



The Methodist Church

Celebrates 125 years in Malaysia



Cutting the Cake



Thanksgiving Service at CMC KL

The Thanksgiving Service for the 125th Anniversary of the Methodist Church in Malaysia was held on 12 August 2010 at the Chinese Methodist Church Kuala Lumpur. It was followed by a Dinner Celebration at the Indoor Sports Arena, Wisma OCM, a short walk from the church.

There were many representatives from the three Annual Conferences in Sabah and Sarawak, together with the Presidents and members of the General Conference Executive Council. Bishop Emeritus Datuk Denis Dutton and Datin Emme returned from the United States for the occasion. Bishops, Denominational Heads and representatives from other churches were also present for the celebrations.

The service began with the procession of the Bishop, the Presidents and officers of the General Conference into the hall as the String Ensemble played Ode to Joy (Beethoven). This was followed by the Handbell Choir giving a sweet and melodious introit to the Service.

The other highlights must be the moving rendition of the Lord's Prayer by Mr Eddy Chin. And the anthem sung by the combined choir from members of CAC, TAC and TRAC. The power and majesty of the song – Gloria by Mozart - filled the capacity sanctuary with the praise and thanksgiving worthy of our Almighty Lord.

In his sermon Bishop Hwa Yung spoke of the call and possibility of the Church's role in transforming the nation. Transformation is not just at the personal spiritual dimension but also in the concrete reality of society and nation. He gave the example of the impact of the revival of Wesley's time on the nation of Briton, and a more recent example of South Africa.

During the Service Mr Anthony Row narrated the process, which took over two years, of drawing up a Roadmap for the Methodist Church for the next twenty years. A copy of it was presented to the President and Lay Leader of the Annual Conferences by Bishop Hwa Yung.

The Dinner Celebration saw about 1000 people come together. Ms Juwita Suwito started the dinner programme with her fine singing. Presentations were given by GC Methodist Women, CAC, TAC, TRAC, Boys' Brigade, Persaudaraan Belia Methodist and the Sengoi Mission Conference. This was the first time many of us saw the performance of the Village Bamboo Dance from the Sengoi brothers and sisters and was greatly appreciated.

The highlight of the evening was the cutting of the cake participated by, besides Bishop Hwa Yung and Bishop Emeritus Denis Dutton, representatives from clergy and laity from all the Conferences, and also from the youngest generation. It was not only looking back in thanksgiving but also to look forward to succeeding generations to carry on the mission of the Methodist Church entrusted by God our Father.

Christopher Cheah

125th Anniversary Celebration

Handbell Choir



The String Ensemble



Bamboo Dance by Sengoi Mission Conference

Representatives receiving the Road Map

Choir singing the Anthem

MPC Prayer Request

In 2011 the second Methodist Prayer Convention will be held from 29 April – 1 May in Sibü, Sarawak. Planning is underway and the call is for prayer to uphold to this event and for the Lord to do a mighty work through it.

1. **Speakers and workshop leaders. Chinese speaker is not confirmed.**
 - a. Right Workshop leaders will be invited - Topics to be selected.
 - b. God would speak through them.
 - c. They would receive a clear word from God for the people as they seek Him for guidance and message.
2. **Delegates**
 - a. Publicity will reach all Church members.
 - b. They will give support in prayer and in attendance.
 - c. 3500 will register before the closing date.
 - d. They will receive God's rich blessings.
3. **Grand Finale in Sibü Town Square on the 1st May evening**
 - a. Our target of 12000 Christians will turn up.
 - b. It will be well organized.
 - c. Pray for the organizing committee
 - d. Good PA System
 - e. Good weather
 - f. Good and orderly Holy Communion service
4. **Finance**
 - a. Sufficient funding
 - b. Fund raising activities will be successful
 - c. Wisdom to the finance sub-committee and the Treasurer (Mr John Ting)
5. **Dr Deborah Chan Geok Oon - person in charge of 4 prayer sessions , for the wisdom to organize each session effectively.**

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Malaysia National Prayer Network (MNP)

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1. CHURCH

(has been given the supernatural power of God to live life pleasing to Him)

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,” (1 John 3:9.) Do I seek to stop sinning or have I stopped sinning? To be born of God means that I have the supernatural power of God to stop sinning. In the Bible it is never—Should a Christian sin? The Bible puts it emphatically—A Christian must not sin. The effective working of the new birth life in us is that we do not commit sin, not merely that we have the power not to sin, but that we have stopped sinning. 1 John 3:9 does not mean that we cannot sin; it means that if we obey the life of God in us, we need not sin.” (Chambers, Oswald: My Utmost for His Highest)

- Pray for believers to heed the God's voice as He teaches us His ways and leads us in a straight path

2. 1MALAYSIA

continue to pray:

- For the governing authorities to do what is right, just and good, without fear or favour.
- For the national leaders to have discernment, able to tell their right hand from their left.
- that the stronghold of racial politics to be broken; that the government will be sincere and commit to change for the interests of the whole nation.
- For the Penans in Sarawak who have lost their homes to fire, to be comforted, their lives be restored, and their houses be rebuilt soon.
~ Relief aid is being rushed deep into the interior of Belaga district in central Sarawak in Borneo to help the 500 Penans from two locations left homeless after fire razed their homes
~ Hulu Rejang MP Datuk Billy Abit Joo said effort would be made to acquire funds from the government to repair and rebuild the homes
- For proper sex education in schools and at home; for the society as a whole to pursue good moral values; for the government to come up with effective preventive measures rather punitive; for easy access to assistance and counseling for the troubled pregnant women and young girls.
~ Records from the ministry (Women, Family and Community Development Ministry) show that of the 60 babies abandoned so far this year, the gender of 14 could not be determined due to decomposition.

GCEC Resolution On Grants From Federal / State Governments At Election Times



The Methodist Church In Malaysia

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To:
All Presidents, Pastors and Members,
The Methodist Church in Malaysia

Dear Friends,

Per: Special Government Grants at Election Times in the Country

Warmest greetings to all in the Name of Christ! I trust that this finds you well!

Many of you are aware of the controversy that has been stirred up in the press concerning government grants handed out during recent by-elections, both in East and West Malaysia. The Council of Presidents, after its meeting of 25th May 2010, had issued a pastoral letter on the matter. The General Conference Executive Council (GCEC) at its meeting of 12-13 August deliberated further on the matter. We write to inform all pastors and members of the decision that was taken at the meeting.

The GCEC notes that the Federal and the various State governments, whether from BN or from the Opposition parties, regularly give out grants to citizens' groups of all kinds. To make such grants is a government's responsibility, and to receive such is a citizen's right. After all, the money given is actually taxpayers' money. However, the question of timing is crucial. It is important that the reception of such grants at any time does not compromise the moral stand of the church in the eyes of the public. We must not be perceived to be involved in corrupt practices of any kind or appear to be manipulated by the party(s) in power.

The GCEC has therefore taken the following decision concerning special government grants in all future elections:

That the GCEC resolves that no Methodist church should apply for or receive government grants, irrespective of the party in power, in the period between the nomination date of any election to the polling date of the same. Given the present socio-political context, this will send a clear signal to everyone that the church is non-partisan. More importantly, it will make clear that the Methodist Church does not condone actions that are or can be perceived as being related to money politics.

This decision is not meant to refer to whatever may have happened in the past, but rather to serve as our guideline for all future elections. May God grant that through acting in such a manner, we will be able to achieve, by His all sufficient grace, our goal of 'Spreading Scriptural Holiness, Transforming the Nation!' The peace of God be with you always!

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Bishop Hwa Yung

Letter to the Editor

The letter below was sent to Pelita Methodist from the TRAC Methodist Seniors Fellowship. We reprint it below for the information of our readership but it does not mean that this is the view of Pelita Methodist. Please also note that we are not opening it for debate here and therefore will not publish any response to this letter. Editor.

VIEW FROM 3SCORE10

1. Is our Church heading in the right direction? We see the Church being busy in obeying the Great Commission from the local to national level, organising mission trips and prayer conventions, among others, even speaking up for the rights of citizens including our indigenous brothers and sisters; yes – we are doing many things that are good and right. Yet a group within the Church is regarded as a non-entity.
2. 70 is just a number but to the Methodist Church, any member who reaches the age which bears the number “70” loses a right which a citizen of this country, Malaysia, exercises until he is no longer a citizen or ceases on death. The right referred to is the right to vote and the right to hold office. Both these rights are concomitant. Our administrative structure is such that in order to have the right to vote you must hold an office. Therefore if you do not hold an office, you do not have the right to vote. This is the position for being a “citizen” of the Methodist Church.
3. What is the rationale for the deprivation of such right at the age of 70? Your guess is as good as mine! “It is in the Book of Discipline of The Methodist Church in Malaysia”, one can hear a voice blasting into your ears. It says that at age 70, a member does not have the right to hold office or serve in committees at local and national level.
4. Does the Methodist Discipline have such provisions? Cannot be – when a church is first organised, every member who is age 21 and above has the right to vote and stand for office. Again, at a congregational meeting of the church (if it is held), every member who is age 21 and above has the right to vote, and also the right to stand for office, presumably, because that goes with the right to vote. The Methodist Discipline says so!
5. However, after a church is organised, what happens? That is when the spectre of discrimination based on age rears its ugly head. “It is in the Book of Discipline of The Methodist Church in Malaysia”, the voice yells again! After the church is organised, you cannot hold office or serve in committees if you carry the number “70” in your age.
6. How can the Methodist Discipline contain conflicting and contradictory provisions you ask? Is it “Methodism” at its best? A human is fallible and Methodists being humans are therefore also fallible. Can this act of commission be rectified? We believe it can be. Let us see.
7. Does the Methodist Church support the right of all citizens in Malaysia to be equal before the law? We believe that the Methodist Church supports it because such a right is provided in the Constitution of the Federation of Malaysia, and because the Methodist Social Principles also say so. One of the categories of the Methodist Social Principles is Human Rights and Responsibilities of which Freedom from Discrimination is the first to be highlighted. Under this Right, it says “we stand for equal rights for all racial, cultural, and religious groups, and insist that the principles set forth herein apply to all alike. The right to choose a home, enter a school, secure employment, promotion, vote, and have access to public accommodations should be guaranteed to all regardless of race, culture, national origin, social class, or religion.” If the right to vote is guaranteed to those whose religion is Christianity, can the powers that be in that religion deprive 70-year old members of that right within that religious denomination, Methodism?
8. Furthermore, in the World Methodist Social Affirmation, Methodists are called to “rejoice in every sign of God’s kingdom; in the upholding of human dignity and community;” and “confess our sin, individual and collective, by silence or action: through the violation of human dignity based on race, class, age, sex, nation, or faith.” Is it not right to say that the Social Principles are an affirmation of the Methodist Church’s stand on Justice and Human Rights?
9. And furthermore, the Constitutional provisions in the Methodist Discipline state that the persons holding office shall be not less than 21 years of age and that lay members/delegates to the Annual Conference and General Conference respectively shall be at least 21 years of age and shall have been for the four years preceding their election, members in good standing of The Methodist Church in Malaysia. That, in a nutshell, is the constitutional benchmark requirement for a member to vote and to hold office.
10. The provisions in the Rules of Organisation and Administration of the Methodist Discipline which state that members age 70 and above cannot hold office or serve in committees are subsidiary legislation and are ultra vires the Constitutional provisions because they are contradictory to the Constitutional provisions. The Judicial Council of The Methodist Church in Malaysia has held in a case before them that should there be any conflict between a Constitutional provision and a provision in the Rules of Organisation and Administration of the Methodist Discipline on the same matter, the Constitutional provision must prevail.
11. The Methodist Church by virtue of its Social Principles and the Constitutional provisions in the Methodist Discipline should be seen to be doing what it professes and affirms to stand for. Such profession and affirmation should not be empty words but should be expressed with positive action.
12. Do not let inane arguments such as “... the seniors should not fight to hold office and deprive younger members from holding office but should do other ministry work, this would open the floodgates to those age 70 and above to hold office, etc.” cloud the issue. Such arguments should be discarded. Every member, irrespective of age, should be involved in various ministries. The issue is whether or not the denial of a right because of age is justified in the light of the Methodist Social Principles and Constitutional provisions.
13. Thus the View from 3Score10 is not that senior members of the Methodist Church are clamouring to hold office but that the denial of a right because of age is sheer discrimination and a violation of human dignity. Slavery has been abolished long ago. Women have won the right to suffrage not very long ago. Shouldn’t the right to hold office be restored to the seniors in the Methodist Church now?
14. A member’s right to hold office is not an automatic assumption of office. Any member who desires to exercise the right to hold office is required to comply with the procedure laid down, such as being nominated and going through the process of election with other candidates.
15. Let not the Methodist Church shoot its own foot in the matter of Social Justice and Constitutional Rights of its members as laid down in the Methodist Discipline.

This article is one in a series under the Global Conversations commissioned by the Lausanne Movement to introduce some of the issues and challenges for witnessing to the world today. These are published by the Lausanne Movement in collaboration with Christianity Today leading up to the 3rd Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town in October 2010.

EMBRACING SUFFERING IN SERVICE

Ajith Fernando



I write this shortly after returning from a week of teaching pastors in the deep south of Sri Lanka. The experience of these pastors shows that when people pioneer in unreached areas, it often takes ten to fifteen years before they see significant fruit and reduced hostility. In the early years they are assaulted and accused falsely; stones are thrown onto their roofs; their children are given a hard time in school; and there are few genuine conversions. Many pioneers give up after a few years. But those who persevere bear much eternal fruit. I am humbled and ashamed of the way I complain when I have problems that are so minute in comparison to theirs.

When I return from ministry in the West my feelings are very different. I have been able to 'use my gifts' and spend most of my time doing things I like to do. I am hit by frustration when I return to being a leader in our less efficient culture. The transition from being a speaker in the West to being a leader in Sri Lanka is a difficult one.

As a leader I am the bond-slave (doulos) of the people I lead (2 Corinthians 4:5). This means that my schedule is influenced more by their needs than mine. Vocational fulfilment in the kingdom of God has a very distinct character, quite different from vocational fulfilment in society. Jesus said, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work' (John 4:34). If we are doing God's will we are happy and fulfilled. But for Jesus, and for us, doing God's will includes a cross. The cross must be an essential element in our definition of vocational fulfilment.

Young Christian workers who come back to Sri Lanka after studying in the West struggle with this. They are highly qualified, but our poor nation cannot afford to give them the recognition that they think their qualifications deserve. They cannot use their gifts to the fullest because we cannot afford pure specialists. They struggle with frustration. Some end up leaving the country

after a few years. Some start their own organizations so that they can fulfil their 'vision.' Others become consultants, giving expert training and advice in their specialized field. Others pay the price of identifying with our people and ultimately have a deep impact on the nation.

I try to tell them that their frustration could be the means of developing penetrative insight. I try to explain that people like John Calvin and Martin Luther had a dizzying variety of responsibilities, so that they could only use their gifts through tiredness. Yet the fruit of their labours as leaders and writers still blesses the church.

Frustration

Paul's theology gave an important place to the need to endure frustration patiently as we live in a fallen world awaiting the redemption of creation. Paul said that we groan because of this frustration (Romans 8:18-25). I believe we are not including this frustration in our understanding of vocational fulfilment today. A church that has a wrong understanding of fulfilment for its workers will certainly become a sick church. This may be one reason why there is so much shallowness in the church today. We have measured success from the standards of the world and failed to challenge the world with the radically new biblical way to fulfilment.

The contemporary emphasis on efficiency and measurable results makes frustration even harder to endure. In the past four centuries industrial and technological development in the West resulted in efficiency and productivity becoming high values. With rapid economic development, things once considered luxuries became not only necessities but also rights in the minds even of Christians. In this environment the Christian's idea of commitment has taken a heavy battering.

We call our churches and Christian organizations families, but families are very inefficient organizations. In a healthy family, everything stops when family members have big needs. We are often not willing to extend this idea of commitment to Christian body life.

Commitment

The biblical model of community life is Jesus' command to love one another as he loved us—that is, for members to die for other members (John 15:12-13). The model of Christian leadership is that of the Good Shepherd dying for the sheep without abandoning them when the situation gets dangerous (John 10:11-15). When God calls us to serve him, he calls us to come and die for the people we serve. We don't discard people when they have problems and

cannot do their job properly. We serve them and help them to come out of their problems. We don't tell people to find another place of service when they rebel against us. We labour with them until we come to agreement either to agree or to disagree.

When people leave a church because they did not fit into the program, we communicate a deadly message: that our commitment is to the work one does and not to the person; that our unity is primarily in the work and not in Christ and the gospel. The sad result of this is that Christians do not have the security of belonging to a community that will stay by them no matter what happens to them. They become shallow individuals never having deep fellowship and moving from group to group. Churches can fulfil programs and grow numerically in this way, but they don't nurture biblical Christians who understand the implications of belonging to the body of Christ.

Sticking with people is frustrating because it is inefficient. Taking hours to listen to an angry or hurt person seems to be a very inefficient thing. Why should we waste time on that when there are professionals who can do it? So people have counsellors to do what friends should be doing.

Ideally the counsellor helps to diagnose and treat difficult cases, and friends give the time that is needed to bring healing to hurting individuals through acceptance, comfort, and friendship. Hurt people usually hurt those who try to help them. Hurt and angry people whom we are committed to will hurt us too. Others who are hurt by them could get angry with us because we are committed to them. But we endure that pain because Christ called us to die for our friends.

Several people have sympathized with me, saying that it must be hard and frustrating to serve in a country wracked by war and hostile to evangelism. Indeed we have suffered because of this. A few months ago one of our staff workers was brutally assaulted to death. But I think the biggest pain I have experienced is the pain I have received from Youth for Christ, the organization for which I have worked 34 years. I can also say that next to Jesus and my family, Youth for Christ has been the greatest source of joy in my life. Whether you live in the East or the West you will suffer pain if you are committed to people. This is suffering that can be avoided. We can avoid pain by stopping the relationship or moving to something more 'fulfilling.' But then what do we lose?

Some years ago I was preparing a message on commitment while I was travelling in the West. Within the space of a few days three people told me how they or someone close to them had left a group or a person because of problems they were having. One had left an unhappy marriage, another a church and another an organization. Each of these leavings was described as a merciful release from suffering. But I could not help asking myself whether, in each of these cases, the Christian thing to do was to stay and suffer.

Drivenness or Servanthood

I have a large group of people to whom I write asking for prayer when I have a need. Sometimes my need is overcoming tiredness. When I write about this need, many write back saying they are praying that God would strengthen me and guide me in my scheduling. However, there are differences in the way friends from the East and some from the West respond. I get the strong feeling that many in the West think if when one struggles with tiredness from overwork that is evidence of disobedience to God. My contention is that it is wrong if one gets sick from overwork through drivenness and insecurity. But we may have to pay the price of tiredness when we, like Paul, are servants of people.

The New Testament is clear that those who work for Christ will suffer because of their work. Tiredness, stress and strain may be the cross that God calls us to. Paul often spoke about the physical hardships his ministry brought him. This included emotional strain (Galatians 4:19; 2 Corinthians 11:28), anger (2 Corinthians 11:29), sleepless nights, hunger (2 Corinthians 6:5), affliction, perplexity (2 Corinthians 4:8), and toiling—working to the point of weariness (Colossians 1:29). In statements radically counter-cultural in today's 'body culture' society, he said: 'Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day' (2 Corinthians 4:16); and 'For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you' (2 Corinthians 4:11-12). I fear that many Christians approach these texts with an academic interest without seriously asking how they should apply in their lives today.

The West, having struggled with the tyrannical rule of time, has a lot to teach the East about the need for rest. The East perhaps has something to teach the West about embracing physical problems that come because of commitment to people. If you think that it is wrong to suffer physically because of the ministry, then you suffer more from the problem than those who believe that suffering is an inevitable step along the path to fruitfulness and fulfilment. As the cross is a basic aspect of discipleship, the Church must train Christian leaders to expect pain and hardship. When this perspective enters our minds, then pain will not touch our joy and contentment in Christ. I found eighteen different places in the New Testament where suffering and joy appear together. In fact, often suffering is a cause for joy (Romans 5:3-5; Colossians 1:24; James 1:2-3).

The Glory of the Gospel

In a world where physical health, appearance, and convenience have gained almost idolatrous prominence, God may be calling Christians to demonstrate the glory of the gospel by being joyful and contented while enduring pain and hardship. People who are unfulfilled after pursuing things that do not satisfy may be astonished when they see Christians who are joyful and content after depriving themselves of these things for the sake of the gospel. This may be a new way to demonstrate the glory of the gospel to this hedonistic culture.

I have a great fear for the Church. The West is fast becoming an unreached region. The Bible and history show that suffering is an essential ingredient in reaching unreached people. Will the loss of a theology of suffering result in the church in the West being ineffective in its evangelism? The church in the East is growing, and because of that God's servants are suffering. Significant funding and education come to the East from the West. With funding and education comes influence. Could Westerners influence Eastern Christians to abandon the cross by sending a message that they must be doing something wrong if they suffer in this way? Christians in both the East and the West need to have a firm theology of suffering if they are to be healthy and fruit-bearing.

Ajith Fernando has been National Director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka since 1976. With his wife Nelun, he also serves in a church in Colombo consisting mainly of poor, urban first generation Christians. He is the author of The Call to Joy and Pain (Crossway / IVP UK) and An Authentic Servant (Didasko Files).

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Dedication Service @ New Auditorium



Bishop Hwa Yung unveils 'Flame' Sculpture



College 'Flame' Sculpture

Dedication Service of New Building of Methodist College Kuala Lumpur

This is the speech by Ms Moey Yoke Lai, CEO of Methodist College Kuala Lumpur, at the Dedication Service held on 21 August 2010. This is a slightly edited version. Editor

Thank you for being here with us to celebrate and give thanks to God for the birthing of a dream long cherished. Today, we sit in this grand auditorium and feel justly proud to be part of the Methodist College Kuala Lumpur family, for family you all are to us. And a special word of thanks to Bishop for giving us a whole Saturday morning when you have the burden of the church in the whole nation upon your heart. This is evidence of your commitment to quality education as a ministry of the Methodist Church in Malaysia.

Building on Faith

I joined the College in 2006 and soon realized that there were many challenges ahead for those of us who have chosen to serve here. It was not long before we recognized the fact that unless we gave the College a face lift and expanded its premises, we were fighting a losing battle against the competition with much bigger players in the arena of private tertiary education. New plans were drawn up and we approached the Council of Education for the mandate to build. We presented a budget of RM12 million. Fully aware of the fact that funds were not available yet, we were inspired by the verses in Hebrews 10:38; 11:1, *"But my righteous one shall live by faith..., Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* (NKJV)

The Council of Education with Bishop as Chairman realized our predicament and graciously agreed to the project with the Methodist Church granting the College a launching fund of RM7 million. The rest will have to be raised by the College, so said Bishop.

With trepidation and at the same time with faith, we began. The ground breaking ceremony was held in August 2008, directly over the very spot on which we are seated today. And on 22 August 2009 the 'Topping Up' ceremony was held in the bare shell of the new chapel. Today, in August 2010 we dedicate the new building to be used for the glory of God through the education of youth in our nation. All that you see today is made possible because of your love and generosity in giving towards the building fund as God moved you to do so. Thank you for your kindness and partnership.

God's Workmen: the Builders, the Workers & the Donors

The Technical Committee under the Chairmanship of Dato' Dr Tan Kee Kwong, who is also the Chairman of the MCKL Board of Management, has met officially no less than 35 times in the last 12 months. It has successfully kept costs to the barest minimum in deciding on the best tenders for each task and in its value engineering efforts, to enable us to pay the contractor as each bill came in. "Thank you" is inadequate to express our gratitude to these men who gave of their time and expertise willingly. For Mr Ho Cheok Fai, our architect and as the leader of the team of consultants, this project became a personal journey of faith and commitment. I did not have a single sleepless night because I came to trust and appreciate his selflessness and integrity. Not only did he give his best in attending to every detail, he has refused to accept any payment from us. Only God, our Father in heaven will know the extent of his love poured into this MCKL project.

To the team of consultants, Mr Yue Chee Mun our C & S consultant, Mr Alvin Hoong our M & E consultant and Mdm Oh Chin Choo our Quantity Surveyor, our heartfelt thanks for your quality input and sacrificial giving of your time.

To the other members of the Technical Committee, Mr B.C. Ong, Mr Leo Anthony, Mr N.K. Tong, men of experience in property development and in the building industry, our deepest appreciation for the many evenings you sacrificed to help us obtain the best for the least cost.

To the representatives of the Council of Education and our Board of Management, Dr Lim Boon Hock, Mr Gopal Sundaram, and Rev Dr Mark Chua, all busy men in their own fields, thanks for the support and the wide network of friends you provided to help us at every turn.

The Fund Raising Committee, again under the chairmanship of Dato' Dr Tan Kee Kwong, worked hard to raise the much needed funds and the members will continue to harass friends and family to help us since we are still in need of funds! Datuk Bhupalan is a pillar of strength in this committee. At this age, she still campaigns at every opportunity to provide the best education for the youth of our nation. Mrs Vimala Mathews,

in spite of the onerous responsibilities as Principal of Wesley Methodist School, a much sought after private secondary school, comes for every meeting and uses every opportunity to ask parents and friends to give us a cheque. From the College, Mr Khoo Teng Sooi, Mr Michael Lee, and Ms Carmen Magen Chow have worked tirelessly on this committee.

To all of you who have donated generously, our grateful thanks. Every donation is deeply appreciated even though I just mention a few by name today. *(Note to Editor: Total donation received to date is close to RM2 million – in the form of sponsorship of various lecture rooms and facilities, and in cash contributions. Some of our donors have requested that their names should not be acknowledged in public and we wish to respect their requests.)*

Mention must be made of our contractors Mr Tony Teng and Mr Lee Peng Kock of Luxbee Enterprise, who have given of their very best to raise this building in record time for us to have this ceremony today. Mr Tony Teng has pushed his skill to further limits in taking on the challenge of meeting all our requests in the special features that you will see for yourselves as you walk around the College.

To all our sub contractors, Interior Design, Audio Visual and Landscape consultants, a very big thank you for the beautiful furnishing and landscaping you have created for us. It will be such a pleasure to come to College every day.

My special thanks also go to a quiet gentleman who came alongside us from the very beginning and helped us to make changes bit by bit to improve the College facilities and

appearance. Mr Wong Hoe Lock helped us set up the IT infrastructure with a most effective local area network (LAN) and painted the old College to make it look new, with very friendly credit terms, at a time when we were counting every penny that was spent.

From Humble Beginnings to a High Vision

The College has come a long way since its humble beginnings. From **Methodist Afternoon School** established in 1969 as a school of second chance, to **Methodist High School** the preferred private secondary school, the **Methodist College Kuala Lumpur** of today is fast establishing its name as the College of preference for pre-university studies. With the Church making a re-commitment to ministry through education in financing this new building, the College has received a new lease of life. The present management team is deeply convicted about the need to send teachers of calibre into the arena of schools in our nation and would like to see the College develop a centre of excellence in teacher training. Bishop has charged us with the vision of moving towards university college status. With all these challenges ahead of us, we look to Almighty God and to you, His people, for the resources to actualize our shared vision for the College in the coming days and years ahead.

Thank you and may God bless each one of you with His peace and joy as you continue to serve Him through serving mankind.

Moey Yoke Lai
Chief Executive Officer
Methodist College Kuala Lumpur

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9 August 2010

CFM CONCERNED OVER “FORCED” CONVERSIONS OF THE ORANG ASLI PEOPLE

The Christian Federation of Malaysia is very concerned by the allegations of “forced” conversions of the Orang Asli people as reported by Aljazeera in their news item entitled “Malaysia ethnic tribes 'forced to convert'” (see <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2010/08/2010886496589764.html>)

Every Malaysian has the right to choose his or her religious beliefs based on personal conviction as guaranteed under Article 11 of our Federal Constitution.

The allegations that “facilities and easy access into the villages” will be gained by conversions in the report should be investigated fully so that any wrong-doings by persons or organisations may be brought to light and stopped immediately.

Any development programme of the Government to lift Malaysians out of poverty should be without strings attached.

Whilst we note that the Malaysian Department of Orang Asli Affairs (JHEOA) has stated that “development program such as electricity, water supply, housing and other basic infrastructure given to Orang Asli communities are based on their need and not their religion”, yet we see in the video clip that those who converted received new homes and enjoy modern amenities while those who don't continue to live in their huts.

We believe that the promotion of conversions-in-name to gain “facilities and easy access to villages”, if true, is an abuse of executive powers (which ought to be exercised for the public good) for insidious sectarian purposes. Ultimately, such practices would tend to create a community lacking in integrity and true freedom of choice where people are encouraged to compromise their beliefs, culture and identity by means of economic duress and inducements.

Bishop Ng Moon Hing,
Chairman and the Executive Committee
The Christian Federation of Malaysia

Jesus Christ:

God's Yes to the World!

International Christian Youth Conference on Evangelism (14 – 21 July 2010)



ICYC Logo

The ICYC has been run by World Methodist Evangelism since 1980. This latest edition was the ninth one and for the first time held in Asia. 450 youths and young adults from 43 countries came together in Seoul, Korea, at the Kwang Lim Vision Land the conference site of the Kwang Lim Methodist Church, the host of this conference.

From Malaysia, representatives from each of the six Annual Conferences attended with Michael William, the Executive Youth Director from the General Conference Office. He was invited to take a seminar on "Being Christian in a Multi-Cultural Society" at the conference.

It is the commitment of World Methodist Evangelism to multiply witnesses of Jesus Christ, and since 1980 more than 6000 young people aged 19 – 30 have experienced these life-changing conferences.

H. Eddie Fox, the World Director of World Methodist Evangelism, says, "It was an incredible experience of faith, hope, love and celebration as persons worshipped, prayed, studied, played, and shared deep fellowship in a world community in the unity of Christ Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.... It was

one of the most powerful world conferences that I have ever personally experienced."

The Conference theme was "Jesus Christ: God's Yes to the World!" There were Bible study, testimonies and prayers led by participants from different continents each morning. Seminars on Christian Faith-Sharing, Christian Mission, Christian Spirituality and Christian World View were conducted by various resource persons. Delegates testified of the presence of the Holy Spirit and of life-changing commitments to Christ, and commitment to ministry and service in the name of Christ in the world. Two of the participants from Malaysia share their response and experience in the accompanying articles.



Group Photo

My Dream for the Methodist Youth in Malaysia

I thank God for giving me the opportunity to attend the 9th ICYCE in Seoul, Korea. It has been a great experience to fellowship with 450 young people from around the world in Kwang Lim Vision Land.

Even though we came from different countries, in Jesus Christ we are one family. The testimonies shared by different young people were so inspiring; and always reminded me of the presence and faithfulness of GOD, no matter what the circumstances of our lives.

Like so many others, I found refreshment and restoration in my relationship with GOD through prayer, praise and meditation on GOD's word.

I pray for GOD to show me the way, for what I can do for my country and the young people. There are some ideas from my mind after the conference. It may be just a dream, but perhaps the dream will be achieved in the future.

1. *A Conference for Methodist Youth in Malaysia.*

This will gather the young people around Malaysia for fellowship and to unite them with vision and commitment for the country. This will involve understanding the trend of Christianity in our country, to raise awareness of the commission for being a Christian and to grow spiritually and build up our relationship with GOD.

2. *Set up a fund for youth ministry.*

This will be used to sponsor or subsidise young people for conference and training purposes whether overseas or locally. It is also to help to support the Annual Conference MYF activities in case there is a lack of funds. And the big dream is to build a Youth Centre for conference and camp events, which includes lodging, dining hall, meeting rooms and recreation facilities.

Winnie Wong Siew Fong
SPAC MYF



Report on International Christian Youth Conference on Evangelism

I am thankful to God for a chance to join the ICYC in Korea. It was a great conference and I benefited a lot from it. There are a few things that I learnt which I want to highlight here.

1. I now truly understand and can say that I am proud to be a Malaysian. Living growing up here with different races and cultures have helped me a great deal throughout the conference. There was no problem mixing with different people from around the world; it was easier for me to adapt to the different cultures that we had there. For some people actually found it hard to sit down for a meal with people from different cultures.

Some participants shared with me that they were amazed by how Malaysians could mix together so easily with people from other cultures. I learnt more than one language in school. This helped me to communicate with different people in their own language. I spoke English to the Americans, Britons and Australians; Mandarin to those from China; Cantonese to the people from Hong Kong; and Malay to Indonesians. Because we are used to learning different languages, it becomes easier to learn other languages, and so I believe that Malaysian Christians may have more advantages in missions.

2. After talking to the young people from different countries, I realized that they generally have a certain understanding of their own countries and communities, and they were aware of how they could be the salt and the light in their own countries in a practical way. I think it is very important that we start helping our young people to develop a sense of responsibility for the country and their own communities. I heard many testimonies of how Jesus brought changes to their communities and countries because of the work of young people.

I liked how the Africans make their youth groups so relevant to the communities. They understand their people, they know what they like and how to make them understand God and the gospel. They bring their youth groups into the communities and also bring the communities into their youth groups.

3. I heard from different young people how they made a clear decision to serve God, and because of that the other decisions in their life revolve around the commitment to serve God fulltime, like what to study in college and who to marry. I asked myself whether we put to our young people serving God fulltime as an option for their consideration when they are thinking about further studies. By our silence are we instilling a belief subconsciously that fulltime service is something to consider only when there is nothing else to do? Or have they been made to believe that going fulltime must come with an earth-shaking calling from God instead of having a willing heart and using the gifts that God has given?
4. We definitely need to help our young people develop the habit of praying, not just for themselves, but also for the Kingdom of God. I believe that one of the reasons young people are not interested in praying is because they do not know what to pray for. I believe it is our responsibility to pray for our young people in this area, and also to help them develop an interest in prayer. They need to see prayer as their responsibility and an important element of serving God. It is not something that they do when they need help only. A youth who is passionate about serving God (in worship, youth group or other areas) should have the passion to pray too.
5. I strongly encourage our young people to go on mission trips. Through mission trips, they will understand more of God, life and themselves that they do not see in their own comfort zone.

My personal experience in Korea, I was so overwhelmed by God's love and I had a strong sense of affirmation of God's love for our young people and His heart of wanting to use them. There may be a lot of things we need to do but I strongly believe that God is at work and our young people will be great for Jesus. I believe that our young people will learn self-sacrifice for the Kingdom of God.

*Lawrence Tan
TRAC MYF*

Datuk Ngeh spoke first, recounting the ways early Methodism served and contributed to the wider society besides being concerned for church and spiritual needs. He pointed out the continued need for the church to be relevant to society today. Rev Dr Komar highlighted the still existing distinctions along racial lines in our annual conferences after so many years of autonomy. Dr Samuel Ong raised the important issue of the current trends in worship that shape the understanding and life of worship of Methodist congregations. Rev Dr Kok raised a number of concerns for the future of Methodism: moving from evangelism to mission, being a witness for Christ in our multi-religious society, Bahasa Malaysia ministry and ministry among the indigenous groups, the need to raise pastor-teachers and pastor-scholars/theologians, and the rethinking of the relationship of the Methodist Church and STM.

In response Bishop Dr Hwa Yung added his own thoughts to those shared by the panel. Some of these were the reaffirmation for the need to engage with society as integral to our discipleship, the recovery of a more vibrant worship life of the church, the need for greater theological depth for both pastors and laymen. But he also added that we need to recover a fuller understanding and practice of our Methodist heritage and the spiritual gifts including those of prophets, evangelists and healers. And he called for the church to be an agent of reconciliation in our society wracked by racialism as much as, and perhaps even more than, religious and cultural differences.

We had two nights of widening, deepening and enriching our understanding of being committed Methodists as well as being faithful Christians standing firmly for God. We were already

tired after a long day, but most stayed awake and alert to listen to the public lectures by Dr Ng Kam Weng, the Research Director of Kairos Institute, on “How Malaysian Churches can impact Malaysia”. What a great opportunity we had to be able to listen to this committed humble servant of God. Indeed, we, the participants, are reminded of our rich Methodist heritage as an integral part of the Church community in this country of ours. We are “to use this awareness to spur ourselves on to influence the direction of nation building. We need to stand firm for our God and His Word.

On the final day, the various Conferences brainstormed on what and how to take action on all that had been shared by the speakers. This was followed by a plenary session of sharing each others’ action plans. And after a good lunch at the 2 Fish and 5 Loaves Cafe (where we had all our meals) we said our goodbyes. About twenty-five participants took the optional tour to the National Archives Malaysia .

We encourage all churches to be more involved and more supportive of the work of their Archives and History Ministry. Have a place set aside to be an archives room or even a museum! Keep your church minutes and records well. Write your stories. They are God’s story – HIS-STORY! Let our story be --- “a heritage of faithfulness passed on through godly lives and may all who come behind us find us faithful.” (Jon Mohr).

We thank God for His providence, goodness and faithfulness. All glory to our Lord God Almighty!

Ms Vicky Lee, Mrs Goh Phing Choo and Christopher Cheah



Dr Ng Kam Weng



Dr Lee Kam Hing and interpreter Mrs Sarah Say



Rev Dr Hermen Shastri



Panel – From left: Datuk Ngeh Koo Ham, Mr Gopal Sundaram (Moderator), Dr Samuel Ong, Bishop Hwa Yung, Rev Dr Joseph Komar, Rev Dr Ezra Kok.



Q&A time



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Church History SYMPOSIUM 2010



Rev Dr John Roxborough

In conjunction with the 125th Anniversary of the Methodist Church in Malaysia, the Council of Archives and History (CAH) organised the Church History Symposium. It was held at the Wisma Methodist in Kuala Lumpur on 20 - 23 August 2010. Seventy participants from the various Conferences of the Methodist Church came to attend the Symposium. We also had participants from STM and the AEC office, including ten speakers. The TRAC President Rev Dr Ong Hwai Teik, Rev Dr Tan Jin Huat (Director of CTEE of STM) and Mr Anthony Row (General Conference Secretary) dropped by for some of the sessions.

In all, we had the privilege of listening to ten speakers, all renowned in their various fields in the Christian community, locally and internationally.

Rev Dr John Roxborough delivered the keynote address “The Christian Presence in Malaysia in Retrospect – Faithfulness to Christ, Engaging the Nation”. Dr Roxborough taught at Seminary Theoloji Malaysia from 1983 to 1990. He was involved with the Malaysian Church History Study Group which published *Christianity in Malaysia: A Denominational History*, which he co-edited with Lee Kam Hing and Robert Hunt.

Dr Lee Kam Hing gave an excellent response to Rev John’s address. Both of them reiterated the need and importance of the on-going project of writing the history of the Christian church in Malaysia. This is not only for Malaysian Christians to know our roots and identity but also for the country to know the Church’s presence and contribution in and to the growth of our country. This is especially needed when our history is being written from a narrow, one-sided point of view today.

In relation to the theme of the paper, both writer and respondent helpfully pointed out the various dimensions of Christian engagement with the nation in its early history. From these early efforts and encounters lessons and models could be drawn for engagement in

our socio-religious and political climate today. Much can also be learnt from the less than positive responses from the church in the past and the factors that hindered it so we may be wiser and bolder today.

In the second session Rev Dr Lau Hui Ming, from SCAC, spoke on “The Autonomy of 1968 and 1976: Its impact and challenges for the Methodist Church in Malaysia”. Rev Dr Hermen Shastri (General Secretary of CCM) was the respondent. This session was an eye-opener for most of us – learning of the events, the effects and consequences.

Rev Dr Lau brought our attention to some of the issues that came about with the attainment of autonomy. He detailed the emergence of our present structure of the episcopacy, presidency and the district superintendents in the annual conferences; and the emphasis of the role of the laity.

Rev Dr Shastri elaborated on the forces of nationalism and the drive for independence that played their part in our road to autonomy. But he also identified other factors like racial and linguistic issues that influenced the adoption of the structure of the annual conferences in the autonomous Methodist Church. It was an appropriate response to the socio-cultural climate existing then.

We had a most interesting panel of speakers among whom were pastors, lay leaders as well as a politician. Rev Dr Ezra Kok (CAC), Rev Dr Joseph Komar (TAC), Dr Samuel Ong (TRAC) and Datuk Ngeh Koo Ham (CAC) spoke on “Quo Vadis the Methodist Church in Malaysia: Learning from the past, coping with the present and planning for the future”. It was a challenging time of response from Bishop Hwa Yung, the respondent.

