 'Blessed are those who die in the Lord' (Revelation 14.13) ... The resurrection is the guarantee of that transformation, a transformation that already through the Spirit begins to take shape as we share in the life of the people of God. No wonder that in another of his letters, Paul breaks out into those famous words: 'For I am sure that neither life nor death, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come ... nor anything in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 8:38-39).

Challenging Our Teens in Bible Knowledge

Once again the Interschool/Interstate SPM Bible Knowledge Oral Quiz was held in SMJK Katholik, Petaling Jaya, on 4 August 2007. Sponsored by the Malayan Christian Schools' Council and Scripture Union this annual event saw more than 500 participants from Johor, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Selangor, Perak, Labuan and Kuala Lumpur test their understanding and memory against each other on individual and team basis.

Once again this was made possible by the hard work and dedication of students, teachers, parents and other volunteers in logistics, invigilating and marking.

The Malayan Christian Schools' Council, comprising representatives from Anglican, Brethren, Catholic and Methodist mission schools continues to encourage students to take the SPM Bible Knowledge paper through such events as this. There is still a unique opportunity to make available the study of scripture in our schools provided there are enough students taking the subject to warrant it being offered by



the ministry. And there is also the need for more volunteer BK teachers who are willing to be trained to teach the subject.

For further information contact the Malayan Christian Schools' Council at 03-79565310.



Evangelising Indigenous People in Bintulu



The first ever Bahasa Malaysia (BM) ministry vision night was held at Gloria Methodist Church on 21 July 2007. The gathering of 134 adults and children from the Methodist Churches in Bintulu speak of our commitment to evangelize the indigenous people. In his exaltation, Rev. Law Hui Seng, chairman of the Board of Evangelism, asked, "Has the church caught the vision to reach the indigenous people? Are we willing to dirty our hands to reach them? Are there problems too difficult for us?" The obedience of Peter to the heavenly vision (Acts 10) marked the beginning of cross-cultural evangelism and ushered a multi-racial fellowship in the early church. Similarly, it is time for Chinese Christians to make a difference in Sarawak.

The presentations given by the 70 indigenous adults and children in a Chinese church truly amazed me. Three Iban youths who led the BM praise and worship stirred me to applause their maturity. They grew up in the Sunday school and now lead a mixed congregation. It is simply incredible. Simpu Masir, a member from Emmanuel Methodist Church, shared his passion to win his family members for Christ. The floor applauded when his father told him recently, "Son, I will believe in your Jesus one day." The openness of his father speaks of the open opportunity that Chinese Christians must now grasp.

Rev. Hii Kong Ching
District Superintendent, Bintulu
From *Connection* (15/08/07)

The Pearl of Sungai Merah

Hoover Memorial Garden Dedication Ceremony

On 27 July 2007, Rev. James Hoover Memorial Garden, Sibul, was dedicated by Rev. Dr. Su Chii Ann, President of Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference (SCAC) and YB Dato Sri Wong Soon Koh, Finance Minister (II) and Minister of Urban Development and Tourism Sarawak. A park to commemorate James Hoover (1872-1935), the first missionary serving the Methodist Church in Sarawak, this project is a joint effort of the Sibul Municipal Council (SMC) and the Methodist Church in Sarawak.

Costing RM1.2 million within a two-acre piece of land, the park serves to commemorate Hoover's achievements and his legacy for the future generation, to arouse the new generation to give boldly to their society and nation. It is also meant to be a nice garden for people to relax, to stimulate people to a meaningful life, to bring forth people's love of history, and to unify various social development and cultural uniqueness.



Presenting an album to Dato Wong Soon Koh (second from left).



Planting a tree at the park

This park is located at the estuary of Sungai Merah (Red River) and is about 5 km from Sibul town. It speaks of a life of a missionary and it also marks a milestone in the development of Sibul. It is a place to enjoy, to commemorate and to offer thanksgiving to God. One should never miss visiting it.

Winnie
Connection
15/08/07



Unveiling the plaque at the site.



Piling in progress for additional facilities for the Early Childhood Learning Centre.

Methodist Pilley Institute Additional Facilities for Early Childhood Centre

The Methodist Pilley Institute (MPI) began offering a new course - Early Childhood Education - from 7 May 2007. It is also in the process of building additional facilities for the Early Childhood Learning Centre.

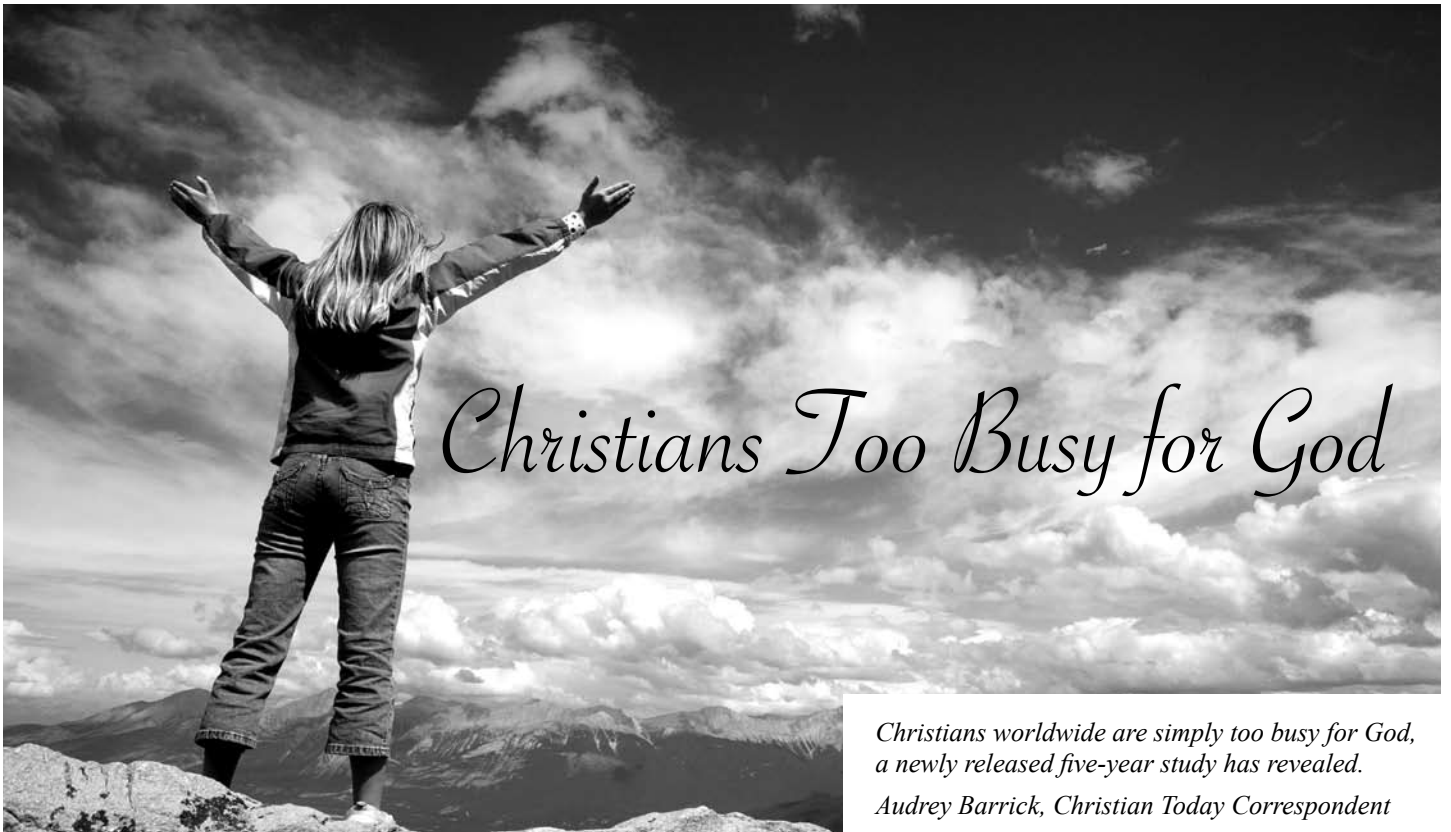
Students are not only groomed theoretically on various aspects such as child development, program planning, literacy development, child observation, measurement and evaluation, but also on home school relations, health and safety for young children and special education. They are given hands-on opportunities to learn how to set up and manage

learning centres in the learning lab. Students will be assigned practicum sessions in child care centres, pre-schools and kindergartens.

Among the students, we also have two existing kindergarten teachers. Despite their hectic daily schedule as teachers and full time mothers, they still manage to cope very well with their studies.

From *Connection*
15/08/07

Methodist Pilley Institute is a private college run by the Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference.



Christians Too Busy for God

Christians worldwide are simply too busy for God, a newly released five-year study has revealed.

Audrey Barrick, Christian Today Correspondent

Christians worldwide are simply too busy for God, a newly released five-year study has revealed.

In data collected from over 20,000 Christians aged 15 to 88 across 139 countries, The Obstacles to Growth Survey found that on average, more than four in 10 Christians around the world say they “often” or “always” rush from task to task.

Busyness proved to be the greatest challenges in Japan, the Philippines, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Mexico and Indonesia. Christians in Uganda, Nigeria, Malaysia and Kenya were least likely to rush from task to task. But even in the less-hurried cultures, around one in three Christians report that they rush from task to task. In Japan, 57 per cent agreed.

The busy life was found to be a distraction from God among Christians worldwide.

Around 6 in 10 Christians say that it is “often” or “always” true that “the busyness of life gets in the way of developing my relationship with God”. Christians most likely to agree were from North America, Africa and Europe. Christians in South Africa, Nigeria, Canada, Singapore, Ireland, Philippines, the United States and the United Kingdom are more distracted from God than those in other countries.

While across gender lines, busyness affects both men and women, the distraction from God was likely to affect men more than women in every surveyed continent except North America, where 62 per cent of women reported busyness interfering with their relationship with God compared to 61 per cent of men.

By profession, pastors were most likely to say they rush from task to task (54 per cent), which adversely also gets in the way of developing their relationship with God (65 per cent).

“It’s tragic. And ironic. The very people who could best help us escape the bondage of busyness are themselves in chains,” said Dr Michael Zigarelli, associate professor of Management at the Charleston Southern University School of Business, which conducted the study.

Professionals whose busyness interferes with developing their relationship with God include lawyers (72 per cent), managers (67 per cent), nurses (66 per cent), pastors (65 per cent), teachers (64 per cent), salespeople (61 per cent), business owners (61 per cent), and housewives (57 per cent).

“The accelerated pace and activity level of the modern day distracts us from God and separates us from the abundant, joyful, victorious life He desires for us,” said Zigarelli.

While the study does not explain why Christians are so busy and distracted, Zigarelli described the problem among Christians as “a vicious cycle” prompted by cultural conformity.

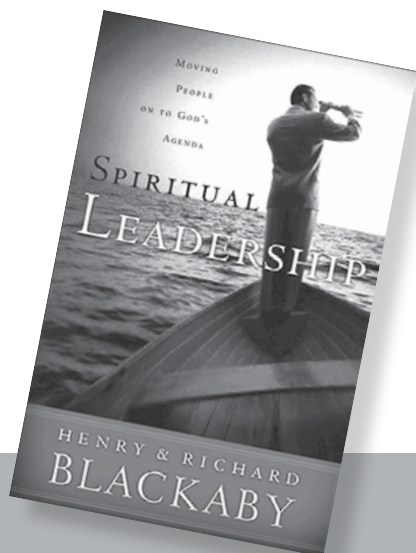
“[I]t may be the case that (1) Christians are assimilating to a culture of busyness, hurry and overload, which leads to (2) God becoming more marginalised in Christians’ lives, which leads to (3) a deteriorating relationship with God, which leads to (4) Christians becoming even more vulnerable to adopting secular assumptions about how to live, which leads to (5) more conformity to a culture of busyness, hurry and overload. And then the cycle begins again.”

Zigarelli, who believes busyness and distraction may be a global pandemic, suggested breaking the cycle by “re-ordering our thinking”, including “the way we think about who God is and how He wants us to live our lives”.

The Obstacles to Growth Survey was conducted on 20,009 Christians.

By Christian Today
www.christiantoday.com.my

*Used with Permission.
Copyright © 2007 Christian Today. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.*



Book Review: Spiritual Leadership

by Henry & Richard Blackaby
Broadman & Holman Publishers, USA, 2001

One wonders whether there is anything new to learn on Christian leadership after the writings on the subject by quotable authors like John Maxwell, Tim Elmore, Bill Hybels, George Barna, Robert Clinton, Henri Nouwen and Oswald Sanders. Besides, one can mine precious gems on Christian leadership from reading the biographies of great leaders of God in the past and the present.

Is there anything new or unique that Henry & Richard Blackaby can add to the already rich and vast storehouse of Christian leadership knowledge? In a sense they have not brought in anything new or novel. But their book is certainly worth our time to read as it repackages old ideas in a refreshing and enlightening manner and critique secular leadership materials in a biblical wholesome way.

In a nutshell, the authors defined spiritual leadership as 'moving people on to God's agenda.' This understanding of leadership applies not only to the church but equally as well in our workplace and the business world. This is a strong and unique emphasis of the authors and it is demonstrated by the fact that Henry Blackaby regular consults with CEOs of Fortune 500 companies (pp 22, 143).

The book covers the subject comprehensively in eleven chapters and it can be used as a handy reference handbook for all Christians. The authors pre-suppose that spiritual leadership occurs when a Christian has a vital living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ as when as a servant of the Lord, he obeys and does what God's agenda is moment by moment. No Christian leadership is seen without knowing and doing God's will. The authors have dealt with this important

issue in other books like *Experiencing God*, *Experiencing God Day-by-Day* and *When God Speaks*.

Following his very basic theology of leadership of moving people on to God's agenda will free us from the many pitfalls of leaders. Many a leader has reaped an agonized soul when his family left him in his pursuit of success in his leadership. A very sad case of a young driven pastor who lost his wife and children is narrated (pp 280, 281). The Blackabys point out in no uncertain terms that spiritual leadership covers the home as well and not just the church or the workplace. Recognizing his duty of leadership in the home will then help the leader to balance his stewardship of his time and energy. He will wisely not spend all his time or energy at his work but also have these resources for the family. By following these principles, Henry Blackaby is a very proud father of five grown-up children who are following the Lord just like the father.

Another liberating principle from their writings is the freedom of the tyranny of the urgent and the harassment of busyness. Their stress on walking close to God moment by moment will help us to do just the assignment given us by the Lord. This will free us to say 'no' to other loads not meant for us and to delegate other tasks that others can do. This will contribute not only to our effectiveness as leaders but also without sacrificing our health in our success.

Today with technology, marketing techniques and managerial tools, a leader can build a large church or organization with huge budgets and beautiful buildings to impress. But have we led by leading God's people on to His agenda? Have

Contents

1. The Leader's Challenge.
2. The Leader's Role: What Leaders Do.
3. The Leader's Preparation: How God Develops Leaders.
4. The Leader's Vision: Where Do Leaders Get It and How Do They Communicate It?
5. The Leader's Character: A Life That Moves Others To Follow.
6. The Leader's Goal: Moving People On To God's Agenda.
7. The Leader's Influence: How Leaders Lead.
8. The Leader's Decision Making.
9. The Leader's Schedule: Doing What's Important.
10. The Leader's Pitfalls: What Disqualifies Leaders?
11. The Leader's Rewards.

we done His will and remained faithful? Henry Blackaby has walked his talk and has finished well. We do well to listen to him.

Lim Yew Foo
Faith Methodist Church
Kuala Lumpur

MAJLIS GEREJA-GEREJA MALAYSIA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF MALAYSIA

26 Jalan University, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Tel: 03-79567092/ 79551587 Fax: 03-79560353 E-Mail: churchm@streamyx.com

PRESS STATEMENT

Deputy Prime Minister's inference at Press Conference (17th July) that Malaysia from its independence can be referred to as an "Islamic State"

The Council of Churches deeply regrets that the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, came out publicly recently to assert that Malaysia is an "Islamic State".

His statement has greatly upset the whole non-Muslim population in Malaysia, who constitute forty per cent of the population.

Furthermore, his statement goes against the very letter, spirit and foundation of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia. The coming together of the different ethnic groups under the "social contract" at the time of Independence (1957), envisaged a country that is secular and where the multiethnic and multireligious differences are celebrated to strengthen national unity.

As we prepare to celebrate our 50th Merdeka Anniversary, such a statement by a government official does dampen the spirit of unity

and casts a dark cloud over the future of this country.

We appeal to the government in general and to the DPM in particular, to refrain from using "Islamic State" as an official description of the country to stir up racial tension. As it is precisely because of our diversity and that we are able to live together in harmony as a nation which has made Malaysia what it is today, a fascinating and beautiful country.

Let us all, therefore, celebrate our 50th Merdeka Anniversary in this spirit, and continue to work together as Malaysians and not be divided either by race or religion for the progress of our country.

.....
Rev. Dr. Thomas Philips
President
Dated 24th July 2007

.....
Rev. Dr. Hermen Shastri
General Secretary



RIP

A Quiet Resting Place for Christians

Total peace of mind and hassle free Christian cemetery at affordable cost

Landscaped scenery and secure environment

Functional and well planned memorial park with walkway access

A choice between burial plots and garden columbarium niches available

Facing the Guthrie Expressway

Subang Lutheran Garden

A MODERN CHRISTIAN CEMETERY

Enquiries: 03-7960 7066
H/P: 019-335 1977

Limited Units for Prebooking!

Managed by: **Lutheran Garden Berhad** (755390P)
Website: www.lutherangarden.com Email: lutherangarden@gmail.com

POSITION AVAILABLE: OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR Trinity Methodist Kindergarten, Petaling Jaya

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the above post effective 1 September 2007.

- Able to handle accounts, payroll and general administrative work.
- Computer literacy is essential.
- Good command of English and Bahasa Malaysia.
- Good interpersonal skills and pleasant personality.
- Minimum 5 years working experience.

Interested candidates are invited to send in your resume to:

Trinity Methodist Kindergarten
No. 6, Jalan 5/37
46000 Petaling Jaya
Selangor
Tel: 03-79566350



孝恩·集團
XIAO EN GROUP



Special Design Burial Plot

Nilai Memorial Park

One of Malaysia's most beautiful memorial park, Nilai Memorial Park is situated just 30 minutes away from Kuala Lumpur. Surrounded by lush natural greenery, the Park successfully combines the best of oriental traditions and architecture with western planning and design. Set amidst all this is a series of tastefully designed and crafted memorials and niche columbariums, which not only provide a serene final resting place for our departed loved ones but also for others to pay their respects.



One-Stop
Bereavement Arrangements & Services

Xiao En Bereavement Care Packages

There is peace of mind in being able to fulfill your final act of filial piety and assurance knowing that every detail will be taken care of conscientiously. There is dignity in a meaningful ritual well planned and well performed. A Xiao En Bereavement Care Package ensures that the warm memories of your departed loved one will endure for generations to come.



Xiao En Centre, Jalan Kuari, Cheras

Xiao En Centre

Xiao En Centre, as a complex for social education & life ceremony, is complemented with function halls for memorial services and funeral rites. We are also equipped with facilities to hold cultural & community events including art exhibitions & seminars. The centre's design, which combines the modern sensibilities & traditional concepts which appraise human values represents our unflinching commitment towards celebration of life excellences.

NILAI MEMORIAL PARK • MELAKA MEMORIAL PARK • XIAO EN BEREAVEMENT CARE • XIAO EN CENTRE • XIAO EN CULTURAL

Corporate Office No 1 Jalan Kuari Cheras 56100 Kuala Lumpur
T +603 9145 3888 F +603 9145 3999 W www.xiao-en.com
Tollfree 1-800-88-8333 (24 Hours)

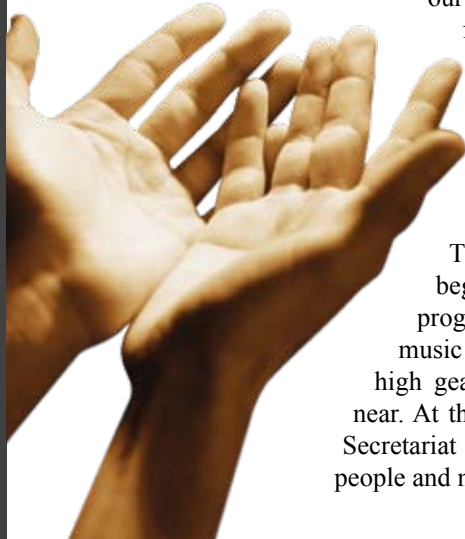
Methodist Prayer Convention 2007

3500 Target Achieved!

Since the very first meeting of the planning committee in January 2006 the target for the Prayer Convention was 3500 participants. This was deemed highly achievable, given the membership of the Methodist Church. Still, as the closing date drew nearer the numbers were not encouraging, as is the habit of Malaysians to wait till the last moment to sign up.

Now the registrations have surpassed our original target, and further registrations cannot be accepted as the capacity of Convention Center has been stretched to its limits.

The countdown has begun. The logistics, programme, worship and music committees are all in high gear as the event draws near. At the centre of this is the Secretariat which sees no end of people and meetings these days.



However, let us not forget that all these activities are only in aid of making the Convention a conducive time to hear God's word to his people in the Methodist Church. To that end unceasing prayers continue to be made for the speakers, seminar leaders, worship and ministry people and all participants that we will be ready to receive what God has prepared for the Methodist Church.

Children's Room at Stadium Malawati

There is now a room made available for parents with young children during the Thanksgiving Celebration on Sunday 2 September.

Big enough for 500 people and equipped with TV screens, this will allow parents to follow and participate with the others in the main hall.

Klang Valley churches and even those from further away have indicated their participation for this Sunday event. This may well see the Stadium reach its seating capacity. Indeed there is a growing excitement and anticipation for God's blessings to come upon his people. Let us prepare and wait with prayer and humble hearts for God to do a great work in our midst.

马来西亚禧年宣教展

〈马礼逊入华宣教二百周年〉

Malaysia Jubilee Mission Expo

〈200th Anniversary of Robert Morrison's Mission to China〉

日期 /Date	时间 /Time	地点 /Venue
28-30.9.2007 (星期五至日)	9:30am-10:30pm	吉隆坡马华三春礼堂

活动内容：183幅历史图片展览，日间宣教讲座，宣教晚会及宣教庆典。
Activities: Exhibition of 183 Historical Pictures, Daytime Seminars, Night Mission Rallies & Jubilee Mission Celebration.

讲员阵容：林治平教授，戴绍曾博士，王美钟博士。
Speakers: Prof. Peter Lin, Dr. James Hudson Taylor III & Dr. John Ong

讲员阵容 /Speakers:



林治平教授
现任台湾基督教宇宙光全人关怀机构外展部执行长。著有基督教、历史文明与励志关怀主题书籍及论文多种。

Professor Peter Lin
Promotional Director of Christian Cosmic Light Holistic Care Organization of Taiwan. He is the author of various books and theses on Christianity, history & civilizations, exhortation and care.



戴绍曾博士
生于中国开封，曾祖父为戴德生牧师。「国际专业服务机构」创办人及荣誉总裁。

Rev. Dr. James Hudson Taylor III
Born in Kaifeng, China. His grandfather is Rev. J. Hudson Taylor. Founder & President Emeritus of MSI Professional Services.



王美钟博士
现任马来西亚浸信会神学院院长，全球华人浸信会宣教促进会总干事。

Rev. Dr. John Ong
President of Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary. Executive Director of Trans-World Chinese Baptist Missions.

The Methodist Church in Malaysia is one of the joint-organizers.

主要赞助 /Main Sponsor:
马来西亚浸信会联合
Malaysia Baptist Convention

展览制作 /Produced by:
台湾基督教宇宙光全人关怀机构
Christian Cosmic Light Holistic Care Organization, Taiwan

主催 /Initiator:
耶和華以勒影視中心
The Provider Productions Bhd.



走进历史，见证上帝作为。
走向未来，延续宣教使命。

*in the days gone by, we have witnessed the deeds of GOD.
in the days ahead, we see His mission for us.*