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Behold, how good
and how pleasant it
is for brethren to dwell
together in unity!

Psalm 133:1

TOGETHER IN
UNITY

The Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) Exco and Heads of Churches of the Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM) "Luther and Vatican Ecumenical Study Trip" [24 May - 4 June 2019 delegation meeting with the Ambassador, His Excellency Westmoreland E. Palon, Mrs. Palon and Embassy Staff at the Holy See [in Rome]



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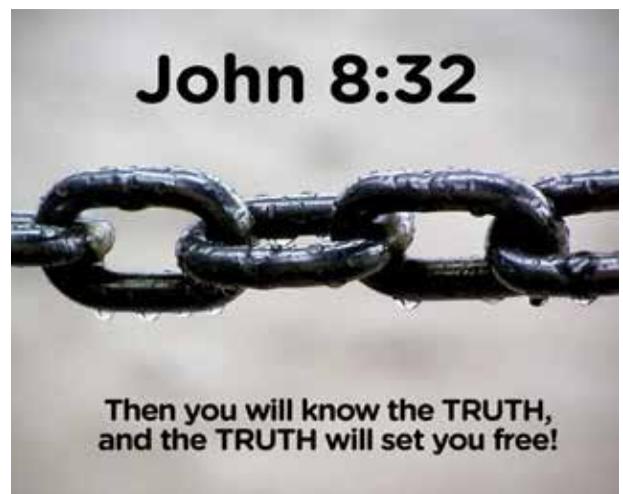
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Unity in Ecumenicity

– The Luther and Vatican Ecumenical Study Trip 2019



The Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) Exco and Heads of Churches of the Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM) jointly organised a “Luther & Vatican Ecumenical Study Trip” on 24 May – 4 June 2019.

This marks for the first time such an ecumenical endeavour is undertaken whereby some leaders from the Lutheran, Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Salvation Army and National Evangelical Fellowship, came together to foster a deeper ecumenical spirit locally as well as with the global body of Christ. This is facilitated by tracing the “biographical footsteps” and works of Martin Luther in Germany and making connections with the Catholic Church in Rome.

The participants of this Ecumenical Study Trip included Bishop Dr Ong Hwai Teik, Bishop of the Methodist Church, Bishop Aaron Yap of the Lutheran Church of Malaysia, Bishop Danald Jute of the Anglican Diocese of Sarawak & Brunei, Bishop Datuk Melter Jiki Nais, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Sabah, Archbishop Datuk Ng Moon Hing, Bishop of the Anglican Dioceses of West Malaysia and Primate of SEA, Mr Tan Kong Beng, Executive Secretary of CFM, Rev Andy Chi, General Secretary of the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship, Rev Fr George Harrison, Parish Priest of the Church of the Visitation, and other CFM Exco members and CCM Heads of Churches who were accompanied by their spouses. President Ezra Kok [CAC] and President Tie King Tai [SCAC] were also part of this delegation.

The itinerary began with our arrival at Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, which is about 2 hours drive from Munich, and situated 20 miles southwest of Nuremberg. We were most impressed by the cleanliness, beautiful, well planned and organised social and living environment of Germany.

The Headquarters of the Mission EineWelt [MEW] or Mission One World of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria is

located here. It is the Mission One World that made it possible for our Ecumenical Study trip through their generous hospitality based on a strong conviction of the need for global ecumenical unity. The MEW is “committed to the Christian testimony in word and deed and it stands up for justice, peace and the preservation of the Creation.” It has connections and work relations with church institutions and projects in 32 countries, the oldest being with Papua New Guinea since 133 years ago.

The visit to the local Augustana Lutheran seminary [since 1947] was very profitable as we heard a presentation on “Luther and the Reformation” by Prof Dr Gury Schneider-Ludorf. She enlightened us on Martin Luther’s powerful tract in 1520 at Wittenberg – *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate* that powerfully created spiritual, political, social and economic changes in 16th century Germany. Martin Luther, by God’s sovereign providence, expounded a theology that had far reaching reforming effects in shifting responsibility and authority for the welfare of the state and people to the secular authorities, ensuring access of the Bible for everyone through his translation. That led to wide-spread educational initiatives of the founding of schools and universities and strategic impact on art, culture, literature, music and architecture.

Another memorable highlight was the visit to the Protestant Church Central Germany in Erfurt where we witnessed how the local pastor and congregation share their premises and some worship services and community outreaches with the Augustinian monks. It was most heart-warming to hear from Rev Gabriele Lipski, Father Jakob and Fr Matthias how “we use everything together, we worship together” - in very concrete and practical ways.

We visited the remarkable Asisi Panorama “Luther 1517” - a 360° panorama (cyclorama) that provides a lively recreation of Wittenberg at the time of Martin Luther, his wife Katharina von

Bora and his fellow Reformer Justus Jonas. This presentation of life in the medieval ages using lighting, art and spatial manipulation to create an unforgettable educational and mind-opening experience - is best experienced personally, rather than describing it on paper!

This was followed by the delegation led by Bishop Dr Ong Hwai Teik and Bishop Aaron Yap in planting of the CFM sponsored tree on 29 May 2019 at the Lutheran World Federation Luther Garden [set up to commemorate 500 years of the Reformation with the planting of 500 trees]. [All in the delegation participated in the act of planting and watering]. There are 11 denominations and major church networks from 101 countries participating, with 37 varieties of trees planted. Martin Luther had reportedly said, "Even if I knew that the world were to collapse tomorrow, I would still plant my apple tree today". In 2017, Lutheran churches commemorated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation (Jubilee) here as it had its beginnings in Lutherstadt Wittenberg.

Our stay in Germany ended on 31 May with a visit to the head office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bavaria in Munich. There we had a constructive exchange on ecumenism and global issues relevant to the witness of the Church as we met Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, who is also chairman of the EKD, a German umbrella organization of Protestant, Lutheran and reformist churches [like our CFM].

The next leg was to Rome to visit the Holy See at which time, 8 of the 26 in the delegation had to leave for home. Apart from the dazzling architectural sights and wonders in the ancient Basilicas, Catacomb, Colosseum, Pantheon, the Scavi [site of the bones of St Peter] and the Vatican Museum, we were regaled with stories, legends and traditions by a most competent tourist guide who made the past come alive.

She gave us insights and increased our understanding of the religious life of the Catholic faith and of great personalities of our Christian faith when we visited the basilicas dedicated to St Peter, St John and St Paul.

The other highlights in Rome included our visit on 3 June to the Malaysian Embassy in the Holy See where we were warmly welcomed and accorded thoughtful Malaysian hospitality for lunch! We are so glad and honoured to be able to visit, dialogue and share a meal with the Malaysian community in the Vatican, hosted by the Ambassador, His Excellency Westmoreland E Palon and his wife and staff - who did most of the cooking!

We were warmly received by Cardinal Kurt Koch who heads the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity [PCPCU was set up by Pope John XXIII on 5 June 1960] on the next day. We learnt of the serious intention of achieving Christian unity via great efforts made by the Vatican in which it is engaged in international theological dialogue with at least 15 Churches and World Communions [including the Anglican Communion, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the World Methodist Council, the Baptist World Alliance, some Pentecostal groups and the World Evangelical Alliance]. Specific PCPCU officials are allocated to work with

different World Communions and Denominations. There is also a Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue.

This Ecumenical Study Trip, has unequivocally enriched the ecumenical fellowship within our delegation and fostered greater understanding, deepened friendships and unity as we come from different Christian traditions and denominations. We are further challenged to pursue unity in ecumenicity as we have been touched by the openness and warmth of the international Lutheran and Roman Catholic Communions. They have expressed their earnest sincerity in pursuing ecumenical unity by the way they so authentically and generously received and connected with our delegation.

We are again reminded of the great and sovereign providence of God, Who "in the fullness of time" – raised a man like Martin Luther who worked in a team with Philip Melanchthon [the first systematic theologian of the Protestant Reformation, intellectual leader of the Lutheran Reformation, and an influential designer of educational systems] and Lucas Cranach the Elder [German Renaissance painter and printmaker in woodcut and engraving]. Martin Luther was also aided by the timely invention of the printing press by Gutenberg and protected by Frederick the Wise from being assassinated. [Frederick III, Prince of Saxony worked for constitutional reform of the Holy Roman Empire and protected Martin Luther at a crucial period for the early Reformation].

We were reminded and inspired by the first hand exposure to the colossal and serious effort put in at a global level by the very much older and bigger historic denominations in intentionally pursuing unity in ecumenicity, that will authenticate the witness of the Lord's Church. The current "next great step" in Christendom, in an age and a world that seeks unity, is demonstrating the reality of Christian unity. Christians possess little moral authority as messengers of the Gospel of reconciliation – unless we can demonstrate to a watching divided world that despite our denominations, we are "all one in Christ Jesus." We need to let our unity in Christ shine through even though we do not disband our denominations. The risen Christ as reality of the heart and source of our fellowship must be affirmed; this basis should not be displaced by other substitutes. It is said that the measure of our maturity can be and is measured by the breadth and depth of our capacity for fellowship with other Christians.

In this unforgettable historic study tour, one refreshed participant said, "We were able to enjoy our study tour amidst much learning, self-reflection and personal transformation and fellowship." Another sums up the priceless experience of this trip with these words: "All in all, this has been an eye opener for all those who participated in this study. This tour has indeed opened a whole new world of love, understanding and unity amongst the Churches."

Bishop Dr Ong Hwai Teik
Vice-chairman
Christian Federation of Malaysia



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PRESS STATEMENT

CONGRATULATIONS AND FELICITATIONS

**TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS AL-SULTAN ABDULLAH RI'AYATUDDIN AL-MUSTAFA BILLAH SHAH
AND HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, TUNKU HAJAH AZIZAH AMINAH MAIMUNAH ISKANDARIAH**

The Heads of Churches of the Council of Churches of Malaysia extends its heartiest congratulations and felicitations to His Royal Highness, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah and Her Royal Highness, Tunku Hajah Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah on the occasion of His Royal Highness' installation as the 16th Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaysia.

May Almighty God shower his richest blessings upon their Majesties and endow them with good health, wisdom and compassion in their reign.

The churches will uphold their Majesties' well being in their prayers and hope that they will continue to care and unite the people from the various races and religions so that everyone can live in peace and prosperity in our beloved country.

DAULAT TUANKU

Heads of Churches

Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik
(Methodist Church in Malaysia)

Rt. Rev. Datuk Melter Tais
(Anglican Diocese of Sabah)

Cor Episcopa Philip Thomas
(Orthodox Syrian Church in Malaysia)

Bishop Aaron Yap
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Date: 29th July 2019

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Affiliate Member: Coptic Orthodox Church

《基督教论坛报》交流会、讲座会

报道/摄影：甘慧仪

6月21日早上十时至中午十二时三十分，年会基督徒社会关怀部特邀台湾《基督教论坛报》社长——郑忠信弟兄，在卫理大厦五楼小礼堂展开交流会和接受年会机关报《南钟》双月刊杂志采访。

郑社长从容说出自己如何将经营五十三年之久的报纸，从传统的纸媒转向链接亚洲教会的创新媒体之过程。他指出，要让报纸转型不容易，但这是继续生存的惟一选择，当纸媒输入数字媒体后，就能成为连接各地教会的那扇窗口。《南钟》主编——简永裕牧师坦言，随着新时代来临，《南钟》面对订阅人数每年下滑的严峻现象；他期许能藉郑社长的分享，探索《南钟》未来转型的新空间和发展趋势。

21至22日，郑社长担任由年会基督徒社会关怀部、中二和中三教区联办的“亚洲教会之创新 转化 未来”讲座会讲员，地点是八达灵新市镇堂。21日晚上是公开讲座会，郑社长以“教会如何创新转化面对新而快速的世代”为题，近两百人出席。郑社长甫开声，就强调我们是处于快速转变，大大震动的时代！他鼓励教会在现代城市中“亮”起来，找出“市场”之需，贴近人们的生活圈。

“教会要将‘新酒装在新皮袋里’，随社会之需‘更新而变化’（太9：17）。除了报道教会动态，教会纸媒也要贴近社会，带领读者以信仰角度察看世界的趋势。上帝赐给我们聪明的灵，我们要积极了解世界各领域发展的新趋势，善用新科技，呈上这世代所需的永恒盼望，为亚洲新时代传递正面的影响力。”郑社长希冀会众在5G和AI科技社会中，成为迎浪而来、勇于迎战的高手。

22日早上十时十五分，郑社长开讲的第一场讲座会主题是“假如耶稣在吉隆坡—从菜市场到教会市场策略”；下午一时四十五分的第二讲主题是“降下围墙高度：从教会进入商业、教育、家庭、媒体、艺术、政治七山头”；晚上八时十五分的第三讲（研讨会）主题是“老媒体新势力—如何脱胎换骨发新媒体影响力”，有近两百人在座。

“教会常自诩为人们信仰与心灵的寄托中心，教堂常建筑在人群与市场附近，时至今日，教会是否仍能满足人心，引领人们走进教会？当今教会如何在商业等七个重要领域培育社会的菁英领袖，助信徒坚定地活出信仰真谛？传统纸媒在瞬息万变的数位新媒体时代中，赶得很累、很喘，如何脱胎换骨，继续成为社会的桥梁与媒介？”郑社长以“创新媒体人”的视野，尝试为上述课题提供可行的方向。

在新世纪的冲击下，《基督教论坛报》致力于蜕变，现在不仅是报纸、电子媒体，也举办以色列营会、文创和福音微电影比赛等活动。郑社长说，《论坛报》打破一般电子媒体的定义，积极承载和展现丰富、多元的媒体资源；也愿意和亚洲华人教会各媒体合作，建立亚洲华人教会论坛的平台。他以《论坛报》转型成功之路提醒会众，不要定

焦于社会日后如何转变，而是自己每天的生活是否合神心意。

供会众提问的环节后，已近晚上十时，凌向明教区长上台，为大会作祝祷，两天的讲座会就此划下句点。



在交流会中合影。左起为郑社长的秘书—谢卓君、中二教区副会友领袖—陈碧云、年会基督徒社会关怀部主席—周道惠、郑社长、凌向明教区长、本刊主编—简永裕牧师和执行编辑—甘慧仪（摄：黄珍珠）。



21日晚上，郑社长第一讲。



左起为郭会长、郑社长、凌向明教区长（后）、周道惠、郭进吟教区长和吾会会友领袖—李祖国。



22日晚上的全体照

Features

News from SCAC

Feeling the Pulse of Lighthouse Kapit

Heading to the Interior Heartland

It was 7:30 am on Saturday 15th June 2019. Five of us from Emmanuel Methodist Church Bintulu embarked on a three-hour journey from Sibu to Kapit, the heartland of the upper Rajang basin. As the express boat manoeuvred out from the jetty, I started to reminisce my days in Kapit some 38 years ago when I was a young medical officer at the Kapit Hospital. I looked forward to the hospitality of the Ibans, the delicacy of the local fresh water fish, *dabai* and wild boar meat among others.

Dr Lee CS, chairman of the Board of Ministries of Lighthouse Kapit, greeted us as we alighted from the boat. As we stepped out of the wharf, I could not believe what my eyes beheld. Traffic jam! The whole town was different from what I remembered. Once vacant lands in the town are occupied by buildings. The town was bustling with people and shops



running brisk businesses. The markets too were teeming with life and shoppers. Many more shops were under construction. Even the town football field was not spared!

From what I gathered, the town has not be coping well with the rapid influx of young families from rural Iban longhouses over the last few years. Due to the closure of many logging camps, most of the experienced local timber workers have left to work in logging camps overseas, sending home their lucrative salaries. It has become the trend for them to move their families to the town area. As each family needs a house and a car, one can only imagine the impact on the socio-economic health of the town. The young people are obviously exposed to life challenges they are not prepared for. Many struggle with their faith and moral values while adjusting their lives to the changing culture.

Is there any hope for the weary and vulnerable young sojourners? We believe that Lighthouse Kapit provides the answer. An unwavering beacon of light shines forth from the Lighthouse Kapit guiding the seekers to the right path.

The Lighthouse Ministries

As its name implies, the Lighthouse serves to throw light in the paths of the youths living in the midst of social storms and in the rough sea of life, which is strewn with hidden rocks. Lighthouse gives hope by providing them with love, care and guidance. The Lighthouse building is a converted 50-year old Methodist girls' hostel. It also aims to be a friendly Youth Centre. It is also a platform for birthing the wave of a much needed revival among the Iban community.



Strategically located between SK Methodist Kapit and SMK Kapit, the Lighthouse is within walking distance from the town centre. The facelift and renovation work began in Jan 2017. May 1st 2019 marked the historical dedication of the building officiated by Bishop Rev Ong Hwai Teik. As we watched a video of the worship during the Official Opening Celebration that night, I was deeply moved. This has to be the beginning of a spiritual breakthrough!

Through the unity of God's people, this landmark was established for His glory. It had started with the brainstorming session on the community needs by the Sarawak Iban Annual Conference (SIAC) in 2015, followed by the sharing of the vision with leaders of the local churches as well as with various NGOs. The notion of the Lighthouse was consolidated during the Prayer Revival Seminar of SIAC held in Kapit in April 2016. In summary, the Lighthouse would not have been possible without the help and contributions from its many partners who have also synergically generated a series of kingdom-minded ministries through engaging, equipping and empowering the communities with its holistic initiatives. Lighthouse Kapit focuses on five key thrusts, namely, students and youth, women's welfare, outreach, economic transformation and social concerns. The reactivation of the Teachers' Christian Fellowship marks another significant milestone in realising the effectiveness of the students program held at the Lighthouse.



Winning the Next Generation

The ISCF Camp was running when we checked into the guest rooms at the Lighthouse. More than sixty children from three primary schools led by their teachers and facilitators were then busy discussing their group skits according to what they had just learnt.

The primary school pupils were introduced to the "5 Principles of The Way", encouraging them to be on a journey of following Jesus. At the altar call during the last session the next day, we witnessed an almost 100% response to be the followers of Jesus. Many were touched by the Holy Spirit and were in tears during the commitment prayer.

The camps for the secondary and primary school children are run on alternate months. Participants at the camps for secondary school students journey through a series of 7-10 lessons extracted from "Standing Strong through the Storm" discipleship program.

About 1,600 students have been blessed since its commencement in early 2018. It has been a very fulfilling ministry. The testimonies of the participants, with confirmations from their parents and teachers on life transformation, attest to it. The initiation in strengthening the basic essentials of Christian faith foundation and the subsequent follow up by their teachers bear equal importance in the strategy of shaping their lives to face future challenges.

Meeting the Spiritual Hunger

One cannot deny the existing spiritual hunger of the community. Their spiritual decline is obvious. Perhaps the church should ask whether it has been neglectful in contributing to the spiritual development of its members.

The spiritual roots of the Iban community here date back some 70 years. In 1959, the American missionaries built the first Mission House at Nanga Mujong, about 45 minutes' drive from town today. The chapel is still standing. They also started Christ Hospital in Kapit. The first thing I did when I revisited the hospital was to look for the foundation stone



laid by Bishop Hobart in 1959. This building was handed over to the government in 1974 and became the old wing when the new hospital was built. The contributions by the American Methodist Mission in terms of infrastructure, human resources development, education and healthcare programme are well archived.

Though the hospital was taken over by the government, the Mission-sponsored Community Health Education and Motivation Programme (Chempro) was set up and continued to serve the Iban community under the church. However, Chempro has not been active for about a decade. Can Lighthouse Kapit revive Chempro and continue to be an agent of change and blessing like before?

We were told that over the last seven decades, about 300 Iban longhouses have been reached in this region. However, passing on the spiritual legacy to the younger generations is not evident. In spite of this set back, we sensed their spiritual hunger during our longhouse ministry that night. Even the *Tuai Rumah* volunteered to be our driver! The residents participated actively in our programs which included a health talk and free blood pressure checking before worship, gospel sharing, altar call and prayer for the sick. It was a very meaningful and fruitful night. It had been a long while since the last time an event of such nature took place here. We distributed the bibles and recommended them to use the audio *Bub Kudus*.



Before we departed, a lady told us that a group of them had in recent months been having bi-weekly bible studies with two lady missionaries. It was disturbing that the missionaries had been distributing Watchtower publications and teaching heresy to these spiritually hungry longhouse ladies. How many ladies in other longhouses have they reached out to?

Does the church have any plan for regular pastoral visits to all the longhouses? Is there any strategy to train the *tuai sembayang* (worship leader) of individual longhouses to conduct their own bible studies? How does the church equip them to defend their faith and beliefs when challenged by those

who confuse or challenge them? These are crucial questions which demand urgent answers and concrete actions. There is no time to linger!

The Urgency

After church the next morning, our friend took us on an eye-opening ride around Kapit, running commentaries and all. We learnt that unwed teenage pregnancies here is the highest in Sarawak. Truancy, alcoholism, drug addiction among the teenagers is sadly on the rise. There appears to be an acute shortage of space and place for healthy activities for the youth. Despite the uphill task, our friend's spirit is not dampened. We encouraged her to continue her voluntary services in the town and Lighthouse ministries, to bring about a positive transformation in Kapit.

There is an urgent need to transform the social and spiritual landscape. The Lighthouse has turned on the light. Its holistic interventions are not just defensive but rather it takes the offensive. We have seen the leading and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Everyone is excited that the Sibu-Kapit road will be officially opened soon. Road accessibility is definitely a blessing but the question is "Are we willing to move faster than others in our ministry for God's kingdom?" Are we already on our pathway to galvanize the leaders to action before it is too late?

We praise God as we see Lighthouse Kapit gaining momentum in seeking God's favour in this heartland. We must also realize that the imminent challenges and the fight against the spiritual forces and social ills and causes are far from over. Will Lighthouse Kapit be able to recruit more workers to nurture the youths and equip the folks in the longhouses in their faith formation? Will the Lighthouse be able to embark on building a youth centre to provide healthy activities on the empty lot next to the present building?

Our team was only able to feel the pulse of Lighthouse Kapit during our short visit. As we departed after lunch, my heart was singing praises and thanksgiving for the Lighthouse. We shall continue to uphold the Lighthouse in prayer so that its ministries will always be aligned to God's own heart. My salute to all who have been working so painstakingly for the people of this heartland whom God has never abandoned.

"I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there." (1 Kings 9:3) May His name be magnified in this Lighthouse forever and may it bring blessings of eternal value for many more generations to come.

Dr Wong Sung Ging

படகின் திறைகளை உயர்த்துவோம்.

‘எழுப்புதலை நாம் அனுப்ப முடியாது, ஆனால், தேவனானவர் தமது ஜனங்களின் மீது தமதுஆவியை ஊத முற்படுகையில், நாம் ஆயத்தமாக இருந்து அவரது ஆவியை சுதந்திரத்துக் கொள்ள எத்தனிக்கலாம். இந்த ஞானமுள்ள வாக்கியம் கேம்பல் மோர்கள் என்பவரது புத்தகத்திலிருந்துஎடுக்கப்பட்டது.

சமீபத்தில், சபாவில் உள்ள ஈபான்திருச்சபையின் பல போதகர்கள் மற்றும்தலைவர்களின் சொந்த வாழ்க்கைசாட்சிகளைக் கேட்கக்கூடிய சந்தர்ப்பம்எனக்குக்கிடைத்தது. இந்த யூலிஆண்டினைத் தொடங்கி, எக்காளத்தை ஊதியமாத்திரத்திலே, 16 செப்டம்பர் 2012 தேதிக்கு இரண்டு வாரத்திற்கு முன்னதாகவேஅற்புதங்கள் நடக்கத் தொடங்கி விட்டன.கிழக்கு மலேசியா எல்லையில் எழுப்பதல்நடந்தன.தேவனுடைய சந்திப்பின்விளைவுகள் அற்புதமாகவும்,உண்மையாகவும் இருந்தன.

இதே போன்ற தேவனுடைய சந்திப்பினைநாமும் கூட அனுபவிக்க வேண்டும் என நம்புகிறேன். இதற்கு நாம் இன்னும்ஆயத்தமாக வேண்டும். முதல் மற்றும் சிறந்த-ஆயத்தமானது, முழு மனதுடன் தேவன்பக்கமாக திரும்ப வேண்டும். இதேஅழைப்பினைத் தான் யோவான் ஸ்நான-வ்வனாந்திரத்திலே விடுத்தான். உலக சிற்றின்பங்களை உதறிவிட்டு, முழுமையானமாற்றத்திற்கு அழைத்தான். மைக்கேல் கேட் மறை பெய்யும் காலத்திற்கு ஆயத்தமாகுங்கள்” என்ற தமதுபுத்தகத்தில், தங்களது நிலம் காய்ந்துபோனதால் பயிரிட முடியால் இருந்த இரு உழவர்களைக் குறித்து இப்படியாககூறுகிறார். இந்த இரு உழவர்களும்ஜெபித்தனர். அவர்களில் ஒருவன் ஜெபித்தபின் வயல்வெளிக்குச் சென்று உழ தீர்மானித்தான். மற்றவன் மழைக்காககாத்திருந்தான். தேவன் நிச்சயமாக கிரியைசெய்வார் என்ற விசுவாசம் செயல்படச் செய்யும். ஜெபமும், விசுவாசமும் ஒன்றுசேரும் போது நிச்சயமாக மழை வரும்.

நாம் ‘மழைக்கு ஆயத்தமாக வேண்டும்.இதற்கு ஆயத்தமாக நிலத்தை பண்படுத்தவேண்டும். ---ஓசியா 10:12இல் இப்படியாககாண்கிறோம். ‘... உங்கள் தா-சுநிலத்தைப் பண்படுத்துங்கள் ... அவரைத் தேடும்காலமாயிருக்கிறது’. அது மாத்திரமல்லாமல், உடைந்த உள்ளமும், நொருங்குண்டஆவியும் இந்த ஆயத்தத்திற்கு முக்கியமானதாகும். இவை இல்லாவிடில் தேவனுடைய அசைவாடுதலை நம் மத்தியில் காண முடியாது.

அடிக்கடி நாம் உலகப்பிரகாரமானகாரியங்களில் தடுமாறுகிறோம். பண ஆசை,சொத்து, சுகம், சுய தற்காப்பு,

புகழ் மற்றும் பல காரியங்களினால் இழுக்கப்படுகிறோம். நமதுதிருச்சபைகளைக் குறித்து நாம் என்னஎண்ணுகிறோம்? நம் திருச்சபைகளை பராமரிப்பது மட்டும் போதுமானது என்றநிலையில் இருக்கிறோமா? சில நிகழ்ச்சிகளைநடத்துவதிலும், அது குறித்த திறமையாக அறிக்கைகள் கொடுப்பதிலும் நமது கவனம்இருக்கிறதா? ஆத்துமாக்கள் தொடப்படுவதையும், சுவிசேஷத்தினால் காணப்படும் வல்லமையான மாறுதலையும்காண வாஞ்சை இல்லாமல், நமது நிகழ்ச்சிகளிலே திருப்தி கொள்ளுகிறோமா? இன்னும் ஒருவருக்கொருவர் நமக்குள்ளே பதவி மற்றும் அந்தஸ்துக்காக சண்டையிட்டு, போராடுகிறோமா?

வாழ்கையிலும், ஊழியத்திலும் சிறு சிறுஅழைப்புகளிலிருந்து முற்றிலுமாக திரும்பி,தேவனுடைய மேலான அழைப்பிற்குப் பாத்திரவான்களாய், அவரையே நேசித்து, அவருக்கே ஊழியம் செய்வோம். நம்மை எளிதாக மேற்கொள்ளும் உலகப்பிரகாரமான சுக போகத்திலும், அக்கறையிலுமிருந்து நாம் முழுவதுமாக மாற வேண்டும். தேவனுடைய வார்த்தைக்கு நம்மை முழுவதுமாக அர்ப்பணிக்க வேண்டும். ஈபான் திருச்சபை சேகாதரர்கள், தாங்கள் எல்லாவற்றிலேயும் தேவனுக்குக் கீழ்ப்படிந்ததாக பகிர்ந்து கொண்டார்கள்- இதுவே அவர்களின் இரகசியமாகும்.

நாம் உழுது பண்படுத்த வேண்டிய காரியம் இதுவே. அப்போதுதான் இராஜாதி இராஜாவை வரவேற்க ஏற்ற பாதையை நம் உள்ளத்திலே கட்ட முடியும்.

படகின் திறைகளை உயர்த்தி, காற்றினைப்பிடிப்பதற்கு நமக்கு மனமில்லாவிட்டால், எழுப்புதலைக் குறித்து எப்படி பேச முடியும்? நமது ஜீவியத்தின் சாரம்சத்தைக் குறித்து கவனமான இருப்போமாக. காற்றடிக்கும் திசையிலே நம்முடைய படகின் திறைகளை உயர்த்துவோம். அப்போது பலமான எழுப்புதல் அலை நமது திருச்சபைகளைத் தொட்டு, நமது திருச்சபைகளிலேயும் மாற்றம் வரும்.

அருள்திரு. சி. ஜெயராஜ்
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God's children



Marie A. Oldham

Marie A. Oldham, widow of Bishop William Fitzjames Oldham, died October 12th at the age of eighty-one, and was buried beside her husband in Forest Lawn, Glendale, California.

Born in Bangalore, India, Marie Oldham came from a fine Christian family, and it was at the evangelistic meeting to which he went “out of curiosity” that William Oldham first saw his future bride. After he had decided to dedicate his life to God’s service it was natural that he should become acquainted with the young girl who was so much interested in all the church was doing. Three years later they were married and when later the Mission decided that Oldham should go to America to study. Mrs. Oldham urged him to go, though it meant a long separation. After three years she, too, went to America, where she spent her time studying and acquainting the women of America with conditions in far-off and little known India.

When the Oldhams returned to India, supposing that he would be given a school some place in India, they were told that they had been appointed to open work in Singapore. The announcement was a blow, and Dr. Thoburn asked, “Will you go?”

It was Marie Oldham who answered, “Doctor Thoburn, if we are appointed to Singapore, we will go to Singapore.”

That was characteristic of Mrs. Oldham and one can appreciate the sincerity of Bishop Oldham’s opening sentence in his address given on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday:

“Let me begin by saying that this is Mrs. Oldham—and she is the secret of the family.”

Only a brave woman would have been willing to go to Singapore under the circumstances “Make your own way.” Yet she rose to the challenge, as she did to every challenge that came to them.

The name Oldham is revered in Malaya as much for Marie Oldham as for Bishop Oldham, and the same is true in South America and in the United States. She was a tiny lady, not reaching her husband’s shoulder, but full of energy and vivacity, practical yet sympathetic.

In 1934 when permission was asked to dedicate “Malaysia Mosaic” to Bishop Oldham, his answer came back: “I would make one alteration, and that is that you add the name of Marie A. Oldham to mine. The work could not have been done without her.”

During the last years of his life, Bishop Oldham was an invalid and the Oldhams returned to Bangalore to live. Mrs. Oldham nursed her husband with untiring devotion and when they came to Malaya to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Mission people were amazed at the strength of that frail little lady of seventy-seven.

From Malaya the Oldhams went to America, their adopted country, to live in the mild climate of southern California. During the last five months Mrs. Oldham was confined to her bed and she was unaware that God had called her husband home.

Bishop Oldham ended his address nine years ago, “And after I have gone, the span of my years will be surpassed by this dear little lady who sits by my side.” But not for long, for only a few short months separated them.

The Malaysia Message

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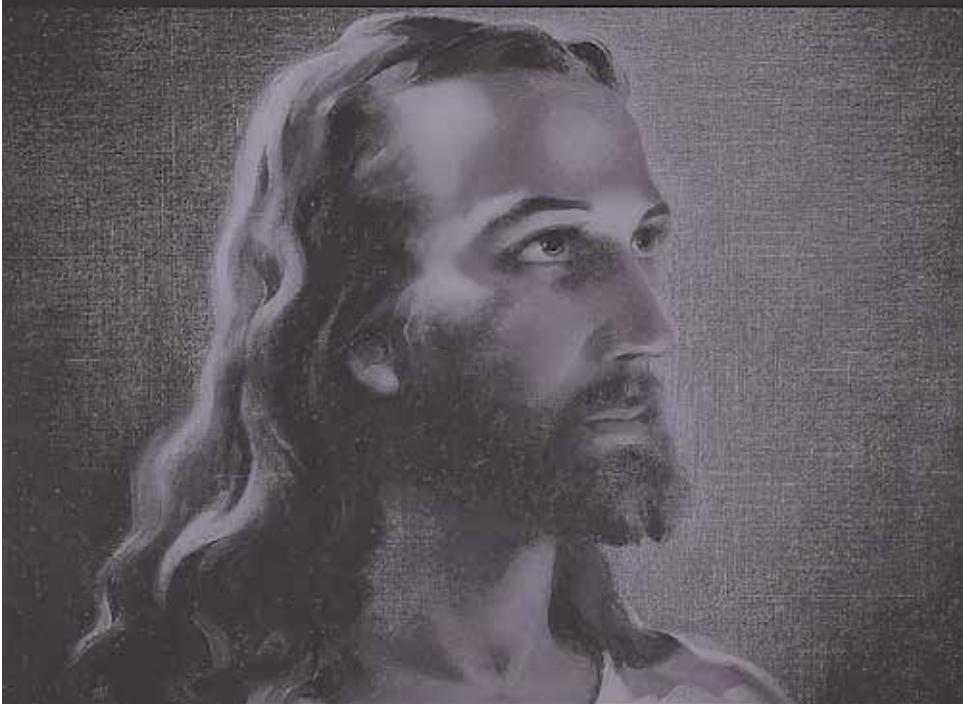
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