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An Overview of Methodist Schools in Malaysia

SEK KEB METHODIST (ACS) SITIAWAN SEK KEB METHODIST (ACS) LUMUT SEK KEB METHODIST AYER TAWAR SEK KEB METHODIST TAIPING SEK KEB (P) TREACHER METHODIST (MGS) TAIPING SEK KEB METHODIST PARIT BUNTAR SEK KEB METHODIST TANJUNG MALIM SEK KEB (L) HORLEY METHODIST TELUK INTAN SEK KEB (P) METHODIST (MGS) TELUK

Moment



Education is crucial to the development for our children. One of the privileges of being Malaysian is the access to schools for all. One of the legacies of good education is the part the churches played in setting up schools all over Malaysia. Though most of these schools now belong to the government, its presence alone can witness to its importance to our society and nation.

“..The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and

when you rise up.” Deuteronomy 6:4-7)

Our role in the education field comes from the very foundation of scripture. The call to love God is extended to not only the adults but also to our children. We are called as adults to teach our young to love God in all circumstances. And since many children do not come from Christian homes, the schools play a very important role in teaching and nurturing them in the love of God.

I am a product of a mission school in my home town. Our motto was and always is “for the glory of God”. In my school, the church played a prominent role in the education process. We had chapel and a Christian fellowship weekly. I remember vividly one of my friends asking me why I prayed after seeing me doing so in my

classroom during a CF meeting. And it was a pleasure sharing with him that day on God and his presence in my life. All this happen simply because we had many opportunities to hold Christian meetings in school.

Do mission schools have a place in the Malaysian society today? In this Pelita issue we would be highlighting the heritage and current development of mission schools in Malaysia.

Furthermore, our mission does not just end with the secondary education, it extends to our tertiary education as well through the Methodist college in Kuala Lumpur. We hope that the legacy of our Mission schools will always be a key factor in the development of education in Malaysia.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ISSAC NG

By Michael William

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Malaysia National Prayer Network

BELOVED (crucified with Christ)

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me; May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which[a] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Gal 2:20; 6:14 NIV)



Pray that

- | We will remember : the life I now live is not my own life;
- | Our lives may demonstrate our calling in the fellowship with and in the strength of our Lord and that the old nature be kept nailed to the cross until the time comes when it is utterly destroyed;
- | We yield ourselves entirely to be led by the Holy Spirit into the fellowship of His cross;
- | Our spiritual leaders to be conscious of their fellowship with the Crucified One through faith; that such fellowship of the cross be strengthened day by day, and bring about deeper communion with His life and His love.
- | We continue to lift up our brothers and sisters who face injustice and suffer for the name of Christ:

Continue to Pray

- | For our national, state, local leaders and law enforcement to be clean, transparent and just; to respect rakyat’s rights to voice their concerns and to peaceful assembly in public spaces, not too quick to condemn and make accusations, but listen to those concerns and be sincere to change.
- | For a revamp of the Election Commission, for clean and just.
- | For the courageous rakyat who have demonstrated their love for the nation through their actions in responsible and respectful manners; praise God for them;
- | For the people: as they witness the lives and conducts of the believers, they may desire to know the Lord, their eyes, ears and hearts be opened to the truth, that their lives be transformed.
- | F or respect of religious diversity and freedom to choose one’s faith in Saudi Arabia.
- | For the children in Afghanistan.

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Presidents' Corner

Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference

A Summary of the SCAC President's Address, 36th Session SCAC

By Rev. Dato' Dr. Su Chii Ann, President of SCAC

布道植堂 家庭关怀 作主门徒

感谢上帝建立与保守我们的教会110年！我们欣慰的看到牧者、教会领袖和会友都一起秉承“立足本地，胸怀普世”的精神，上下齐心敬拜、教导、装备、关怀、布道和宣教，致力顺服和实践基督的大使命。为了具体说明今年如何达成这大使命，小仆不得不用一些数字（以2010年与2011的数字比较）来表达：

主日崇拜人数从28,544增加到29,358人，3%的增长率。

会友捐从RM9,074,915增加到RM10,167,731，即12%增长。复活捐增加2%。感恩捐增加5%。四项捐平均增加10%。每位崇拜者每年平均奉献RM1,654。经济部如何作每年的预算案？以今年预算案来说，基本上教牧薪金占总预算案38%；事工费用34%；硬体发展20%，以及经常费用8%。这是一个相当健康的预算案。

祷告会由5,292人增加到5,676人，7%增长率。受门徒、三福、顶峰课程和其他课程装备的人数为5,573人。新收小洗，成洗和正式会友有2,526人，3%增长，达到四年一万人信主每年2,500人的目标。现在教会共有95,107信徒。（今年小洗1%；成洗25%；会友4%增长。）

今年共有海外宣教士26位，2位（完成第一期，不再继续），2位（述职进修），2位宣教系毕业生以及9位宣教系学生。本地宣教士共有5位，明年加多一位，集中在Ulu Belaga宣教。

当然，从另一个角度来看数字，我们要关注下列事工：

主日学人数继续在下降，从9,526减到9,444人，1%负增长。其他负增长的肢体包括妇女会—1%，成年—4%，初成—7%，青年—4%，儿团—17%。

今年另有一个现象：农历新年奉献减少2%（-RM12,558）和专款奉献从RM1,163,147减少到RM774,751。一个贴心的提醒：第一期3,000万事工专款奉献到明年为止。我们必须在此赞扬诗巫西教区，已经有4间堂会完成他们的事工专款奉献，即真源堂，兴安布道处，榕南堂和鸿安

堂。

有一件事一直使我们纳闷的是：虽然今年崇拜人数有增加，但只占生命册总会友人数的41%。我们不禁会问：其他59%的会友，何日君再回来？

让我们重温一下耶稣的大使命（引用和合本修订版圣经）：耶稣进前来，对他们说，天上，地下所有的权柄，都赐给我了。所以，你们要去，使万民作我的门徒，奉父子圣灵的名，给他们施洗。凡我所吩咐你们的，都教导他们遵守。记住：我天天与你们同在，直到世代的终结。（太28:18-20）

那么，耶稣天天与我们同在，我们有没有天天遵守耶稣的大使命，作主门徒呢？我们教会168蓝图的重点就是作门徒。作门徒需要天天内在的更新（敬拜、教导、装备）和外在的强化（关怀、布道、宣教）。

敬拜方面：

培育门徒需要个人扎实的操练基本功：个人灵修，祷告，读经和参加主日崇拜。如希伯来书5:12-6:1所说：“看你们学习的工夫，本该作师傅，谁知还得有人将神圣言小学的开端，另教导你们。并且成了那必须吃奶，不能吃干粮的人。凡只能吃奶的，都不熟练仁义的道理。因为他是婴孩，惟独长大成人的，才能吃干粮，他们的心窍，习练得通达，就能分辨好歹了。所以，我们应当离开基督道理的开端，竭力进到完全的地步。”

在此，我们特别关注主日崇拜。有四方面可以提升堂会的崇拜：

1. 提倡平常主日崇拜在1小时15分钟内完成。

2. 培育更多人才教导上帝的子民敬拜上帝。年会崇拜与音乐部计划到2030年，能够栽培出50位崇拜与音乐干事/主任，在年会、教区和堂会层面全面性引导上帝的子民以心灵和真理来敬拜上帝。（参阅崇拜与音乐部的报告）

3. 出版“圣诗导唱”，使大家更了解诗歌的涵义和信息，更加爱上帝。

4. 不断提醒41%会友自己参与崇

拜，也带领其他59%在羊圈外的羊群回归上帝的家中。有一间香港循道卫理教会为了培育会友敬拜主的心，就用海报提醒大家作个有气质的门徒。“属灵气质要重整：要准时，不迟到；要庄重，不暴露；要朝圣，不云游；要唱诗，不缄默；要行道，不斋听。信徒精兵齐做到。”

教导方面：

会祖卫斯理约翰除了使用班会和会社培育信徒外，也常常透过教导来栽培信徒。明年，我们继续开办“卫理信仰讲座”——卫理信仰：改革与落实（苏慈安牧师主讲）；末世：2012？（刘世尧牧师主讲）；敬拜：向上帝？为己？（卢臻长牧师主讲）。

我们教会一路来都秉承办教育的使命。去年，年会教育部受托研究开办“私立学校”的可能性。研究小组把一年的考察和研讨的成果呈现大家：为了栽培有素质、有品格、有信仰、有见地、有智慧的公民，小组建议开办私立学校；先开办中、小学，以国家教育课程为准，并安排适当时间在学术、品格、语言、灵性上进深与强化。小组已经拟定办学的理念，方针和策略，若年会通过，可在各教区开办（参阅教育部报告）。

基督教教育部、会友事工部和布道部经过一年多联合的研究和整合，终于把我们教会这110年上好的课程有系统，按部就班，也按着会友的需要，编著了一套“终生学习”的材料，称为《卫理会友迈向完全之旅》，学习一生作主门徒。

装备方面：

在牧者装备方面，一个牧者一生至少栽培一位会友献身作牧者。更重要的是确定人选后，在未入学前，先给予灵性建设、心理辅导、品格培育、人际操练、事奉督促、工作经验等等装备。在推荐时，给予真诚具体个人、家庭、教会、社会等等资料，好让有关学院可以事半功倍的训练牧者或领袖。

在会友方面，各教区或堂会可以个别举办“国际领袖训练”（ILI）或“历史开创者”（History Makers）领袖课程，来动员会友在家庭、教会和社会中作有品格和榜样的领导者。

以上的装备领袖心路历程都应该是各教区和堂会领袖装备的蓝本，最基本的是：我们所提供的装备（课程或训练会）所装备出来的领袖是我们所要的领袖吗？因此，我们必须了解我们教会五年或十年后所需要的领袖。如果没有异象，教会就无方向了。

社会关怀方面：

最近国家人口与家庭发展局指出本国人口增长应关注的七个课题：确保孩子是在父母的盼望下平安出生；提升高龄人士的照顾；城市人口增加的对策；家庭债务的增加；强化公共卫生和环境健康；性别暴力的挑战，以及满足年轻族群的需求。

其中特别提到本国人口逐渐高龄化的趋向：到了2020年高龄人口将达340万人，占总人口9.9%。到2030年时，本国60岁以上的人口将占总人口的15%。为了乐龄人士实践积极和喜乐的人生（active aging），在知体灵群四方面成长，其中行动之一就是：今年，砂拉越中区（诗巫、加帛、民丹、泗里街）开办了卫理乐龄学习中心，共有40多名学生。明年，在南区（古晋）和北区（民都鲁、美里）也开办卫理乐龄学习中心。

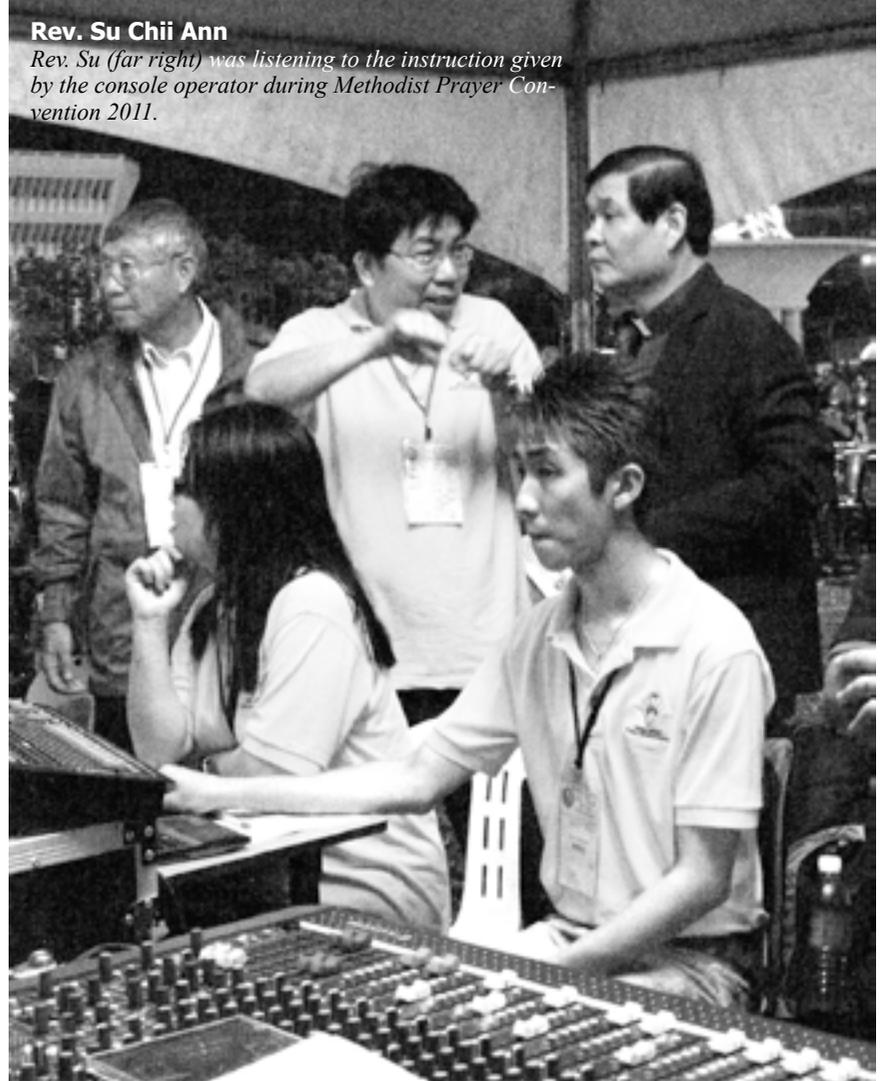
从明年开始，凯胜之家将交给诗巫西教区基督徒社会关怀执行会策划、管理和提升。对象为出狱者，提供生活技能、灵性栽培、重整人际、融入社会。

近年来，到福儿院求助的多为面对单亲、离婚、家暴等等人士或家人。今天，社会生病了。因此，基督徒社会关怀部，福儿院董事部和卫理关怀中心联合探讨这些课题，决定成立“特殊事工”。

布道方面：

本会在这四年中的布道目标是：“万人信主受洗入会成为主的门徒”。感谢上帝和教会的参与，过去两年和今年都达到预期的目标：一年2,500人信主进入教会。现在，本会有95,107信徒。请按着布道部所规定的布道人数作计划，让我们向着十万个信徒的目标前进！

不过，我们目前面对一个严峻的挑战：由于现今社会环境复杂，商业化推销策略，人与人之间缺乏信任，强调个人隐私权，个人主义抬头，为了清闲或安全，屋门不向外



Rev. Su Chii Ann
Rev. Su (far right) was listening to the instruction given by the console operator during Methodist Prayer Convention 2011.

开放，促使逐家探访布道越来越困难，达不到预期的效果或有时根本就是徒劳而归。这也无形中负面地影响了个人布道、布道队、逐家探访布道进展的局面。我们将如何应对？也许可以考虑友谊布道、关怀布道和网络网际布道的可行性。

其实，其中一个最有效的布道途径就是植堂。我们期望明年目标如下：古晋东教区开始3个布道站；古晋西教区2个布道站；泗里街教区2个布道所；民都鲁教区1个布道所；美里教区1个布道站。

诗巫东教区正在计划2013年分划成为两个教区，为的就是拓展新的福音工场、植堂、建立教会。

我们应该了解，在我国总基督徒人口当中，60%的基督徒是原住民。他们应该是真正教会的带领者。但，目前的实况是：他们（尤其是年轻人）迁居市区失落信仰，在家乡/长屋深受异教化之风左右，原住民教会经济短缺和受到世俗化

的影响，他们所面对的挑战、诱惑和迷失是在所难免的。在这种情况下，华人教会该如何与他们一起负起训练牧者、培育领袖、装备门徒，使他们刚强起来，将来成为教会的发言人和耶稣的见证人？针对目前的需要，就是透过教育，从小用圣经教导儿童；在乡区开办“学前教育”是刻不容缓的工作，免得其他团体捷足先登，影响儿童和居民，后悔不及。我们可以与SIB教会合作。我们在Ulu Belaga也必须拟定开办“学前教育”的学校和课程，有策略性的进行教育宣教。希望在策略小组中，注意国语事工的探讨。一位牧师语重心长的说：“全世界每天死亡172,800人，其中有114,048人沉沦地狱，所以，福音真的非传不可！何况，传福音是一道不可违抗的圣旨！”

宣教方面：

耶稣进前来，对他们说，天上，

地下所有的权柄，都赐给我了。所以，你们要去，使万民作我的门徒，奉父子圣灵的名，给他们施洗。凡我所吩咐你们的，都教导他们遵守。记住：我天天与你们同在，直到世代的终结。(太28:18-20)

现在，我们从另一个角度来看大使命。耶稣的大使命是以“使万民作主的门徒”为命令，“去传福音”、“施洗”、“教导”，是执行命令的途径。换句话说，在推动宣教事工的同时，教会也必须推动门徒训练。“门训事工”和“宣教事工”必须相辅相成。教会如果不以“门徒训练”为主要议程，宣教事工难成气候。教会若注重宣教而忽略门训，会产生负面的结果，如：弟兄姐妹灵命不成长，难以支持宣教事工；教会所传递宣教的异象和信息，对不追求的会友来说，无关痛痒，无感无动；会友不懂得祷告、读经、灵修、服侍和发展恩赐，宣教人才难找；所派的宣教士灵命和事奉软弱无力，伤亡率肯定偏高。

这也许使我们了解到其中一个因素，使我们迟迟不能预期达到所定的宣教士人数目标：2010年差派50位宣教士或2020年差派100位宣教士，就是我们人才难找。

在结论时，我们必须留意两件事：1. 我们已经推动教会168蓝图，至今长达7年，发现多半堂会在推行中，使牧者牧养和会友建立教会方向，有重点和有使命。为了在加强教会168蓝图，在此附上“SCAC教会168蓝图在堂会的落实”样本，在堂会中，研讨与落实。2. 我们教会推动事工的方式和策略。年会策划蓝图/事工；教区传递蓝图/事工；堂会落实蓝图/事工。举例说明：

目前已经落实的事工：
•布道部策划四年“万人信主受洗入会”，每年各堂会的目标；教区传递这个目标，堂会按地区性的处境和方法推动。
•年会基督徒社会关怀部所成立的“凯胜之家”，明年交给诗巫西教区基督徒社会关怀执行会，发动堂会，管理和照顾。
•幸福家庭与辅导部的辅导事工，由年会发起，在各教区成立辅导中心并给予人力和财力的支援，这包括：古晋恩典中心、诗巫幸福中心、民都鲁希望中心和美里弦中心。

•福儿院 / 卫理关怀中心都由年会延伸到美里设立福儿院/希望之家。
•年会教育部策划 / 拟定成立卫理私立学校的政策，由教区或适当地区联合堂会去落实。

现在和将来，整个教会推动事工

的方式应该如此：年会策划/拟定策略，交给教区或堂会去落实，使各地区的教会更复兴，更有联系性，更有归宿感和使命感，更体验主的福气和同在，会友天天作主门徒。

English Translation

Ministry Focus: Church Planting, Family Enrichment, Discipleship
We thank God for leading our church in the past 110 years! We also appreciate how the pastors, church leaders and members have obeyed the Great Commission of Jesus Christ in making disciples locally and globally. Our emphases are in the areas of worship, education, equipping leaders, social concerns, evangelism and missions. Let me quote some statistics (comparing 2010 and 2011 figures) to illustrate our growth as a conference. The Sunday worship service attendance has increased by 3% from 28,544 to 29,358.

Members’ tithing has increased and the amount has increased by 2% from RM9,074,915 to RM10,167,731; Offerings on Easter Sunday has increased by 2%, Thanksgiving Sunday offering increased by 5%. The average offering of a worshipper is RM1,654 per annum. What is our annual budget? It is based on the following allocation percentage: Pastors’ salaries 38%, Ministry expenses 34%, Physical development 20%, and Operational expenses 8%. This is a healthy budget. Church Prayer Meeting has a 7% increase in attendance, from 5,292 to 5,676 people. There are 5,573 members who join training classes like “Disciples”, “EE III”, “TOP” and other spiritual formation seminars.

As far as our “Evangelism Campaign” is concerned, the target is 10,000 Baptisms, with an increase of 2,500 each year. We have reached beyond our target this year. The number of our present overseas missionaries is 26. Two more will be commissioned next year. We have 5 local missionaries working among the Penans in Ulu Belaga, doing mission through education. We must thank God for His mighty work in our Conference, but we need to study the statistics from another angle.

Our Sunday School again records a drop of 1% in attendance, from 9,526 to 9,444. The drop in attendance are also recorded in WF (-1%), MAF (-4%), MJAF(-7%), MYF (-4%) and JMYF(-17%).

Another observation is that there is a drop of 2% in Chinese New Year Service offering, and a tremendous drop in Special Ministry Fund this year. For the Special Ministry Fund, next year is the last year for us to contribute. At this juncture, I must congratulate 4 churches in Sibu West District on their completion of contributing to the Special Ministry Fund this year! They are Cheng Uong Church, Hin Onn Preaching Centre, Yuan Nan Church and Hong

Ang Church. One fact that troubles our hearts is that only 41% of our total membership turns up for Sunday Worship Service. Where are the 59%?

Let us recall what Jesus said in His Great Commission: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. You must therefore go and make the people of all nations my disciples. You must baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and you must teach them to obey all the commands I have given you. An there is not a day when I will not be with you to the end of time.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

Jesus has promised to be with us everyday. Do we live as His disciples everyday? This is really a great challenge.

Our Blueprint focuses on discipleship in 6 main ministries: Worship, Education, Equipping leaders, Social Concerns, Evangelism and Missions.

Worship

Hebrew 5:12-6:1 says, “By now you should have been teachers, but once again, you need to be taught the simplest things about what God has said. You need milk instead of solid food. People who live on milk are like babies who do not really know what is right. Solid food is for mature people who have been trained to know right from wrong. We must try to become mature and start thinking about more than just the basic things we were taught about Christ.” Christ desires his followers to act on the basic practices, like personal Quiet Time, prayer, studying the Bible and Sunday services and grow into maturity.

We need to pay special attention to our Sunday Worship Services. We have to review it from time to time. The following are some suggestions:

1. Try to hold the ordinary worship service within 1 hour and 15 minutes.
2. Train God’s people to worship in spirit and in truth. Board of Worship and Music has a vision to train 50 Directors by year 2030 to help improve the worship in church music and hymns.
3. Publish “Introduction to Hymn Singing” every year to help people appreciate the hymns their background, content, main points and messages.
4. Motivate the 41% worshippers to bring back the other 59% people who are lost and do not attend Sunday service.

Education

Our founder, John Wesley, often taught his members the Word of God through bands, societies and class meetings. We follow his example by teaching our people God’s Word through talks and seminars. Next year, “Methodist Belief That Matters” seminars will still continue in 9 Districts. Rev. Su will talk about “Methodist Belief: Reformation and Implementation”,

“Last Days: 2012?” by Rev. Thomas Lau, and “Worship: To God or For Self-satisfaction?” by Rev. Lu Chen Tiong.

Our church continues to launch mission through education. Board of Education is entrusted to find out the possibility of establishing “Methodist Private Schools”. After more than one year of research and discussions, the Board proposes before all of you a “Methodist Private School” Project Proposal, with the rationale, vision, mission statement, funding sources, program, strategy and implementation plans. We pray that we can reclaim this mission field soon.

Board of Christian Education, Board of Lay Activities and Board of Evangelism this year have come out with the lifelong learning program, called “Methodists Growing Towards Maturity”. The program demonstrates the best materials on Christian growth and discipleship in a systematic and user-friendly way.

Equipping leaders

Every pastor must intentionally lead at least one member to become a pastor. More importantly, pastors must help familiarize the selected candidate in the areas of spiritual formation, counseling, character building, interpersonal relationship, and all aspects of pastoral ministry before he or she applies for theological training. Pastors must also give specific information with regards his or her character, family, church and working background so that the training authorities know how to equip him or her more effectively.

As for equipping the church leaders, we will continue to train them through regional ILI and History Maker programs, to mobilize and enable them to become more effective leaders at home, in the church and society.

Basically, we must understand what kind of future pastors and leaders we need in the church and society, at least 5 or 10 years down the road. Then, we review and decide on the training program to suit this need. That is why we should examine “the pilgrimage of the leader” very closely every time we plan for the future leaders.

Social Concerns

Our population is aging. By 2020, 9.9% of our total membership will be senior citizens. By 2030, people above 60 years old will make up 15% of the total membership. We need to heed this group of people: How can we help them age graciously? In order to help them grow intellectually, physically, spiritually and socially, we will launch the Methodist Senior Learning Centre (MSLC) in Sibu this year. Next year, we will set up such Centres in Kuching and Miri.

Next year, Sibu West District will manage “Victory Home” which is a half way

home for ex-prisoners. It serves to train ex-prisoners in daily living skills and help them adjust to society and lead normal lives.

Our society faces other social issues, like single parents, unwedded pregnancy, and divorced couples who leave behind children to be taken care of by grandparents who are aging or they may end up with no one to take care of them. Our church is concerned about the children, and has formed a “Special Ministry Team” to help look into such social issues.

Evangelism

We have launched an “Evangelistic Campaign” annually since 2009. The target for each year is 2,500 baptisms. Praise be to God! For the past three years, we have achieved the target. Now our membership has increased to 95,107, not far from achieving the number of 100,000 members.

In the face of complex social factors, lack of mutual trust, emphasis on privacy, rise of individualism and security reasons, we find it hard to do house to house personal evangelism. The people tend not to open their doors for visitations by pastors and zone leaders. It is time to consider other means of evangelism, such as friendship evangelism and relational evangelism. Here I would like to introduce a book to equip you to do evangelism: Norman Geisler and David Geisler, “Conversational Evangelism: How to Listen and Speak So You Can Be Heard”, Eugene: Harvest House, 2009.

In fact, one of the best ways to grow the church is by church planting. Next year, we will target to start 3 preaching points in Kuching East District, 2 in Kuching West District, 2 in Sarikei District, 1 each in Bintulu and Miri Districts. Sibu East District is planning to form into 2 Districts, with the aim to develop new gospel centres and to build more churches.

We must always be reminded that the indigenous Christians make up 60% of the Christian population in Malaysia. In actual fact, they are the real church leaders. Nowadays, the indigenous people migrate from villages to the towns. Away from home, the young people are free to do anything they like, forsaking their Christian faith, without attending church worship services and being influenced by Islamisation and Secularism. We need to help train the adults to be mature disciples of Christ, while we set up “Pre-School” classes for the children to gain knowledge and learn Christian faith. It is very urgent that we set up “Pre-School” classes for the Penan children in Ulu Belaga.

Missions

“Make disciples of all nations” is a command or imperative of the Great

Commission, while “going (to spread the gospel), baptizing and teaching” are means to implement such mission.

If we talk about mission, we need to talk about discipleship. In another words, “discipleship” and “mission” should go together. If our church does not take discipleship seriously, it is hard to carry out mission both locally and overseas. If we just emphasize on mission and neglect the importance of discipleship, negative results will occur: Our members who do not grow spiritually are obstacles to carrying out mission; for those whose spiritual life is at the infant stage, they will not take mission to heart; it will be very hard to find missionaries if members do not cultivate the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible study, personal Quiet Time, ministry and even discovering their spiritual gifts. If missionaries we send out are weak in spiritual life and ministry, the success rate of missionary survival will be very low.

We must acknowledge that the gospel of Jesus Christ must be preached throughout the world, indicating that we love the world with the love of God. But at the same time, we need to ask: as part of the universal church, what can we do in world mission with limited resources that we have? Shall we continue to open up more new mission fields or concentrate on a few fruitful mission fields, working together with international mission agencies, such as WFCMC, SIM and OM?

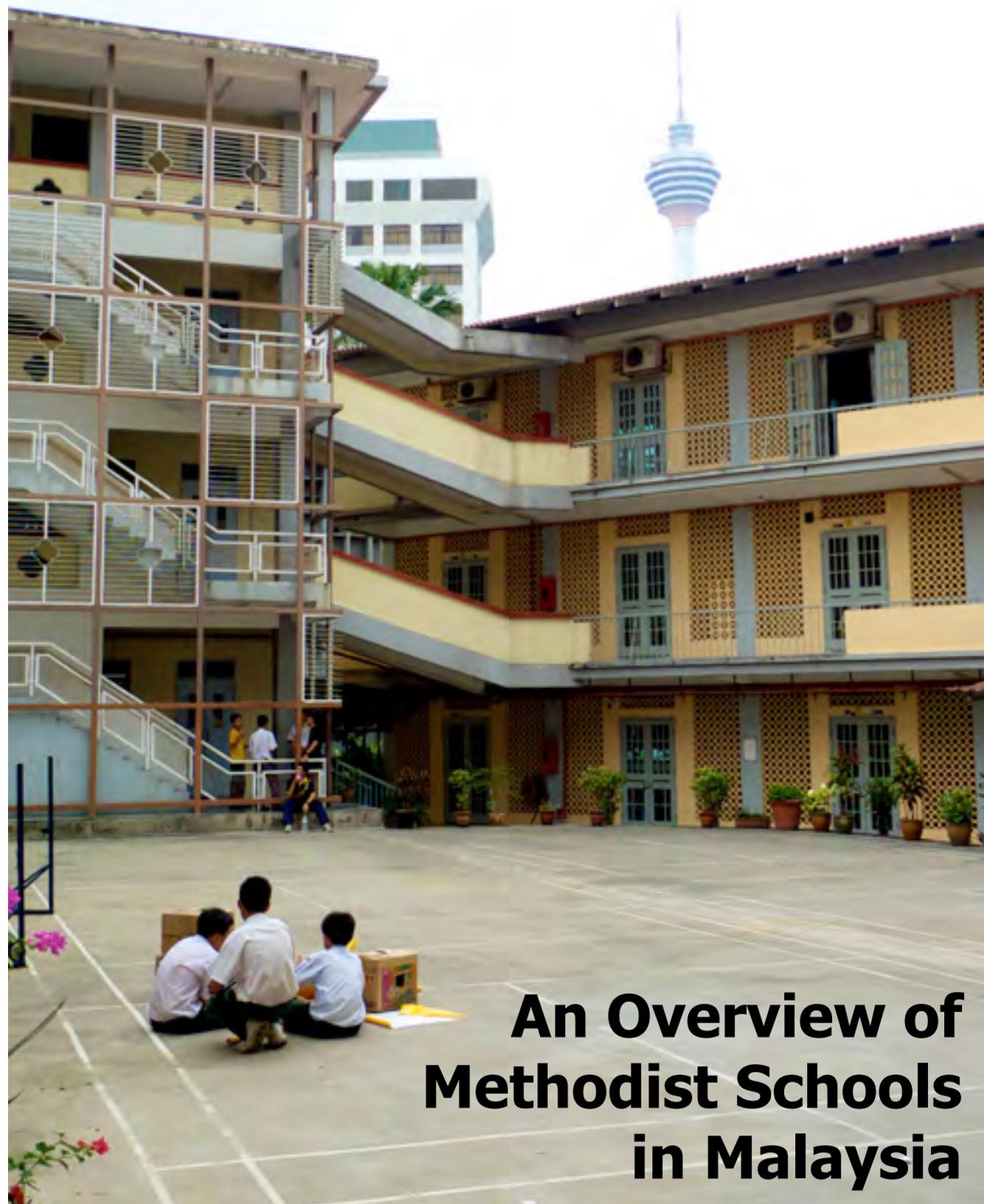
In conclusion, I would like to highlight two important matters of concern:

1. To effectively implement our church “Blueprint 168”, a planning sheet is attached. Just plan your church program according to the Blueprint next year.

2. Take note of the Annual Conference plans and programs. The Districts are to communicate the plans to the local churches for implementation.

For instance, Board of Evangelism has set out the plan for “Evangelistic Campaign: 10,000 Baptisms”, Districts are to strategize and make it known to local churches for implementation. Board of Christian Social Concern has set out plans for “Victory Home”, a half way home for ex-prisoners. Sibu West District will call all the local churches together to manage and run the home. Board of Education has drawn up the principles and policy of setting up Methodist Private Schools. If approved, Districts will take up the establishment and running of the schools, with the cooperation and resources from local churches.

This polity will definitely enhance our connection, pool our resources together, create stronger sense of mutual belonging and shared mission in fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.



An Overview of Methodist Schools in Malaysia

Photograph by Issac Ng

BY TAY CHOON NEO

The early missionaries were actually the pioneers in establishing schools in Malaysia. They were the church pastors and the school principals and teachers. Land was bought for church and school, or donated by some generous, well-meaning persons.

Methodist mission schools had their beginnings in the 1880s when Rev. William F. Oldham started the Anglo-Chinese School in Singapore on 1st March 1886. Five years later, the Anglo-Chinese School was started in Penang. Our annals are replete with the names of founder-principals like Rev. G.F. Pykett, Rev. James Hoover, Rev. Preston Peach and Rev. Dr. Ho Seng Ong. These schools were established in the former Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States in Peninsular Malaysia. Some of them were established by the British colonial government and then handed to the Methodist Mission to manage - Treacher Methodist Girls' School, Taiping (founded in 1889, handed to the Methodist Mission in 1899); Methodist Girls' School, Kuala Lumpur (founded in 1896 and handed to the Methodist Mission in 1900); Horley Methodist School, Teluk Intan (founded in 1899 and handed to the Methodist Mission in 1903) and the Anglo-Chinese School, Klang (founded in 1893 and handed to the Methodist Mission in 1915).

In 1963, there were 70,000 pupils in 95 institutions (English-medium) in Malaya and Singapore, and some 4,000 in 25 schools in Sarawak, besides 1,779 in 11 Chinese-medium schools and 657 in 6 Tamil-medium schools, making a total of 72,697 pupils distributed from Singapore to Sibü and from kindergarten to pre-university grades. (Ho Seng Ong, *Methodist Schools in Malaysia*, 1964)

Since the early days, changes in government and education policies have affected Christian Mission Schools.

In his paper 'Christian Schools in Malaysia' released in 1986, David Boler outlined three distinct phases through which the mission schools have passed. The first phase, which Boler called the 'Pre-Merdeka Era', was when the Christian missionaries who

Changes over the years have obviously affected our schools...but we believe good practices and traditions carried out during the early decades of mission schools can be revived.

established the schools also administered them. Next, came the 'Unified Teaching Service' which was implemented following the Razak Report (KPM, 1956). Here, each school was responsible for selecting its own teachers through its Board of Governors. The third phase came with the recommendations made by the Aziz Commission (1971) where teachers would then become government servants and their appointment and deployment determined by the Teachers' Service Commission.

Boler's analysis helps us understand better how the Christian ethos and traditions in mission schools have gradually eroded over the years. The loss of this original sense of identity of the mission schools has been so keenly felt that many of the mission authorities have begun rethinking the future of mission schools (Malaysian Lasallian Education Council, 2007).

Our Methodist Mission schools from their inception to 1971 (Aziz Commission proposals) have always had a very strong Methodist ethos with strong Boards of Governors/Managers with the right to hire

and fire teachers. Since 1971 with most of mission school teachers opting for Government servant status with attendant benefits, the strongest link between the Methodist Church Authority and the school is the Board of Governors / Managers. Some Methodist chaplains too have been appointed. Our Methodist ethos centre round the school mottoes, school songs, school houses, plaques of dedication and blessing and the dedicated Methodist principals and teachers who selflessly showed the face and heart of the Divine Master in their compassion and love for the students.

Throughout Malaysia today there are 49 Methodist primary schools and 26 secondary schools, as well as 6 Methodist private schools and 2 Methodist private colleges of higher education. All our educational institutions promote holistic education with emphasis on character development.

Changes over the years have obviously affected our schools, both the private and government-aided schools. But we believe good practices and traditions carried out during the early decades of mission schools can be revived, as well as new ideas tried out. If mission schools have the responsibility of administering and selecting their own principals and teachers, and are able to inculcate a high standard of character traits amongst the staff and pupils through good Moral Education and Religious Knowledge classes, and even weekly chapel services as done in the past, with well-run co-curricular activities, like the Christian Fellowship, the Girls' Brigade and the Boys' Brigade, they may be able to once again produce men and women with high moral standard and calibre for the betterment of Malaysians.

For the private Wesley Methodist Schools, the strategy is to produce ACE students; A for being strong in Academics, C for Character building, E for Extra-curricular activities as this is our ethos for holistic education; going Above and Beyond ourselves, looking to Almighty God and looking out for others.

It has always been, and will continue to be, the desire of the church to engage in the education of the young of our nation, modelling our Lord Jesus Christ who is Healer and Teacher. [Ms. Tay Choon Neo is currently serving as Deputy Executive Director in Methodist Council of Education.]

Living

And Jesus answered him saying, “It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (Luke 4:4)

Mission | **Worship** | **Fellowship** | **Discipleship** | **Care & Concern**



Continuing the Tradition of Mission Schools

Mission schools are as ‘Malaysian’ as can be. We really ought to be applauding, supporting and promoting their work as they are indeed an asset to our country.

BY KARIM RASLAN

The canteen of an all-girl mission school in Ipoh is a riot of noise as the students throng around their favourite stalls. The canteen is shared by both the secondary and primary schools and it’s situated between the two institutions.

This school can trace its lineage back to an educational institution founded in 1895 by British missionaries, although it only assumed its current name in 1959.

In 2010, it was named one of the Sekolah Harapan Negara.

The secondary school is in the slightly grander, older buildings dating from the 1920s while the primary school occupies the 1950s structure alongside the assembly hall.

Recess is staggered and the girls eat at different times.

The racial mix is striking, with Malay, Indian and Chinese students in almost equal measure.

I’m looking on, from the teachers’ dining room where I’m sitting with the enthusiastic and chatty senior teachers – all of whom are women.

“You could say that curriculum is our core business,” says one headmistress.

“I’ve been teaching for 30 years – of which 25 were spent in mission schools.

“I learned a great deal from the old teachers from the mission schools back in the 1980s. Their administration was strict and yet we had fun. Committee meetings were far shorter in those days!

“Still, I have a very active board and they have a strong sense of tradition. They’re very particular about our results and reputation.”

“I personally prefer having a strong

school board. The members of the school board provide the necessary checks and balances. They also help with fund-raising and are always monitoring our enrolment to ensure we’re preserving the character and tradition of the school.”

Tradition and continuity are important for the mission schools.

One of the teachers I spoke to was an old girl at the school who was a student from 1969 to 1980 before heading off to Teachers Training College and returned to serve in 1985.

All in all, she has spent 38 years at the school, both as a pupil and a teacher.

Mission schools have played a central role in the story of education in Malaysia.

The first “missionary” school is arguably the Penang Free School, founded by an English Anglican clergyman in 1816.

This was followed by the Roman Cath-



olic St Xavier’s Institution and Convent Light Street in 1852, also in Penang.

Since then, it is estimated that there are now 462 mission schools in Malaysia, including 227 in peninsular Malaysia and 235 in Sabah and Sarawak.

Among the famous schools are the Convent Bukit Nanas, St John’s Institution of Kuala Lumpur as well as St Michael’s and Methodist Girls’ School of Ipoh.

Mission schools have educated countless Malaysians regardless of race, religion or class.

The distinguished alumni from mission schools include several of our prime ministers (Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak was an old boy of St John’s), ministers, corporate captains, sports stars and artistes.

Still, many have bemoaned the perceived decline of mission schools in tandem with education in Malaysia in general.

As history will show, most mission schools became partially-aided schools in the 1970s, which meant that the Education Ministry supplied and paid the teaching staff plus operating costs, while the various churches retained ownership of the land and buildings.

Beyond the usual debate over the medium of instruction and quality of teaching, there have been criticisms that the schools have lost their distinctive Christian character.

On the other hand, some feel that this ethos remains unduly pronounced.

Indeed, questions of the appointment of head teachers and restrictions to non-Muslim religious activities in the schools have been the cause of much bitterness to certain alumni and parents alike.

Visiting the mission school in Ipoh, amid its leafy surroundings, however, I got a sense that many of these schools are fighting to maintain their identities while reflecting a truly Malaysian identity.

It helps that while the Anglican and Roman Catholic missionary schools have suffered due to the ageing and declining membership of their various religious orders, the lay-based boards of schools like the one in Ipoh remain very active.

In a sense, mission schools are accomplishing what our national-stream schools have failed to deliver.

For one thing, they’re largely multiracial: the student body of the premier girls’ school that I visited in Ipoh is 33.5% Malay, 36.4% Chinese, 26.9% Indian and 3.2% others, almost neatly mirroring the ethnic composition of peninsular Malaysia.

As my editor Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai says: “Mission schools provide a neutral platform for all the races to meet and interact.”

Their students are also accomplished both

I strongly believe many of our young people are able to do the same as long as our focus is correct in leading and guiding them

academically (the UPSR pass rate has been above 90% for the last five years, and in 2006, 40% of their students achieved 5As) and in extra-curricular activities (the school has had noted success in games, including swimming).

Mission schools are as “Malaysian” as can be. We really ought to be applauding, supporting and promoting their work as they are indeed an asset to our country. *[This article first came out in The Star (3rd April 2012). It is reprinted with permission from The Star, Malaysia.]*

A School for Youths Desiring to Experience God

BY ELIZABETH TAN



Jeremiah School (JS) was launched in 2003 and since that year 215 youths from our Trinity Annual Conference (TRAC) churches have gone through the training offered by the school. God in His grace sends the right number of students and mentors each year and it is such a joy to see lives transformed and challenged through the nurturing program drawn up.

The vision statement: “To raise a generation of God-fearing, faithful, persevering and selfless young leaders who will be of a different spirit.”

Scripture Model: “But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it.” (Numbers 14:24).

Objectives:

1. To develop Godly disciplines & habits
2. To facilitate the discovery of God’s Calling.
3. To develop basic leadership skills.
4. To impart a Vision for the World.
5. To develop basic people skills.
6. To facilitate a meaningful and personal encounter with God.
7. To facilitate an experience of authentic Christian community.

Testimony: Jeremiah School 2012

Since the age of 10 I have been making annual visits to Jeremiah School held at different campsites. I had wondered why my daddy (who has always been a JS Mentor) often went for long periods to that JS-thing and only came home on weekends when JS was on for that period of 6 weeks. And when I visited JS as a kid, or when the JS groups visited my church, I would always wonder, “What’s so special about these young people, laughing together and expressing great joy?” And when JS was over, they would talk, and talk, and TALK about JS and had all sorts of reunions. It’s like... they had become a happy family.

With a blink of an eye, I realized that I was old enough to be able to go for JS. At first I wasn’t very keen, for the thought of Bible studying every morning, praying, fasting and all that didn’t seem very appealing. But the JS alumni students kept asking me to go, saying that it’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience. With all their persuasion I agreed to attend only half heartedly.

A few months before JS registration’s closing date, I stumbled upon a few JS Alumni’s Articles in their blogs about their experiences in JS. Reading through, I felt in my heart a strange eagerness to attend JS, especially when I read the part on how

God refreshed, filled, and transformed their lives. To be honest, it had been quite some years since I felt refreshed in my heart. I had been feeling spiritually dry and I did not feel that joy serving God in the ministries of the church while in that condition

I promised myself that I would sign up for JS and experience the wonderful touch of the Lord that the others had testified on their blogs.

And, finally! JENG JENG JENG JENG! I went through JS and graduated. It was such a life changing experience! The most significant thing that I learned or experienced was God’s Love! His love was expressed when he came down and dwelt amongst us, to save us, even to DIE for us! He did all that while we were all still filthy with sin, selfish in our own life and choices. The fact that He came in love to fill the deep, lonely corners of my heart, was totally overwhelming! One of the verses that describes this love is Romans 5:5 that says, “God has poured his love into our hearts!” It’s like, God picking up a filthy, ugly water bottle, takes a huge tank of water, and whooosh, pours the water into the already-overflowing-with-water bottle.

Of course I learned lots of other important stuff as well. I learned about Evange-

It wasn’t as boring as I had expected! In fact they were quite Mind-Opening!

lism, resolving conflict, missions, Methodism, freedom in Christ, the Trinity... And to my surprise it wasn’t as boring as I had expected! In fact they were quite mind-opening! All those, I learned with 23 other young people... classmates, whom I’ve come to call best friends... no, wait! It’s more than just that, I’ve come to consider

them as family!

All of them are dear brothers and beloved sisters; siblings whom I hold dear in my heart. This really is the first time when I get so close with my peers! We slept together, cried, ate, washed dishes and clothes, sang songs, laughed, brushed our teeth, hugged, played and shared personal stuff together. Moreover, there were also the 5 loving Mentors who worked their white hairs off in trying to help us learn and get the best experience out of JS. I really thank God for them!

I realize that somehow I am now a changed person... I have changed! With lots of time to reflect on my life and living during the Quiet Retreat days, I can summarize those changes in a few points:

Firstly! I have learnt some spiritual disciplines. One of it is doing Daily Devotions. Previously I was too lazy to do it, let alone start! But now it has become a good habit, integrated into my daily schedule. Thanks to the motivation of doing it with my Devotional Group and specially The Trio. Secondly, I notice that I now enjoy serving others. I guess all the time spent in washing plates, doing secret services and all that have cultivated in me a servant’s heart. Previously I would feel totally lazy when it

comes to serving others. All I wanted was to relax in my bed and let others serve ME instead.

Thirdly, I feel the fire of passion for Malaysia burning in me with an even bigger flame. I used to complain and ramble on about how bad Malaysia is politically. You know, you go for meals and hear all the Aunties and Uncles talking about it, and you start to ponder about the ugly facts. Now think for a moment.

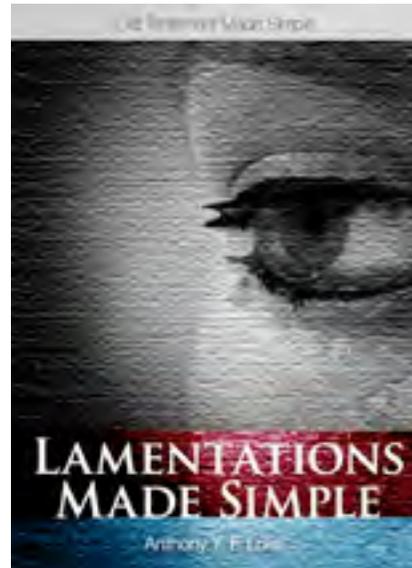
What if I change all my complaints into prayers? What if everyone changes the complaints into prayers for Malaysia? For every complaint we utter, we transform it into a short, one-line prayer for our Country. Wow! I bet if that happens, miracles and revivals would be happening everywhere by now! I know that God can and will change Malaysia if we trust and have faith in Him!

Last but definitely not least, I have discovered more about my inner-self. And for once, I have a real, main, purpose in life. Discovering God’s will for my life through the Sound-Mind principle by Bill Bright was one of the things that changed my life. Praise the Lord! Now I have a goal and vision! I hope that God will use me to influence many lives and use my talents to glorify His name. To God Be The Glory!

Arts

The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. (Deut 7:6)

Books | Movies | Music | Architecture



Lamentations Made Simple

Author: Anthony Y.F. Loke

Publisher: Pustaka Sufes SDN. BHD.

BY BISHOP ROBERT SOLOMON

Rev Loke's book introduces Lamentations to the reader in an interesting way. The introduction is simple and yet scholarly – a special writing gift the author has. The first part of the book deals with several technical and textual matters that help readers to understand how to approach Lamentations. The section on Hebrew poetry is particularly helpful in understanding some of the technical and interpretive issues since Lamentations is essentially a collection of poems ranging from helplessness and despair in the face of mega catastrophes to stubborn faith and hope in a God who will keep His promises. The book helps us to understand that the textual architecture of the book itself has a message. It is like being guided to look at a house and to be taught to appreciate its architectural significance – of how the structure and the material used are messages in themselves. This overview is most helpful for those entering the 'house' to examine the furniture and meet the people, so to speak.

The spiritual message of Lamentations comes through in the latter sections of this book – and talks of a sturdy faith that can (almost) shake a fist at God out of anger, despair and disbelief at what is happening and at the same time relax the tight fist to become a hand of trusting prayer, echoing the words we find in the New Testament: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life' (John 6:68). God is the ultimate reality we can cling to even in (and

especially in) calamity, in situations where we lack understanding and there is unbearable darkness and pain. Why? Because Lamentations has to be placed in the context of the whole Old Testament which speaks of a God who is holy and loving, a God who makes covenants with His people and who keeps the covenants, a God who remembers redemptively, and a God who has the power to deliver. This God cannot be neatly squeezed into our religious boxes for He is bigger than our conventions and theories. C. S. Lewis wrote words that express this well. A character in the Narnia Chronicles when asked if Aslan the Lion (representing Christ) is safe says: 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you'.

It is therefore a great service that Rev Loke has done in turning people's attention to the value of Lamentations and the importance of its message in a world of superficial quick-fix solutions and in a modern church that may be guilty of trying to domesticate God and therefore of distorting who He is, and weakening the solid foundations that He provides for earthly life that can be confusing and difficult, uncertain and frustrating. It represents a faith that will 'wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord' (Lam 3:25) because the Lord revealed in the totality of Scripture is a God who relishes on working against the odds (making wet wood burn, barren wombs fruitful, and dead bones live) and a God who can be ultimately trusted more than the dark circumstances that may surround us.

Essay

“We are the clay, You are the potter;
We are the work of Your hand.” (Isaiah 64:48)

Prayer and Providence; A student's experience in Methodist College Kuala Lumpur



BY COLIN WONG

Chua Yue Han enrolled for MCKL's A-levels programme in January 2010, and graduated in 2011 with two A*s and two As. Since then, he has acquired the Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah Scholarship, which covers his tuition fees and living expenses, coming to a total of RM 196,000. He is currently studying Engineering at Monash University, and would like to share the following testimony with students of MCKL.

“My MCKL experience started in January 2010, right after I had completed my SPM. I was looking forward to a fresh start in a new environment. Although there were many familiar faces from my high school, I took to meeting new people and making friends with them. Right from the start, Methodist College provided many activities such as Orientation Camp, Orientation Ball and MCKL Treasure Hunt (just to name a few), which really provided a pleasant atmosphere and a good platform for college students to interact, and develop interpersonal skills.

“One of the highlights of my time in MCKL was the Christian Fellowship. It was a privilege for us to be able to attend Chapel service every morning, listening to the sharing of experiences from students and staff alike. We are so blessed! Besides that, we would also meet once a week, for more fellowship and spiritual food. Under the guidance of our teacher-advisors Mr Yoshua, Mr Tee and Mr Jared, our CF grew in numbers and in God's Word.

“Maths has always been my favourite subject which is why taking Further Maths in college was an obvious choice. The lecturers, I believe, played a big part in the success of many of the students, including mine. I wish to express my gratitude to all my lecturers, especially Ms Goh, who guided, encouraged, and never gave up on us through the whole course. Also, never forgetting Ms Moey, Ms Leow and other God-fearing management staff of Method-

ist College, who mentored and nurtured me to live a life of excellence.

“After completing my A-Levels, I applied to NTU in Singapore. However, my application was rejected. Even so, I continued to pray, asking God for directions for my future. I got to know that the Logos Hope, a Christian ship which aims to bring knowledge, help and hope to countries all over the world, was coming to Malaysia. Before long, I was accepted into the Short Term Exposure Programme for three months on-board the ship. Throughout the three months that I volunteered on Logos Hope, the ship travelled to 3 ports: Port Klang, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu.

“When the ship was in Port Klang, I got a call from Jeffrey Cheah Foundation, regarding the scholarship application that I had sent in. I was to go for an interview the following week. As I had already volunteered on the ship, I felt that I had to forego the opportunity. However, through God's provision, I managed to arrange for transport to Sunway University for the interview, and back to the ship right after that. The same thing happened for the second assessment that I had to attend. Finally, I got the good news days later that I had been awarded the Jeffrey Cheah Foundation Scholarship, which covers my full tuition fees as well as living expenses to study Engineering in Monash University Sunway Campus. Needless to say, my family and I were overjoyed, and we can clearly see God's sovereign hand in our lives. Praise God!”

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