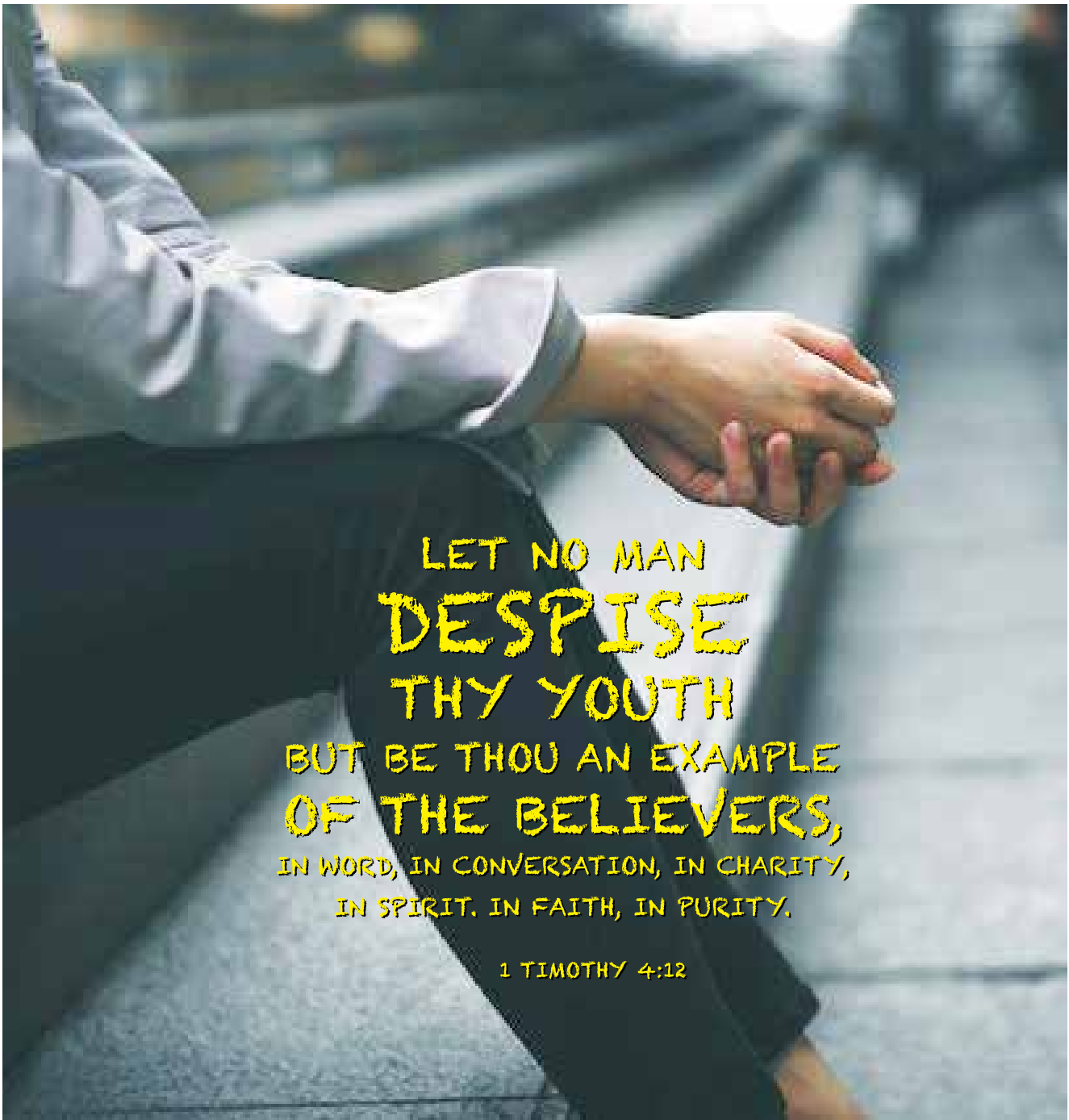


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LET NO MAN
DESPISE
THY YOUTH
BUT BE THOU AN EXAMPLE
OF THE BELIEVERS,
IN WORD, IN CONVERSATION, IN CHARITY,
IN SPIRIT. IN FAITH, IN PURITY.

1 TIMOTHY 4:12



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The Miracle of a Changed Life – John Wesley



"A Church After
God's Own Heart"

- Every Methodist personally renewed in his/her first love for Jesus
- Every Methodist congregation revived as in the Book of Acts
- The Methodist Church to be refocused and reframed after the Word of God and the Holy Spirit



Soaring Like Eagles

Soaring Methodist Youth

I have been honoured and privileged to serve the Methodist Youth in Malaysia. It has been a deep learning curve for me and yet there are many nuggets of blessings in this ministry. Our young people are first and foremost, God's children. They are also members of the Methodist Church in Malaysia – growing, serving, being disciples and being God's agents of reconciliation to their homes, church and communities.

'Hidup ti meruan'

This is the Iban phrase which means 'Eternal life'. "We obtain eternal life when we die or when Jesus comes again" – that's what many believe. Therefore the life they live now is temporal, of little significance and riddled with challenges and difficulties. Yet in my journeys around Malaysia, I see many stories of life that surely is eternal as how the bible defines it, "Now eternal life is this: that they may know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3). Witnessing to our young people – from the rural areas to the urban areas, you will see people worshipping and serving the Lord exuberantly. And this is heart-warming.

As a church we need to show them that what they are experiencing is the life eternal given graciously by God, thus enabling them to worship and trust Him in every aspect of life. We need to pray for our young people to realise this as on the one hand you can see them serving and worshipping God and yet on the other hand we also see them worrying and struggling about life.

Authentic Relationships

This generation of young people long for authenticity in their relationships in living. Amazingly without much effort, they find it through friendships. Many friendship groups form within our youth gatherings. These groups are based on how comfortable they are with each other especially when there are some common interests among them. These interests could be anything 'under the sun'. These is a sense of belonging in these groups and they feel relaxed, secure and are able to participate in that particular group with ease and authenticity. Certainly

there is always the danger that some people may not have a sense of belonging to any particular group in church, yet our young people rarely are overly concerned by this as they have other groups that they belong to. In short, our young people function in groups. And we praise God that once they belong to these groups, authentic relationships begin to form. By the way, these groups form organically solely through interactions between young people.

Our challenge is firstly to give them encouragement for these groups to form. In other words, we need to allow these friendships to take place. We can organize events, games or outings with the sole purpose of helping our young people form their own groups. When these groups form, we can then influence them to include spirituality in their conversations. In fact, due to this sense of belonging and authentic, real relationships, an ideal place is created where our young people can talk and share about God in their lives. Yet this task is not easy. The moment we try to be a part of these groups without having anything in common with them, authenticity dissipates. Usually how I gain access to these groups is through discipling individuals. If we have enough counsellors and youth leaders who spend time with our young people, mentoring, praying with and discipling them, we don't have to be too concerned about changing a group. Organically they change themselves.

Active Discipleship

Every time I meet various groups of youth throughout the Methodist church in Malaysia, I always ask myself if these young people are growing to become disciples of Jesus Christ. I intentionally ask myself this question because it is so easy to lose this identity through their various activities, issues and challenges. We do not want the church or their youth meetings to be just a social, friendship making activity. We want them to find Christ and to become His disciples. In my experiences mixing with these youths, this is my greatest challenge in the ministry. At the end of the day, are we seeking to point our youths towards an active living relationship with our Lord who teaches them through the Holy Spirit and be His people in Malaysia?

Are we there yet in our programs, activities and interactions of our youths? I don't think we will be able to give a uniform answer

for every member of our MYF but there are telling signs that there is growth in this area. There is a growing emphasis I see in the place of prayer and worship in young people and the MYF. I do think that we are still lacking in giving our young people the tools for personal devotion, bible study and witnessing for Christ to their friends. But still there is a lot of work that needs to be done.

What do we need for the MYF today?

1. **Empowerment.** Everywhere I go I try to encourage the young people to trust the Holy Spirit in helping them understand the bible. Many times they don't see the need to spend time with God in reading the Word simply because of the lack of their confidence in understanding the bible. There is also their lack of belief that God speaks to them directly through His Word. I always try to ask for their opinions of different passages of the bible when I have normal interactions with young people. This can also be done through their social media platforms. I do not take their postings when I read them as just random musings. In encouraging them to voice their opinions, we empower them to believe in the God who speaks.
2. **Personal Time of Worship and Prayer.** I also make it a point to always encourage our young people to spend time alone praying and worshipping the Lord. They are so busy with many things. They know they need to spend time but I realize in my work with young people that many do not know how to spend time alone with the Lord. Many do not know how to pray. These seem basic but very important skills that need to be nurtured.
3. **Realizing.** Finally we also need to help our young people believe in the life our Lord has laid out for them. Through their lives, the ups and downs, we need to encourage them to experience God in them. This includes exhortation to trust the Lord, to praise and thank God in all circumstances, to repent and to forgive and finally do not feel condemned but to hope on the finished work of the Cross.

May God continue to shape these young people after his own heart!

Michael William
Executive Youth Director
General Conference

The Formation of the Federation of Christian Mission Schools, Malaysia (FCMSM)



17 September 2019 is a red-letter day as 25 Mission Authorities who own Government-assisted primary and secondary Mission Schools in Malaysia gathered at the La Salle Hall in Petaling Jaya for the Inaugural Annual General Meeting of the newly-constituted Federation of Christian Mission Schools, Malaysia or FCMSM.

The federation was first established in Kota Kinabalu on 7 April 2010 comprising the following three bodies:

- (1) Malayan Christian Schools' Council or MCSC (207 schools)
- (2) Sabah Christian Schools' Council (with Labuan 100 schools)
- (3) Sarawak Christian Schools' Council (129 schools). At that time the Federation was known as the Federation of Councils of Christian Mission Schools Malaysia (FCMSM).

It was at the Conference of Christian Mission Schools held on 26-27 June 2009 when YB Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, the convenor and patron of the conference and Bishop Ng Moon Hing, Chairman of the Christian Federation of Malaysia called for such a body to be formed. With the formation of the FCMSM, for the first time the Mission Schools in the country had a common platform and a common voice in dealing with Mission School matters, especially in matters relating to the Ministry of Education.

Efforts at registering with the Registrar of Societies finally

succeeded in July 2019, with a new Name and Constitution. Under the new set-up of FCMSM, membership consists of 25 individual Mission Authorities rather than the three regional councils.

Among the roles of the Federation was the distribution of Government allocations to Mission Schools which began in 2009; and the on-going process of channelling and monitoring of these allocations. These funds which are included in the National Budget are allocated by the Ministry of Education to the Board of Governors for repairs, maintenance and upgrading of Mission School land and buildings.

FCMSM aspires for Mission Schools to become schools of choice by

- raising the Mission School Ethos, Character and Traditions,
- having strong Christian School Leadership, teachers and Board of Governors,
- and teaching and learning of Bible Knowledge

To play our part in educating the young for our nation in challenging and turbulent times, the clarion call is for the churches, the Christian community, alumni and other stakeholders to come alongside FCMSM to make Mission Schools great again for the glory of God.

By Tay Choon Neo and
Angeline Lazaroo

亚洲基督教救援赈灾研讨会

报道：黄珍琳 摄影：甘慧仪

9月20至21日，年会卫理救援赈灾事工（Methodist Crisis Relief & Development, MCRD）在吉隆坡联邦酒店主办“亚洲基督教救援赈灾研讨会”，有一百五十三位来自本国和其他九个国家的代表出席。

20日早上九时零五分，年会卫理赈灾委员会（跨部）主席——李祖国弟兄首先上台说明卫理救援赈灾成立的宗旨：一、援助灾区；二、提醒众人学习应对灾害；三、安排义工到灾区服务。吾宗会督——王怀德牧师（博士）认为，会众能藉此研讨会学习如何有效地面对自然灾害和善后。

大会邀请我国妇女、家庭及社会发展部副部长——杨巧双（泗岩沫国会议员）致辞。她鼓励会众要教导下一代，让他们不过度依赖网际网络，能具备救援赈灾的技能和知识来面对灾害。语毕，吾会会长——郭汉成牧师（博士）率众作祷。

接着，我国天灾管理机构（National Disaster Management Agency, NADMA）灾情缓解组主任——扎丽娜女士（Puan Ir. Bibi Zarina）担任主题一“政府在灾害管理中的角色和责任”的讲员。她陈述我国常见的天灾、NADMA的成立、灾害管理政策和机制、National Disaster Command Center (NDCC) 基础设施和政府参与的国际合作事项。NADMA 可指挥军队、警察和我国公共工程局（JKR）等机构，彼此配搭来应灾。今年八月，烟霾来袭期间，NADMA 安排我国皇家空军在空气污染指数超过五百点（危险指数）的砂拉越州数座城市进行人造雨活动。NADMA 也每天在各大报章刊登我国各地空气污染指数。

主题二“如何合作赈灾”的讲员，是新加坡触爱国际机构（Touch International, TI）的首席执行官——Eugene Seow传道。TI是新加坡人道主义、救济和社区发展的非营利机构，注重以合作伙伴关系和同盟，以服侍新国贫困和弱势群体。他期盼能与更多人合作。

在分享环节中，澳洲悉尼大学的机械工程师副教授兼 SkyJuice 基金会主席——Mr. Rhett Butler，以“为每个孩子提供安全的食水”为题，简介基金会进行的项目。以提供低成本和干净的饮用水为目标，Mr. Rhett 和其他工程师研发能过滤、净化污水的 SkyHydrant 移动滤水器，进而成立基金会，和全球多国成为合作伙伴。Mr. Rhett 当众示范从一堆零件组合成 SkyHydrant 移动滤水器，引人注目。

联合国世界粮食计划署国家顾问——Azura Ibrahim 在主题三“灾难应急响应中的物流准备”中，介绍联合国世界粮食计划在我国吉隆坡设立的联合国人道主义应急仓库（The United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot, UNHRD）。她表示，为回应灾难，准备物流工作的五大支柱，有协调/合伙人、物资、人力、物流信息和标准/系统。

下午三时五十分，主题四“带给创伤儿童真正的安慰”的讲员——Jonathan E. Wilson 传道与其妻——Rie Wilson，指出 OpSafe 以艺术治疗、游戏和讲故事，引领孩童从灾后的创伤中走出来，重新和他人建立人际关系。现居日本的 Jonathan 传道伉俪是 OpSAFE International 的董事。

翌日早上九时十五分，Jonathan 传道与慨施（Crisis Relief Services & Training, CREST）的执行董事——张志建弟兄是主题五“文化因素和祸患”的讲员。他们常到其他不同文化的国家救灾，因此认同，若要与对方合作，首先要了解当地的语言和文化，才能对症下药，取得更好的果效。

International Disaster Response Network (IDRN) 主席——Daron Tan Huat Swee 牧师担任主题六“赈灾保安措施”的讲员。现居古晋的 Daron 牧师以“防灾安全”为题，陈明赈灾队员在灾区里要做的保安措施。他说，灾区是危险之地，或会成为犯罪现场；当赈灾队到灾区时，要时时警醒。基本保安法是：一、接纳：赈灾队员和谐地与当地人合作，受当地人接纳；二、保护：以各种方式保护自身避免受害，或降低伤害；三、防御：应对威胁的正确方式，例如自我防卫、拥有警卫和透过军事等策略方案。

下午二时零五分，大会来到最后一场主题“动员教会应对灾害”，讲员是 CREST 董事——黄瑞明牧师（博士）。他呼吁教会要未雨绸缪，正视灾害，着力防治。祖国兄在闭幕环节时强调，救援赈灾是不分任何宗教的行动，不是传福音的管道；教会应清楚教导会友，参与救援赈灾事工不是为了宣教。他以<哥林多后书>9章8节勉励会众。随后，他邀请印尼的 Andrew Mandey 传道率众作祝祷，研讨会就圆满结束。



左起为三一年议会会长——T. Jeyakumar 牧师（博士）、祖国兄、郭会长、杨巧双副部长、扎丽娜女士、王怀德会督和研讨会主席——卢道远弟兄。



来自各国各族的赈灾同仁/义工/热心人士，分享所闻所得。

TAC Statement

To whom it may concern.

Please be informed that due to different reasons, the following persons (formerly Reverends) are no more in employment with the Tamil Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Malaysia. Therefore, they do not represent our legitimate interests anymore.

Mr. Timothy Krishnan
Mr. Raymond Raj

Mr. Edward Devadason
Mr. Silvester Louis Martin

Thank you and God Bless you.

In His Grace,

Rev. Dr. Dennis Raj
President,
Tamil Annual Conference,
Methodist Church in Malaysia.

SIAC MPC 2019 at Betong Sarawak



It was a historic moment for SIAC's calendar this year as Betong hosted for the first time a SIAC event — The Methodist Prayer Convention (MPC 2019). All Glory to Him as 380 delegates converged at Dewan Datuk Stephen Kalong Ningkan for the 6th Session of the Methodist Iban Prayer Convention on the 31st August till 1st September, 2019.

Members from all the 5 Districts gathered for prayers and intercessions. Our General Conference Prayer Team (GCPT) led by the main speaker, Reverend Vincent Jayaraj was present at the Convention. The main speaker was assisted by Reverend Jonathan Wong (SCAC), Ps. Jenny Teo (SAC), Sarah Say (CAC), Terry Law (TRAC), Lucrece Loo (TRAC), Ruth Ratnam (TAC) and Shanti Latiner (TAC). The 2-day convention was divided into 5 Sessions based on Psalms 90.

Session 1	A Church After God's Own Heart Through Prayer On Spiritual Warfare
Session 2	A Church After God's Own Heart Through His Protection
Session 3	A Church After God's Own Heart Through Praying Together
Session 4	A Church After God's Own Heart Through Prayer Under His Angels' Protection
Session 5	A Church After God's Own Heart Through Prayer By Listening & Answering From Him



In conjunction with the convention, delegates and speakers were joined by friends and invited guests for a Fellowship and Fundraising Dinner at the Convention venue. The local State Legislative Member, YB Gerald Rentap was also present on behalf of the Guest of Honour, Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas. The auspicious occasion was also to launch the fundraising drive for the construction of the Betong Methodist Iban Church whereby the State Government had recently approved the alienation of a 3.5 acre plot of State land for the Church site in Betong. At the same function, the State Government through UNIFOR committed a fund of RM250,000 for the building of the Church.

Guests at the dinner were also entertained with presentations by the delegates from each District Conference and also from the GC Prayer Team from Kuala Lumpur.

Indeed, the Lord had guided and blessed us throughout that prayer convention and we will meet again soon for the 2020 Prayer Convention.

Report by
Jefri Ngalambai
MPC 2019 Organizing Chairman
SIAC Lay Leader 2019-2020

Features

News from SCAC

Founder's Day and 2019 BB Love Box



Oct 26, Miri – This year, the BB Love Box was held in conjunction with the BB Founder's Day. The grand two-in-one event was graced by Miri's Member of Parliament, YB Dr Michael Teo Yu Keng.

Witnessed by the public and invited sponsors, more than 300 members of the Sarawak Northern Region (Bintulu, Miri and Limbang) Boys' Brigade converged at Bintang Mega Mall, the main venue and BB Love Box Booth sponsor.

Traditionally, Founder's Day is commemorated in the month of October; the same month when Sir William Alexander Smith

founded The Boys' Brigade in 1883 in Glasgow, Scotland.

Sir William, a former Sunday School teacher and Officer of the 1st Lanark Rifle Volunteers, devised an option for the unruly boys in his class to join the Boys' Brigade in church based on religion and discipline. Initially, 59 Boys joined out of curiosity but 35 stayed on. The Boys' Brigade has become the world's first uniform youth organization in 60 countries with 750,000 Members today.

The ostentatious event started with the arrival of YB Dr Teo at 9:00 am. Welcoming the Guest-of-Honor was Hon. Capt. Lawrence Wong, the Chairman of the Sarawak Northern Region Boys' Brigade, Capt. Sim Tze Sian, the BB Sarawak State Social Welfare and Community Chairman, Capt. Law Sie Siek, the Chief Coordinator of 2019 Miri BB Love Box, and Captains from various Companies.

For the first time, the event was streamed live on Facebook (Sarawak Council, The Boys' Brigade in Malaysia, page) by sponsor Hobiz Digital Media.

Following the inspection of the Guard-of-Honor, YB Dr Teo proceeded to Level 1, New Wing, to be greeted with a rousing welcome by a long row of BB Officers and Seniors. He was impressed with the BB Love Box Booth.



Managing Director of Kereta Mewah Sdn. Bhd. (Proton) Tan Kim Hoon

A Colour March-In was performed by the various Companies from the Northern Region after the guests were seated. The Opening Prayer was done by Rev. Simon Ting, the District Superintendent of Miri Methodist Churches. Lt. James Wong presented the Founder' Day brief, followed by performances from 3rd Miri, 5th Miri and 7th Miri Members, delighting the crowd.

In his speech during the BB Love Box Opening Ceremony, Capt. Sim Sze Sian thanked all those involved in organizing the month-long project. The State BB Love Box Organizing Chairman also reiterated that the BB Love Box was a community project that coordinated the collection and distribution of gifts to people in need, regardless of race or religion, during the Christmas season. "Its beneficiaries are the needy people from rural areas identified by the Ministry of Welfare, and social organizations such as homes for the elderly, orphanages, and dialysis centers," said Capt. Sim. "Our project covers Kuching, Sarikei, Sibu, Mukah, Song, Bintulu, Miri and Limbang. With your strong support, we hope to raise 20,000 gifts this year."

YB Dr Teo, in his speech, praised the BB Love Box corporate sponsors for playing their social responsibility roles. "Community care, community love are two passions close to my heart," said YB Dr Teo. "By your action, you are indirectly partnering the government to alleviate challenging situations faced by needy families by providing them with basic necessities. Today, I also would like to thank BB Love Box for the opportunity to donate 1,000 bags of 5-kg rice to needy families in our community. As your Member of Parliament, I will do my utmost best to assist in whatever ways I can."



Mr Riham of GSC Miri receiving the BB mascot souvenir from YB Dr Michael Teo

In a surprising gesture, the BB Members were elated when they were given a treat to attend the movie 'Angry Birds 2' at Golden Screen Cinema (GSC) after the event had ended.

"I'm deeply touched by the generosity by GSC Malaysia. Because of their kind action, 206 BB Members from Bintulu, Miri and Limbang were able to attend the movie. You may be surprised to know not everyone has attended a movie in a nice and proper cinema like GSC due to family financial constraints. Therefore, I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to GSC for their corporate social responsibilities (CSR)," commented Capt. Law Sie Sek, the Chief Coordinator of Miri BB Love Box.

When asked, Mr Mohammad Riham Akmai Bin Mempani, said that he had hoped to brighten the lives of the BB Members who are from underprivileged families. "By giving them an opportunity to watch a movie, they will experience joy. We are proud to be able to sponsor this event and hopefully by our action, the BB youths will learn and also help the needy community in their journey of life," added the Manager of GSC Miri.

Other highlights included words of encouragement from Radio TEA Fm's DJs Jacky and TP, free haircut for 60 children by Alan Salon, symbolic BB Love Box presentation to students of Tudan Learning Centre, souvenir-giving to sponsors, band presentation by Bintulu Brigade Bands. MacDonald's generously served unlimited, free drinks to BB Members.

Rev Simon Ting closed the event with a Benediction.

The Boys' Brigade of the Northern Region wishes to acknowledge and thank the following sponsors for making the 2019 BB Love Box possible: YB Dr Michael Teo Yu Keng, Dato' Dr. Lau Siu Wai, Mr Tan Kim Hoon of Kereta Mewah Sdn Bhd, Shin Yang Group, MacDonald's Miri, Mr Alan Chng Poh San of Alan Salon, Golden Screen Cinemas, Hobiz Digital Media, MF Signmaker Sdn Bhd, Zen Li, Amfield, Hing Soon Li, Da Sing Development, Ji Hui, and Green Summit Development Group of Companies.

Date / Place / Booth (BB Love Box Collection Centres)	Time
Nov 2 - Dec 2 / Kuching Boulevard, Vivacity, Crown Plaza	10am - 8pm
Nov 1 - Nov 30 / Sibu, Farley Supermarket	10am - 9.30pm
Oct 19 - Nov 30 / Bintulu, Farley Supermarket	10am - 8pm
Oct 23 - Nov 23 / Miri, Bintang Mega Mall	10am - 9.30pm
Sept 15 - Oct 29 / Limbang, Limbang Plaza	10am - 4.30pm

By Lt James TC Wong
4th Miri

Introducing Little Lamb's Lamp Society Malacca

Wesley Methodist School (WMS) Melaka closed down with the conclusion of the 2018 academic year. With the impending closure, Wesley Methodist Church Melaka applied to the Council of Education (COE) to convert the school into a hostel for “orang asli” (OA) children. A big “thank you” to members of COE who graciously granted permission. In partnership with Pastor Joseph O of Jus Chapel Tribal Ministry, this project, a brainchild of Rev. Andrew Lim, has since been passed into the capable hands of Rev. Teoh Lee Yng. The Southern District churches have adopted this ministry and together with the Central District I churches have assisted financially, given donations in kind, and conducted programs with the students.

The Beginning:

A pro tem committee was established at the end of 2018. Little Lamb's Lamp (LLL) Society Malacca was registered on 1st February 2019 with the Registrar of Societies. Members of this NGO consist of volunteers from Wesley Melaka.

The joint management board consist of LLL members, Pastor Joseph and his wife Lisah, representatives from Malacca Presbyterian Church (Chinese) and Pastor Ronnie from Straits Baptist Church Malacca.

The Objectives:

1. To provide accommodation, care and other relevant services to poor and needy students to study in education centers in Melaka.
2. To provide aid in other forms where necessary to the poor and needy students and their families.
3. To run activities for fund raising for the Society to achieve its goal with prior approval from the Society's general meeting and the relevant authorities.
4. To encourage emotional and spiritual growth and maturity according to biblical principles.

The Opening:

The hostel for OA children opened with a “bang” on 1st January 2019 with close to 220 children but the latest head count on 30th October was 179. This is because the OA population is “nomadic”. Each time they go back to their kampong over the school holidays some children will dropout and some will be added. Prior to the opening up of the premise of the former WMS, Pastor Joseph used to house his charges at 4 different locations under 4 different wardens. Now there are 9 wardens and 6 fulltime teachers at a single site.

The Demographics:

Most OA ministries in Malaysia are mono-tribal. The OA hostel at Jalan Tengkeri poses a unique challenge in that it is multi-tribal and hence multi-dialect. Pastor Joseph recruited children from 3 different states in Peninsular Malaysia.

State	Region	Numbers (tribe in italics)
Melaka (8) (<i>Temuan</i>)	Kampong Jus/ Machap	8
Kelantan (104) (<i>Temiar</i>)	Pos Gob Pos Hau Pos Pasik Setawar	32 38 3 31
Pahang (60) (<i>Semai</i>)	Janggal Regang/Saweh Rangan Muazam (<i>Jakun</i>)	6 25 5 24
	Boys Girls TOTAL	99 73 172 (earlier total)

The Level of Education:

Location	Numbers
Home school	78
Primary school	34
Secondary school	48
Solid Rock Learning Centre	19

Besides the above, 3 boys are undergoing vocational training in automotive engineering at the Batu Berendam campus of Despark College, the leading automotive college in Malaysia. Eleven girls are attending the Vocational Training Opportunity Centre (VTOC), YWCA, Kuala Lumpur in Sewing & Tailoring (7), Hair Dressing & Beauty Care (3) Culinary & Bakery (1). Seven children are learning art & craft for making costume jewellery with Joe of Calanthe Art, Herren Street. Joe was a former Boys' Brigade Officer.

The Advantage:

In the past many churches and NGOs conducted missions trips to remote areas to expose their members to OA ministry. With the opening of the OA hostel at Jalan Tengkeri, the OAs are literally brought to our doorsteps. Many organizations, like City Community Church, Presbyterian Church besides Wesley Melaka have taken the opportunity to help the OAs in cash & kind, with “kutu” treatment, hair cutting

sessions, medical care, combine worship and children ministry without having to travel far.

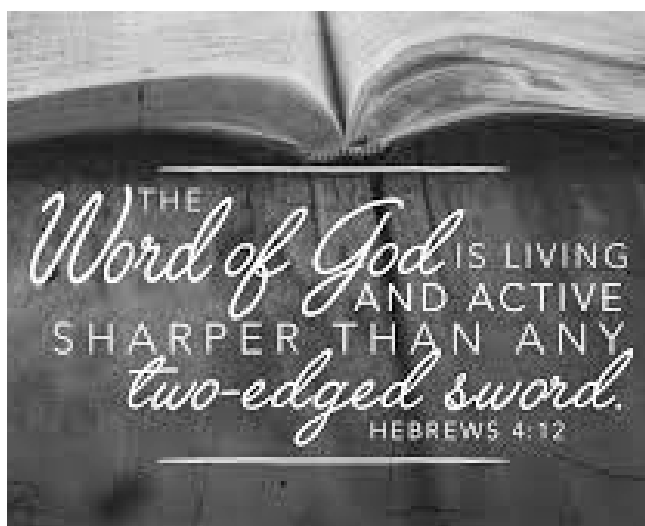
The Appeal:

As LLL approaches its 2nd year we would like to issue the following appeal. Donor fatigue is a real challenge and we would like to appeal for fresh donors, while the appeal is for all existing donors to persevere. Secondly, the 11 children currently in Form 2 will be facing PT3 next year and are in need of good tutors to help them excel. Are there any retired teachers out there willing to spend some time to help coach these children?

The Aspiration:

Many have contributed and continue to work tirelessly in different capacities in the setting up and running of the OA hostel at Jalan Tengker. But regardless of their roles, they share a common aspiration that is to provide a conducive environment for the OA children to study in Melaka. It is only through education that they hope to free themselves from the clutches of poverty.

By Chuah Seong York
Editor of LLL Newsletter



The Miracle of a Changed Life – John Wesley

Bishop Edwin F. Lee

N.B. Address at the Service in Commemoration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of John Wesley's Conversion in the Aldersgate (London) Meeting, May 24, 1738. The Methodist Churches of Singapore, Victoria Memorial Hall, Tuesday, 24th May 1938, 7:45 p.m.

The world has seldom witnessed such a tribute as is in evidence today in more than two score countries around the world. In a sense there is a desire to honour the memory of one of the greatest men England ever produced, but it is much more than the desire to do honour. There is apparently an urge to recapture something of the spirit which not only changed but transformed the life of John Wesley.

In 1703 a son, John, was born to Samuel and Susanna Wesley in the Anglican Parsonage home at Epworth, England. The father was for nearly four decades the Vicar of the church in this country community. The brilliant God-fearing mother had a remarkable influence upon all of her children and sent them out from a modest home but one in which a high degree of culture and of character was given to each as an invaluable heritage. John Wesley became a charity boy in Charterhouse School. A recent head-master of the school said proudly, "We count John Wesley as the greatest of many Carthusians". On the school roster are the names of the poet Addison, the novelist Thackeray and Baden-Powell, Scoutmaster of the World!

Next came a scholarship in Oxford University where John Wesley was soon known as an earnest and intelligent student. Following his graduation he became a Fellow of Lincoln College, was ordained in 1725 as Deacon in the Anglican Church and in 1728, at the age of 25, as presbyter or priest. During his student days he and his brother were members of a small group of serious-minded students who associated themselves together in what was known as "The Holy Club". They endured

jeers from fellow students who considered them a group of impractical dreamers. Undeterred, this group of students sought, in the midst of a period of religious indifference, for a deepening of their Christian faith.

At the age of 32, he and his brother accepted appointment to the new colony in Georgia. Charles' appointment was as secretary to the founder. Colonel Oglethorpe organised this colony to provide opportunity for English debtors to rebuild their lives in the new world. John went as a missionary to the American Indians, whom he found so unapproachable that it was necessary for him to divert his attention to a ministry among the English colonists. After two years he returned to England in complete despair. His service in Georgia is unquestionably a record of defeat caused primarily because of an inclination to compel people to be religious. The return journey, however, provided a contact with a group of God-fearing people known as the Moravians, who had learned something of the assurance that can be found in the Christian faith. He was deeply impressed by the courage of even the women and children of this group when a terrible winter storm threatened to swamp the tiny sailing vessel. From them he learned that one could experience a relationship with God which could give a satisfying and courageous religious note in many of the churches but his message was not one of attractive power but more the message of a John the Baptist warning the people of their godlessness and of the wrath to come.

William Blackstone, the great jurist, wrote of this period in English life. He made a round of the leading London churches and gave his conclusion as follows: "That he did not hear in any sermon more of Christianity than could be heard in the writings of Cicero; nor could he make out from

the content of the preaching whether the preacher was a disciple of Confucius, Mohammed, or Christ!"

The earnestness of purpose on the part of John Wesley could not long go unrewarded. His fine background added to his remarkable university experience both as a student and as fellow of Lincoln College, and his earnest attempts to be of service to the people as a clergyman in the Established Church, were insufficient to make him a vital spiritual influence. Not long since in a pocket in an outlying region of the Levant a traveller found a group of some five thousand people who were followers of John the Baptist but who had not yet, after 19 centuries, heard of the Message of forgiveness of sins and of salvation through Jesus Christ.

On May 24, 1738 John Wesley in the afternoon attended a service in St. Paul's Cathedral. There the anthem stirred him as the choir chanted the words from the 130th Psalm. "Out of the depths have I called unto Thee". That same evening, as he records in his diary, he went very unwillingly to a meeting of a small religious society, in Aldersgate Street, London. "I think it was *about five this morning* that I opened my Testament upon these words: "There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). Just as I went out I opened it again on these words, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God'.

In the *afternoon* I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was 'Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. O let Thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? For there is mercy with Thee; therefore Thou shalt be feared. O Israel, trust in the

Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his sins'. *In the evening* I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. *About a quarter before nine*, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death."

A recent biographer describes the evening thus: "With a troop of exultant friends, Mr. Wesley left the little room in Aldersgate Street, and sought out his happy brother in the home of the brazier in little Britain, just around the corner. His two words '*I believe*', told the good news. The company voiced its rapture by singing the hymn which Charles Wesley had just written, 'How shall my wondering soul begin'. Prayers of thanksgiving were offered, and then the rejoicing company separated to seek their several homes. Surely, not one of them at that moment realized what this night was to mean to millions of souls, through centuries to come, all round the world".

The historian Lecky, evaluates that event as follows: "It is scarcely an exaggeration to say, that the scene which took place at that humble meeting in Aldersgate Street forms an *epoch* in English history. The conviction which they flashed upon one of the most powerful and most active intellects in England, is the true source of English Methodism".

If Mr. Lecky were writing today he might voice the language of a biographer that this Aldersgate experience was the starting point of a nation-wide and world-wide revival of evangelical Christianity which after two centuries has not yet spent its force.

The significance of this Aldersgate experience, which represented a definite religious conversion for Wesley, is that whereas John Wesley, with all his talents and finished technique, had preached for thirteen years with negligible results, after his experience at the meeting in Aldersgate he preached up and down the land with extraordinary power. Another ob-

server has expressed his experience as follows: He finally and permanently shifted the centre of gravity of his own life from himself to God."

From that day onward John Wesley began what history records as one of the most remarkable religious expressions. In the course of his labours he travelled, mostly on horseback, 250,000 miles. In this day one could travel in most parts of the world with the same physical effort, two and a half million miles. Between 1738 and the year of his death in 1791, a period of 63 years, this good man preached forty-two thousand sermons, practically all of them out-of-doors or in ordinary halls and living rooms in homes. In the midst of this activity he produced a large amount of literature, much of it original and much of it an editing of the works of others, which he put into the language of the common man. He had these books printed so that the average book would fit into the pocket of the labouring men and at a cost within the reach of his purse.

Perhaps quite naturally the established church failed to appreciate his emphasis, for it was not geared to this kind of Christian interpretation and experience. No understanding Methodist fails to appreciate the close kinship between the Wesleyan evangelical revival and the Anglican Church. Two hundred years ago, it would have been well-nigh impossible for any established church to incorporate the Wesleyan movement as a part of its programme. What has become the Methodist Church throughout the world, owes much to the mother church and is unfailing in its gratitude. The dignity of its ritual and the breadth of its Christian doctrine are carried on in revised form but with clear evidence of the source of their origin. Despite the fact that he was a regularly ordained minister he was even denied the privilege of preaching in his father's pulpit. The entire community, however, met him in the church-yard, where John Wesley, standing on his father's grave, gave them his new message and evidenced its unusual power. His denunciation of sin and wickedness naturally brought out much ill-will and frequently mobs threatened him and now and again actually did him serious bodily injury. Despite all opposition, people by the thousand listened to this changed voice which represented a miracle of spiritual power.

In the "New Room" in Bristol which was the first building the Methodist groups acquired, one can still see the exit where a preacher could make a hurried departure from the pulpit before the members of a disagreeing congregation would be able to lay hold upon him. One's imagination is fired when he is privileged to visit the Cathedral in Bristol where Bishop Butler sleeps, and then goes from that stately building to the modest New Room which has become a shrine for interested Methodists. One cannot stand and gaze upon the lovely bronze statue there, of John Wesley on horseback, without recalling what the travels of this man on his horse meant to England. To a Methodist preacher who is permitted to ascend the steps of the pulpit in the City Road Chapel London and to attempt to preach to the assembled congregation, there is much stirring of emotion as he remembers the voice that formerly spoke from that same sacred desk.

John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir) has rendered a service of a high order in giving to us his recent biography of Oliver Cromwell. This great man's death occurred less than half a century before the birth of John Wesley. The picture of the British Isles in those days reveals the several peoples as floundering in their attempt to establish a secure basis for a social, religious and political order.

Wesley visited Scotland twenty times—a long and wearisome journey from the Foundry or the New Room. He admired the Scottish people, though they were slow in responding to his appeals. I am sure that our Scotch friends will understand the kindly spirit with which the following paragraph is added. This is Wesley's comment following those visits. "Among all the sins they have imported from England, the Scots have not yet learned—at least the common people—to scoff at sacred things." "Yet", he remarked, "there is seldom fear of wanting a congregation in Scotland. But the misfortune is, that they know everything, so they learn nothing".

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