



## CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIAN MISSION SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA

# The Role Of Mission Schools In Nation Building



The Prime Minister, YAB Dato' Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak (centre), with YB Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department on his right, Bishop Ng Moon Hing, Chairman of the Christian Federation of Malaysia on his left, and YB Dr Wee Ka Siong, Deputy Education Minister next to Bishop Ng.

Organized by the Malayan Christian Schools' Council and the Mission School Authorities of Sabah and Sarawak under the auspices of the Christian Federation of Malaysia, the Conference met from 26 – 27 June 2009 in Kuala Lumpur.

Fortyone representatives from Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia representing 425 mission schools throughout the country were encouraged, affirmed and united by their common concern in improving their current high standards of education and providing the best opportunities for the children attending these schools.

The Objectives were:

- To promote greater understanding, cooperation and cohesion among mission school authorities in Peninsular Malaysia, Sarawak and Sabah (including Labuan).
- To obtain a wider perspective of management, role and direction of mission schools.
- To generate resolutions for the Government to act on for the welfare and betterment of mission schools in the country.
- To establish the Federation of Christian Mission Schools Malaysia.

Praise the Lord for this landmark meeting of all Christian Mission School Authorities in the whole of Malaysia. The conference was convened by YB Tan Sri Bernard

Dompok who had taken a great interest in Mission Schools in Malaysia.

### Opening Ceremony

This was graced by the Prime Minister, YAB Dato' Seri Mohd. Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak, at St John's Institution, Kuala Lumpur on 27 June 2009 at 11.00 a.m. In his speech, the Prime Minister acknowledged the role and contribution of mission schools all these years. He said that the ethos and traditions of the schools must be maintained and promised that the government will cooperate wherever possible.

Outcome: By the end of the conference, a list of resolutions had been agreed upon by the participants. These were refined by a subcommittee who presented the Conference Resolutions to Tan Sri Bernard Dompok on 7 July 2009, who will raise them at the Cabinet meeting.

If the resolutions materialize, exciting times lie ahead and the Mission Authorities must prepare themselves. By the Grace of God, the mission of the founding fathers will continue on and brought to a higher level. To God Be the Glory!

### The Primary Resolution

It was resolved that the best possible scenario ultimately for the involvement of mission schools in education in Malaysia would be for the mission schools to be

allowed to operate along the lines of the system practiced in Hong Kong where the Government fully funds both the development and operational expenditure of the schools. The schools prepare the students for a common examination mandated by the Government under a common curriculum.

In other words, the policy is set by the Government whereas its implementation is almost entirely left to the mission authorities which will hire (or fire) all the teachers and administrative staff.

### Interim Resolutions

While waiting for the Government to study the above-mentioned proposal, the Conference unanimously agreed that there are other issues which could be addressed immediately by the Government and these have been summarized as follows:

1. The principle of maximum consultation between the Ministry of Education and the Mission Authorities in the appointment of Principals / Head Teachers be strengthened
2. Preservation of the character and ethos of mission schools; that Boards of Governors continue to preserve this legacy.
3. Funding. That the capital grants and full grant-in-aid which mission schools are

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# Tragedy Turned Into Blessing FOR KALMUNAI, SRI LANKA.

In response to the tsunami tragedy in Sri Lanka in 2004, the Methodist Church in Malaysia rallied around with the rest of the world to lend a helping hand. A team comprising Leong Pook Seong, Kala Devadasan and myself were quickly sent (3-5 February 2005) on a relief and fact finding mission to identify the best way to assist them, within the resources made available to us through special offerings that were taken in response to an appeal by our Bishop Hwa Yung on 29 December, 2004.

After extensive surveys of the devastated areas, interviews with victims and consultations with the Methodist Church of Sri Lanka, the team proposed that the best and most long lasting option would be to establish a vocational training centre for the tsunami victims who had lost their livelihood. Requests were also made for the renovation of the Women's Hostel of the Kalkudah Evangelism Training College which was badly damaged by the tsunami.

Upon approval from both the Sri Lankan and Malaysian Methodist Churches, both projects were launched with the signing of a MOU by Bishop Hwa Yung and Rev

Ebenezer Joseph, the President of the Sri Lanka Methodist Church. Several planning and consultation meetings followed, interrupted and delayed by unstable political conditions that ensued throughout the next three years.

The construction of the Methodist Livelihood Vocational Training Centre in Kalmunai was finally completed and became operational in March 2008. The staff load included a Director, 4 instructors and 1 Caretaker cum Gardener/Cleaner. Three courses were offered in the area of Air Conditioning & Refrigeration, Plumbing and Domestic Electrician. The first batch of students numbered 31. The second batch included an additional course in Motor-Cycle Repair & Maintenance (from December 2008 - May 2009) and a total of 80 students graduated. The third batch is scheduled to commence in July 2009.

Whilst the project has been a success it is facing financial difficulties as it still has not become self sustaining due to the poor economic and political situation of the country. Monthly, the Centre requires RM10,000 as operation costs. It is planned to get outside work for the trainees for on the job training and to charge clients for jobs



Bishop Hwa Yung, Shellatay Devadason and Mr Hemal Fernando, the Director of Methodist Relief & Development Service, outside the chapel of the Evangelism Training College, Kalkudah.

done so that a reserve fund may be built up for future sustenance.

8 December 2008 was a special day for the above projects as it was the day both project centres were officially dedicated for the Glory of the Lord, jointly by Bishop Hwa Yung and Rev Ebenezer Joseph. It was an apt occasion in which the care and concern of the Methodist Church in Malaysia in responding to the tsunami was gratefully acknowledged and celebrated with worship, dances, singing, garlands, speeches and feasting! Though our journey was beset with so many uncertainties and unknown dangers, the Lord granted Bishop and me, a safe trip and the joy of witnessing the mighty works of God amidst a people redeemed from the trauma of disasters and wars.

Shellatay Devadason  
Tamil Annual Conference

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entitled to, according to the Education Act 1996, be implemented Mission schools have been unjustly denied assistance due to them in the last 13 years since the Act came into force, and even before that.

Students in mission schools are citizens of Malaysia and a majority of them are Bumiputra especially in Sabah and Sarawak. Every student in this country has a right to receive quality education guaranteed by a just and equitable allocation of resources.

4. A Special Unit in the Ministry of Education to deal with matters related to mission schools.

5. Designate selected mission schools to meet the special needs of under-achieving students who are unable to fit into the normal schools' academic, exam-orientated curriculum.

Mission schools envisage "a recovery of our historic mission to help the poor, the helpless and the marginalized of society".

6. Restoring the multi-ethnic character of Mission schools in terms of student enrolment and teaching staff.

7. Mission schools built on leasehold land: that existing leases of mission schools and leases which have lapsed to be renewed at nominal premiums.

8. Ministry approval and financial allocations for Meeting of Mission School Heads and administrators for discussion of common challenges and resolving of issues peculiar to Mission schools.

9. Every Mission School shall have a fully functioning Board of Governors regulated by an Instrument of Government as required by the Education Act 1996 Chapter 11, Para 53 Management of Educational Institutions.

That the Board should be fully functional and open a Bank Account for the management of funds accrued from Bookshop, Canteen and other sources related to the use of grounds and buildings.

10. That mission authorities / head teachers be given the discretion of 20% of pupil enrolments at Std 1 and Form 1; that all Primary VI school children move automatically to the corresponding secondary school.

11. That upon written request Christian Clubs and Societies be given approval to function in school and recognized as part of the school co-curricular activities.

12. While we do not agree to students offering 17, 19 or 21 subjects, we propose the maximum number of subjects a candidate can offer in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia be capped at 12.

13. That the subject, Bible Knowledge, be taught to Christian students in mission schools in place of Pendidikan Moral.

14. That selected mission schools capable of financing themselves be allowed to operate as private educational institutions.

Tay Choon Neo  
Deputy Executive Director  
Council of Education

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### August

07-09	Fri-Sun	TRAC Spiritual Formation & Leadership Weekend 2 - Penang
13-15	Thu-Sat	General Conference Executive Committee
22-24	Sat-Mon	TAC Methodist Women Conference CAC Methodist Women Conference
22-26	Sat-Wed	TRAC Methodist Women Conference
24-26	Mon-Wed	CAC Senior Citizens Retreat
25-27	Tue-Thu	SCAC Board of Family Wellness & Counseling - Marriage Enrichment Retreat
27-29	Thu-Sat	SCAC Board of Evangelism - Bahasa Malaysia Ministry Camp
29-31	Sat-Mon	TRAC Young Adults Consultation SIAC District Lay & Pastors Convention, Sibul
25-31	Tue-Mon	TAC Week of Prayer and Self-Denial

### September

04-06	Fri-Sun	TRAC National Youth Counselors Retreat
07-09	Mon-Wed	SPAC Executive Board Meeting
10-13	Thu-Sun	TRAC Board of Ministry, President/DS, Joint Boards/Executive Board Meetings
22-23	Tue-Wed	SCAC Board of Christian Education – Discipleship Teacher Training
22-27	Tue-Sun	World Methodist Council, Chile
25-27	Fri-Sun	TRAC BB/GB Consultation

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# The Transforming Spirit — The Ultimate Power For Life Changes

In the first of this series we looked at 'The Waiting Father', the one who meets our deepest longings for love and acceptance. The second article dealt with 'The Self-Giving Son' who through His death on the Cross addresses the most difficult existential problem faced by humans, the problem of suffering. In this article we come to the third person of our Trinitarian God, the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps the most pressing practical question that all of us face is, 'Is change possible?' We see this most clearly in politics. Anwar campaigned in the last election for change, and Najib sings the same tune today. Change was the keyword for Obama's presidential campaign also. On the personal level, all of us struggle with the same question. The wounded husband or wife weeps in silence as he or she cries for change in a broken marriage. A loving parent waits for her child to grow up and change. A Christian struggling with inner sin longs for the power to know victory. The list goes on. But, sadly, as is so often the case in life, many of the promises to change ends with more of the same! As we say, 'Cakap sahaja! Talk only lah ...'

Where then do we find the power for genuine change? Is there any hope for change? It is at this point of seeming hopelessness that the Christian message of Easter comes loud and clear: Jesus 'was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Holy Spirit by his resurrection from the dead' (Rom 1:4). The Holy Spirit which gave life to the dead human body of Jesus is the ultimate answer to humanity's longing for the power to change. If He can raise the dead to life, what else can the Holy Spirit not do!

The Bible tells us repeatedly what the Holy Spirit can do. For example, King Saul was told by the prophet Samuel before he became king that the 'Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power ... and you will be changed into a different person' (1 Sam 10:6). Or, often when we seek to live holy lives, we end up feeling like failures because the grip of sin is too powerful for us. But the apostle Paul tells us that we

need not despair because 'the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death ... in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us' (Rom 8: 2,4). The sanctifying power of the Spirit is the secret of victory over sin.

Again, Jesus told his disciples that anyone 'who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father' (John 14:12). In other words, all who believe in Jesus will be empowered to do all that Jesus did in His earthly ministry, including his prophetic, healing and deliverance ministries. Where would the power for this come from? Answer: Because when Jesus returns to the Father, he will send His Holy Spirit to empower us (John 16: 7, 8). This same Spirit will also convict the unbelieving world of sin and guilt, and that salvation comes through Christ alone (16:8-11). This promise was fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2) when a frightened group of disciples was transformed into a missionary force that turned the world upside down for Jesus!

In summary, the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is given to all Christians and the church to advance the work that Christ begun on the cross, to bring salvation and transformation to all humanity and the world! It is a revolutionary message that tells us of the greatest power for CHANGE in our broken world. Unfortunately, we Christians are too used to a powerless Christianity. We are often merely satisfied with treating our faith as no different from other religions which lacks the Spirit's power to change!

We need to remind ourselves of Jesus' words: 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses' (Acts 1:8); 'All authority in heaven and earth is given to me ... Go and make disciples of all nations' (Mat 28:18f); 'Those who have faith in me will do what I have been doing' (John 14:12); and 'I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it' (Mat 16:18). Jesus' words here and elsewhere tell us of the tremendous power and

authority He has made available to us. But the church often appears to have failed to take them seriously. Consequently we often live defeated lives and proclaim a powerless and impotent Christ!

George Verwer, the OM leader for many years, once wrote a parody of the great hymn 'Onward Christian Soldiers' to describe the weakness of much of today's church. He titled it: '*Backward Christian soldiers*'

1. Backward Christian soldiers,  
Fleeing from the fight,  
With the cross of Jesus,  
Nearly out of sight.  
Christ our rightful master  
Stands against the foe  
Onward into battle, we  
Seem afraid to go.

**Chorus:**  
*Backward Christian soldiers,  
Fleeing from the fight,  
With the cross of Jesus,  
Nearly out of sight.*

2. Like a mighty tortoise  
Moves the church of God.  
Brothers we are treading,  
Where we've often trod.  
We are much divided,  
Many bodies we,  
Having different doctrines, but  
Not much charity.

3. Crowns and thrones may perish,  
Kingdoms rise and wane,  
But the cross of Jesus  
Hidden does remain.  
Gates of hell should never  
'gainst the Church prevail,  
We have Christ's own promise, but  
We think it might fail.

4. Sit here then ye people,  
Join our sleeping throng.  
Blend with ours, your voices  
In a feeble song.  
Blessings, ease and comfort  
Ask from Christ the King,  
But with our modern thinking,  
We won't do a thing.

Perhaps you think that George Verwer's parody is rather unfair, and we can argue endlessly over this. But the only way to prove him wrong is for us to live differently.

The leadership of the Methodist Church set as our theme for this quadrennium, *'Spreading Scriptural Holiness, Transforming the Nation.'* This is a theme that goes back to John Wesley and his colleagues. They believed that the reason for which God has called them forth to lead the Methodist revival in 18th century England was *'to reform the nation and, in particular, the Church; to spread scriptural holiness over the land.'*

This theme and mission was formulated against a social background that is not too different from ours. In fact, in some ways, it was even worse than our national situation today. England at the beginning of the 18th century was marked by national spiritual decline, gross immorality at all levels of society from the king downwards, rampant corruption, and widespread poverty. Within this situation, the poor were oppressed and neglected, and it is not surprising that many found their only solace in getting drunk!

Wesley and his colleagues preached the gospel of free salvation in Christ, and the poor especially heard them gladly! This led to widespread evangelism, church growth, and spiritual revival in the nation, which contributed much to the moral regeneration and transformation of individuals and society. This explains their consciousness of the call *'to reform the nation and, in particular, the Church; to spread scriptural holiness over the land.'* The question is: Do we believe that God can do it again?

The 20th century has seen an unprecedented growth of the church throughout the non-western world. In Latin America, Pentecostal forms of Christianity have grown phenomenally in the past 100 years. Their impact has been so significant that David Martin, Emeritus professor of sociology at the London School of Economics, has asserted that they are changing the social landscape of Latin America. Africa, south of the Sahara, has essentially been turned into a Christian continent with the percentage of believers in some countries as high as 90%. Even in Asia, where Christians are proportionally less, the church has grown like wildfire at different times in China, India, Korea, Nepal, Philippines, Indonesia, as well as other places.

Much of this explosive growth has little to do with human methods and resources, but rather the result of powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit's work. For example, the stories of Prophet Harris and Simon Kimbangu are two of the most amazing stories of revival and evangelism in Africa. You just have to look them up on the net via Google. In the case of Harris, up to 200,000 people were baptised in an amazing 18-month preaching ministry along the coast of Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire in 1913-14. A few years later in Congo, Kimbangu, a man with little formal education, started to preach in 1921. He did it for 2 months, was then arrested on the false charge of inciting rebellion, and thrown into prison thereafter for 30 years till his death. But the church he started today numbers some 5 million members or more. In both cases, much of the advance of the gospel was due to the powerful work of the Spirit in prophecy, healing and deliverance. When we look at the way the church is growing rapidly today in China and other parts of Asia, we find similar stories about the amazing power of the Spirit!

The work of the Holy Spirit is seen not only in 'signs and wonders' and church growth, but also the transformation of individuals and societies. This brings us back to the Methodist revival of the 18th century under Wesley. Some historians (especially Marxists and secularists) generally seek to minimise the impact of Wesley and the early Methodists on social change. But others have argued that early Methodist played a significant role in the transformation of England.

Ronald Stone (*John Wesley's Life and Ethics*, Abingdon, 2001, p. 226) has suggested that Methodism did much to reduce poverty in English society. He sums up the evidence as follows: 'In fact, the Wesleyan-organized cell movements provided the discipline, hope, organization, learning, and networks that lifted many of the early Methodists out of poverty. Religiously inspired communities of economic, ethical orientation, and education may still be one of the greatest antidotes to poverty for many societies.'

Luke Keefer ('John Wesley, The Methodist and Social Reform in England,' [[http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan\\_theology/theojrnl/21-25/25-01.htm](http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/21-25/25-01.htm)] 2000, p.8) goes further. He asserts: 'As the only nation in Europe which successfully carried out a

social revolution in the period 1763-1914 without widespread violence, England was admired by foreign observers for its unique blending of personal freedom and social stability.... As Halevy sees it, it was a matter of Methodism's acting in concert with other factors in the complex British scene which produced the England of the nineteenth century. Wesley is assigned a constructive position in that overall development. This interpretation may not sit well with Marxist philosophy, but it fits very well with the historical data.' In other words, Wesley and his colleagues may well have saved England from the sort of violent revolution that countries like France went through in their quest for a better and more just society.

We come back to the question with which we began: Is change possible? The answer of the Bible and of church history is a clear and resounding 'YES!' Perhaps the real difficulty that many of us face is the question of whether we are prepared for the long haul. Living in an age of instant noodles and instant coffee, modern creatures like us want changes fast, and preferably, by yesterday! But it is instructive to remember that Wesley's ministry spanned a total of 53 years, from the beginning of the revival in 1738 till his death in 1791. Clearly Wesley laboured long years to bring about the spiritual and social impact he exerted upon England. Indeed the revival went on altogether for about 100 years, with other Methodists carrying on where Wesley left off after his death.

In the generation after Wesley, the most significant group of Christians in socio-political change in England was the Clapham Sect, whose leader, William Wilberforce, led the fight against slavery in the British Empire. (You can see his story in the recent film, 'Amazing Grace.') Though Anglicans, they were clearly influenced by Wesley and the Methodist revival. They fought a long battle in Parliament and in the wider public for the abolition of slavery and for moral reformation in society. From the day Wilberforce took up these issues in Parliament till the day the final abolition bill was passed, just a couple of days before his death, it was a total of 46 years! Wesley's and Wilberforce's stories remind us that, whilst the Holy Spirit gives us the power to change the world for good, nevertheless He expects us to be longsuffering and persistent too!

*Come Holy Spirit to empower us and give us grace for the long haul!*

## 9th Session of SCAC Methodist Convention Bishop: Only Deep-Seated Repentance Leads to Revival

The 9th Session of the Methodist Convention, Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference (SCAC) was held from 3 - 5 June 2009 in the newly renovated Masland Methodist Church, Sibü. This once-in-three year event reached a record breaking 1,500 participants from all over Sarawak and Sabah this year.

The main theme of the Convention is "Spreading Scriptural Holiness, Transforming the Nation" which is also the theme of the General Conference for this quadrennium. Bishop Hwa Yung said in the Opening Message that such a theme actually came from John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement. Wesley was concerned about the need for spiritual and moral reform in the nation and he understood very well that only deep-seated repentance



Calling on the Lord

would bring revival. The Bishop suggested that our nation is also undergoing a lot of political changes. Will our Church remain as a vibrant mission oriented church and an instrument of transformation or will our Church be irrelevant to the nation? "Only when our hearts are changed and our church made holy, can we be empowered and used by God to change our nation and the world."

Other special topics included were "The Future of Sarawak from a Christian Perspective with Special Reference to Blue Ocean Strategy," "How Christians can Influence Society Through Politics," "Understanding Depression," "God Opens the Door in China" and others.

Organising Chairman of the Convention, Mr Hii Ching Chiong said in his welcoming speech that this was our Convention. It was a time for thanksgiving, a time for fellowship, a time for renewal and a time for action. The SCAC Methodist Convention was first held in 1992 and since then once in two years or three years.

Rev Dr Su Chii Ann, President of SCAC in his opening speech said that the goals of the Convention were 3-fold: to enable the church



From left, Bishop Hwa Yung, Bishop Emeritus Peter Chio, President Su Chii Ann, SCAC Lay Leader Mr Hii Ching Chiong and Dato Tiong Thai King, Chairman of Sibü Municipal Council.

members to have a better understanding of the church theme, to connect with the other churches and pastors, and to encourage active participation in the Convention and in the church.

There were 30 minutes of praying time each day for three days during the Methodist Convention. It was a very touching moment when 1,500 people raised their hands or knelt down in front of God to pray. God works in ways that we cannot see and prayer is the beginning of action taken to spread scriptural holiness and transform the nation. I was personally moved to tears when I began to call upon the Lord to have mercy on our land.

Winnie  
Connection  
15 June 2009

## WFCMC Missions Work Vietnam and England as the New Mission Fields

During the recent Executive Committee meeting of the World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches (WFCMC) in June in Hong Kong, the Chairman Rev Dr Su Chii Ann reiterated that the main thrust for WFCMC is in Mission work. Therefore, this should be the emphasis of all its committee. WFCMC has the following committees: Worship, Communication, Religious Education, Theology, Missions Fund, Social Concern, and Mission & Evangelism.

Each member church (Australia, Hong Kong, East & West Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan), has one representative in all the committees. The committee on Mission and Evangelism has Mr Richard Wong (CAC West Malaysia) and Mr John Ling (SCAC East Malaysia).

For the past few years, the main ministry of the committee has been in Cambodia. Together with the United Methodist Church of USA and Europe, the Korean Methodist Church, the Methodist Missions Society of Singapore, the WFCMC is pulling all the resources together to help establish the Cambodian Methodist Church.

The social work of the Cambodian Methodist Church is encouraging. The Methodist School provides an opportunity which we can only dream of in other places. After a few years of concerted effort, it has developed into a well known school in Phnom Penh. It provides quality and total education which is much needed in a developing country like Cambodia.

The Cossi Children Homes is another good example where the needs of children are provided for. We are now moving into Student Hostel ministry, providing affordable accommodation for students coming from other towns and villages into Phnom Penh for their education.

The Cambodian Methodist Church has its own Bible School to train up future pastors to serve in the Church.

The Church now has 142 Churches, 5,250 members, 11 elders, 19 deacons and 108 preachers. In August 2008 it was established as a Mission Conference, and hopefully within four years, it can become a Provisional Annual Conference. We shall continue to provide personnel to help out in



the Bible School, assume duties as District Superintendents and pastors, be involved in administrative duty, running the Children Homes, Methodist School and Student Hostel ministry.

WFCMC has decided to spread our wings beyond Cambodia now. We are looking into Vietnam and England. It is fairly easy to understand why we include Vietnam. But you may ask why England? The situation in England is there are now 12 Chinese Methodist Churches but only four pastors. Besides, there are 100,000 Mainland Chinese studying in England each year in different universities. These students have to go back to China after completion of their study. So there are tremendous opportunities to reach out to these students.

John Ling, Chairman  
Committee for Mission and Evangelism  
World Federation of Chinese Methodist  
Churches

# Spiritual Formation and Leadership (SFL)

*The Institute for Christian Ministry (ICM), a newly set up agency of Trinity Annual Conference has planned a number of programmes for 2009. One of these is the SFL Weekend retreats which is a four part module for the training of leaders in spiritual formation.*

*Two retreats running part one of the module were held in February and April. Each retreat took up to 25 participants with four spiritual companions and facilitators. Their focus was on building the inner-life of the leader and disciplines like silence, solitude and scriptural meditations were integrated into a weekend of teaching, reflections and interaction.*

*Below is a reflection by Dr KT Lee, one of the participants of the SFL Weekend.*

## **Harvest Haven, Gopeng (20-22 February 2009)**

It was a quiet Friday morning at my clinic when I closed for the day at 1.00pm. My clothes had been packed the day before. The map to the camp site was surprisingly detailed and so I did not lose my way and actually arrived early. However the road was a bit run down deeper in and unless you do not mind scrapping cow dung from your car tires, you need to slowly weave on the road and negotiate your car like a commando to avoid the 'dungmines'.

Located on a fenced area of 6.8 acres, the campsite appeared like an oasis popping out of a monotonous listless plantation landscape. It boasted of a swimming pool, football field, basketball/volleyball/futsal court and table tennis table. Alas, none of these facilities were enjoyed as the participants were not supposed to talk, gesture or even have eye contact with each other when they practiced the disciplines of Solitude and Silence (though one was allowed to scream, "Fire! Fire!" etc. if the need arose). Here, I must confess that I 'cheated' a little, sometimes nodding and smiling upon receiving a simple courtesy from other participants, most of whom were equally amateurish in playing the role of monastic monks.

The retreat officially started during dinner time and we were given the above mentioned ground rules. We were also expected to eat our meals together at the same table in silence and solitude. Now when a group of adults is plucked from the hustle and

bustle of their daily responsibilities and told to basically be alone and avoid outside stimulus (except the Bible), each would be compelled to pause, rest and reflect on his/her life. If during this same period, a sprinkling of teaching sessions were added, wherein each participant was invited to go to God with his/her wounds, many souls would instinctively seek out Jesus for healing and rest.

I could not help but compare this to my own medical practice of 'insisting' that very vertiginous (giddy) patients be admitted in the hospital for complete rest in bed. I know from experience that if I were to allow these patients to go home, they would not be resting in bed but rather be pandering to the needs of their family or sneaking in some home/work chores! The more they force their bodies beyond their limit, the sicker they become and the longer they will need to recuperate. So also, a period of silence and solitude is very often NECESSARY to rest one's soul and allow it to rejuvenate and bask in God's presence. Quite often too, like the patient with vertigo, Christians will not admit they actually need soul rest.

Among the interesting things I learned during the weekend was to read the Bible using *Lectio Divina* – read the scripture slowly, prayerfully, meditatively, repetitively and invite the Holy Spirit to guide me and bring God's words to life for me. We were taught that to focus on God, we need to let our cluttered thoughts fly over us. The facilitators encouraged us to still our wandering hearts in a quiet place. There we were to read and reflect on scripture while listening with our hearts. Only then do we respond to that which stirs our souls.

In another session, the participants were invited to reflect on the whole of their life story and to identify their strengths and weaknesses. St. Augustine wrote, "Man possesses wisdom through dual knowledge – the knowledge of God and the knowledge of self." We were also introduced to the need to schedule our lives in a realistic and practical manner, by integrating spiritual disciplines in our lives suitable to our life stage, personality and interests. In other words, as good stewards, we need to know our body and take care of it holistically – what author Ruth Haley Barton called "Sacred Rhythms".



A teaching session

When life suddenly grinds to a snail pace, we tend to slow down and start looking at life around us. The surrounding becomes suddenly more interesting and we tend to appreciate God's creation better. The humble shrub too can become an object of fascination with its unique branches, canopy of leaves and its glorious flowers each in its God-appointed place.

On Sunday during breakfast, we were allowed to break the Great Silence! Oh what joy it is to be able to talk, yak, laugh and have sweet fellowship. The group sharing was refreshingly candid and encouraging. Many were refreshed and spiritually drawn closer to God. A few confessed that they had been granted much needed rest for both their body and soul. All felt the closeness of God; personally real and collectively invigorating.

We were challenged to serve God and put Him first in our lives. I came away from the retreat strengthened and realizing that today the need is for faithfulness and obedience to build up the one body of the bride of Christ – His Church. God is patiently waiting for His people today, ordinary men and women, like you and me, to stand up and be counted.

Dr KT Lee  
Wesley Methodist Church  
Taiping

SFL 2 will be held from 6-8 August at Stella Maris, Penang and 2-4 Oct at Methodist Centre, Fraser's Hill. Part 2 of this SFL Weekend will focus on building Personal Leadership Skills for Leaders. The focus is on looking at leadership skills from a spiritual formation perspective. For more information, please visit [www.trac.org.my](http://www.trac.org.my) and go to the Institute for Christian Ministry link.

*At the 9th Session General Conference in September 2008, four papers were presented on the topics Discipleship, Evangelism & Church Planting, Missions and Church & Society. These provided the basis for group discussions with the view of drawing up a roadmap for the Methodist Church in Malaysia. Three papers, in abridged form, have been published in the previous issues of Pelita Methodist. This is the final paper. Editor.*

*Rev Dr Tie King Tai from the Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference is the Principal of the Methodist Theological School, Sibu. Mr Wong Woay Ern is a member of the Chinese Annual Conference working with the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) Malaysia.*

# Missions of the Methodist Church in Malaysia For the Coming Twenty Years

• Paper Writer: Rev Dr Tie King Tai • Research Assistant: Mr Wong Woay Ern

## INTRODUCTION

The following chapters of this paper are an attempt to answer the questions raised by our Bishop and the GCEC in regard to the missions endeavor of the Methodist Church. The questions are summarized as below:

First, in the present Malaysian Methodist Church missions endeavor, is there a problem of commitment and sacrifice in sending out long-term missionaries, not only short-term ones?

Second, when the western missionaries came in the 19th and 20th centuries, they did many good things but also made many mistakes. Are we also repeating many of the mistakes of the past?

Third, every church and conference sometimes appears to be doing their own thing. Is there a need for some sort of coordination? Can we begin to seek God for His leading to think through together how we should do missions, what should be our priorities, and how we can become a truly effective missionary church?

### Present Missions Endeavor

According to reports given by Boards of Missions of all six annual conferences and presented to GCEC in August, 2007, each annual conference has been involved in certain missions works in one form or another. The following paragraphs are a very brief summary of what they have been doing.

### A Summary

SIAC has been working on reaching out to as many Iban longhouses as possible. Meanwhile, SIAC is also doing missions work in Johor Bahru. In years to come, they hope to reach out to Shah Alam, Serdang, Melaka and Alor Setar.

SCAC has sent out and supported at least 26 long-term missionaries serving in six

missions fields overseas, while supporting some short-term missionaries and sending short-term missions teams to support their missionaries. Their vision and goal is to send 50 long-term missionaries in 2010 and 100 long-term missionaries in 2020.

SPAC has been involved in local urban missions focusing on school youth ministry and Chinese university students ministry. In overseas missions, SPAC has been nurturing 53 needy kids in Khang Tong, Myanmar with food, shelter and education. SPAC has also been supporting financially six Wa District local pastors, and doing discipleship training for the minority people groups in Kunming.

TRAC has four adopted overseas countries with two in the ASEAN region and two in the Indian Sub-continent. Churches are encouraged to adopt at least one of the four countries and be involved in missions work initiated by TRAC in collaboration with local missions partners.

CAC is a member of World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches (WFCMC). Along with SPAC, SCAC and other Chinese Methodist Churches in Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, they have joint missions works in Cambodia and China. CAC also has missions works in Myanmar and Thailand. In Myanmar, CAC has five primary Chinese schools and five churches, totaling 1,250 students, 49 teachers/pastors and more than 3,000 church members. Besides, CAC also has work among the Akkha people, having trained seven local pastors and training seven more youths as future pastors. In Thailand, CAC also works among the Akkha people, having 23 churches, totaling more than 2,000 members, and one Chinese primary school, having 150 students. Seven new graduates have become pastors.

TAC has established MMM (Malaysian Missionary Movement) about 15 years ago

to advance the missions works. Among the Palay people in Hatyai, Southern Thailand, the language centre has 350-400 students, with missionaries and volunteers based there. In Komerang, TAC has been working there for more than 10 years with cell churches. In Myanmar, TAC has adopted 500 children for school education and helped the Methodist churches and Methodist Theological Institute in Yangon while supporting the Tamil, Telugu and Hindustani churches financially. In Sabah, TAC has supported the Bonggi people, adopting one child for education and helping rebuild the parsonage. In Nepal, TAC has adopted five missionaries to work in five unreached people groups. In India, TAC has adopted a church which is run by lepers and sponsored missionaries who work among the lepers. TAC also works among the migrants in Malaysia involving 16 TAC churches.

### An Answer

To answer the first question posted above: "in the present Malaysian Methodist Church missions endeavor, is there a problem of commitment and sacrifice in sending out long-term missionaries, not only short-term ones?" Yes, there is a certain commitment and sacrifice by some Annual Conferences in sending out long-term missionaries. However, generally speaking, the majority are not doing so. More are involved in adopting and supporting local people in doing missions among their own peoples. More are involved in sending short-term missionaries. Let us take a look at the growth rate of worldwide long-term missionaries over the years:

*In the 1970s, the number of non-Western missionaries was less than 1,000 and the Western missionaries were nearly 60,000. But by the end of 20th century, the number of missionaries from the non-Western world had far exceeded the number of missionaries*



from Western world. The growth rate of Western missionaries had doubled which meant up to 120 thousand from 60 thousand. But the growth rate of the non-Western missionaries was 180 times, which meant 180 thousand from 1 thousand.<sup>1</sup>

Are Malaysian churches, or more specifically the Methodist Church, ahead or behind in sending out long-term missionaries?<sup>2</sup> Just by looking at the AC's Board of Missions reports above, we are actually very behind in this aspect. We need to do something about it.

### **Repeating Past Mistakes**

We have looked at how majority of our churches are only sending short-term missionaries instead of the long-termers. Now let us take a look at some of the mistakes made by the western missionaries that we might be repeating. When they came in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, they did many good things but also made many mistakes. Are we also repeating many of the mistakes of the past?

In his penetrating and thought-provoking paper<sup>3</sup>, Dr Ralph Winter<sup>4</sup> listed and explained twelve mistakes that the western missionaries have made over the past century. Therefore they are not only mistakes in the past but also in the present. It is only wise for us to take heed and to avoid the same mistakes:

1. The Mistake of Starting Bible Schools, Not Universities.
2. The Mistake of Only "Salvation in Heaven," not "Kingdom on Earth."
3. The Mistake of Congregations Sending Missionaries, Not Using Mission Agencies.
4. The Mistake of Whole Congregations in Direct Involvement, Not Professional Missions.
5. The Mistake of Insisting That Devout Followers of Jesus Call Themselves "Christians" And Identify With the Western Church.
6. The Mistake of Sending Only Money, Not Missionaries.
7. The Mistake of Sending Short-Termers, Not Long-Termers.
8. The Mistake of Not Understanding Business in Mission and Mission in Business.
9. The Mistake of Healing the Sick, Not Eradicating Disease Germs.
10. The Mistake of Thinking "Peace" Not "War."
11. The Mistake of Assuming Science Is a Foe Not a Friend.
12. The Mistake of An Evangelism That Is Not Validated And Empowered by Social Transformation.

For our purpose, we will look at only three of the above mistakes, namely, 3, 6, and 7.

### ***No. 3. The Mistake of Congregations Sending Missionaries, Not Using Mission Agencies.***

Dr Winter explains:

*Today many congregations are large enough and strong enough to feel that they don't need a mission agency through which to send their missionaries. This is a new and widespread phenomenon which ignores the great value of the veteran mission agencies which can draw upon the insights of missiology and the vast field experience which are lacking in the average congregation. It may be true that some mission agencies are more experienced and wiser than others, but to my knowledge there is no example of a local congregation bypassing mission agencies with any great success.<sup>5</sup>*

There is a tendency today for churches to bypass missions agencies in order to avoid bigger expenses. It is true that some missions agencies need to review and revise their budgets for the third world churches. However, the third world churches have not taken into account the vast amount of money needed to build up the missions fields in the long term process.

### ***No. 6. The Mistake of Sending Only Money, Not Missionaries***

It seems that most churches in Malaysia which are keen to conduct annual missions conferences year after year are content with setting faith-pledge goals in reaching a certain amount of money. They are usually not targeting to have certain number of missionaries to be sent out from their midst. It also seems that churches have replaced missionaries with money to ease their conscience to obey the Great Commission.

Dr Winter clarifies that money can be very helpful but there is no example of harm to the cause of missions that is more extensive than the careless use of money. Money is more easily corrupted than missionaries.<sup>6</sup>

This action of sending money only actually kindles a new kind of imperialism - spiritual imperialism whereby the giving church takes control of the receiving church, and imposes its own culture and church model upon the latter. As a result, it stifles the development of an indigenous church and produces a church that is dependent on the giving church.<sup>7</sup>

### ***No. 7. The Mistake of Sending Short-Termers, Not Long-Termers***

Dr Winter again explains:

*There are now almost two million short-termers leaving the United States each year compared to 35,000 long-term missionaries. Note that the overall cost of short-termers is at least five times as much as the overall cost of long-term missionaries. This means that instead of doubling or tripling the number of long-term missionaries we're investing at least five times as much money in short-termers. Short-term trips are wonderful education, but a very small accomplishment in missions. Worse still, a short term is often scary enough or useless enough to turn a young person away from being a missionary at all<sup>8</sup>*

It might be true that short term experiences would be too wasteful, too scary and too useless in certain sense. Or some might use short term experiences as an opportunity to travel or to ease one's conscience or to boast about one's experiences and have no intention to go long term at all.

However, short term experiences could be turned into long term commitments and fruitful experiences if handled and supervised well by both the sending churches and the receiving missions fields. In SCAC, many long term missionaries had been short term missionaries.

The question remains for us to answer: are we repeating the past mistakes? If not, let us move on; if so, let us make changes. But how can we make changes if we are not aware of the mistakes and coordinated enough to learn from one another and move on together? Let us now turn to the subject of coordination in missions.

### **Coordination in Missions**

We have looked briefly at the present missions endeavor in our Methodist churches. We have also looked at some possible mistakes that our churches might be repeating in missions. Now, let us look at the third area of concerns on the matter of coordination in missions. It was pointed out that every church and conference under GC sometimes appears to be doing their own thing. The question now is "Is there a need for some sort of coordination?"

In the Missions Consultation organized by the Council of Missions on April 7-9, 2006, in Sibuluan, Sarawak, the same issue of coordination was raised for the 34 participants, including Bishop and all six presidents to ponder upon. Bishop Hwa Yung stated that the purpose of this meeting

was to share with each other our respective work, to think, discuss and pray over the question of coordination, and to see where God will lead us in the future.<sup>9</sup>

The consultation then spent time in pondering over the pros and cons of setting up an equivalent 'Methodist Missions Society' for Malaysia. In view of our situation, it was felt that it might not be the right time to do so. However, it was agreed that the Council of Missions should extend its role by coordinating more effectively with all Boards of Missions, meeting more frequently, and looking into the questions of missionary training process and curriculum. The council would also take responsibility for future Missions Consultations.<sup>10</sup>

Now, more than two years have lapsed since the consultation. It is time to ponder upon the issue of coordination again. The question for us to answer is "do we want the present missions endeavor to continue as it is or do we want more coordination?" Before we answer this question, let us look at some possible mind-sets of local churches.

In Urbana Pastors Program message on December 30, 2003, Paul Borthwick spoke, in his exposure to the church in North America, about the role of the local church in the sending process:

*I observe an "all or nothing" phenomena in response to global missions. Some churches, overwhelmed and "globophobic," choose to do little or nothing (Stackhouse, p. 207). Small budgets, survival mentalities, and local challenges predominate and as a result, they do nothing beyond their immediate sphere of influence.*

*At the other extreme are those who increase their involvement in missions, implying or directly stating that they want to return to the Antioch model where they do it all. They want to take back [i.e., from agencies or denominations] the local church's priority position in the Great Commission.<sup>11</sup>*

Borthwick's observation of the church in North America might also be true for the church in Malaysia in the "all or nothing" phenomena in response to global missions. Or in our context, it is not only true of local churches but might also be true of annual conferences.

Any biblically-minded and Christ-centred churches or church leaders should not debate anymore about the role of all churches and conferences in global missions. All churches and conferences should be obeying the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. But the question now is how we are going to

accomplish the Great Commission. Are we to do it by our local churches or individual annual conferences? Or are we to coordinate all local churches and conferences and move forward together?

Please listen to Borthwick in giving us precautions about working by ourselves in global missions:

*... While I zealously endorse a central role of the local church in God's mission in the world - what one British pastor calls "The Antioch Factor," — I wonder what the world will look like when rather than 10 or 20 or 30 agencies sometimes working in competition to evangelize a country or a city, we have hundreds of Western sending churches all creating their own strategies for one locale?*

*In this regard, Todd Johnson observes, "perhaps the most significant development is the rise of specifically non-global plans. Without centralized planning, agencies and churches are focusing more on specific peoples, countries, and regions. Except for the largest agencies [and churches], most work in thirty or fewer countries. As churches begin to work directly on the field, their emphasis is not global but local. The advantage of this type of strategy is the availability of far more resources for reaching unreached peoples. The disadvantage, which has already been observed in places like the former Soviet Union, is massive duplication of resources. What happens when thousands of individuals, churches, and agencies all have their eye on the same new opportunity?" (Bonk, p. 46)<sup>12</sup>*

Therefore some kind of coordination is definitely needed in order for our churches or conferences to work effectively in the missions fields. Let us then take a look at some Methodist churches around the globe to see how they go about doing missions works in coordination. Then hopefully we can be enlightened to see what kind of coordination in missions we can have in Malaysia.

### **MMS Singapore**

In an effort to coordinate and connect the missions works done by congregations under the Methodist Church of Singapore, the Methodist Missions Society (MMS) was established in Singapore in 1991. However, many Methodist congregations continue to be active in independent missions work while in partnership with MMS<sup>13</sup>. The MMS has developed a "2020 Vision" that involves multiplying 800 Indigenous Churches throughout the region in Cambodia, China, Nepal, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Timor-Leste in the future. The hope is

that at least twenty percent of their local church missions personnel and giving will be channelled through MMS to fulfill the MMS 2020 Vision.

MMS Singapore faces problems which include "How do you help Singapore churches catch the excitement of the mission field? What is the role of MMS as a General Conference agency? (There are many different views about how to do missions among our forty-three churches) How do you care for missionaries? (Currently there are twelve full-time MMS missionaries and five potential personnel)"<sup>14</sup>

### **MMS Ireland<sup>15</sup>**

The Methodist Missionary Society (Ireland) is not a missions agency. It is the church itself sharing in world missions. Every member of the Methodist Church in Ireland is a member of the Methodist Missionary Society (Ireland). It engages in partnership with overseas churches and inter-church bodies as they undertake the work of missions both within and beyond their own borders. It supports work with communities in Ireland which originate in other countries. It engages in education, recruitment, fundraising and prayer support. It sends and receives cross-cultural mission partners and needs more missions partners to meet an increasing opportunity in world missions.

### **GBGM-UMC USA**

The General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) is the global mission agency of The United Methodist Church (UMC), its annual conferences, missionary conferences, and local congregations. It is organized into eight program areas, the Women's Division, and General Administration. Making disciples, building up the church, alleviating suffering, and promoting justice, freedom and peace are GBGM's missions goals. GBGM missionaries witness and serve in dramatically different locales and cultures and engage in a range of professions and activities.<sup>16</sup>

As we know, because of good coordination in the UMC utilizing GBGM, GBGM-UMC has blessed The Methodist Church in Malaysia for many years with its missionaries until late 1960s. It has also blessed many nations around the world. We have much to learn from this model to bless the world today, including its streamlining plan announced in 1993. It is interesting to note and learn the reasons behind its streamlining plan<sup>17</sup>

*Trying to explain a plan to downsize the United Methodist Church's missions unit, the denomination's largest agency, a director of the unit said the agency hoped to shed a "supertanker image" and become more like a*

"ballerina doing a pirouette." The metaphors, mixed though they were, seemed appropriate at the recent annual meeting of the General Board of Global Ministries as directors grappled with a complex task—reorganizing a structure that supports 1,000 missionaries and field workers around the globe.

Hard financial facts lie behind the streamlining of the New York-based missions agency. The agency faces a projected \$1 million budgetary shortfall next year, and the emergence of strong churches overseas makes it increasingly apparent that the old donor-recipient style of carrying out missions is no longer appropriate.

Introducing a 12-page paper titled "Mission for a New Millennium" to the 180 directors, Messer said the group hoped to get "some sense of how you feel about these concepts and principles. There is no sense in moving ahead if we do not have some sense of momentum and direction." The essence of the proposal is to combine two of the agency's largest units, the domestic and overseas mission units, into one, and to adopt a mission philosophy emphasizing partnerships in the mission field in place of the donor-recipient approach. The reorganized agency is expected to be leaner, more responsive, more efficient — and smaller. Respect for missions based on equal partnership would mean, said Messer, "no longer will we ask the question, 'Does New York approve?' but 'How can New York help?'"

Mainstream denominations around the country have been emphasizing that approach increasingly in recent years as churches planted in Third World nations come of age and seek more control of their own destinies — without giving up their ties to mother churches. In some cases mission work has come full circle, with overseas churches sending their own missionaries to the U.S. But the bottom-line philosophy, Messer noted, would remain rooted in the gospel mandate to seek out "the least, the last and the lost."

We observe from the above report on GBGM-UMC's streamlining plan at least four reasons behind the streamlining plan: 1. to tackle financial problem of budgetary shortfall, 2. to have some sense of momentum and direction, 3. to replace donor-recipient approach with equal partnership at the emergence of strong churches overseas, 4. to be more efficient in responding to missions needs.

We need to understand that GBGM-UMC has existed for many years in blessing many nations with its missions endeavors. The Methodist Church in Malaysia is

still at the initial stage of learning how to bless the world. We are still at the stage of understanding and talking about what kind of coordination we need for our missions endeavors. However, right at the beginning we can already learn how to avoid mistakes made and how to work together more wisely.

### **Preliminary Recommendation**

The questions remain for us to answer: Is there a need for some sort of coordination? Can we begin to seek God for His leading as we think through together how we should do missions, what should be our priorities, and how we can become a truly effective missionary church?

To answer the questions, we have at least three options to do missions through our churches:

1. Continue with what we are doing now. That is, individual churches or conferences doing own missions works
2. Do some networking among annual conferences in terms of planning and partnership. That is, more coordination would be established;
3. Set up a MMS type of agency, like the ones in Singapore, Ireland, and USA, to coordinate and move forward together.

For the coming twenty years, we could start to have more coordination for the first quadrennium. Then for the second quadrennium, we should begin some kind of preparation work for the establishment of MMS. By the third quadrennium, MMS could be in tentative operation. MMS should be in full operation by the fourth and fifth quadrennial.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, attempts have been made to answer three areas of questions raised by our Bishop and GCEC in order for our church to move forward in missions for the coming twenty years.

First, we saw that in the present Malaysian Methodist Church missions endeavor, there is a problem of commitment and sacrifice in sending out long-term missionaries.

Second, we also saw that we might be repeating some, if not many, of the mistakes of the past in missions works.

Third, we realize that there is a need for some sort of coordination. We should begin to seek God for His leading as we think through together how we should do missions by having some kind of networking initially and then having more centralized coordination gradually for the coming twenty years in order that we can become a truly effective missionary church.

### **End Notes**

- <sup>1</sup> David J. Cho, ASIAN MISSION: Historical Perspective, Asian Missiology, Vol. 2/No.1 (2008), p. 36 / The Report of Global Mapping International (Norway, 2000)
- <sup>2</sup> Wong Woay Ern observes that with globalization, the definition of long term missionaries changes too. The term is not limited to those who live and minister long term among foreign culture overseas. It also refers to non-residential long term missionaries whom for strategic reasons, choose not to live among the people that they serve, but make frequent ministry trips to the people. It also includes those who are committed to minister among the foreigners at their doorsteps.
- <sup>3</sup> Ralph D. Winter, To The New ASM: Greetings from the West, Asian Society of Missiology, Bangkok Conference 2007.
- <sup>4</sup> Ralph D. Winter, Ph.D. is a senior mission thinker who has been actively involved from the beginning of the massive mission transition from simply thinking in terms of countries or individuals to thinking in terms of peoples. He is founder of the U.S. Center for World Mission, and is currently chancellor of William Carey International University.
- <sup>5</sup> Ralph D. Winter, To The New ASM: Greetings from the West, Asian Missiology, Vol. 2/No.1 (2008), p. 200.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.202
- <sup>7</sup> This thought of imperialism comes from Wong Woay Ern.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 202
- <sup>9</sup> John Ling, Missions Consultation, 7-9 April 2006, Sibiu.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Paul Borthwick, URBANA PASTORS PROGRAM MESSAGE December 30, 2003. Prepared for Peter Kuzmic as an integrative reflection paper for MS 1024, "Missions in the World of Violence and Clashing Civilizations" GCTS, Doctor of Ministry in Missions and Cross Cultural Studies, Residency 2 LEARNERS, PARTNERS, SERVANTS The North American Church in Global Missions, p. 13.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 15.
- <sup>13</sup> George Martzen, THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SINGAPORE MISSIONS OVERVIEW, CSCA Occasional Paper No. 2. FORMS OF MISSION ENGAGEMENT, A CSCA Forum, © The Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia, Trinity Theological College, Singapore, October 2006, p. 25.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid, pp. 28-29.
- <sup>15</sup> [www.irishmethodist.org](http://www.irishmethodist.org)
- <sup>16</sup> <http://new.gbgm-umc.org>
- <sup>17</sup> Christian Century, December 1, 1993, p. 1200

## CFM STATEMENT OF CONCERN ON THE SUDDEN DEATH OF MR. TEOH BENG HOCK

Dear Bishops and Christian Church leaders,

**W**armest Christian greetings in Christ Jesus from the CFM.

In recent days the Christian community in Malaysia has been truly appalled and saddened by the sudden death of Mr. Teoh Beng Hock in strange and unclear circumstances on the morning of 16 July.

The Prime Minister himself has personally promised Mr. Teoh's parents that every effort would be made to find out the cause of the political aide's death (NST, 29 July 2009). To this end the Government of Malaysia has convened an inquest to look into the circumstances of Mr. Teoh's death and to inquire if anyone was criminally liable. At the same time, a Royal Commission of Inquiry will be set up to inquire into the investigatory procedures of the MACC.

Collectively as a community we want to express our deepest condolences and sympathies to the family of the late Mr. Teoh

and our prayers go out to them for God's grace and comfort to face this difficult period. We encourage church leaders to express their prayers and condolences to the family.

As Christian citizens of Malaysia we pray that Almighty God will guide the inquest and the Royal Commission of Inquiry to unearth the truth, to uphold justice and to bring closure to the very unfortunate death of a young man with a bright future ahead of him.

We also pray that the Lord God will help us to seek an end to the many deaths in custody that occur all too frequently in our prisons, detention centres and lock-ups. [According to SUARA RAKYAT MALAYSIA's 2008 Human Rights Report, citing government statistics, in 2008 itself there were 13 cases of deaths in police custody while 255 deaths were recorded in prisons.]

The very least that must be demanded of the relevant authorities and which they in any event should at least do is to thoroughly investigate every loss of life in ambiguous

circumstances while in the custody of our law enforcement agencies so that any element of foul play may be ruled out.

We call upon our fellow Christians in government and in the political parties to also seek to leave no stone unturned in seeking the truth of the death not only of Mr. Teoh but the many others who have died whilst in the custody of our law enforcement agencies. Every human life is precious in the sight of Almighty God. Every family of each deceased person has the right to know the truth behind the death of their loved one.

May we together in love and patience grapple with the issues of the day in seeking to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly before God (Micah 6 : 8). This is the very least that God demands of us.

+ Ng Moon Hing  
Bishop Ng Moon Hing,  
Chairman and the Executive Committee,  
Christian Federation of Malaysia  
31th July 2009

### PRESS STATEMENT GOING ABOUT THINGS THE WRONG WAY

**T**he Christian Federation of Malaysia deeply regrets the surreptitious manner in which information was gathered for, and the publication by the magazine *Al Islam* of, the article entitled "Tinjauan Al Islam Dalam Gereja: Mencari Kesahihan Remaja Murtad" in its May 2009 edition where the "investigators" took it upon themselves to be "undercover spies and policemen".

Firstly it is not proper or acceptable for adherents of one religion to spy on worshippers of another. Matters of faith and belief are personal, and it should not be the case that citizens of Malaysia should be made to live in fear of professing and practising the religion of their own free choice in public. Regrettably the interpretation/existence of certain laws, customs, practices and teachings in Malaysia has bred a type of religious imperialism, intolerance, intemperance and illegality which is unhealthy and unhelpful in the development

of a truly multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious society where everyone is able to profess and practice their own faith free from the interference of the authorities, whether civil or religious.

Secondly, no right-thinking publication and editor should have stooped so low so as to condone, let alone permit, this so-called investigative piece of journalism (if the article can even be called that) to be published. The authors of this article clearly failed in their stated aim as described in their chosen title – to seek the truth about Muslim youths who had converted to Christianity. It should have ended there. That it went further, and led to the actual publication of the article and the proud disclosure of acts which can only be described as religious desecration (by the illicit and wrongful participation in the rite of Holy Communion of Christians without understanding its meaning and consequences), only goes to reveal the moral, ethical and journalistic bankruptcy of the editors of this publication. The sacrilegious behaviour of the authors simply breached all standards of

common decency. All God-fearing and peace-loving Malaysians, regardless of their faith traditions, should rightly distance themselves from such conduct.

Thirdly, Christianity has nothing to hide. If people indeed seek the truth, if they are curious about what Christianity is all about, what Christians do, what Christians believe, they need only ask. If they sincerely wish to learn, we welcome them with open and loving arms, as we do people of all faiths, or of none, into our churches and seminaries to learn more about Christianity. There is no need to snoop or to spy. Doing so is merely going about things the wrong way.

Finally, we trust that the authorities will do the right thing and take the necessary action to correct the wrong that has been done.

+ Ng Moon Hing  
The Rt. Revd. Ng Moon Hing  
Chairman, Executive Committee  
Christian Federation of Malaysia  
17th July 2009

**GRACE METHODIST CHURCH,**  
Sentul is seeking candidates for the position of

## TADIKA PRINCIPAL

Requirements:

- Matured Christian lady
- Minimum qualifications SPM
- Preferably with teaching experience especially in Kindergarten
- Possess pleasant personality

Please write in with full resume, copies of relevant certificates and a non-returnable photograph to:

The Principal  
Tadika Senyum Manis  
22, Jalan Sentul  
52000 Kuala Lumpur

**WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH, KAMPAR**  
is looking for a

## YOUTH WORKER

**The Responsibilities:**

1. To direct and co-ordinate all work relating to ministry with campus students.
2. To assist in the youth ministry of the church.

**The Person:**

1. A matured Christian
2. Possesses a college diploma or university degree. Related ministry experience will be considered.
3. Possesses at least a Local Preachers' Licence or is working towards its completion

4. Between 25 – 40 years old.
5. Must be able to relate to and engage secondary school youths and campus students.
6. Must be able to work independently and also with a team.
7. Be prepared to work late to facilitate the campus and youth ministries.
8. Ability to speak and/or write Chinese will be an added advantage.

Please send all applications to:

The PPRC Chairman  
Wesley Methodist Church  
13, Jalan Kuala Dipang  
Taman Mutiara  
31900 Kampar, Perak D.R.

The closing date for submissions is **31st October 2009**.  
Only short-listed candidates will be invited for an interview.

RECRUITMENT NOTICE

**Council of Education, Methodist Church in Malaysia**

## Senior Administrator In Methodist Private School

**FUNCTION OF WORK:**

To assist the School Principal in managing a private secondary school in consonance with the fundamental philosophy of Methodist Education and the provisions of the Education Act 1996.

**LEVEL OF WORK:**

Management, Administration and Supervision

**CRITERIA**

- Should have experience in teaching, preferably also in educational administration

- possess a Degree in Education or equivalent
- Be a committed Christian
- Have an extensive knowledge and understanding of pedagogy
- Well-informed on assessment and monitoring
- Able to contribute to the professional development of colleagues through coaching and mentoring, demonstrating effective practice, and providing advice and feedback.
- Provide leadership in the school
- Able to relate to parents, government

officials, church officials, and other stake-holders

Interested, please:

Email to [edumeth.lbh@gmail.com](mailto:edumeth.lbh@gmail.com) or  
Post or fax your resume to :  
The Executive Director  
**Methodist Education Centre**  
67, Jalan 5/31,  
46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor  
Fax: 03-79583346  
Tel: 03-79565310

# Experiencing God – The Musical: A presentation to move the masses

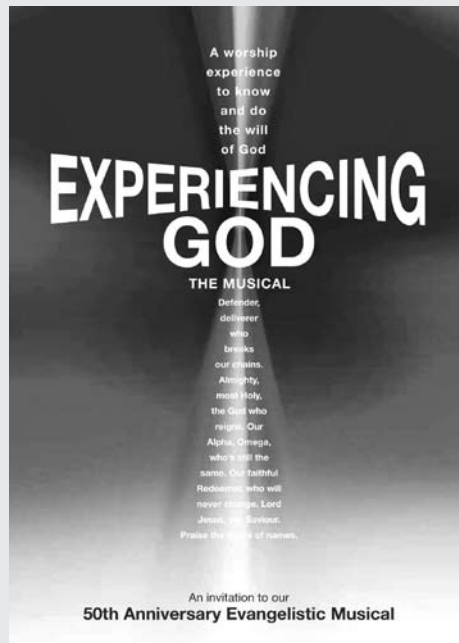
Block off Nov 29 and Dec 5 in your diaries if you want to experience life-altering change.

One of the highlights in Trinity Methodist Church Petaling Jaya's events calendar as she celebrates her 50th year of God's faithfulness is an evangelistic musical to be presented towards the end of the year.

Certainly, both performances of "Experiencing God – The Musical" are not to be missed. A powerful call to the people in the pew to rise up out of the ordinariness of their Christian life and join the living God in the exciting work of reconciling the world to Himself, it was originally created by Claire Cloninger of Word Music and Gary Rhodes some 10 years ago, based on the Christian believer programme of the same name developed by Dr Henry Blackaby.

Since the musical version first took to the stages of many churches around the world, it has touched and changed many lives.

"In this generation, music can be a huge conveyor of Truth, and when the Truth unchanged is communicated, God honours that and will transform lives in the process," said Blackaby, who is founder of Blackaby Ministries International.



Trinity Methodist Church's production of the hour-long presentation will be delivered by an adult and children's choir, soloists, ensembles, narrators and monologists. With over 100 cast and crew, including the Boy's and Girl's Brigades, its "Broadway-style" presentation is bound to leave an indelible impression on the lives of all who experience it.

As an offering of worship to God created to bring the audience face to face with the cross in all its intensity and passion, "Experiencing God – the Musical" will open eyes to see how deeply God loves us and bring all to a point where the only response to Him would be to say, "Lord, You have captured my heart with Your love.

"I say yes, Lord, I will follow You!

"Use me, send me!"

Indeed, after witnessing this musical spectacular which is the first of its kind in Trinity Methodist Church's history, it is going to be difficult for anyone to ever be the same again!

So, make a date with God on Nov 29 and Dec 5, and bring your relatives and friends. Take this as a personal invitation to a worship experience to know and do His will!

Andrew Wong  
Trinity Methodist Church  
Petaling jaya

## Rev Eugene McGraw 1909 - 2009

Rev Eugene McGraw died on 6 July 2009 at the age of 100. He was a retired Elder of the Trinity Annual Conference, the last surviving member of missionary pastors from America who served with the Methodist Church in Malaysia.

He was from the state of Indiana and studied Physics and Bible Studies at Earlham College, and then theology at Oberlin School of Theology. After a year in his first pastorate in Indiana he set sail in a cargo ship for the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore in 1936. Then a train up to Kuala Lumpur where Rev McGraw took up teaching at the Methodist Boys School, before becoming the Principal of the Methodist school in Sitiawan in 1937.

During his time in Sitiawan he was also pastor at Wesley Methodist Church, Taiping where he met and married his wife Louise Leonard, also a missionary teacher from the United States. When war came to Malaya in 1941 they fled Sitiawan and eventually arrived back in America via Indonesia and Australia. While back in America Rev McGraw studied social work at the University of Southern California and became a certified social worker in 1945.

After the war they returned to Malaya and were sent to Sibul, Sarawak in 1947, where he served as principal of the Methodist school and also a term as District Superintendent. Rev Eugene McGraw also served as



Rev Eugene McGraw and family, Sitiawan 1953.

principal in Malacca and Penang before retiring in 1971.

Rev Eugene McGraw is survived by his son, Paul and daughter, Bonnie, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



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Xiao En Centre, Jalan Kuari, Cheras  
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### Xiao En Centre

Xiao En Centre, as a complex for social education and 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.

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CORPORATE OFFICE No 1 Jalan Kuari Cheras 56100 Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

T +603 9145 3888

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W [www.xiao-en.com](http://www.xiao-en.com)

Tollfree 1-800-88-8333 (24 Hours)

The prayers below are taken from the liturgy prepared for churches to use on CCM Sunday. As it is also in August the prayer for the nation is appropriate as we commemorate Hari Merdeka. Editor.

# CCM Sunday August 2009

## Responsible Stewardship of God's Creation

### CONFESSION

**L:** O God, we thank You for your creating power. That You have made all things and made them well; that You have given us all things richly to enjoy; for the beauty of this earth, and for Your creating power which can make all things new.

**C:** *We thank You, O Father God. Forgive us if in pride and selfishness we have misused Your gifts, and made the world You created unbearable for those who are poor, who are powerless, and those voices of suffering and pain that are not heard by an affluent society.*

**L:** O Lord Jesus Christ, we thank You for Your redeeming power, that You taught us to share and care and to use the resources of the earth to ensure the fullness of life for all.

**C:** **We thank You, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour in Life.**

**Forgive us for the times when we are preoccupied with our own interests and turn a blind eye to those who suffer around us. Forgive us for our silence when we see how people exploit your earth for profit and plunder its resources for selfish pleasure.**

**L:** O Holy Spirit, we thank You for your sustaining power. That You created the world and it was good, that Your breath of life sustains all living things; and that all of creation is being renewed by Your creative power to transform all things from death to life.

**C:** *O Holy Spirit, we thank you that nothing in this creation can*

*separate us from the love of God. Forgive us for each time we avoid caring for this world and the people who live in it. We are appalled by what human activity has done to bring about an ecological crisis and climate change. Millions are suffering because of poverty, illness, disasters and wars. Forgive us for our inaction. Let your Spirit inspire us to work for a clean world and work for just policies to aid the poor and suffering.*

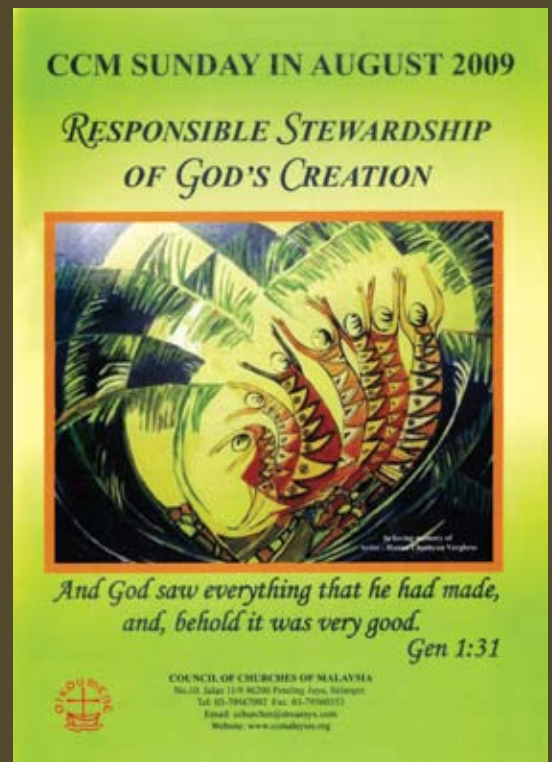
**ALL:** Lord, You have work planned for each one of us. Help us to know and do your will. Teach us to serve you in all we do. In Christ's name.  
AMEN

### SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR THE NATION

O Lord, our heavenly Father, whose glory is in all the world and whose blessings are upon all nations, we pray to you with fervent hearts for the continued well-being of our nation and its people.

We pray for our King and Queen and the royal family, the various Sultans and their families that they may be blessed with good health and through your grace be granted wisdom and strength for exercising righteous rule over all our people. We pray for our Prime Minister and his wife, Ministers in government, chief ministers and others who have responsibilities in governing public life. Make them pure in motive, wise in counsel, and strong in action, upholding justice and peace for all our people.

We pray for the prosperity of our beloved land. Let there be growing spaces of understanding, tolerance and harmony among the peoples of different ethnic communities. Inspire our people to strive for peace and concord in all they do. And being blessed with your goodness, inspire us to sustain a caring society, where the plight of those in need will not be overlooked.



Grant, O Lord, that your church in Malaysia will deepen its influence and extend her power for good in our nation. We pray that all Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life.

So rule our hearts and prosper our endeavours of good, may love and peace prevail everywhere, to the honor of thy holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
AMEN.