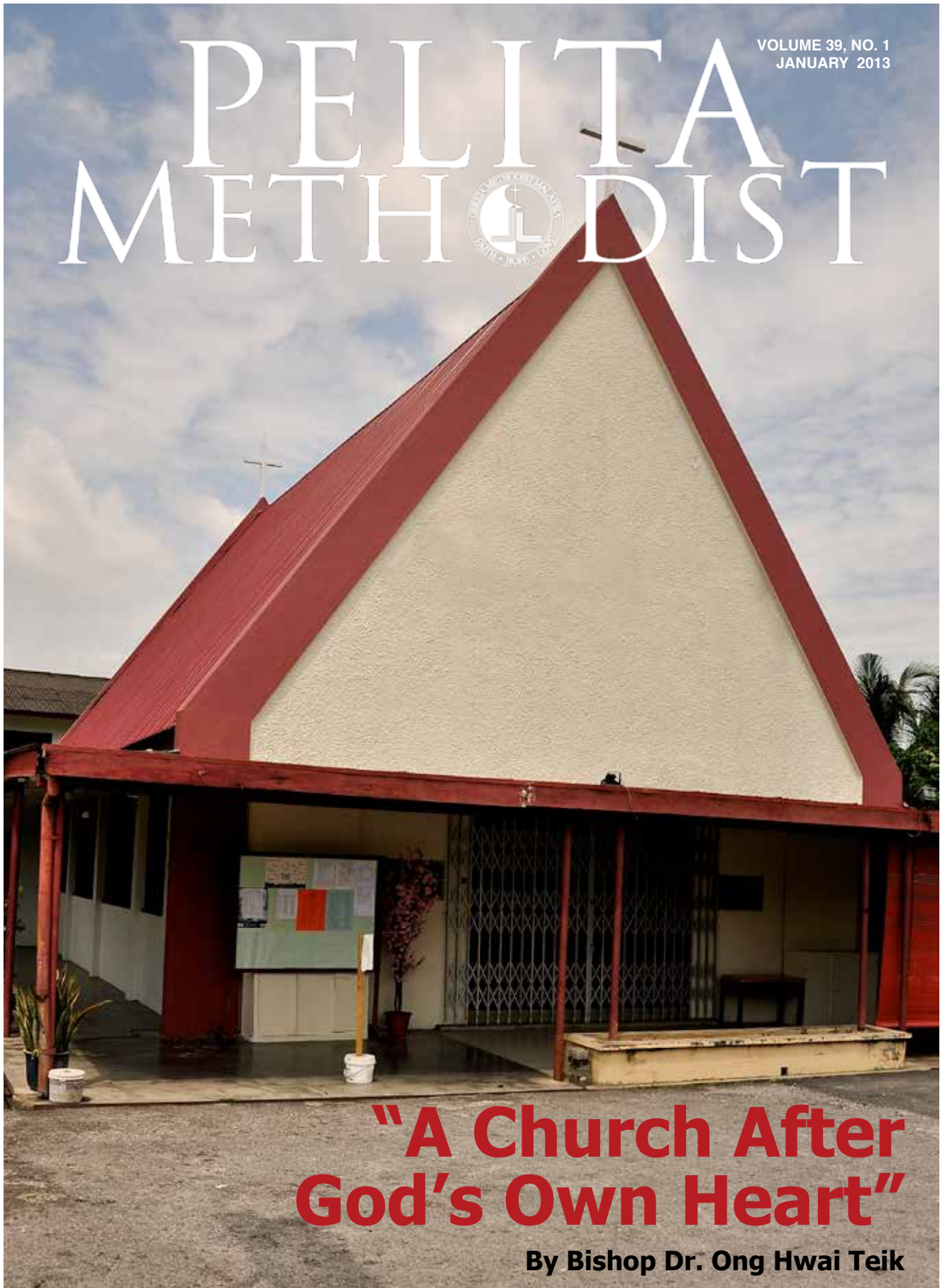


# PELITA METHODIST

VOLUME 39, NO. 1  
JANUARY 2013



**"A Church After  
God's Own Heart"**

**By Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik**

# Moment

The Bishop and staff of the Methodist General Conference and Council of Education would like to wish all our readers a Blessed New Year.



**“May the Light of the Lord’s face shine on His People”**

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## Malaysia National Prayer Network

**BELOVED [the sheep of the Great Shepherd]**

**Psalms 23; Hebrew 13:20-21**



"If I cannot in honest happiness take the second place (or the twentieth); if I cannot take the first without making a fuss about my unworthiness, then I know nothing of Calvary love." — Amy Carmichael

### Pray that

- We may be useful to the Shepherd so that He can work through us and accomplish His will on earth, resulting in service to others and glory to the Lord
- Pray for our spiritual leaders
  - to be set free, willing to admit weaknesses and fear, and live in healthy transparency, pointing people to Christ and not to self.
  - that the congregations to be supportive and accept our leaders for who they are

"There is no one without faults, not even men of God. They are men of God, not because they are faultless but because they know their own faults, they strive against them, they do not hide them and are ever ready to correct themselves." ~ Mohandas Gandhi

- Pray for our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world

- "And after you suffer for a short time, God, who gives all grace, will make everything right. He will make you strong and support you and keep you from falling. He called you to share in his glory in Christ, a glory that will continue forever." (1 Pet 5:10, NCV)
- The Christian community in Iraq
- - Before Iraq was conquered by the Arabs in the seventh century, it was one of the oldest centers of Christianity in the world. Even after the Arab conquest, Christians made up a sizable minority of the population – sometimes tolerated, sometimes persecuted, but always surviving. Now it's facing its biggest threat in centuries.
- (<http://www.gadling.com/2012/12/03/visiting-the-christian-community-in-iraq/>)

### Nation

"Sow righteousness for yourselves and reap faithful love; break up your unplowed ground. It is time to seek the LORD until He comes and sends righteousness on you like the rain." (Hosea 10:12, HCSB)

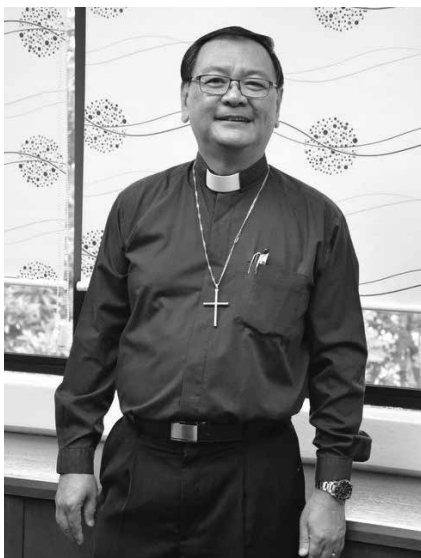
### Persistent in praying for God's mercies:

- **The coming 13th GE**
  - o for the right people to be voted in and take office, people who are honorable and humble in their conduct, wise and insightful, and committing to walk in righteousness and hate corruption
- **The government of the day, all ministers and deputies, and those holding office:**
  - o they may serve the rakyat with honesty and wisdom
  - o they will discard political rhetorics, empty promises and lip services, but walk the talk
  - o they may be sincere and committed to place rakyat's wellbeing above their own gains
  - o those who lust for power, plow wickedness and reap injustice may be removed
- **The rakyat will have discernment, understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God**

### Nations, pray:

- **(Pray for speedy rescue and aids, comfort and protection to those who are afflicted)** NEW BATAAN, Philippines -- A typhoon that had left the Philippines after killing nearly 600 people and leaving hundreds missing in the south has made a U-turn and is now threatening the country's northwest, officials said Saturday.
  - o Another calamity in the north would stretch recovery efforts thin. Most government resources, including army and police, are currently focused on the south, where Bopha hit Tuesday before moving west into the South China Sea.
  - o Nearly 400,000 people, mostly from Compostela Valley and nearby Davao Oriental provinces, have lost their homes and are crowded inside evacuation centers or staying with relatives.
  - o ([http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/\\_news/2012/12/08/15779980-typhoon-makes-u-turn-heads-back-toward-philippines-after-killing-nearly-600?lite](http://worldnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2012/12/08/15779980-typhoon-makes-u-turn-heads-back-toward-philippines-after-killing-nearly-600?lite))





# “A Church After God’s Own Heart”

By Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik

**A**s we enter the new year, the Church is already facing challenges, such as the use of the word “Allah” issue (see the CFM statement appended) We shall continue to face challenges to our life, ministry and mission as God’s people – and the key question for us in the Methodist Church in Malaysia is how we exist as the Church that is after the Sovereign Lord’s own heart.

I am reminded of the first Gentile church that was birthed by the person, presence and power of the Holy Spirit found in Acts 11. **The church at Antioch** was the launching pad of the worldwide mission of the Gospel, being a vital commercial centre and the gateway to the eastern world for the Roman Empire. Up till then, the Christian faith had been linked only to Judea and to Jews. So we read in **Acts 11:19** - “Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus”. Earlier on, Philip had preached in Samaria, to a people associated with Judaism, and to Cornelius, a God-fearer. It was in Antioch that the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians, ostensibly by others who could not help but notice that by their lips and their deeds – they were people who belonged to and lived for Jesus.

**It was a church birthed and born after God’s own heart.** The persecution of the early church became a growth dynamic, for

under the sovereign control of the Lord, the church grew in its outreach and mission. Throughout history, that was seen repeatedly. God’s outnumbered people, a minority who encountered His reality under such trying circumstances, became paradoxically, His powerful witnesses. Under such “purifying circumstances” they increasingly demonstrated the reality of **Revelation 12:11** – “*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death*”. They were then people “*full of the Holy Spirit and of faith.*” *It is therefore not difficult to understand why “in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians” (Acts 11:26).*

It was a church after God’s own heart that spoke the Word and lived authentic lives of holy discipleship. These courageous but nameless disciples responded with spiritual integrity empowered by the Holy Spirit in the face of persecution - that “*the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number who believed turned to the Lord*” (Acts 11: 21). In the hand of the Sovereign God, **the persecution did not finish them off - in fact it made them shine!**

It is my prayer, and also that of many, that **the Methodist Church in Malaysia will be a church after God’s own heart.** We will not let adverse circumstances “finish us off”, but with humble dependence on the Lord, be salt and light that shines for the Lord. There have been many courageous but nameless disciples in the family of the Methodist Church in Malaysia in the past 127 years of our history.

- In this season of the history of our nation and world, let us **never let the external inimical forces be larger than the God of the Gospel**; that adversity will not finish us off, but make us shine for the Lord Jesus by living lives of holy discipleship in dependence on Him.
- In this generation may we, like the Church in Antioch, follow after God’s own

heart in the **fulfillment of His Abrahamic promise** – where nations and peoples are brought into the family of God as they come to believe in Jesus the Christ.

- In this new quadrennium, let us personally and communally, as individuals, local churches, Annual Conferences – as a people called Methodists in Malaysia, **remember our Methodist Church in Malaysia Road Map** launched at our 125th Anniversary Celebration (2010).

## “A. Evangelism and Church Planting” key objectives are:

- #1. To remove the apathy from the church and to restore the passion for evangelism. Our love for our neighbours and our obedience to Christ’s Great Commission require this of us.
- #2. To put prayer at the heart of the ministry of the church in order to seek God for revival and empowering (by the Holy Spirit) for the advance of the Gospel.
- #3. To actively promote church (and congregation) planting in both rural and urban areas as a key means of evangelism and church growth.
- #4. To make special efforts to reach the children and youths, both in and outside the church.
- #5. To build strong local churches (and congregations) throughout the country so that they become centres of Christian communal life and effective outreach.
- #6. To strengthen the bumiputra churches, especially the SIAC and PMSM, so that they become fully self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating.

Let us together respond to the Lord as David did, of whom God testified and said, **‘I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’** (Acts 13:22).

**May the Methodist Church in Malaysia truly be a church after God’s own heart;** and may the blessings from God’s heart be yours as you delight in Him in this new year.

## CCM Heads of Churches Statement on the use of the word "Allah"

The Heads of Churches of the Council of Churches of Malaysia, meeting in Ipoh at its

retreat has noted the current discourse over the use of the word "Allah" by non-Muslims. We wish to reiterate our stand that Malaysian Christians have been using the word "Allah" in their Malay Bible and devotional life for centuries. Also, many indigenous communities in our nation have incorporated this word in their everyday language. That being the

case, we shall continue this practice - a right guaranteed to us in our Federal Constitution ( Art 11 ) and call on all parties to respect this fundamental right.

*CCM Heads of Churches, dated 9th January, 2013*

## CHRISTIAN FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA (PERSEKUTUAN KRISTIAN MALAYSIA)

### BM BIBLES AND "ALLAH"

Christians in Malaysia have had a Bible in the Malay language and indeed celebrated its 400th anniversary last year.

Malaysian Christians have been using the word "Allah" in our Bahasa Malaysia Bibles and in our faith to signify the Almighty God and we will continue to do so.

In particular, it is used by all Bahasa Malaysia-speaking church congregations especially the Orang Asli Christians, the Baba Christians and Sabahan and Sarawakian Christians including those who are residing in the various states of West Malaysia.

In accordance with Article 11 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, CFM affirms every person's right to profess and practice his religion and in this connection, the churches' freedom to use the Holy Bible in Bahasa Malaysia, the Alkitab, in all our church services, meetings and in our homes.

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

## The Annual Conferences Presidents

The Methodist Church in Malaysia has Six Annual Conferences and one Mission Conference. In this issue of Pelita, we would like to introduce these Presidents and Superintendent. The Presidents have also included their New Year greetings and thoughts for the coming year.



**Chinese Annual Conference President**

Rev. Boh Che Suan was elected President of the Chinese Annual Conference (CAC) in 2004. He was re-elected for another quadrennium in 2008 and 2012. He joined CAC in November 1980 after graduating from Trinity Theological College, Singapore.

Rev. Boh obtained the B.Th. (1980) from Trinity Theological College, Singapore and the M.Min. (2004) from Seminari Teoloji Malaysia.

Rev. Boh Che Suan served as Pastor of a number of CAC Churches from 1981 to 2004. He served as the Methodist Youth Director from 1993 -1996. He was District Superintendent of Southern District from 1998 to 2003.

Rev. Boh is married to Chin Quee Moy and they have three children, Zhuang Xiao (daughter), Zhuang Yui (daughter) and Zhuang Xin (son).

西马卫理公会华人年议会来年事工发展蓝图

本会来年事工主要有三：

一、海外宣教：除了派员去中国授神学课程，也资助印度科钦宣教区的同工和建堂事工、继续开拓缅甸南板一带的百多座村庄和征得总会五个年议会成为宣教伙伴等。

二、国内布道：“在城市设立布道所的二十年计划”为其核心，鉴

定“母体教会”，鼓励有能力的教会设立布道所或植堂，目标是从巴生谷/大吉隆坡地区现有的四十五间堂会，在2032年增至八十间。据2000年统计，东西马原住民基督徒约有一百二十六万，故牧养与协助散居各地的东西马原住民亦是当务之急。

三、社怀：美门残障关怀事工为其一，福儿院则是近年开展的新事工——向福利部注册“卫理儿童之家”（Methodist Children Home），栽培同工。

马来西亚基督教卫理公会华人年议会  
莫泽川会长

President  
Boh Che Suan



**Sarawak  
Chinese  
Annual  
Conference  
President**

Rev. Su Chii Ann became President of the Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference (SCAC) in 2005. He was re-elected President in 2008 and 2012. He has been in the pastoral ministry since 1982.

Rev. Su received his theological training from Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia.

Rev. Su served as Pastor of two churches in Sibul, Sarawak, prior to joining the Methodist Theological School (MTS) Sibul in 1990. He was Dean of the Chinese Department, and later the Academic Dean of MTS (1990-1995). Subsequently he served as the Principal from 1999-2004.

In 2009, Rev Su was awarded the Panglima Setia Bintang of Sarawak (PSBS) by the Governor of Sarawak, which carries the title Dato’

He is married to Phyllis Yeo Hung Eng, and they have two children, Timothy and Grace.

### **The Way Forward of Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference**

*During the 36th Session of our Annual Conference, we agreed to develop our future ministries according to the*

*General Conference “Road Map”. I just share with you some important ministries:*

**1. Evangelism and Church Planting**  
*Evangelism: We still plan for “Evangelism Campaign: 10,000 baptisms”, but the emphasis is on adult baptism and confirmation.*

**Church planting:** *We aim at planting 14 churches over the next 4 years. Start 4 more BM worship services, and target to raise up 10 BM pastors.*

**2. Discipleship**  
*Our AC will articulate marketplace ministry by unleashing the power of the lay people through systematic teaching, forming Christian Businessmen Fellowship, organizing motivational talks, encouraging Christian leaders to conduct Bible study in their workplaces, holding thanksgiving services during special occasions, publishing books or articles of good Christian testimonies in marketplaces and conducting a state-wide “Marketplace: War? Testimony?” seminars in 2013.*

**3. Church and Society**  
*In 2013, we will organize 4 seminars throughout the State on “Preventive Measure against Website Pornography” in January, June and August to bring awareness to the people on how serious this problem has become and how to prevent it.*

*To reclaim the mission through education and to nurture future leaders for the church and society, we find it inevitable to set up Methodist Private Schools in various Districts.*

**4. Cross cultural missions**  
*We encourage the indigenous Christians from Sarawak, Sabah and Indonesia to be trained in Methodist Pilley Institute on Early Childhood Education program and then send them back to the villages to start pre-school education.*

*In the past 12 years, we have been evangelizing to the Penan people. Most of the children grow up and now study in primary and secondary schools in the town areas where they face a lot of temptations, and their Christian faith is greatly tested. In order to help them grow strong spiritually, physically, intellectually*

*and socially, our Board of Evangelism decided to work with a Christian organization “River of Life Music Association” to build a care centre in Lawas.*

*In order to materialize these ministries, we need human and financial resources. Our prayer requests are as follows:*

- 1. Formation of Human Resource Development Board;*
- 2. Developing physical facilities for the main purpose of training people and leaders, and catering for the different needs of the churches.*
- 3. Articulating the central pool for financial contribution and support.*
- 4. Educating pastors, church leaders and members to know the spirit of revised new Discipline so that we can serve in one accord.*
- 5. Pray that in the next quadrennium, we must devote more time to prayer everyday, to seek God’s will, accomplish His task and glorify His name!*

President  
Su Chii Ann

**Sarawak  
Iban  
Annual  
Conference  
President**



Rev Steward Damat was elected President of SIAC in 2008. He was then re-elected for a second term in 2012. He is an ordained minister with the Sarawak Iban Annual Conference since 1986. He has served in various boards of the Conference and as Conference Secretary from 2005 - 2008.

He was a theological educator at the Methodist Theological School in Sibul, Sarawak for 18 years. Prior to his full – time teaching in MTS, Rev Damat served as a pastor in Kapit, Sarikei and Sibul Districts. He graduated with a Bachelor of Theology degree (1986) from Seminari Theoloji Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur and a Master of Ministry and Master of Theology degree in Pastoral Theology (1999) from Trinity Theological College, Singapore.

He is married to Lau Lee Lam and they have one son, Abraham and three teenage daughters Adele, Angela and Amenjah.

### **President working for All,**

*Rev Damat continues to work out his plan 2009 first board meeting in his Buku Jingga SIAC. This quadrennium will work closely the plans drawn up in 2009 -2012. The strategic planning through the approval of the various boards is relevant for the coming years.*

*Let's work on God's spirit achieving the Kingdom of God agenda. Pray together to plan forth within the Methodist Structure based on the board – whatever success. What matters are how we carry out the board orders? God is the ultimate.*

*Pray our time is limited and short. Pray for my ministerial and members of Sarawak Iban Annual Conference that we will not be taken by the power of darkness in executing our duties.*

*We are pressing forth the vision towards developing an Asian Christian identity in the region.*

President  
Steward Damat



**Tamil  
Annual  
Conference  
President**

Rev C. Jayaraj was elected President of the Tamil Annual Conference in 2008 for the quadrennium 2009 - 2012. He was re-elected as President in 2012. Rev Jayaraj has served 27 years in the Tamil Annual Conference since 1981, being ordained as Deacon in 1983 and Elder in 1985.

Rev Jayaraj studied at Union Biblical Seminary Yeotmal, India and received the Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) in 1981. He has pastored churches in Cha'ah, Taiping, Klang and Penang, and was District Superintendent of Selangor and Northern Districts. From 1989 to 1993 he was the Youth Director of TAC and from 1994 to 1999 he served as the Chairman of the Board of Missions and Malaysian Missionary Movement

(MMM) of the Tamil Annual Conference. He has also served at various times in the Board of Ministry, Finance and the Executive Board of TAC.

Among his interests he lists discipling members, church growth, revival and also football and athletics.

Rev Jayaraj is married to Vijayatara and they have two children, Vivek Jason (b.1987) and Jemimah (b.1990).

### **Vision For Our Conference - TAC**

*I believe, this year, 2013, is a year of abundance. As a conference we are looking forward to a season of harvest. It is my desire to see local churches flourish in the area of evangelism and reaching out to our community. The 'Go' challenge – 'Each One 'Get One' is being promoted fervently in our churches. We also want our churches, boards, agencies and committees working hard with much perseverance and zeal to bring in the harvest.*

*Another major thrust in our conference would be in the area of prayer. We want all ministries and programmes to be saturated in prayer. Through the Prayer Conference (24-26 March) we plan to further strengthen our initiatives. We also want to maintain a strong prayer network at conference level.*

*With this sense of purpose and mission we will move forward and realise our goals of:-*

- a) 10% growth in membership
- b) establishing 6 new outreach points.
- c) witness the formation of 3 new local churches.
- d) embarking on 5 more social projects / centres.
- e) carrying out 3-5 community projects in local churches (rural setting)

*May God's grace and power cause us to be vessels of noble use in His hands.*

President  
C. Jayaraj

### **Trinity Annual Conference President**



Rev T. Jeyakumar was elected President of the Trinity Annual Conference in December 2012 for the quadrennium of 2013 - 2016. Rev Jeya has served 22 years in the Trinity Annual Conference since December 1991, being ordained as Deacon in 1993 and Elder in 1996. Rev Jeya studied at Seminari Theoloji Malaysia, and Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary. He has pastored a number of churches, and was District Superintendent of Northern and Perak Districts. His hobby is collecting stamps. If time permits he goes walking and hiking. He likes reading. His concern is to equip churches to grow. Rev T. Jeyakumar is married to Grace Leong and they have two children, Ebenezer Jeya (b. Jan 1998) and Joanne Jeya (b. Dec 1999).

*When David Watson moved to the church in York, England in 1965 the congregation had been reduced to a handful of people. The total offerings averaged 2 pounds a Sunday. The church building was considered to be a potentially redundant church. On his first official day in the church he had to escort the Redundant Churches Users Committee around the building as they were considering alternatives of how the building could be used – maybe a library, a museum. The Chairman of the Committee took David Watson aside and asked "Do you honestly think that this church has any future?" He replied, "I believe that if anyone really preaches the simple gospel of Christ, trusts in the power of prayer, and opens his life to the renewal of the Spirit, this church will be full in no time!"*

*I believe the same. If we could go back to preaching the gospel of Christ faithfully and turn to God in prayer our churches would grow. Still, I am aware of other challenges facing the TRAC churches. We are facing shortage of Pastors and other ministry workers. Small group ministry needs to be strengthened. We need to take seriously Rev John Wesley's method of dis-*



*cipling thru small groups. Ministry to young adults, youth, and children need to be revisited and revitalized at local church level so that the generation after us will not be Bible illiterates and will not be missing from our churches. Faith and planning must go together. Sure we trust in God. But we must also do our part.*

*In view of the above challenges, in TRAC we will continue to focus on our Four Essentials: Lifelong Discipleship, Wholesome Families, A Voice to our Nation, A Vision For the World. Our main task is to disciple the believers. One effective way of doing this is thru small groups. We pray that the training which we offer will help churches in starting and strengthening small group ministry in our churches. Discipleship must be reflected at home. We need to be exemplary disciples at home and lead our family members to Christ, and help our children become disciples from young, and let our families be wholesome families.*

*We are not just disciples in church and at home. We are disciples in the marketplace, political arena, at school, in our neighbourhood and anywhere else we may be in. We need to let our voices be heard in our beloved nation and make our Christian views and contributions count. We need to consistently make our voices heard and our opinions known all the time and about all matters, and not only when we feel our rights are threatened. We must also be a voice to those who don't have a voice. Having spoken we must act. Then we must not lose our vision for the world. Rev John Wesley said, "The world is my parish." We have been mandated by our Lord Jesus Christ with the task of taking the gospel to the ends of the world. Therefore, the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ need not fear fulfilling this task. In today's world being faithful to the Great Commission may lead us to be branded as mad or even lead us to martyrdom. We embrace both without fear if that is the cost of discipleship for us.*

*My prayer for the TRAC churches is that we will not fail to be the Church God wants us to be. We must not fail in our discipleship. We must not fail our*

*families, and the younger ones in our Church. We must not fail to be a voice that is worthy of being heard, and we must not lose our vision and passion to reach out to the world.*

President  
T. Jeyakumar

### Sabah Provisional Annual Conference President



Rev Dr Hii Kong-Hock was elected President of Sabah Provisional Annual Conference (SPAC) in November 2012.

Rev Dr Hii received his theological training at Alliance Bible Seminary, Hong Kong (B.Th, 1992; M.Div 1994). After serving eight years (1994-2002) in Sarawak and Sabah, he pursued his studies at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, U.S.A., where he graduated with MTS (2003) and PhD (2007).

Upon his return from U.S.A. in May 2007, Rev Dr Hii has served as a lecturer in New Testament Studies and Dean of Students at Sabah Theological Seminary (STS).

Rev Dr Hii is married to Fui Tshin, a doctoral student in Archaeology & Biblical History, who is now also serving as a lecturer at STS.

### **SPAC is celebrating its 30th Anniversary this year!**

*30 years ago, we began humbly by ministering among the Chinese Foo-chows, borrowing a small chapel and the garage of an Anglican Church for worship purpose.*

*Today, as we remember those years, we want to thank God for His blessings and mighty works among us!*

*Over the years, we have planted a total of 23 churches/preaching centre-shr throughout Sabah both in cities and rural areas. Our ministries have*

*extended to diverse groups among the Chinese and indigenous peoples using Chinese, English and Bahasa Malaysia. Mission works are also set up in Myanmar, Thailand, Philippines, and China.*

*But we are not content with this. As we journey forward, my prayer-hope for SPAC is that we shall continue "To commit ourselves to build a church that glorifies God by proclaiming Jesus Christ, nurturing every member to become a faithful disciple, and serving in love and unity."*

*I covet your support as I begin my duty as the President. Please remember us in your prayers:*

*(a) All SPAC pastors/leaders will be fervent in prayers and diligent in service;*

*(b) God will raise up a new generation of youth to commit their lives to full-time ministry;*

*(c) To be equipped and ready for the religious, socio-political challenges in Sabah.*

President  
Hii Kong-Hock



### Sengoi Mission Conference Superintendent

The ministry of the Sengoi Mission Conference is headed by Rev. Uda Aman A/L Bah Dipeh. He joined the Sengoi Mission conference in 1985 as a bible teacher. Then began his journey as a Deacon in 1989, Elder in 1991 and District Superintendent in 1991. Rev. Uda did his Theological studies in SWTC and in STM.

He is married to Sina A/P Bah Mudluk and has 4 children, Yafet, Rico, Bah Resdi and Rita.



# News From the Annual Conferences :

## Tamil Annual Conference

### ஒரு பெரும் வழி

ஜயன் மாலின்ஸ் “எழுப்புதலுக்கு வழியை ஆயத்தப்படுத்துங்கள்” என்ற தமது நூலில் ஒரு கிறிஸ்தவக் குழு இங்கிலாந்திற்கு சென்று வந்த கதையைக் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ளார். இந்தக் குழுவின் பல வருடங்களுக்கு முன்பு ஜான் வெஸ்லி வாழ்ந்த வீட்டைக் காண்பதற்குச் சென்றார்கள். அந்த வீடு எந்தவித சேதமின்றி நன்கு பாதுகாக்கப்பட்டு இருந்தது. அவர்கள் வெகு நாட்களுக்கு முன்பு இங்கிலாந்து தேசத்திலும், உலகத்திலும் ஏற்பட்ட எழுப்புதலைக் குறித்து நினைவுகூர்ந்தனர். பல மணி நேரம் வெஸ்லி அவர்கள் முழங்காலில் நின்று ஜெபித்த அதே இடமானது இப்போது சோலையாக காணப்படுவதைக் கண்டார்கள். அந்த இடத்தை விட்டுச் அவர்கள் புறப்பட இருந்த போது, அவர்களில் ஒரு நபரைக் காணவில்லை என்பதை அறிந்தனர். உடனே மறுபடியும் அந்த வீட்டிற்குச் சென்று பார்த்த போது, ஜான் வெஸ்லி ஜெபித்த அதே இடத்தில் அந்த நபர் முழங்கால் படியிட்டு, கதறி அழுது, “ஆண்டவரே மீண்டும் செய்யும்!” “மீண்டும் செய்யும்!” என ஜெபிப்பதைக் கண்டு ஆச்சரியப்பட்டார்கள்.

ஒவ்வொருவருக்கும் மாற்றம் அல்லது புத்துயிர் அனுபவத்தைக் காண வேண்டும் என்ற உள்ளான குமுறல் இருக்கிறது என நம்புகிறேன். அந்த அனுபவத்தைப் பெறுவதில் நாம் எவ்வளவு தீவிரமாக இருக்கிறோம்? நமது வாஞ்சை எவ்வளவு பெரிதாகக் காணப்படுகிறது, ஆண்டவரே மீண்டும் செய்யும் என்ற பெரிதான கூக்குரல் ஒலிக்க வேண்டும். யோவான்நானன் பரலோகராஜ்யத்தைக் குறித்து, “காத்தருக்கு வழியை ஆயத்தப்படுத்துங்கள், அவருக்குப் பாதைகளைச் செவ்வையண்ணுங்கள் ---- என்று பிரசங்கித்தான்.

இந்த நாட்களில், ஒரு தேசமாக மற்றும் திருச்சபைகளாக தேவனுடைய பெரிதான அசைவாடுதலை காண வேண்டியது அவசியமாகும். உலகப்பிரகாரமான ஆசைகள் மற்றும் சுயநலம் ஆகிய சவால்களின் மத்தியில் “பரிசுத்த வழியை” (ஏசாயா 35:8) ஆயத்தப்படுத்துவது அவசியமாகும். பரிசுத்தமான வாழ்க்கை வாழ்வது, முழுமையான அர்ப்பணிப்பு, தேவனுக்குக் கீழ்ப்படிதல், நம்மைத் தாழ்த்துவது, ஒருவருக்கொருவர் மன்னிப்பை நாடுதல், ஒற்றுமைக்கு முயற்சித்தல், மற்றும் திருச்சபையாக தேவனிடத்தில் அழுது மன்றாட வேண்டியது அவசியமாகும். நமது திருச்சபைகள் “பழக்கமுறை” என்பதற்காக மட்டும் பராமரிக்கப்பட்டு வருதல் கூடாது. வளர்ச்சியைக் காணாமல் ஏதோ காலத்திற்கேற்ப கடந்து செல்லக் கூடாது. நூற்றுக்கணக்கான மக்கள் தொடப்பட்டு, மனம்மாற வேண்டும், அதைக்கண்டு நாம் உற்சாகமடைவோமாக.

தேவனுடைய வழிகளையும், அவருடைய செயல்களையும் முழு சிரத்தையோடு செயலாற்றும் போது நிச்சயமாக நம்மால் இயலும் என விசுவாசிக்கிறேன். நமது இருதயத்திலே ஒரு வழியை உண்டாக்கி, தேவனிடத்தில், “தேவனே மீண்டும் செய்யும்” என கதறி அழும் போது இது ஆரம்பமாகும்.

அருள்திரு. சி. ஜெயராஜ்  
தலைவர், தமிழ் வருடாந்திர மாநாடு  
மலேசியா மெதடிஸ்ட் திருச்சபை

*Below is the translation of the above article.*

## A Highway

There is I believe an inner cry within each one of us to experience a time of renewal or refreshment.

The question is how desperate are we to go for it. How great is this desire? There has to be an overwhelming sense of ‘Lord, do it again. When John the Baptist ushered in the kingdom of God, he declared to the people ‘prepare a highway, the valleys are to be filled, mountains and hills removed, ----- for the King is coming’.

We need as a nation and as churches to see a powerful move of God in these days. Amidst the challenges of materialism and secularism we need to prepare a ‘highway of holiness’ (Isa. 35:8).

We need to live holy lives, totally dedicated and obedient to God,

humbling ourselves, seeking forgiveness from one another, striving for unity and together as a church crying out to Him. Our churches can no longer be on a ‘maintenance mode’. We cannot be contented to sail through the times and seasons without seeing growth. Let us be excited about hundreds of people being touched and transformed.

I believe we can as we take God and His ways and works seriously. It begins by us preparing a highway in our own hearts and crying out to God ‘Do it again’.

Rev.C.Jayaraj  
President, Tamil Annual Conference  
Methodist Church

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# JESUS, JOY of My Heart!

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## Understanding Jesus through the Prayer He Taught His Disciples.

**Note: This article is not an exhaustive discussion of the Lord's Prayer but an encouragement to know Him as the Joy of our Hearts.**



**L**est we forget our Friend Jesus right after a busy Christmas season, let us ponder afresh some aspects of His reality and nearness to us, His disciples and friends. Let us fearfully and cautiously read between the lines of the prayer He taught His disciples then, and us now, in our ever busy globalised 21st century Malaysia, Asia and world. May this reflection help us see a bit more of our Friend Jesus Who is full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

Let us ponder on the "Lord's Prayer" and try to decipher why Jesus our Lord summarized the contents of this prayer for us as it is (Matthew 6:9-13). Using Scripture to pray, we will not go too far off His purpose for us, His children. It will also enable us to pray more secretly, sincerely and specifically (Matthew 6:5-8)...

### **Our Father in heaven**

Jesus taught that, when in need, remember that your *Creator Father* already knows what we need *before* we ask Him. That is why we do not need to babble profusely like some do when they pray for some blessing

or gift. We can come to our God with confidence and humility because He knows and cares for us. It is up to us to trust Him. In contrast, those who do not know the true and personal God feel the urge to keep repeating (as Jezebel's prophets anxiously did) their prayers especially when they are unsure of their gods' availability.

Jesus must have grown up like many local church believers who have been nurtured in God-fearing families. Learning about of God was a daily process of osmosis of godly influence through the lives of Jesus's *foster parents*, Joseph and Mary to their children. Scripture reading and memorizing at home and at the local synagogues (especially for boys and men) were part and parcel of home life. Spiritual and natural functions merge, though yet imperfectly as both parents were imperfect humans seeking to love and honour the God of their fathers. God understands. It was also the responsibility of children to learn to obey God for themselves, not just because their parents say so. God holds them Christian children accountable to Him as far as parents have done their best for them (2 Kings 14:6).

Jesus must have figured this out in His relationship with God as He pondered on who God was to Him, naturally known as *the eldest son of a commoner, Joseph the carpenter*. Much of His faith education must also have been during those prolonged times alone with God whom He knew through the Old Testament Scriptures, tutored under the counsel of the Holy Spirit, just like us, except that we often ignore Him in our hectic local church or non-church activities. (O when will we ever learn?)

### **Birth and infancy**

One of the most wonderful lessons we may learn through this stage of Jesus' humanity is that His *foster* mother, Mary, kept secret what God had prophesied to explain to her about her pregnancy and to calm her down (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38). She did not know the details of Jesus's future but she humbly waited for God's time to reveal Jesus' divine identity when He would be ready for His public mission. Presumably, Joseph humbly did the same. (Contrarily, how many of us boast of our children's giftedness?)

### **Adolescence**

Luke informed us of Jesus's precocious intellect as He must have attracted much attention at the temple (Luke 2;41-52). Curiosity urged Him to engage in serious discussions with the elders of the Jewish religious teachers to the point that He forgot to seek his parents' permission for His change of plans. This incident got them worried sick as they searched for Him for three days and finally found Him still in the temple. They were not amused. But Jesus had to explain His action; He had to be in His Father's house! (Typical adolescence, one may say.) We may thus deduce that, by then, Jesus must have realized that God was His larger and ultimate Father in heaven, just like we take time to do so. Growing up pains are not necessarily sins though they will lead to sin if we do not control them; self-control is a fruit of the Holy Spirit for

both parents and children (Luke 2:50-51). When both look to Father God for forgiveness, reconciliation and a renewal of the mind and heart, peace will prevail.

For examples, having grown up in a CAC local church from birth till 18 years old, I was taught to address God as “Thi Peh Siong Teh” (God my heavenly Father). This is due to the strong Chinese concept of family relationships and the headship of the father. Our preachers and bible teachers must have picked up the biblical fatherly relationship with which God loves and cares for His children. Hence, if we honour our earthly fathers, imperfect though they may be, how much more we need to honour God as our perfect heavenly Father. Since the fully divine Jesus was incarnated as fully man, He must have gone through similar process of faith education at home and at the synagogue. Do we dare do less?

In harsh contrast, today’s secularized youth have chosen to reject the fatherhood of God and hence reject their parents also to the poverty of their own temporal and eternal destiny.

#### **Hallowed be Your Name**

Jesus knew the ten commandments and lived His young human life determined to honour and glorify His heavenly Father’s Name. He would not disobey Him at all since Moses’ 5th commandment, through Moses, clearly stated its demand (Deuteronomy 5:16; Mark 7:8-13).

#### **Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**

Jesus had learnt by then that to do God’s will was food to Him (John 4:34). Therefore, He wanted to do so and did so with zeal and joy! However, submission did not come easily to Him as it does not for us. Those who submit lightheartedly probably may not have really grasped what it means to love Him above all through serving Him gratefully or by sheer will when times are bad. Ponder on Jesus’ Gethsemane prayers and the night’s scenario; feel with Him as His sweat became like drops of blood, probably due to severe dehydration! That is how much He loves His Father through intentional uphill obedience (Hebrews 12:1-17). Note that His Father did not leave Him alone; He sent angels to uphold Him (Matthew 26:36-46; Luke 22:42-46) and the Son could change His prayer to “...nevertheless, NOT My will but Yours be done”! But for that change, we would still be in our sins

on the way to eternal condemnation and die without reconciliation with God, now our Friend (John 17:3)

When we meet Jesus at Cana of Galilee, He had surrendered His life to Father. In essence, this was His determined prayer:

*“Father, I want to do obey You by doing all of Your will for Me. I am ready now that my natural family has grown up and Mary is well taken care of. I am ready to be single, leave my earthly family and be identified with Your mission for Me.”*

It was time for Jesus leave home to serve God “full-time” (not necessarily as a Christian worker only but more to go where He sends, do what He wills, think and say what He thinks and says). Is it time for us to do so as well so that His ministry of reconciliation will be completed sooner rather than later?

At Cana, the fact that Mama Mary had to nudge Him to help a friend by performing a miracle hints at His having done so many times for their daily needs (John 2:1-12). Who says mothers are not meant to help their adult children obey God? Note the mother-child mutually submissive dialogue and mannerism where each could voice His/her opinion without stepping on each other’s toes. How does this family dynamic compare with that of our IT age behavior between parent and child?

#### **Give us this day our daily bread**

As the eldest child and son in Mary’s home, Jesus knew what it meant to feel hungry and in desperate need of daily food. He knew the guilt feelings of not being able to provide His family with sufficient food. He also knew the deep gratefulness to Father God for answering His prayers for food at meal times for Mary and her brood. Tradition says that Joseph died young.

Jesus most probably had learnt carpentry from Papa Joseph. As the eldest son and brother in this Galilean family, it was His role to earn an income to support the living nuclear family. No wonder Hebrew 2:10-12 records that He is not ashamed to call us His brothers! Brotherly loyalty had been real to Him for 30 years. It was a natural expectation that many of our youth have forgotten.

Jesus used His giftings (whether classified as natural or spiritual) well as the occasion arose.

#### **Lead us not into temptation**

There must have been times, after the wilderness at the beginning of His public ministry, when Jesus the carpenter was tempted to cheat customers when desperate for funds at home. Satan had not rested, resigned or retired yet. Further, when lacking in human companionship and understanding, the naturally human desire to get married could have haunted Him for days. He overcame that legitimate personal desire in obedience to Father. Therefore, when questioned by His disciples, He could quickly reply why anyone could stay single (Matthew 19:10-12). The significant difference between Jesus the Man and us is that though He had weaknesses, due to His being brought up by God fearing but imperfect parents He did not sin at all. We did and still do till He takes us out of the presence of sin (Revelations 21).

#### **Deliver us from evil**

Had the thought of revenge not entered His mind when all over His enemies tried their best to ridicule, slander and even kill Him out of a desire for status, money, sexual immorality and pride of life? In earlier days in Nazareth, was He not tempted to socially isolate Himself from those who called Him “bastard” because He was conceived by a young woman out of wedlock? Was He not tempted to use the spiritual gifts God had entrusted Him to hit back at His enemies? But if He were to practise the evil of revenge, how was He going to fulfill the Father’s mission through Him as the blameless Lamb of God who came to take away our sins?

#### **Forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us**

Jesus had seen too much malice everywhere. That was why He did not trust in man (the human race; John 2:23-25). Even His siblings ridiculed Him for being over-spiritual and single! That was why He commanded us to forgive as God has forgiven us. Forgiveness among fellow sinners, though saved by grace, has to be a lifestyle instead of an option, if we truly desire to live His life of joy on earth. Did He not call us to forgive our enemies 490 times (Matthew 18:21)? I believe this figure is only a symbol for the need to forgive till we lose count as He did for His enemies then and for us to forgive now.

#### **For Yours is:**

**the kingdom** – His rule, not of an earthly type like that of the Roman rulers then but





of truth and grace (undeserved and unearnable mercy), justice, honesty, love, riches, compassion, peace and stability  
**the power** – His ability to answer prayers and to keep promises over and over again, to create, protect and redeem...and  
**the glory** - His nature in the universe which reveals Him in all His splendour (Job chapters 38-41; 2 Corinthians 3:18)

Jesus is indeed our:

- *Joy* (John 15:10-11; 16:16-24)
- *First love* (Revelations 2:1-7)
- *Bridegroom* who is patiently preparing us for His wedding banquet and waiting to hold us in His arms (Rev 19 and 21)
- *Protector and Deliverer* from temporal webs of the worldly order (John 17:11-21)
- *Example* of utter humility and gentleness, integrity and faithfulness (Galatians 5:22-23; John 8:1-11)
- *Companion* who sobers us by the reality of His sanity (Luke 24:13-35)
- *Love* Who constrains us by stooping down to bring us home to His eternal Father and now ours though we have all sinned and fallen short of His glory and have ignored Him for wasted years gone by (John 3:16-17).

**Forever and ever...**

**AMEN!!**

May the above reflection on Him move us to love Him more and more as we understand a little more of His cost of incarnation to save us from sin and its inevitable consequences. He came to be the scape goat for our sins in order to reconcile us with His Father and also ours now. May the realization of His amazing grace upon grace on us move us to a deepening gratitude to JESUS, The JOY Of Our Hearts!! The pen of a hymn writer almost says it all.....

## The Love of GOD

By Frederick M. Lehman 1917  
 The hymn writer expressed God's love well...

\*

The love of God is greater far  
 Than tongue or pen can ever tell;  
 It goes beyond the highest star,  
 And reaches to the lowest hell;  
 The guilty pair, bowed down with  
 care,  
 God gave His Son to win;  
 His erring child He reconciled,  
 And pardoned from his sin.

Refrain:

O love of God, how rich and pure!  
 How measureless and strong!  
 It shall forever more endure  
 The saints' and angels' song.

\*

When years of time shall pass away,  
 And earthly thrones and kingdoms  
 fall,  
 When men, who here refuse to pray,  
 On rocks and hills and mountains  
 call,  
 God's love so sure, shall still endure,  
 All measureless and strong;  
 Redeeming grace to Adam's race-  
 The saints' and angles' song.

\*

Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
 And were the skies of parchment  
 made,  
 Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
 And everyman a scribe by trade,  
 To write the love of God above,  
 would drain the ocean dry,  
 Nor could the scroll contain the  
 whole,  
 Though stretched from sky to sky.

**By Dr. Lee Bee Teik**

# Blessed Beyond Measure:

## An Interview with a MYF Member

20-year-old Christine Wong Siaw Wei will read medicine in the prestigious world-renowned Cambridge University this September. The effervescent, top all-rounder JPA scholar from Miri has a zest for life and glorifies God for her excellent accomplishments, James TC Wong discovers.

“I was not born a genius. I am not gifted in music or in sports. I am just a child of God.”

by James TC Wong

### Aug 9, 2012 Miri

I arranged to meet Christine at the new McDonald’s at the Petronas Petrol Station near Columbia Asia Medical Center. Arriving on time, Christine was immediately recognizable by her simple-yet-nice turquoise-colored blouse and dazzling smile.

I praised Christine for her punctuality. *Will your Mom be here later for a photo shoot?* I asked. I had earlier arranged a mother-and-daughter photo to go with the interview. She said yes and thanked me warmly for the lunch invite.

We ordered double cheeseburgers, started eating and chatting.

### The early years

Born to Wong Ing Mow and Sim Soon Gim, Christine is the youngest child of her three other siblings. Her parents, originally from Sibuan, are now retired. Being part of a church-going family, attending worship service during Sundays was the norm for Christine. But for some unknown reason, the Wongs stopped attending church when Christine was in Primary Four.

“For some unknown reason, my family and I stopped going to church when I was about 10 years old.”

I was surprised to find out Christine was not so outstanding in her primary school days though she scored straight A’s in the UPSR.

“Once I was caned 22 times consecutively

by my teacher because my results were really bad - it was common to see red-ink grades in my report cards,” confessed Christine.

“I liked dancing and public speaking but never did anything to pursue these interests. On hindsight, I suppose you could say that I had no motivation to excel in anything in my early years. The change came after that. Even my peers in secondary school noticed the late bloomer in me,” continued Christine.



### Turning point

In secondary school, things took a drastic turn for the better. Motivated with a purpose and plan, Christine began to put in a conscientious effort into her studies. She was determined to toil harder albeit without private tuition classes.

Well-articulated and academically-inclined, Christine participated in competitive events like public speaking, science quizzes and softball competitions. Fueled by the desire to be the best, Christine became the top student in her cohort every year and was unstoppable in winning various extra-curricular competitions. Her indomitable spirit was recognized and she received many awards from her school and other organizations.

### Emptiness

Despite all the success, strangely, Christine felt no peace and joy in her heart. Worse still, she was constantly under pressure to maintain her good grades due to peer-rivalry in school.

“I was friendly at a superficial level to my peers and rivals, and strangely I felt empty inside in my heart despite earning all the accolades.”

### Experiencing God’s extraordinary loving grace

Christine was quick to declare that God showed His love and faithfulness by sending a very good friend to her at the right time. Kho Ee Ping understood the terrible state of Christine’s spiritual life and invited the latter to the once-a-week Youth Fellowship at Mei Ann Methodist Church. Not wanting to be alone on Saturday nights, Christine agreed to join – and yes, apparently for the wrong reason.

Going the extra mile, Kho would fetch Christine to attend the Sunday worship service regularly. Deeply encouraged by her friend’s act of love, Christine even joined the church youth choir.

“One night during the Youth Fellowship in 2008, I was at a low point burdened with a lot stress from my studies. Feeling increasingly desperate, I cried out to the Lord to forgive my faults and frailties while we were worship-singing. I wanted to give everything up and I needed a new purpose. Tears came pouring out and all of a sudden, I experienced peace and liberation in my heart.”

Christine added, “In a heartbeat, the Lord Jesus became the center and purpose in my life.”

More storms in life are inevitable and Christine was relieved that she no longer had to carry the burden by herself. All she had to do was to surrender everything to the Lord Jesus.



“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose.” - Romans 8:28

“I also learned to pray: *Let Your will be done, O Lord, not mine. God, lead me to seek and follow Him with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind and with all my strength.* Guess what I found out? There may be many purposes in life we hold on to, but it will never be enough to fill our soul because He created us for one purpose – to glorify Him through the life He gave us, by loving our neighbors as ourselves,” Christine shared.

#### Answered prayer

While waiting for her SPM results, Christine asked God for a direction. God, *what is your pathway for me?* she prayed in earnest. At first there was no sign so Christine chose

to do the South Australian Matriculation (SAM) program under Tan Sri Dato Dr Loy Hean Heong Merit Scholarship in Taylor’s College, Subang Jaya. Christine chose this option in the hope of eventually reading medicine in Australia but at the back of her mind, the potential financial burden on her parents and working siblings troubled her. In 2009, more than 465,000 students sat for the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM). 7,987 students scored straight A’s in all the subjects they took. Another 214 students scored A+ (above 90% marks) in all subjects. The *crème de la crème* top academic cohort was overwhelmingly competitive, to say the least.

Little did Christine realize what God’s greater plan for her was.

As expected, Christine scored 12A+ in her SPM but she was still unplaced in the national Top 30 Scholars list. A student in the Top 30 could choose any discipline or top university in the world of his or her choice, with no bond fulfillment requirement with the sponsor upon graduation.

Miracles do happen! By God’s grace, in June 2010, Christine received a call from the Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA) informing her that she was included in the country’s top 30 when two recipients had turned down the offer and opted for another prestigious scholarship from Bank Negara.

Immediately Christine declared unabashedly that it was the greatest miracle in her life!

As a recipient of the prestigious JPA Top 30 scholarship, Christine switched from her SAM program to Cambridge GCE A-Levels without having to change college. Scoring 4A\*s in Physics, Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics, Christine was awarded the Outstanding Cambridge Learner Awards in Best in Malaysia (Mathematics). She also earned a place to read medicine in the prestigious Cambridge University in the United Kingdom.

Another two awards Christine holds dear to her heart are the Taylor’s International Model United Nations Conference 2012 “Most Diplomatic Speaker” and “Best Position Paper”.

“I was in the Human Rights Council representing Chile, and we were debating about human trafficking and torture as a practice in the global community. I did participate in several conferences before but this is the

one I enjoyed most.”

“Because of His grace, I can now pursue my passion in the university and country I have not even dared to dream of. To choose any course I want, to study anywhere I want, without any bond with the sponsor - God has His way of performing miracles,” she praised God.

“Now I am no longer afraid because I know God will provide.”

#### Glorifying God

Christine hopes she can be a living testimony to glorify God. “I am young and lack wisdom. I realize my limitations and I need to rely on God, to fear HIM, to be in full submission, to trust and be humble in all circumstances. I will continue to learn to live as a living testimony for Him.”

A new chapter now opens for Christine as she heads to Cambridge. She endeavors to do her best so that her family and country will be proud of her.

“More importantly, I will be righteous and truthful in all my thoughts, deeds and actions to glorify God. He has blessed me in so many ways throughout my journey. Personal awards and achievements may be a great way to glorify God explicitly but I believe the way we live our daily life is a better example to our community, especially to non-Christians.”

“I dare not think that my story would be a touching inspiration to anyone but I earnestly hope it is evident that God’s grace is often more than what we could ever fathom – yes, God’s grace is ever overflowing,” summed up Christine.

Too often we fail to see that God’s giving extends far beyond all we can imagine. But not Christine.

Surely we can expect more good things from this child of God in the bright years ahead of her.

*A faithful worshiper in Grace Methodist Church, Christine was among the 15 congregational members baptized last May by Rev. Lisa Ting.*





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