

PELITA METHODIST

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GOD

calls us to

BUILD

our

NATION

By Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik

METHODIST PRAYER CONVENTION 2014
 PERHIMPUNAN DOA METHODIST
 卫理公会祷告大会 (மேதடிஸ்ட் ஜெப மாநாடு)

**A CHURCH AFTER
 体贴上帝心意的教会 GOD'S OWN HEART**
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REV DR JOSHUA TING

31 AUGUST 2014
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 Bt Jalil- gathering of all Methodist churches for a time of prayer and celebration

Wishing you a Blessed and Meaningful New Year

**From: Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik & Family
 and all staff of Methodist HQ**

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Malaysia National Prayer Nurturing

Continue to HOPE in HIM 2014

There have been many uncertainties and discouraging happenings in the year 2013. For some, the current circumstances in our nation have dimmed every glimpse of their hope. Others are frustrated and become even more cynical. Still others continue to struggle day by day. Perhaps some may cry out: Why do the wicked people prosper... their body is fat, they are not in trouble as other men, nor are they plagued like mankind? (Ps 73).

Yet, in the last month of the year, in fact every year, we are reminded with the birth of our Savior; "the good news that will bring great joy to all people" and "peace to those whom God's favor rests." Jesus' birth has brought hope to all, and joy and peace to those who please God. Surely God is good, to those who are pure in heart!

Indeed, as we ponder over all those things or our own individual misfortune, we may feel troubled, until we come into the sanctuary of God, then we perceive the reality in His light. We will be still even in the midst of storms. For we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28). For

those of us who are weary and heavy laden, let us go to Him who gives rest.

May the peace of God that surpasses all understanding guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Let us continue to hope in Him regardless of our circumstances, because we believe.

Let's pray:

LORD, our Father in heaven, , help our weaknesses, for we do not know how to pray as we should. Our flesh and our hearts may fail, but You, O Lord, are the strength of our hearts and our portion forever. We will make You our refuge and tell of all Your works.

Beloved [a holy nation set apart for His good works]

- Read Psalm 73

Nation [a nation whom God's favor rests]

O LORD, we lift up our nation to you, that people will be set free from the love of money and greed for unjust gain or power.

For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions--is not from You but is from the world, for all senseless and harmful desires will plunge people into ruin and destruction. We pray that the nation will be transformed into one that pleases You.

Issues: while all eyes appear to be fixated on the rising cost of living, the underlying issue remain the same: the lacking of good and clean governance

- Najib's new year pledge over rising cost of living" - KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 31 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today gave a new year pledge to minimise the impact of the rising cost of living on the people. "...where necessary, we will fine-tune government programmes so that the effect on household incomes is not too great. "We will put in place mechanisms to cushion people from the rises in the electricity tariff and toll fares, and the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) is coming up with new ideas to ease the cost of living pressures." [http://www.bernama.com.my/bernama/v7/po/newspolitics.php?id=1004459]
- MCA deputy president Wee Ka Siong has urged **the government to focus on curbing wastage and corruption within the civil service**, stressing that mere austerity measures without dealing with these issues will not be enough. [http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/250642]
- **"ALLAH"** - The plan by the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (**Jais**) to **stop Christians from using the word "Allah" appears to be a plan to persecute the minority**, said a Christian legal group. Catholic Lawyers' Society president Viola De Cruz Silva said there were no provisions in the Federal Constitution banning non-Muslims from propagating their religion among their community or to other non-Muslim communities or groups. [http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/selangor-religious-authorities-persecuting-christians-with-allah-ban-says-c]
- Latest: Selangor Islamic authorities raid Bible Society of Malaysia, 300 copies of Alkitab seized.

“God calls us to build our nation”

王怀德：上帝呼召我们建设马来西亚

By Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik



The 38th session of Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference (SCAC) was kicked off on 26 November 2013 at Wei Kuok Hall in Sibü.

In his message at the opening ceremony, Bishop Ong Hwai Teik invited the conference participants to reflect on the theme “For such a time as this, God calls us to build our nation”, citing the Jews’ struggle while they were sent into exile in Babylon to help expound on our current

situation in Malaysia.

He said that the Jews’ exile to Babylon was a judgment that they deserved. An unavoidable exile. The Jews were placed that where they did not want to be so that God could test their faith.

The Bishop reiterated that it was also a time in Malaysia that our faith was being tested. We were in our “Exile” moment, at a point where we did not want to be. For such time as this, the Bishop stressed that what was important was not where God wanted us to go, but WHO was with us wherever we are.

Secondly, we needed to learn that our God was the Sovereign King of the Universe. He was the CENTRE of the Jews’ Exile experience. He called them to build the nation where they were sent into exile. They were not only to survive there, but also to thrive. In Babylon, they were to build houses and live in them; to plant gardens and eat their produce; to take wives and have sons and daughters; to multiply there. (Jer 29: 5-7a) At the same time, they were to bless the nation as well by seeking the welfare of the city and praying to the Lord on its behalf... (Jer 29:7b)

For such time as this, the Bishop encouraged the Methodists in Sarawak to hold fast to 3 Simple Rules of John Wesley’s way of living by Scriptural holiness, transforming the nation:

- 1) Do no harm; say NO to bribery, plant no seeds of hatred between ethnic groups, or commit things as small as violating traffic rules.
- 2) Do good; our ultimate goal is to bring people to the kingdom of God.
- 3) Stay in love with God by attending to all His ordinances and requirements.

马来西亚基督教卫理公会砂拉越华人年议会第38届年议会于11月26日开幕，全砂各堂会代表共聚一堂，商讨来年事工。

大马卫理公会总议会会督王怀德牧师以“在这时刻，上帝呼召我们建设这国家”为题，提醒卫理宗弟兄姐妹建设马来西亚。

会督说，以色列人流亡，被掳巴比伦，是他们该受的处罚。流亡是把他们放在他们不喜欢去的地方。被掳是信仰的考验。我们在马来西亚的困境，正是上帝要考验我们的信仰，重要的不是上帝要你去那儿，而是谁在那儿，是上帝在那儿，祂应许与我们同在。

“上帝是宇宙中至高的君王。祂是以色列人整个被掳经历的中心。祂呼召他们建设他们被掳到的国家。在那儿他们不只是一要存活，更是要兴旺。在巴比伦，以色列人要盖造房屋，并在其中；栽种田园吃其中所出产的，娶妻生儿女，生养众多。”

因此，在这艰困的时刻，我们更要抓紧卫斯理约翰生活的三个简单准则。首先，我们要与上帝保持美好的交通，继续敬畏上帝，更与神团契，建立家庭祭坛，禁食祷告，参加主日崇拜。

同时，引人信主虽是我们基督徒的终极目标，但是我们必须真诚无私地行善帮助人，只能期望在帮助他们的过程中，让圣灵在他们心中工作，进而信主。

最后，基督徒更应该不行恶事，我们要坚拒贪污，也不要增加民族间的仇恨，甚至不要开快车导致交通意外。

“只有完全奉行卫斯理约翰的三个简单准则，我们才能真正地宣扬圣经圣洁，进而更新转化国家。”

Mene, Tekel and Parsin

By Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik

It was an evening of much expectation for the participants as well as the clerics. Thanksgiving, love, blessings, assurance, cheers were in the air and dancing in the brand new sanctuary of Sing Ang Tong Methodist Church. Yes, the Ordination Service of the 38th SCAC was held at the new, modern and spacious building of Sing Ang Tong, the first Methodist church in Sibü.

On this memorable evening of 27 November 2013, seven pastors were admitted as Deacons while 15 deacons were ordained Elders.

The new Deacons are: Wong Poh Fong, Lu Ai Lin, Nguang Ung Soon, Wong Ling Kee, Ling Nguok Sieng, Nicholas Tan Chung Kiat and Wong Yiik Tshing. On the other hand, Chieng Puong Kui, Wong Mee King, Wong Ling Kwong, Debbie Yet Yung Choo, Chua Siew Chen, Hii Siang Cheng, Pau Kiew Chung, Yong Shee Ing, Koh Nien Chu, Ling Ong Chu, Wong Teck Hiong, Samuel Law Ning Seng, Tiong Cheong Lai, Tang Kah Hie and Tie Teck Siing are our new Elders.

To the newly ordained, Bishop Ong Hwai Teik exhorted them to be agents of change when ministering in a season of rapid change.

“There are still lessons we can learn in times of rapid change,” said the Bishop. Taking his text from Daniel 5, Bishop Ong explained how Daniel led his life and ministry after he was out of favor of the Babylon King and being “put in the freezer” for years. He pointed out 4 lessons:

Rapid change

- 1) Creates initiative and opportunities.
- 2) Sharpens response.
- 3) Exposes characters and core values.
- 4) Promotes forthrightness.

Take the “Allah” issue in our country for

instance; the incident has challenged us to value God’s word more. Meanwhile it also initiated a joint collective prayer meeting called by CCM and the NECF which gathered churches of various denominations to pray in one accord and bless our nation. The Bishop thus urged us to learn to give thanks for thorns that have roses as many a time we are not called to serve within our comfort zone.

Secondly, our response will be improved and sharpened. In the above situation, we saw many youths and churches awakening and making their clear stand.

Thirdly, one’s character and core values will also be exposed, for good or for worse. Daniel has set a good example for us as he demonstrated noble character though being forgotten under the regime of Belshazzar. He did not take it negatively nor grumble against God; instead he continued to trust fully in the Lord. Even if he was asked to make known the interpretation of the writing on the wall, he did not do it for the rewards.

Fourthly, in the days of rapid change, we should be able to tell the truth when necessary. Like Daniel, at the risk of sounding rude, bluntly interpreted the writing on the wall to Belshazzar, speaking the

truth. However, the Bishop reminded that God does not want us to be porcupines, but to learn to speak the truth in love.

In wrapping up his sermon, Bishop Ong urged us to remember the interpretation of the writing on the wall. God has numbered (MENE) our days and we have been weighed (TEKEL) in the balance. We surely do not want to be found wanting and divided (PARSIN). How then shall we live and minister in such a time of rapid change in Malaysia? “We ought to be an AGENT of CHANGE,” concluded the Bishop.

To the clerics who would soon be appointed and posted, Bishop Ong exhorted them to do all they can in the parish where they will be sent. When it is time to leave, be ready to leave, for our days are numbered. Secondly, the true standard of measure is the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bishop urged the clerics to read one of the 4 Gospels at least once a year if not more. Last but not least, let our hearts be whole-hearted in God and not be divided.

Front row: the new deacons
2nd & 3rd row: the new elders



王怀德：在巨变中的服事

第38届砂华人年议会按牧礼拜已于11月27日晚假新安堂举行，分别按立了7位副牧与15位长牧。

这7位副牧是王保凤、卢爱玲、阮文顺、黄灵麒、林月仙、陈俊杰与黄育进，而15位长牧则是钱本贵、王美琴、黄麟光、叶荣珠、蔡秀真、许向程、包久聪、翁慈营、柯念慈、林恩慈、黄德香、刘宜迅、张昌来、郑家慧与池德成。

王怀德会督表示世界在面临急速的改变，也带给这世代极大的震撼。我们要如何面对这巨变的世界？他引用但以理书第5章 1-16 节，讲述了但以理在遭遇冷待后，重新被伯沙撒王召见的事，从而带出四点信息，供基督徒思考：

一．看到巨变带来的动力与契机

会督说，从但以理的遭遇中，我们看见改变所带来的契机。虽然生活在这个舒适的时代，很多人都不喜欢改变，但是我们要紧记的是改变会带来机会。正如但以理在巨变中被太后推荐给伯沙撒王一般，我们目前面对“阿拉”字眼之事件，也促使教会合一。诸如，9月15日，CMM与NECF联合召集3千多名基督徒同心祷告。而“阿拉”事件引起世界各国基督徒之关注，并纷纷发表时声支持本国信徒使用“阿拉”字眼的立场。同时，他也藉此勉励牧者与所有服事者，服事是长远的，上帝未必在舒适的环境中使用我们。

二．上帝使用巨变来促使我们回应

另外，巨变能够训练人们的应对，更可以加强人们对巨变的迅速反应。当巨变来到，要么使人趋向真理，也不然就是退缩，远离真理。只是，我们要向上帝求，帮助我们

能够往好的方向反应。正如2012年的国选，我们明显看见年轻人开始参与政治。另外，我国教会领袖在面临各样切身的挑战时，亦不再抱持中立，作出选择，坚定表达立场。

三．巨变突显个人品格及核心价值

再者，会督也从这段经文中看见了但以理先知难能可贵的品格。但以理虽然被冷藏了多年，但他丝毫不因自被忽略而消极回应，他总是时时刻刻地跟随上帝。对于王的询问，他没有因曾被忽视而不愿贡献己长，也没有因着奖赏而不敢说出真理。

四．巨变促使人勇敢讲明真理

在重新受到国王的重用后，但以理先知把奖赏都给了别人，从中可以看出但以理的服事并不是为了奖赏。因此，会督也提醒基督徒领袖、牧者的服事不应该是为了得到奖赏，反要持守正直与坦承。同时，他提醒圣经并不是叫我们成为刺猬，而是学习如何用爱心说诚实话。

最后，会督呼吁各牧者要珍惜被派

往之教会的机会，因为在该教会服事的年日也已被数算了。所以，在任时要尽心服事，时候到了，该离开时就要勇敢离开。牧者千万不要因为服事年日久了，而认为自己作得已足够。

“我们的日子是有限的，机会更是有限。如果可以的话，每个基督徒每年都应该至少把四福音书重读一遍。”让主耶稣的生平与教导成为自省的标准。只有当我们专注于上帝时，我们的服事与生命才有意义。

面对这时代，我们要成为“改变者”，时刻亲近神，听祂的指示，并奉主名完成其托付。切说，无论作任何事都不可埋怨，因为我们有主耶稣。很多人埋怨玫瑰有刺，但我们要感恩，在刺中有玫瑰。愿我们在荆棘满布中，记得沙仑的玫瑰。

Front row: the new deacons
2nd & 3rd row: the new elders



Current Affairs

STATEMENT

JAIS Raid on Bible Society

The dispute over the use of the word 'Allah' is poisoning our fledging inter-religious harmony and fracturing the fabric of our plural society.

In the face of the unrelenting dispute a voice of reason among us has called for all citizens to respect, honour and abide by the guarantee of religious freedom as enshrined in the Federal Constitution and which was agreed to when Sabah and Sarawak joined Malaya to form Malaysia.

In April 2011 the Federal Cabinet issued a 'Ten Point Solution to address the Bahasa Malaysia/Indonesia Bible and other related issues'. The Ten Point Solution was signed by the Prime Minister himself. The first two points being:

1. Bibles in all languages can be imported into the country, including Bahasa Malaysia/Indonesia
2. These Bibles can also be printed locally in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak. This is a new development which should be welcome by the Christian groups.

How JAIS had the audacity to do what it did to the Bible Society Malaysia which resulted in the arrest of its two officials, seizure of 320 copies of Al-Kitab and 10 copies of Bup Kudus is shocking.

If an action assumes such arrogance that violates the Federal Constitution and pays total disregard to the Prime Minister's directive is not treason, I do not know what is.

I would urge that in our handling of such a sensitive issue, it is imperative that we exercise maximum restraint and without undue prejudice. Our action will either convict or commend us before men and God. JAIS has much to answer for its action.

Chairman
Association of Churches in Sarawak

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(PERSEKUTUAN KRISTIAN MALAYSIA)**

Address: 26 Jalan Universiti, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Tel / Fax : + 60 3 7957 1457
Email: cfmsia@yahoo.co.uk

15th January 2014

CFM MEDIA STATEMENT

**CFM DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER RECENT ACTS
OF ESCALATING TENSIONS**

The Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) notes with deep concern the recent acts of escalating tensions on the part of certain groups in respect of the use of the term “Allah” by the Christian community in Malaysia.

In particular we refer to four incidents: the continued singling out of Father Lawrence Andrew, the editor of The Herald, for criticism and threats of “mega demonstrations” against him; the advertisement placed in The Star on Saturday 11 January 2014 by the head of the Majlis Agama Islam Selangor attempting to justify the raid by the Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor on the premises of the Bible Society of Malaysia on 2 January 2014; the demonstration near Shekinah Glory AG Church, Klang on Saturday morning 4 January 2014; and the demonstration by a group of approximately 100 people outside Metro Tabernacle Church in Gombak on Sunday morning 12 January 2014.

We are of the view that none of these incidents was either helpful or prudent in the current environment.

The 10-point solution announced by the Government in April 2011 should have resolved the usage of Bahasa Malaysia and the term “Allah” in the Al-Kitab, the Bible in Bahasa Malaysia. Regrettably, the Government that devised the 10-point solution is now silent about it.

As such, in the absence of any clear direction from the political leadership of our country, what we are witnessing is the mad scramble by any and every group to grab media attention for themselves. It is a sorry reflection of the declining state of affairs. We regret that these groups have felt it necessary to undertake these actions.

The CFM on behalf of the Christian community in Malaysia remains undaunted in the face of these and no doubt future incidents of this nature.

We stand firm and united in our understanding of the principle of the freedom of religion and the equal protection of the law, both of which are guaranteed in our Federal Constitution, the supreme law of the land.

We look to the courts of this land to protect, preserve and defend these cherished principles of our Federal Constitution.

We stand by individuals such as Father Lawrence Andrew and churches that have been singled out to be recipients of unwarranted and undeserved protests, and with the many Christians in this country whose only offence has been a heartfelt desire to worship and address God in their own language.

We bear in mind that 64% of Christians in Malaysia have no other language for their Bible, prayer and worship except for Bahasa Malaysia.

We thank friends and neighbours from other faiths who understand this history and who are standing with us and by us in these dark days.

We call on all peace-loving people in Malaysia and throughout the world to continue to pray for the peace and security of individual Christians, churches and communities, and for justice to prevail in our beloved nation.

Signed

Rev. Dr. Eu Hong Seng,
Chairman and the Executive Committee,
The Christian Federation of Malaysia

**CHRISTIAN FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA
(PERSEKUTUAN KRISTIAN MALAYSIA)**

Address: 26 Jalan Universiti, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
Tel / Fax : + 60 3 7957 1457
Email: cfmsia@yahoo.co.uk

15th Januari 2014

KENYATAAN MEDIA

**CFM AMAT BIMBANG TERHADAP TINDAKAN TERBARU
MENINGKATKAN KETEGANGAN**

Persekutuan Kristian Malaysia (CFM) menyatakan kebimbangan dalam tindakan baru-baru ini yang meningkat ketegangan di pihak kumpulan tertentu berkenaan dengan penggunaan istilah “Allah” oleh masyarakat Kristian di Malaysia.

Khususnya kita merujuk kepada empat kejadian: yang secara khususnya dituju kepada Father Lawrence Andrew, Penerbit The Herald, kritikan dan ancaman “demonstrasi mega” terhadapnya; iklan yang terpapar di The Star pada hari Sabtu 11 Januari, 2014 oleh ketua Majlis Agama Islam Selangor cuba untuk menjustifikasikan serbuan oleh Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor di premis Persatuan Alkitab Malaysia pada 2 Januari 2014; demonstrasi berhampiran Shekinah Glory Church AG, Klang pada hari Sabtu pagi 4 Januari 2014; dan demonstrasi oleh sekumpulan kira-kira 100 orang di luar Gereja Metro Tabernacle di Gombak pada hari Ahad pagi 12 Januari 2014.

Kami berpendapat bahawa insiden-insiden ini tidak membantu atau berhemat pada keadaan semasa.

10 Perkara Penyelesaian yang diumumkan oleh Kerajaan pada bulan April 2011 sepatutnya telah menyelesaikan penggunaan Bahasa Malaysia dan istilah “Allah” di dalam Al-Kitab. Malangnya, Kerajaan yang mencipta 10 Perkara penyelesaian tersebut kini berdiam diri mengenainya.

Oleh itu, jika tiada arahan jelas daripada kepimpinan politik negara kita, apa yang kita saksikan ketika ini adalah setiap kumpulan berlumba-lumba untuk menarik perhatian media untuk diri mereka sendiri. Ini mencerminkan pengurusan negara yang merosot. Kami kesal bahawa kumpulan-kumpulan ini merasakan bahawa mereka perlu melakukan tindakan ini.

CFM bagi pihak masyarakat Kristian di Malaysia tetap tidak tergugat dalam menghadapi keadaan ini dan demikian juga pada masa depan.

Kami berdiri teguh dan bersatu dalam pemahaman kita tentang prinsip kebebasan beragama dan perlindungan saksama dalam undang-undang, kedua-duanya yang dijamin oleh Perlembagaan Persekutuan, undang-undang tertinggi di negara kita.

Kami melihat kepada mahkamah untuk melindungi, memelihara dan mempertahankan prinsip-prinsip Perlembagaan Persekutuan yang kami hormati.

Kami berdiri dengan individu-individu seperti Paderi Lawrence Andrew dan gereja-gereja yang telah dipilih menjadi tempat bantahan yang tidak munasabah dan yang tidak sewajarnya, dan kebanyakan orang-orang Kristian di negara ini yang hanya dipersalahkan kerana keinginan tulus mereka untuk menyembah dan memanggil Allah dalam bahasa mereka sendiri.

Kita mengingatkan bahawa 64% orang Kristian di Malaysia tidak mempunyai bahasa lain untuk Alkitab, berdoa dan penyembahan mereka kecuali dalam Bahasa Malaysia.

Kami mengucapkan terima kasih kepada rakan-rakan dan jiran-jiran kami dari agama lain yang memahami sejarah ini dan berdiri dengan kami dan bersama kami pada hari yang gelap ini.

Kami menyeru semua rakyat yang cintakan keamanan di Malaysia dan di seluruh dunia untuk terus berdoa untuk keamanan dan keselamatan orang Kristian, gereja-gereja dan masyarakat, dan agar keadilan berlaku dalam negara kita yang tercinta.

Ditanda tangani,

Rev. Dr. Eu Hong Seng,
Pengerusi dan Jawatankuasa Eksekutif, Persekutuan Kristian Malaysia

Our Methodist Church in Malaysia Response to the Typhoon Haiyan Disaster in the Philippines

Typhoon Haiyan, known as Typhoon Yolanda in Philippines, was an exceptionally powerful tropical cyclone that devastated some parts of Philippines on 8th November 2013. It was the deadliest typhoon on record killing at least 6,000 people and 1,800 others still missing in Philippines alone and millions of people affected. The Typhoon swept away more than 1.1 million houses. Haiyan was also the strongest storm recorded at landfall, and unofficially the strongest typhoon ever recorded in term of wind speed. The typhoon caused catastrophic destruction in the Visayas, particularly on the Island of Leyte and Samar.

Bishop Rev Dr. Ong Hwai Teik quickly sent out a circular asking all Methodist Churches in Malaysia to respond. While relief funds were coming in, Bishop Ong activated the authorization of a grant of RM30, 000 to the Barnabas Fund and a further sum of RM20,000 to CREST to meet immediate relief needs in the affected localities. He further proposed that the Council of Missions send a small team to the Philippines as soon as possible to take a look at the situation, and to meet up with the episcopal leadership of the Methodist Church there to discuss on what and how we can help.

I communicated with Bishop Rodolfo Juan and Bishop Ciriaco Francisco of the United Methodist Church (UMC) and also Bishop Nathanael Lazaro of Evangelical Methodist Church. It was learnt that UMC has 6 churches in Leyte Province affected by the typhoon. Arrangement was then made for a trip to visit Leyte Province from 11th to 13th December. Col (rttd) Leong Pook Seong and I went on the trip with the two UMC Bishops of the Philippines.

We flew from Manila to Tacloban, which is the capital of Leyte Province with a population of over 220,000. It is situated at the northwest corner of Leyte Island. The other major city of the Island is Ormac. The

whole island has a population of over 2 million people.

We could see the destruction the moment we landed at the airport. The airport terminal building was badly damaged, but temporarily put together to allow air communication with the rest of the country. Immediately outside the terminal building, we could see tents and emergency shelters being put up everywhere. We felt stunned by the enormous devastation at first sight. From the airport and driving south, we could see miles and miles of complete destruction and vast landscape of wrecked village upon village. It is devastation on a scale unlike anything that I have ever seen, and worse than a war zone.

The destruction was most severe near to Tacloban City where everything was destroyed except for the city centre. As we moved further south, the situation got slightly better. At Tacloban, it was reported that the water was more than twenty feet high and the wind and wave lasted for as long as 4 hours.

It was already into the fifth week when we

arrived. Most of the Island was still without electricity then. It was total darkness at night, except for those who had generators.

The Bishops and the local church leaders took us to visit the following Methodist Churches:

- a. Light and Life United Methodist Church in Tacloban
- b. Abuyong United Methodist Church at Abuyong
- c. Holy Mountain United Methodist Church at Kadauhan, Valencia, Ormac City
- d. Galilean United Methodist Church in Guadalupe, Bay-bay City
- e. Lomonon United Methodist Church in Lomonon, Palompon
- f. Isabel United Methodist Church at Isabel
- g. Christ United Methodist Church in In-day Dora, Kanangan

We brought along US\$10,000 cash with us for immediate aid purposes, and after discussing with the Bishops and the local church leaders, the following allocations were made:





the local churches so that the church can use them to provide electricity at night to those houses near and around the churches. Even one lighting point to each house was most welcome after weeks in complete darkness, or being confined only to using candles or torchlight.

- b. To buy water filters so that local churches can provide clean drinking water to those near and around the churches and in the community.
- c. To provide financial loans to church members to start working again, especially those with skills like welders, so that they can be on their feet soon. A strategy was devised that encompasses repayment of loans, tithing to local churches and providing employment opportunity to other church members or even to the public at large.

The GC Council of Missions had decided at its meeting on 15th January to continue to connect and communicate with the Methodist Church in the Philippines on how we can continue to help them in the next stage of recovery and rehabilitation phase post the Typhoon Haiyan disaster. The remainder of our collected funds will be channeled towards this next level of restoration and rebuilding.

Let us continue to remember the people there in our prayers. The Bishop and the General Conference thank all our Annual Conferences, churches, members and friends for their willing and generous contributions.

John Ling,
Chairman of Council of Mission
The Methodist Church in Malaysia

- a. The roof of the Light and Life United Methodist Church in Tacloban needed immediate repair so that Sunday service can be conducted safely. It was estimated that the roof covering plus replacing some roof trusses and some minor repairs to the walls and toilet would cost about USD\$500
- b. There are 5 families of the Light and Life United Methodist Church in Tacloban whose roofs were also badly damaged. Each family was given a token sum of US\$500 for these repairs.
- c. The Holy Mountain United Methodist Church at Kadaudan, Valancia lost its roof although the roof trusses were still alright. The new roof would cost about US\$2,000
- d. The roof of Isabel United Methodist Church and side wing for the parsonage were partially damaged. A sum of US\$2,000 was given for their immediate repair.

growing church and we can take part in this project when it is ready.

For the Abuyong UMC and the Christ UMC at Kanangan we shall wait for further news from the Bishops and shall make a decision at the appropriate time.

Our observation is that the people in these affected areas are at a loss as to what to do next. Their trauma is still very much with them. The rehabilitation and the rebuilding process will surely take a long time. The immediate food and shelter requirements are temporarily provided for by a lot of NGOs working there now. But the question is how much longer will these NGOs be there?

Following our consultation with them, the UMC leadership immediately used some of the relief fund that they had received then from Methodist Churches worldwide to do the following:

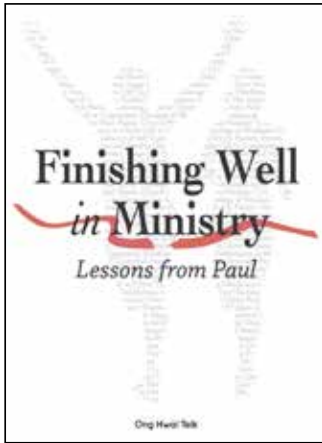
- a. To buy generator sets and give them to

The Light and Life United Methodist Church at Tacloban is a house church. UMC is already negotiating to buy a piece of land nearer to Tacloban City centre to build a new church for them. We shall wait for this plan to come and hopefully we can help in their new church building project.

For the Isabel United Methodist Church at Isabel, the church is growing. At the moment, the land is too small to allow for any extension. UMC is now thinking of buying up the adjoining lot of land to allow new church premises to be built and convert the present church building into a Kindergarten or other community service centre. It is a



Book Review



FINISHING WELL IN MINISTRY: LESSONS FROM PAUL

Available from Canaanland @ RM 22

Book Review by Quek Shiwei

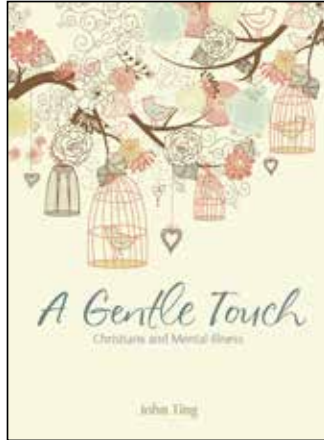
Research by Fuller Institute, George Barna, and Pastoral Care Inc. has shown that 50% of pastors have thought about leaving the ministry in the last months, and 70% of pastors have a lower self-image than when they first started. Clearly, pastors have deep needs and struggles which often go unnoticed.

Ong Hwai Teik has a deep burden on his heart for the well-being of pastors, and hopes to encourage them towards longevity in ministry through his reflections in his book, *Finishing Well in Ministry: Lessons from Paul*.

Starting with a theological understanding of what it means to be created in the image of God, Ong outlines why it is so important for pastors and church leaders to care for their own well-being. He then provides a systematic study of the life of Paul to uncover key spiritual principles that can help pastors and leaders finish well in ministry. Drawing from Scripture and other writers, the author explores principles such as Sabbath rest, having spiritual friends, the theology of weakness, and valuing family over ministry—all in a way relevant to the unique challenges of pastors and church leaders. These principles have undergirded his own journey of over thirty years as a pastor.

Finishing Well in Ministry is meant for all who intend to finish their service well. New and experienced pastors—as well as

anyone actively serving in church—will benefit from this book as they glean from the lessons from the life of Paul. Spouses and church members are also encouraged to read it to catch a glimpse of the struggles pastors and leaders face, so that they can be a greater support to them.



A GENTLE TOUCH: CHRISTIANS & MENTAL ILLNESS

Available from Cannanland @ RM 25

Book review by Joshua Woo Sze Zeng Originally published in szezeng. blogspot.sg

A Gentle Touch seeks to address the common issues surrounding mental illness from the perspective of a Christian pastor. The five areas discussed are psychosis, mood disorders, anxiety disorders, addictions, and self-care.

In his introductory chapter, John lays out his assumption of human being and his approach to healing/remedy for mental illness. Humans are regarded as multi-dimensional being. Our composition is not simply physical but also emotional, mental, psychological, social, and spiritual. These dimensions mutually affect one another. For this reason, John advocates a holistic approach for healing that combines psychiatry, psychotherapy, pastoral, and communal care. By including the spiritual dimension in his framework, John cautions that there should not be any imposition of one's Christian faith to the client. Following this, John sets the dynamic between prayers and medicine on the understanding that "God is the

source of healing". Therefore those who are struggling with mental illness should continue to prayer while at the same time seek after medical/psychological treatment. This is a holistic framework.

The book's second chapter deals with the discerning between demon possession and schizophrenia. The suggestion he gives is to approach such cases with an open mind, without excluding either possibility. On one hand, symptoms of being possessed may be the result of delusional behaviour. On the other hand, behavioural disorder may be due to possession. Sometimes, it could be a combination of both. John helpfully suggests that a way to diagnose which is which is by investigating the client's history, including whether the person participated in demonic or occult activity in the past. "If things occult and temple are absent but emotional traumas, failures and disappointments in life have occurred, the more likely the disorders are due to mental illness."

The third chapter on mood disorder highlights the legitimacy for Christians to take antidepressant. Seeking therapy and medical course does not make a Christian less dependent on God as all healing comes from Him. John points out that mood disorders such as depression is caused by our body's dysfunction, very much like other physical illnesses. Therefore medicine can regulate the biochemical balance in the body. In some cases, those with clinical depression may have to depend on antidepressants their whole life. To John, "God may choose to heal miraculously in answer to faith and prayer", and if He so desires, "He also heals through medication and therapy".

In the same chapter, John shares about his own journey of going through clinical depression. For a long period of time during the depression, he felt unproductive and procrastinated a lot.

Due to the stress that weighed him down, at one point he considered suicide. It was through medication and an extended time of spiritual exercises such as prayer, reflection, and fasting that he managed to be healed from it.

The next chapter deals with anxiety disorder. John notes that "anxiety has a large cognitive component". As such, the spiritual resources in Christianity such as God's sovereignty and faithfulness in providing,

Thirty-Two Years in Sarawak

Mary Hoover's Journey in Sarawak



After the Boxer Rebellion in China, a Christian Chinese gentleman conceived the idea of taking poor, persecuted Chinese Christians to a new country, where they could worship God in peace, and earn a living more easily than in their own land. Accordingly Mr. Wong, for that was the gentleman's name, visited the South Seas, as the Chinese call the lands south of China. While in Singapore, he heard of the unique kingdom of Sarawak, ably and beneficently ruled by the white Rajah Brooke. Mr. Wong visited the Rajah who received him graciously. Not only was the Rajah willing to have a colony of agriculturists enter his country, but he even loaned the money to get them there.

A few months later, a thousand Foochow Chinese men, women and children, nearly all Christians, left their homeland and started for the South Seas. On the way over, the non-Christians were persuaded to throw their idols overboard, and there has never been an idol in the colony. While they were in Hongkong waiting for their boat, Bishop Warne of the Methodist Church was also in Hongkong on his way to the Philippines. When he heard of the Christian colony bound for Borneo, he cancelled his passage to the Philippines and went with them. One or two of the number understood and could speak some English; through them Bishop Warne was able to communicate with the people, and found that the great majority were members of the Methodist Church. He then organized a Quarterly Conference which included men who had been members of the Foochow Annual Conference. When Bishop Warne returned to Singapore he told the Methodists there about the Christian colony, and suggested that a missionary be sent to help them.

In those days, Sarawak was very much off the beaten track. From all accounts it was very evident that the missionary who went to Sibü would have to be willing and able to "rough it" for quite a while, and the Mission authorities were reluctant to appoint anyone to such a place. Moreover Malaya was understaffed, so

Sibü went without a missionary for the time being.

There was at this time a young missionary by the name of James M. Hoover, teaching in the Anglo-Chinese School, Penang (I was teaching in the same school). He had been on the field three and a half years and was unmarried. When Mr. Hoover heard of the need for a missionary for Sibü, he volunteered and was accepted.

When he arrived there in 1903, he found less than half the colony left. The people had met with all the difficulties encountered by any colony in a new country. They had died of various diseases, or drowned in the rivers, or got lost in the jungle. Those who were left were very dissatisfied and refused to work, saying that all they made was taken by the proprietor. This came to the ears of Rajah Brooke who arranged for the proprietor to leave the colony and the people were told that whatever they planted was their very own, absolutely tax-free. This put new life into them and they went to work with a will. Later the Rajah appointed Mr. Hoover Officer-in-Charge of Foochows.

The first year in Borneo was a busy one, but it was hard and lonely too; so after the Annual Conference in Singapore the next year, Mr. Hoover came on to Penang, where we were married in March 1904. I was then 21, and he was ten years older.

Our first home consisted of two rooms, each eleven feet square, in one end of a building with thatched roof and sides, that was used on week-days for a school, and on Sundays as a Church. The ground floor was a dormitory for 30 Chinese boys. Our bathroom was a little hut, built on two logs floating on the stream that flowed in front of the house. A hole was cut in the floor, and we dipped the water up and poured it over us. The water was beautifully clear and cool, but it was the color of strong tea. This was because it flowed down through the jungle over dead leaves and other vegetation. When put through a filter it lost the brown color, and was always boiled before we

drank it.

We lived in one of the Chinese settlements four miles from the town of Sibü. We seldom saw bread, so ate rice instead. Our food was all out of cans. The only fresh meat obtainable was chicken. Travel was all by water. At first we travelled in a rowboat, rowed by two men. Going with the tide was not too bad, but sometimes the tide would turn before we reached our destination.

The Foochow people were then living in five settlements, each having its own Church and school. Every week-end we would start out for one of these places, visit all the homes, and attend the Sunday morning service. During the week we both taught school at the settlement in which we lived.

Mr. Hoover used to devote much time attending to the material as well as the spiritual needs of the people, getting them new grants of land, and helping them in their dealings with the Government. He often said, "There are other ways of preaching the Gospel than with your mouth." During the years, friends in America presented us with a rice-mill, motor-launch, ice-machine and saw-mill. Machinery was Mr. Hoover's hobby and he, with the aid of a Chinese mechanic set up these various machines.

The year before Mr. Hoover died, the Rajah presented him with a long service medal, in recognition of his services in representing the Foochow people to the Government.

We spent 32 years in Borneo, and during that time we had four furloughs. Each time we were away the work was left in the hands of the Chinese preachers and teachers who carried on faithfully and well.

The following is an extract from my husband's last report to Conference in 1935:-

"To sum up. From that small band of 500 which was much reduced before it increased, there are now more than 10,000. The small clearing in the jungle is now more than 200,000 acres of cultivated land.

Five little chapels have developed into 46 appointments. A church membership of 300, is now over 3,000, with 900 adherents and more than 1,500 baptized children under twelve years of age. The school of 30 boys has grown into 38 schools with over 1,800 children of whom about 1,600 are Christians, and from a staff of two teachers, we now have 91, all of whom are Christians. Borneo's story is yet to be told, and we are glad to have had the privilege of writing a paragraph in the preface."

*By Mary Hoover
The Malaysia Message
March 1948*

Pioneering in Borneo

The other day they left Sarawak, not to return, one of those outstanding people who from time to time appear for some years and then leave us the poorer for their loss.

In February, 1935, the Reverend J.M. Hoover, "Jim" Hoover in this part of the world, died. The newspapers wrote fully of his life in Sarawak, stressing not only his piety but the practical side of his teaching. He was in Sarawak "worthy" and in all his work he was supported and encouraged by his wife.

Mary Hoover came to Sarawak as a bride in 1904 and went to live with her husband at the little leaf atap-roofed Mission near Sungei Merah at Sibu. Jim Hoover had arrived in March of the previous year, and now between them they started the activities of their Mission.

The progress of that Methodist Mission is now Sarawak history. Its churches, chapels and schools spread from Kapit to Sarikei, and members of that sect are to be found in all parts of the Third Division.

To Mary Hoover fell mostly the education of the girls, and it is true to say that now up and down the Rejang there are hundreds of Chinese women who remember with gratitude her loving teaching and kindness. To have attended her school in Sibu was a mark of distinction, and it was said that the ambition of many a young Chinese lad was to get one of her "old girls" as bride.

Mrs. Hoover was well qualified to be a mentor. She spoke Chinese fluently and I have never heard a European woman talk better Malay. She surprised us by her knowledge of Tamil and she could converse easily with any strolling Dayak. She was a strict disciplinarian but behind her sometimes formidable manner one could detect kindness and sympathy for all

who turned to her for help or advice.

It is surprising that she was not better known in other parts of the country, but her work was all done in or about Sibu and she was not a woman to court publicity. Jim Hoover himself was an Honorary Doctor of his University long before by chance we heard of it, and he was the only non-Government man who has had the Sarawak Long Service Decoration conferred upon him. Mary Hoover's reward is the affection of the people among whom she worked so long.

On the death of her husband in 1935 she left for Malaya where she did Missionary work. In 1946, however, in spite of her age she volunteered to come back to Sibu for a year in order to get matters going again after the war. It was evident that if anyone could do it she was that person. She has now completed her task and leaves us for good.

Mary Hoover deserves well of Sarawak. She is one of that sisterhood of noble women who put the welfare and interests of the women of Sarawak first in their earthly lives. Some of them come to my mind: Mother Helen, Miss Olger and Miss Cubitt who are dead; Miss Andrews, Mother Clare and Mother Bernadine who still continue their work.

From: Sarawak Gazette, September 1, 1947

Book Review

Continuation from page 12

caring, and loving His children can help to deal with anxiety. Yet, that also depends on whether is the person's anxiety caused by "cognitive, voluntary component" or "emotional, involuntary component". If it is the latter, then medication and therapy may be needed before the spiritual guidance is given. For this reason, counsellors and pastors need "wisdom and sensitivity to discern whether the presence of crisis, anxiety and stress mean it is not an appropriate time to inculcate a biblical worldview or it is an opportunity to learn experientially God's sovereignty and faithfulness".

Chapter five addresses the issue of addiction. John distinguishes between two types of addiction. The first type is addiction is with objects that are sinful such as obsession with pornography and drug abuse. These by themselves are "intrinsically sinful". The second type is addiction with objects that are not sinful such as alcohol, computer games, and Facebook. We can

consume or use them in moderation. In any case, the starting point to break an addiction is by confession and repentance. It is only through the power of Christ that one can be fully rehabilitated from these vices. I think John could discuss more on diagnosing the causes for addiction, which will help to pinpoint the cause of it in order to begin the healing process from there.

The last chapter is dedicated to discuss self-care as a way to avoid burnout. John differentiates burnout from stress where the former is characterised by disengagement and lethargic while the latter is over-engagement and anxiety disorder. Steps of prevention are recommended as burnout is often unnoticeable when it happens. These steps are self-education, participation in a support group, knowing our own limits, accepting our feelings, and confiding in others. The last of them is the best defence against burnout.

This book is not only instructional but also biographical. Besides sharing his thoughts and experience, John has included the personal story of others who have suffered from mental illness. I find that this combination of theory and stories enhances my understanding of the issues of and remedy for mental illness with more vividness. Whether we agree with his diagnosis and suggestions or not, we need to listen to his exhortation to remove the stigma of mental illness in the church. "There are clinically depressed brothers and sisters in our churches who are active in some form of ministry. Most are afraid to let others know about it for fear of rejection and being judged untrusting and lacking in faith when this is probably not so." It would be very unfortunate if Christians with mental illness do not find it safe even in their church to talk about these matters. Thanks to John for this short yet urgent reminder.

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