



The valley experience

Day [34]

Read: I kings 19: 1 – 9a

15/3/08

Saturday

When we are deeply involved in the service of the Lord, with much prayer and hard work, we see God's power displayed. Moving in the power of the Holy Spirit, we are amazed by what unfolds before us. But very often our mountain top experiences are followed by the challenges of the valley. Elijah challenged and ended

slaughtering 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah; the very next moment he was shaken by the threat of one single woman! Today's text helps us face such challenges that follow after the high points in our Christian life.

King Ahab reported to Jezebel how Elijah had killed all the prophets (v. 1).

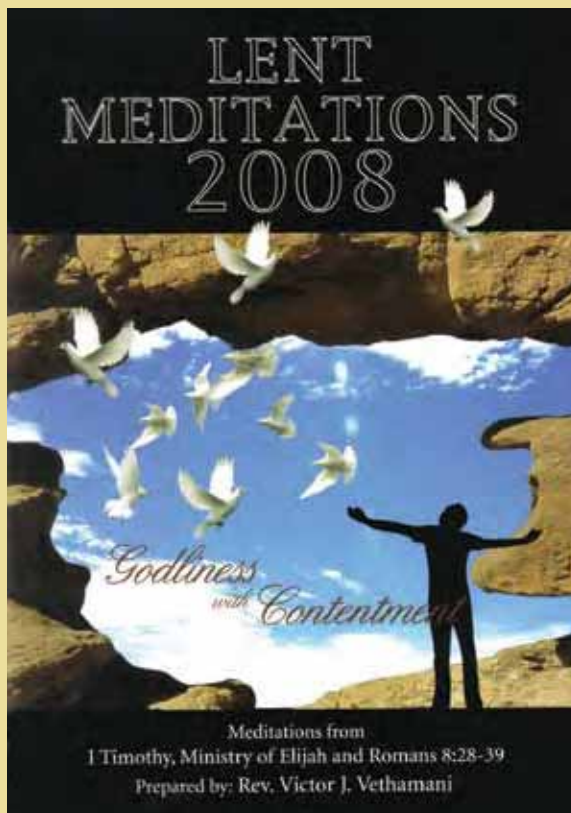
He did not see this as an act of God but that of Elijah! Jezebel was the daughter of the King of Sidon and she worshipped Baal (I Kings 16: 31). She immediately responded, "*May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.*" (v. 2) When this news reached Elijah, he feared (v. 3). Elijah **feared**, perhaps because in his tiredness, he took his eyes off God and only saw Jezebel; her threat was too much for him to handle. Our problems are never bigger than God. Fear sets in when we think they are.

When fear grips us, all that we can think of is to run away from the place of danger. Elijah **fled** because of his survival instinct (v. 3). He went away as far as possible and out of his agony and despair prayed that God would take his life (v.4). This whole experience was just too much for him and so he declared, "*I have had enough, LORD.*" Elijah's strength was sapped; he just fell asleep (v. 5). This was a low point in Elijah's life and he saw himself as being no different from his forefathers- a failure just like them (v.5). He just withdrew and wanted to be alone by himself.

God allowed Elijah to have the space and time to recover. Also, He gave him what he needed for the next task; He

>> continue on page 2

Lent Meditations 2008



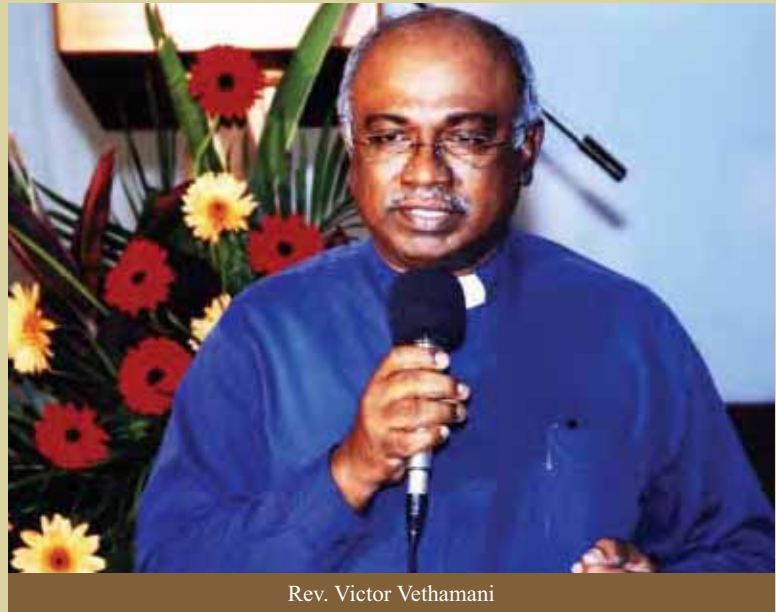
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fed him (v. 5b – 8). Elijah was tired even to eat but God sent His angel to ensure that he did. He needed to be strengthened for the long journey that was ahead of him. Though Elijah had won a big spiritual battle on Mount Carmel, yet that victory did not give him the courage to face Jezebel. But God had much more in store for him. He gave Elijah the rest and strength for the next task. We too need a break to rest, but only to help us face the next task.

Verse to reflect: “The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, ‘Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.’” (I Kings 19: 7).

PRAYER: Father, when I am discouraged, help me keep focused on you, so that I can gain strength to keep going on. Amen.

This is the eleventh publication of Lent meditations by Rev. Victor Vethamani. This year’s theme is “*Godliness with Contentment*”, based on Paul’s First Letter to Timothy, the ministry of Elijah (I Kings 17-21) and from Romans 8:28-39. Rev. Vethamani has taken early retirement after serving in the Tamil Annual Conference the past 26 years. He can be contacted at victor_vethamani@yahoo.com and 012-2051855.



Rev. Victor Vethamani

A black and white photograph of two children. The child in the foreground is wearing a striped shirt and is leaning against a wooden door. The child in the background is partially visible, looking towards the camera.

ECUMENICAL SERVICE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING
Remembering the Orang Asli of Malaysia
at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Jalan Utara Kechil, Petaling Jaya 7:30pm
30th January 2008 (Wednesday)
<http://ccmalaysia.org/>

The 100th anniversary of the
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

CHRISTIAN FEDERATION MALAYSIA

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What is Happening in our Annual Conferences?

February

1	Fri	TAC Executive Board (1)
9	Sat	TAC Board of Laity
13-24	Wed-Sun	TRAC Jeremiah School
18	Mon	Board of Presidents
19-20	Tue-Wed	General Conference Executive Board (1)
22-27	Fri-Wed	SPAC Pastors School
25-27	Mon-Wed	CAC Senior Citizens Retreat
27-28	Wed-Thu	SCAC Board of Ministry Meeting
27 Feb – 19 Mar		CAC Districts Evangelistic Music Events
28 Feb – 1 Mar		TRAC Christian Education Resource Workshop

March

3-6	Mon-Thu	SCAC Pastors School
6-9	Thu-Sun	TRAC Board of Youth Work, GB, BB Retreat
7-9	Fri-Sun	SIAC Team Ministry – Kapit District
11-13	Tue-Thu	CAC Isaiah School (part time students) – Old Testament Theology
13-16	Thu-Sun	TAC National MYF Convention
15-18	Sat-Tue	TRAC National Youth Prayer Retreat
24-31	Mon-Mon	TRAC National Youth Missions Trip
25-27	Tue-Thu	CAC, SCAC, SPAC District Superintendents Discussions (tentative)
25-28	Tue-Fri	TRAC MSF Annual Camp
29	Sat	TRAC Board of Christian Education Meeting
31 Mar – 2 April		CAC Isaiah School (part time students) – Spiritual Gifts and Church

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• Bishop Hwa Yung

What's Right with Methodism (4)? Perfect Love for God

In the previous article in this series, 'Holiness, the Defining Message of the Revival,' we looked at the centrality of holiness in Wesley's teachings. For him, the true goal of the Christian life is sanctification or holiness, even to the point of 'perfection' or 'perfect love.' But what does perfection or perfect love mean for Wesley and how do we attain it?

Wesley's doctrine has been the subject of intense debates because of his use of the word 'perfect.' It should therefore be stated right at the beginning that he himself clearly pointed that his doctrine is not one of 'sinless perfection' (cf. Albert C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley*, 1964, p.287), a state of absolute faultlessness and unimprovability, attainable in this life. Rather, as Albert Outler (1964, pp.31f) puts it, for Wesley, 'perfect love' is 'the conscious certainty, *in a present moment*, of the fullness of one's love for God and neighbor, as this love has been initiated and fulfilled by God's gifts of faith, hope and love "Perfection" is the fulfillment of faith's desire to love God above all else, *so far as conscious will and deliberate action are concerned*.'

In other words, Wesley's understanding of perfection is relative to our conscious will, and does not apply to that which is of our unconscious or subconscious. Further it relates only to the laws of God that we are aware of and not to God's laws in totality. Thus to have attained perfection does not mean that we are exempted from 'ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations' or 'involuntary transgressions' (cf. Outler 1964, pp.258, 287).

Henry Rack (*Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* 1992, p.399) has helpfully clarified this by noting that 'Wesley was only able to assert his paradoxical doctrine of a perfection

which is not perfect because he operated with two definitions of perfection, one attainable in this life and the other not; and this in turn depended on two definitions of sin.' Sin operates at two levels: at the conscious level, and at the unconscious and subconscious levels. In his definition of perfection or perfect love, Wesley is working with the first understanding of sin, as a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. Hence if you are not conscious of such a sin, then there exist no barriers between you and Christ. 'The perfection which he did not claim to be possible in this life was a condition in which one did not fall short in any way, consciously or unconsciously, of the perfect law of God' (p.399).

For Wesley, normally this gift of perfect love is given only at the point of death, when a person is brought to a position of utter seriousness because of the imminence of his meeting with God. But there is no reason why this cannot be attained before that time. It is just that Christians have not been encouraged to expect it now. Indeed to deny that we can attain to perfection in Wesley's sense is 'to imply that deliberate sin is inevitable and unavoidable—which would be to say that man was made to sin and that his sinful disposition is invincible' (Outler 1964, p.32). But that would contradict the Bible's teaching that the Holy Spirit can give us victory over the power of sin (e.g. Rom 8:1-17).

The logic of Wesley's understanding of sanctification is that perfection is not a permanent state, since it relates to our 'conscious will' in a 'moment of time.' If we consciously will to love God in one moment, we can consciously will not to love Him in another. Hence Wesley advised those who claimed to have attained perfection to guard against pride, over-enthusiasm in their spiritual claims,

indifference to God's laws, sins of omission, etc. (cf. Outler 1964, pp.298-305). In other words, if perfection can be attained, it can also be lost. Thus, even if one thinks that he or she has attained the state, one must further seek to grow in grace within that state. For, he writes, 'when ye have attained a measure of perfect love ... think not of resting there. That is impossible. You cannot stand still; you must either rise or fall' (*The Works of John Wesley*, 1872, Vol. 11, p.426). For Wesley there are no plateaus in the spiritual life—if you are not going upwards, then you are always in danger of falling downwards.

Is God's work of sanctification a gradual process or an instantaneous experience? Wesley's answer is given in his comparison of sanctification and death to sin to the act of dying itself. A person may be dying for some time, but he only dies at the moment of death. So is dying to sin. There is the gradual process of 'dying' which takes time. Then there is that moment of 'death' and 'in that instant he lives the full life of love' (cf. Outler 1964, p.294). He also writes: 'Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in some ... But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously ...' (p.282). In sum, Wesley taught a doctrine of sanctification which included both a gradual process and an instantaneous transformation in human lives.

Finally, how do we grow in holiness? Wesley's answer is that on the one hand sanctification comes through faith, and on the other through repentance, spiritual exercises and good works. He sometimes speaks of these as 'works of piety,' such as private prayers, public worship, Scripture reading and meditation, fasting, etc., and as 'works of mercy,' such as caring for the sick, suffering, hungry and needy, evangelism, pastoral oversight

for struggling Christians, instructing the ignorant (cf. Outler 1964, p.280). Thus growth in holiness is not purely and solely the result of God's gracious action. It requires human cooperation in the form of serious personal discipline and effort, and effective pastoral care.

For Wesley, sanctification was not just a theological doctrine, but one that must be lived. This he sought to impart into the lives of his followers in a variety of ways, the most important of which was the use of class and band meetings. The class meetings were in fact the cornerstone of the whole Methodist movement, the key means by which pastoral oversight was exercised and discipleship nurtured. Every member in good standing was expected to be regular at one of the classes meeting weekly.

Wesley described the function of the class meetings as follows: 'Any person determined to save his soul may be united (this is the only condition required) with them [the Methodists]. But this desire must be evidenced by three marks: Avoiding all known sin; doing good after his power; and attending all the ordinances of God. He is then placed in such a class as is convenient for him, where he spends about an hour in a week. And, the next quarter, if nothing is objected to him, he is admitted into the society: And therein he may continue as long as he continues to meet his brethren, and walks according to his profession' (*The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 7, p.209).

More matured followers were encouraged to join bands, the requirements for which were even more stringent. Wesley writes of them as follows: 'The design of our meeting is to obey that command of God, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (Jas. 5:16)' (cf. Outler 1964, p.180). He goes on to list five questions which were asked of every member at each meeting:

- i. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?
- ii. What temptations have you met with?
- iii. How were you delivered?
- iv. What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?
- v. Have you nothing you desire to keep secret?

This emphasis on small groups, with their built-in structures for mutual accountability and pastoral oversight, was the clearest expression of Wesley's pastoral concern for holiness. And as already noted in an earlier article, those who were not prepared to accept the discipline of the movement were required to leave.

'perfect love' is 'the conscious certainty, in a present moment, of the fullness of one's love for God and neighbor, as this love has been initiated and fulfilled by God's gifts of faith, hope and love.... "Perfection" is the fulfillment of faith's desire to love God above all else, so far as conscious will and deliberate action are concerned.'

Those who have struggled with helping Christians to grow into mature disciples today will immediately recognize the wisdom of Wesley's emphases. The church in Malaysia cannot be said to be one that has taken holy living seriously. Evidences are in such abundance that they hardly need to be listed. Part of the problem is that this is not an issue that is clearly taught from the pulpit, nor sufficiently modeled in the lives of the church leadership. That is something from which all of us need to repent and to which much more attention must be given. But there is now an even more insidious problem, which is that in some circles false teachings on salvation and sin are beginning to emerge.

The Christian faith has always recognized that we cannot save ourselves through good works because none of us is perfect. Thus we are saved by grace and grace alone. But does that mean that we can therefore sin as much as we like since Christ has died for us and our salvation is thereby assured? The apostle Paul answers precisely this question in Rom 6:15 when he wrote: 'Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!' Yet, in spite of such clear statements from the Bible, there are some teachings in the church today which encourage Christians to take precisely such an antinomian 'tidak apa' attitude towards sin!

A friend of mine was preaching in a certain church and emphasizing the need for

...how do we grow in holiness? Wesley's answer is that on the one hand sanctification comes through faith, and on the other through repentance, spiritual exercises and good works... Thus growth in holiness is not purely and solely the result of God's gracious action. It requires human cooperation in the form of serious personal discipline and effort, and effective pastoral care.

repentance in our lives. Suddenly a woman got up and walked out—she did not like what was being said! Later, he was told that this person was worshipping in a certain church in a neighbouring country where similar antinomian teachings abound. In another case, a pastor told me what one woman related to him in a counseling situation. The woman's husband had told her that, since we are not saved by our holiness but by grace, his salvation is assured even if he lives in sin. And since he is not satisfied with his marriage, he was leaving her for another who could properly meet his needs. Yet, if they had lived in the days of Wesley, he would have thrown both of them out of the church!

The point is this. Some of us may have difficulties with the precise manner in which Wesley formulated his doctrine of 'perfect love.' Nevertheless, it remains a powerful reminder to us that the most important commandment that we have is to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength' and to 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Mark 12:30f). May we learn to live likewise!

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4th Session Sabah Provisional Annual Conference

Officially formed in 2005, SPAC has 27 pastors and 11 lay preachers, with 20 churches and preaching centres. It has had a Bahasa Malaysia ministry among indigenous peoples for many years and have established a number of churches.

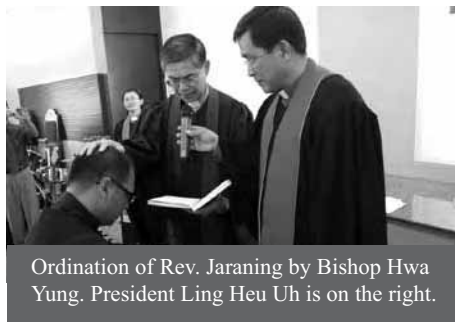
At this Annual Conference there was a first for SPAC as three indigenous pastors were ordained deacons. Altogether five deacons were ordained – Rev. Markus, Rev. Cecelia, Rev. Jaraning, Rev. Sia How Ding and Rev. Sia How Ling. A new District Superintendent



Bishop and President Ling with some of the newly ordained pastors and spouses.



Rev. Cecelia with her parents.



Ordination of Rev. Jaraning by Bishop Hwa Yung. President Ling Heu Uh is on the right.

for Indigenous People (BM) ministry was appointed, Rev. Han Ai Fah.

In his presidential speech, Rev. Ling Heu Uh pointed out the importance of living out our faith in this postmodern era. Christianity has become only secondary or even useless to many. People of this age want to experience their faith. They want something they can feel, see and touch.

Rev. Ling exhorted all pastors to seek wisdom from the Lord so that they can

minister to specific groups in social concerns, family ministry and children's world.

Looking to the future SPAC hopes to plant one church per year. Rev. Ling stressed that the Church is the light of society and where the people are there the churches should be too. For this strategies is needed in cooperation with God to plant churches as the nation develops.

Report from *Connection*

32nd Session Tamil Annual Conference

17-20 November 2007, Penang



Tamil Annual Conference group photo



Worship Service conducted by Bishop Hwa Yung and President Tevaraji.

About 180 delegates gathered at the Tanjong Bungah Beach Hotel for the 32nd Session of TAC. Special guests from the Methodist Church, Myanmar were present – Rev. Mary Daniel and Rev. Ruby Daniel.

After the official opening the Communion Service followed as was the normal pattern. With Rev. P. Tevaraji's Presidential address the Conference got underway

with the reports, discussions and elections that were the order of business of the meetings.

Some highlights of the Conference were the constitution of two new local churches – TMC Bercham and TMC Lahat Baru. And the ordination by Bishop Hwa Yung of three new Elders, four Deacons and six others as Approved Supply Pastors and Church Workers.

All in all, the 32nd Annual Conference was a good one. The organizing committee under the leadership of Rev. C. Jeyaraj is to be praised for an excellent job done. Out heartfelt thanks to them. The delegates left after lunch to meet again in Perak next year.

From the report by Rev. Elijah Bala

32nd Chinese Annual Conference

21-23 November 2007



第卅二届华人年议会于11月21至23日假花城芙蓉豪绅酒店顺利举行，约有324位教牧同工及堂会代表出席。除了华勇会督出席为大会主持开幕礼及议会，印尼耶加达卫理公会第二区章继年会督、印尼卫理公会会友领袖张和平弟兄及华人年议会特别委任的马来西亚神学院院长郭汉成博士也出席参加。

圣餐崇拜中，南部教区长江贞钦牧师在证道时指出，华人年议会在我国的历史不算久，但许多教会都有足够的人力和资源。因此，教会必须善用发展的空间，继续成长，使神的道兴旺起来，门徒的数目增多（徒6:1-6）。初期教会得以成长，因为教牧专心以祈祷和传道的事为首，教会里也有好名声、圣灵充满及知识充足的执事和领袖。现今教会的领导层若有策略和方向，有足够的透明度，肯定得到信徒的支持。江牧师说，教会虽然面对问题，但只要教牧和执事各尽其职，分工合作，问题便能解决，教会就能兴旺。

章继年会督在次日清晨祷告会分享信息时表示，神的儿女必须要有理想，就是成为合神心意的人。他引用旧约尼希米先知为例，指出合神心意的人要有事奉神及帮助人的负担（1:1-5）。另外，信徒的生命要有目标和方向，如尼希米清楚知道神要他做的事。信徒也要对神有信心，如尼希米先知宣告：“天上的神必然会使我们享通。”（2:20）

晚间是教牧同工追思崇拜，追念已故骆宽容牧师及陈瑞华牧师娘，其家属也受邀出席。骆宽容牧师的儿子骆奋兴弟兄及陈瑞华牧师的儿子陈仁忠医生当晚分

别分享骆牧师及陈牧师与牧师娘在世忠心事奉主、服事教会的经历及给予他们的教诲。骆牧师的胞弟骆和平弟兄也在其分享中见证骆牧师对主的信靠坚定不移。他们的见证不禁让众多的教牧同工及代表们感慨万千，也为他们劳苦向神献上感恩。

教牧同工方面，陈英武牧师今年升为长牧，杜奇贤传道则被接纳为副牧。叶建顺传道和詹友训传道分别被接纳成为年会试用会员。另外，今年有6位神学生自马来西亚神学院毕业，加入牧养教会的行列，包括罗艾琳、林志伟、叶秀苹、黄秀萍、潘佩茵、萧贞禄及魏美玉。周隆捷牧师今年修完台湾亚洲宣教神学研究院教牧学博士学位，而吴慧芬传道则自完成美国普灵顿神学院神学硕士学位归来后，受委担任马来西亚神学院部分时间讲师（注：08年成为全职讲师）。

宣教部于2007年7月份分别在缅甸南邦镇设立中心及在大其力开设布道所，并于今年委派吴启宁传道前往泰北宣教区协助，计划成立卫理公会。妇女会积极参与宣教事工，也计划在缅甸大其力购置一所聚会场所。资讯与出版部的《南钟》在2008年庆祝80周年，从2007年开始陆续出版8本南钟80丛书，并于今年8月份假曼绒教区宣道堂（南钟发源地）举行文字营及感恩庆典晚宴。《南钟》较后也将于10月份开始转为月刊。卫理大厦“整装待发”工程于今年一月份确认承包商，并定于今年3月1日开始动工，装修工程大约需要6至8个月完成。

按立牧职典礼第三日上午在芙蓉堂举行。华勇会督在分享信息时以提摩太

后书劝勉教牧同工及信徒要做神无愧的工人（2章15节），不差辱神的名，属灵生命更应该是品质保证（Quality Control）。此外，众人也要自洁，脱离卑贱的事，做贵重的器皿，成为圣洁，合乎主用（21节）。最后，众人要以纯洁的心求告主，逃避私欲，追求公义、信实、仁爱和平（22节）。

华勇会督在按职仪式上按立陈英武牧师为长牧，杜奇贤牧师为副牧。在宣读委任状仪式上，退休的南部教区长江贞钦牧师及届满的中部教区长饶家发牧师则分别将委任状名单移交新任的陈金发牧师和陈观凤牧师。

芙蓉卫理公会今年适逢设教106周年，因此受委协办本届年议会。另外，在年议会结束后，该堂会也于一间酒家举行设教《宣教106年—蕉风椰雨，主恩花城相随》庆典宴，宴开39席款待大会教牧同工、嘉宾及代表们。众人在主里团契交流，彼此关怀。散席前，芙蓉堂还赠送每人一个设教周年纪念杯留念，表示祝福众人蒙神恩典倾倒，福杯满溢。卅二届年议会也在一片温情洋溢的气氛中落幕。



Christmas Processions in Three Towns

Act One: Bintulu – 15/12/07



The joint Christmas Procession was held in the rain. About 2,700 Christians from the Iban and Chinese Methodist Church, Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, SIB and the Salvation Army participated in this grand occasion.

The believers were encouraged to pray for the political situation and social development, for families and the town's people while they walked round the town.

It ended at the town square where the Christmas concert was held. Praises filled the air in Chinese, Bahasa Malaysia and English and presentations of instrumental music, orang ulu dances and songs were given by the participating churches as the rain fell that night.

Act Two: Bintangor – 19/12/07



A large crowd from different denominations gathered for the Christmas Procession through the main streets of Bintangor. Participants walked in groups holding candles or crosses. There were floats, shepherds, angels, and even Santa Clauses riding on bicycles in the procession.

The Good News in three languages – Chinese, Iban and English were broadcast along the way. It ended in Kai Nguong Methodist Church.



From reports by Winnie
Connection 15 January 2008

Act Three: Kuching – 22/12/07



It was the first time in 100 years that a Christmas Procession was held in Kuching. More than 3,600 Methodists with others from Trinity Catholic Church joined in this historic event.

The procession had floats, bands and costumed characters that wound its way round the downtown area for about four kilometers distance. Crowds of passerby stopped and cheered.

Rev. Ting Diu Kiong, the District Superintendent of Kuching, said, "This is the first time in Kuching. We are hoping that more churches of other denominations will combine in the future."

A Golden Achievement for Church Choir

The 41 choir members (39 singers, the pianist and the conductor) of Faith Methodist Church Kuching took the Gold Level Assessment of Trinity Guildhall London College of Music. The examination was held on 11 December 2007 at the State Library in

Kuching. All the examinees received a distinction. It was a great joy for the choir and glory to God!

Winnie *Connection*
15 January 2008





Fifth TAC msf camp

They came by plane, chartered bus, stage-coach and train, not mentioning the one hour ferry ride from Kuala Perlis. These were the 153 MSF members from all parts of the country who attended the 5th MSF Camp at the Langkasuka Hotel, Pulau Langkawi from 26th to 28th October. This was the largest turnout at an MSF camp since it was formed.

TAC President, Rev. P. Tevaraji declared open the camp and expressed delight at

the growth of MSF in the number of branches and membership during the past year. He urged the MSF to be a blessing to others and be witnesses through "our lives and actions."

The inspirational speaker over the three days was Pastor S. Selvaraj, pastor of TMC Shah Alam. Pastor Selvaraj, a gifted, God's anointed speaker stirred the hearts and minds of the seniors with his messages on:

- Transformation of Power to Think.
- Transformation of Power to Feel and Decide.
- Transformation in Decision-making.

His messages inspired and encouraged the hearts of his listeners as he illustrated his talks with singing and slide presentations.

Talent-time which is a regular feature at every MSF Camp showcased the artistic and creative talents of the seniors. Solos, duets, group-singing interspersed with lively folk-dancing made the talent-time night something to remember. Kolatam (*synchronised baton-play*) by the acrobatic-inclined Ipoh Tamil Settlement ladies and the lively dancing to the rhythms of Christian music by the Klang Seniors were the highlights at the talent-time.

Rev. P. Tevaraji brought the Message on the final morning's worship service. This was followed by the Annual General Meeting where the entire committee was re-elected. Sadness could be seen written over the faces of most delegates as they wished one another *till we meet again next year*.

**தமிழ் மெத்தடிஸ்ட் திருச்சபை மலாக்கா போர்ட் டிஸ்ட்ரிக்டில்
மெத்தடிஸ்ட் சென்ட்ரலில் ஒரு நாள் திருச்சபை ஐக்கியம்**

ஆண்டவராகிய இயேசு கிறிஸ்துவின் நாமத்தினாலே வாழ்த்துகள்.

பெரியவர்களுக்கும் சிறுவர்களுக்கும் குழந்தைகளுக்கான நூற்பதங்கம் மெனசா அங்கத்தினர்கள் மெத்தடிஸ்ட் சென்ட்ரலில் கலந்து கொண்ட ஒரு நாள் திருச்சபை ஐக்கியம் உற்சாகமான ஒரு நாளாக தமிழ் மெத்தடிஸ்ட் திருச்சபை மலாக்கா மக்களுக்கு அமைந்தது.

மலாக்காவிலிருந்து ஒழுங்கு செய்யப்பட்டிருந்த பேரூத்தில் 8 மணி அளவில் பிற்பாட்டு 9.30 மணி அளவில் மெத்தடிஸ்ட் சென்ட்ரல் சென்று அமைந்தோம். தூய்மையானகாரினும், பல்வேறு போட்டிகளினும் பெரியவர்களுக்கும் சிறுவர்களுக்கும் உற்சாகத்தோடு கலந்து கொண்டனர். இந்த நாளான தேவனிடத்தில் ஒப்புக்கொடுத்து ஜெபத்தோடு தொடங்கி வைத்த நமது போதகர் அருட்திரு தங்கராஜ் அவர்களுக்கு நன்றி. மதிய உணவிற்கு பிறகு திருச்சபையினர் அருகில் உள்ள கடற்கரையில் உற்சாகமாக கழித்தனர். இந்த நாளிலே நமக்கு ஏற்பாடுகளை செய்த மெத்தடிஸ்ட் சென்ட்ரல் ஒருங்கிணைப்பாளர்களுக்கு நன்றி.

மாலை 6 மணி அளவில் திருப்பி வந்தாலும், அடுத்த ஆண்டில் திருச்சபையாக நூற்றாண்டு கொண்டாட்டங்களை அனுசரிக்கும் வேளையில் இன்னும் உற்சாகத்தடன் வருகிற திருச்சபை ஐக்கியத்தில் கலந்து கொள்ள திட்டமிட்டின்போம்.

இவ்வாறும் இவ்வேளையில் இதற்காக கடுமீ முயற்சி எடுத்தும் கொண்ட நமது திருச்சபை முதியோர் ஐக்கிய அங்கத்தினர்களுக்கு நன்றியை தெரிவித்துக்கொள்கிறோம்.

நாங்கள் எடுத்து வைக்கும் பாடகர்கள் எங்களுக்குமே ஜெபியுங்கள்.

கர்த்தவர்களுள்,
கொண்டேன். (சுவாமி மக்கள் தலைவர்)



From Berita TAC

GCYC Discusses New Youth Act



The Council members. Seated are Rev. Chan Thiam Hee and Ms. Jenny Qua

Members of the Council debated over the pros and cons of registering under the Act. A task force was formed to look into the MYF Constitution as amendments would be needed to fit the requirements of the Youth Act.

Elections were also held for the Secretary and Treasurer positions that fell vacant. Edwin Selvanesan Selladurai, TAC MYF President, was elected Secretary; Kevin Law Lee Loong, SCAC MYF President, was elected Treasurer. Rev. Chan Thiam Hee (CAC) remains the Chairman.

The GCYC has a representative in the Majlis Belia Malaysia (MBM) – brother A. Daniel. He encouraged the Conferences to send members to MBM programmes and events. Representatives were also appointed to attend the Majlis Belia Negeri at the state level.

The General Conference Youth Council met 8 January at the Methodist Headquarters to discuss

the new Government legislation that pertains to youth organizations – the Youth Act 668.

Methodist Schools in the News



Ministry of Education secretary-general Tan Sri Dr Dzulqarnain Awang (centre, back row) with University of New South Wales Australia education assessment director Prof Dr Peter Knapp (on Dzulqarnain's left) with the gold medal winners yesterday. (Inset) Tay Shao An Isaac.

The New Sunday Times (11 November 2007) had a report of two students from Methodist schools who were among the top award winners in the International Competitions and Assessment for Schools (ICAS) exams.

Tay Shao An Issac, 16, is the first Malaysian to win three gold medals in the exams. He attends SMK Methodist Boys School Kuala Lumpur and he won medals for Mathematics, Science and Computer Skills.

Tay attributed his achievement to paying attention in class and to his mother, a retired Mathematics teacher, who instilled a spirit of excellence in him. Tay's father, a pastor, said it was important to help children achieve their dreams.

Albert Ang Keliang, 11, comes from SK Methodist Boys School, Kuala Lumpur. He won the gold medal in his favourite subjects, Science, and Mathematics. Also a keen chess player, he will represent Malaysia in the chess competition of the Asean Pacific School Sports Olympiad in Jakarta.

The ICAS exams is a world class assessment programme associated with the University of New South Wales education assessment. It allows schools and students to assess their capabilities in various subjects, including English, according to its benchmark. Education Ministry secretary general Tan Sri Dzulqarnain Awang said the awards enabled Malaysian students to be benchmarked globally.

(This is based on the report in the *New Sunday Times* by Malina Jeya Palan)

Petitions to the 9th Session General Conference

The Methodist Church in Malaysia

The 9th Session of the General Conference of The Methodist Church in Malaysia will be held from September 15th to 20th, 2008 in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah.

Petitions to the General Conference for the revision of any provision in The Book of Discipline of The Methodist Church in Malaysia 2004 (hereinafter referred to as the "Methodist Discipline") may be made

by any organization, minister or lay member of the Methodist Church in accordance with Para. 507 of the Methodist Discipline.

The Petition Forms are available at all Annual Conference head offices or from the Methodist Headquarters at No. 69, Jalan 5/31, 46000 Petaling Jaya. (Email:gc@methodistchurch.org.my) Each petition should make reference to

the specific provision in the Methodist Discipline 2004. All petitions should be submitted in triplicate not later than July 16, 2008, to:

**The General Conference Secretary
Methodist Headquarters
69, Jalan 5/31
46000 Petaling Jaya
Selangor Darul Ehsan.**

Extract of para. 507 Of Methodist Discipline

Petitions to General Conference:

Any organization, minister, or lay member of The Methodist Church may petition The General Conference by sending to the secretary a signed petition addressed to the members of the General Conference stating the local church of which each petitioner is a member. Each petition shall meet the following requirements:

A. Three copies of it should be supplied to the General Conference secretary in

time to be received by him not later than sixty days before the opening day of the General Conference session, except that the sixty day rule shall not apply to the case of Annual Conferences which meet less than sixty days prior to the opening day of the General Conference.

B. It should deal with only one subject and should propose revisions within only one chapter of the Discipline.

C. If it is one of a series, each petition should be written on a separate sheet.

D. All petitions received in time shall be processed by the secretary in order that they may be received by the appropriate legislative committees at their first meeting.

Farewells in Year 2007



Last year we bade farewell to two staff from the Methodist HQ.

Ms Jasmine Selvamalar

Jasmine was the property officer in the Trustees Office. She joined the office at end 2005 and has moved on to a new job in the city.

Mr. S'ng Poay Seong

S'ng, as he is fondly known in the office, was the Bishop's driver from 2002. He joined us during Bishop Chio's term. He continues to be in the transportation service but is self-employed.

We wish both all the best and may God go with them.



CHRISTIAN FEDERATION OF MALAYSIA (PERSEKUTUAN KRISTIAN MALAYSIA)

PRESS STATEMENT

The right of non-muslims to use the word "allah" to speak of god

The Christian Federation of Malaysia expresses deep disappointment and regret with the statement of the Honorable Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Y.B. Datuk Dr. Abdullah Zin, as reported in the newspapers (The Star and The Sun) of 4th January 2008, that the Cabinet has decided against the use of the word "Allah" by non-Muslims in their worship and in their publications.

It is wrong to prohibit certain sections of the Malaysian public against the use of a particular word in their daily prayers or in their publications.

The word "Allah" is of ancient lineage originating from the Middle East and used

by both the non-Muslims and Muslims for centuries all over the world. The word "Allah" is a pre-Islamic word used by Arab Christians before Islam came into being. The Holy Quran itself admits that Jews, Christians and Muslims worship the one and same "Allah", (Surah 2:62, 2:133, repeated in Surah 5:69, and again in Surah 22:17).

Bahasa Malaysia, the language of all Malaysians, has incorporated the word "Allah" which denotes the One and Almighty God into the language. Therefore, we maintain and we have always told the Government that we have the right to use the word "Allah" whether in our Bahasa Malaysia publications or otherwise. We urge the

Government, in recognition of the universal heritage of religious terminology like "Allah" and others and in the context of Article 11 of the Federal Constitution, to recognize and uphold the rights of all Malaysians to the continued use of the word "Allah" and appropriate religious terminology without restrictions.

The restriction against the use of the word "Allah" by all Malaysians will put the country in a bad light in the international community.

Bishop Dr. Paul Tan Chee Ing., SJ
Chairman, Christian Federation of Malaysia
5th January 2008

Check It Out!

The Children's Bible Explorer Series

This is a locally produced multimedia teaching resource for children. Each volume comes with a 96-page full coloured book and an interactive CD for PC, attractively and professionally produced.

The package is suitable for self-learning for children seven years and above, and

learning with parents for those four years and above. The CD contains animated illustrations, photos, maps, interactive quizzes, discussions, and games to enhance and test learning. The voice-over audio tracks are by Colin Kirton and Juwita Suwito.

Three volumes have been produced – *Genesis Vol. 1 & 2*, and *Moses and the Exodus: Stories from Exodus to*

Deuteronomy. Written by a local, Peter Lim, these are comparable to anything produced overseas and well worth checking out. Suitable for your own children or as gifts and certainly good material for Sunday School.

More information is available at the website: www.pristine-world.com or email pristineworld@gmail.com

Promoted to Glory

Mr. Ngoi Ee Doong, principal of Methodist English School (Methodist High School) Sitiawan 1974 – 1987


was promoted to glory on 19 January 2008, aged 91 years.


He is survived by three sons and three daughters.

May he find eternal rest in Him!

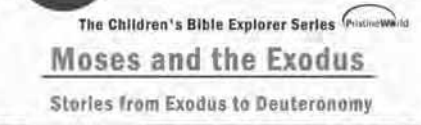
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Peter C. T. Lim

Written and Produced by:
Peter C. T. Lim
Voice-Over Leads:
Colin Kirton
Juwita Suwito

Editorial Advisors:
Rev. Dr. Herbert Tan
Pastor Christopher Choo
Mr. Tan Har-Yong

Ecumenical body appeals for prayers for Gaza churches

Maria Mackay

The head of the World Council of Churches (WCC) has appealed to its members around the world to demonstrate their solidarity with churches in Gaza through prayers and advocacy.

Trouble flared up in the region again on Wednesday when tens of thousands of Palestinians poured into Egypt from the Gaza Strip after a border wall was blown up by militants. From there, the crowds scrambled to Egyptian shops where they stocked up on food, fuel and other basic items in short supply as a result of an Israeli blockade.

In a letter issued on Wednesday, the General Secretary of the WCC, the Rev Dr Samuel Kobia, urged the ecumenical body's 347 member churches worldwide to pray for an end to the suffering in Gaza, which has come under increasing scrutiny in the international media.

Dr Kobia also pressed WCC member churches to speak up on behalf of people in Gaza to their national governments.

"Address your parishes, the public, your governments and the embassies, calling for an end to the siege, an end to their

collective punishments and a negotiated ceasefire," wrote Dr Kobia.

He suggested that WCC members demonstrate their solidarity with churches in Palestine by writing to them with messages of comfort or by supporting local churches and church-related agencies like Action by Churches Together that are working on the ground to care for the most vulnerable.

WCC member church heads in Jerusalem and the Holy Land issued a statement on Tuesday in which they called on the international community and the state of Israel to end the blockade, which has left hundreds of thousands without electricity and hampered the delivery of medicine, fuel, food and other vital goods into Gaza.

"This is illegal collective punishment, an immoral act in violation of the basic human and natural laws as well as International Law," read the statement. "It cannot be tolerated anymore. The siege over Gaza should end now."

The church leaders appealed to the Palestinian leadership to "overcome their differences for the sake of their people in Gaza".

"Put the differences aside and deal with this crisis for the good of all human beings demonstrating that you care for your brothers and sisters who have suffered enough already," they wrote.

"We would say to all concerned parties; while ever you persist in firing rockets into Israel you encourage public opinion outside this land to feel there is a justification for this siege."

They urged Israel, meanwhile, to "act responsibly" and "immediately end this inhuman siege".

"This siege will not guarantee the end to rocket firing, but will only increase the bitterness and suffering and invite more revenge, while the innocents keep dying," they said. "True peace building is the only way to bring the desired security.

"We pray for the day when the people of Gaza will be free from occupation, from political differences, from violence and from despair.

"We pray for the Israelis and Palestinians to respect human life and God's love for every human life, and to take all possible measures to end this suffering.

"Only bold steps towards just peace and ending the violence will protect the human life and dignity of both people."

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The Methodist Church in Malaysia Calendar 2008

January

3 Jan – 4 Feb		TRAC Jeremiah School
4-5	Fri-Sat	TAC MMM Planning Retreat
8 Jan – 13 April		CAC Isaiah School – Full time students
10	Thu	TRAC Board of Ministry Meeting
11	Fri	TAC District Superintendents Meeting
11-12	Fri-Sat	SCAC Fellowship Groups Gathering
11-13	Fri-Sun	TRAC Executive Board Retreat
12	Sat	TAC Board of Evangelism Meeting
13	Sun	TAC MW Fasting & Prayer
14-16	Mon-Wed	SPAC Meeting of Conference Boards
15-18	Tue-Fri	SCAC Healthy Church Growth Seminar
18-20	Fri-Sun	TRAC School for Intercessors # 5
22	Tue	TAC All Night Prayer
31	Thu	TAC DS/Board of Ministry/ Board of Finance

February

1	Fri	TAC Executive Board (1)
9	Sat	TAC Board of Laity
13-24	Wed-Sun	TRAC Jeremiah School
18	Mon	Board of Presidents
19-20	Tue-Wed	General Conference Executive Board (1)
22-27	Fri-Wed	SPAC Pastors School
25-27	Mon-Wed	CAC Senior Citizens Retreat
27-28	Wed-Thu	SCAC Board of Ministry Meeting
27 Feb – 19 Mar		CAC Districts Evangelistic Music Events
28 Feb – 1 Mar		TRAC Christian Education Resource Workshop

March

3-6	Mon-Thu	SCAC Pastors School
6-9	Thu-Sun	TRAC Board of Youth Work, GB, BB Retreat
7-9	Fri-Sun	SIAC Team Ministry – Kapit District
11-13	Tue-Thu	CAC Isaiah School (part time students) – Old Testament Theology
13-16	Thu-Sun	TAC National MYF Convention
15-18	Sat-Tue	TRAC National Youth Prayer Retreat
24-31	Mon-Mon	TRAC National Youth Missions Trip
25-27	Tue-Thu	CAC, SCAC, SPAC District Superintendents Discussions (tentative)
25-28	Tue-Fri	TRAC MSF Annual Camp
29	Sat	TRAC Board of Christian Education Meeting
31 Mar – 2 April		CAC Isaiah School (part time students) – Spiritual Gifts and Church Growth

April

4-5	Fri-Sat	CAC Laity Conference
6-12	Sun-Sat	CAC Trip to China
9-14	Wed-Mon	TRAC Pastors / Diaconal Ministers School
10-12	Thu-Sat	SIAC Pastors School
12	Sat	TAC Malaysian Missionary Movement Board Meeting
13	Sun	CAC Isaiah School 10th Anniversary & Convocation
17	Thu	TAC DS / Board of Ministry / Board of Finance
18	Fri	TAC Executive Board Meeting (II)
18-20	Fri-Sun	SIAC Team Ministry – Sarikei District
21-23	Mon-Wed	SPAC Meeting of Conference Boards
24	Thu	SPAC Sabah Methodist Church 25th Anniversary Celebration
25-26	Fri-Sat	SPAC Laity Seminar
26-27	Sat-Sun	SIAC Sibul District Lay Seminar

May

1-3	Thu-Sat	TAC Prayer Convention
2-4	Fri-Sun	SIAC Team Ministry – Sibul District
6-8	Tue-Thu	TRAC President / DSs Retreat
24	Sat	SIAC Sarikei District Lay Seminar
24-26	Sat-Mon	TAC Methodist Women Annual Conference
26-28	Mon-Wed	CAC Kindergarten Teachers Training
25-27	Sun-Tue	GC Youth Conference
28-30	Wed-Fri	TAC Pastors School
29-31	Thu-Sat	SPAC Youth Convention
31	Sat	TAC Tamil Settlement 100 Years Celebration

June

2-6	Mon-Fri	SCAC World Association of Chinese Church Music Training
6-9	Fri-Mon	CAC - World United Methodist Youth Conference
8	Sun	CAC Sunday School Teachers Training
5-9	Tue-Sat	World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches Youth Convention
6-8	Fri-Sun	TAC Local Preachers Training Institute TRAC School for Intercessors Trainers & Prophetic Songs Retreat
8	Sun	Methodist Education Foundation Sunday
12-13	Thu-Fri	TRAC Board of Ministry Retreat
14	Sat	TRAC Executive Board Meeting
15-21	Sun-Sat	TAC Christian Home and Family Week
20-21	Fri-Sat	TRAC Christian Education Resource Workshop
21-22	Sat-Sun	SIAC Bintulu District Lay Seminar
24-26	Tue-Thu	Asian Methodist Council Assembly – Johor Baru
28	Sat	TRAC Board of Youth Work Meeting

July

4-7	Fri-Mon	TRAC School for Intercessors (Cycle 2) # 1
5	Sat	TAC Malaysian Missionary Movement Board Meeting
10	Thu	Council of Presidents Meeting
11-12	Fri-Sat	General Conference Executive Board (2)
17	Thu	TAC DS / Board of Ministry / Board of Finance
18	Fri	TAC Executive Board Meeting (III)
18-20	Fri-Sun	TRAC Missions Consultation
19	Sat	TAC Board of Evangelism Meeting
27	Sun	TAC TMC Malacca 100 Years Celebration

August

8-10	Fri-Sun	9th Session GC Methodist Women
8-10	Fri-Sun	TAC 33rd Session Methodist Women
9	Sat	SCAC Celebration of 40 Years as autonomous Methodist Church
15-21	Mon-Thu	SCAC Training on Christian Listening
18-21	Mon-Thu	SCAC Emmaus Walk (in English for men)
20-23	Wed-Sat	CAC Southern Bell 80th Anniversary and Literature Camp
25-31	Mon-Sat	TAC MW Week of Prayer and Self-Denial
29 Aug – 1 Sept		TAC MYAF Camp
30 Aug – 1 Sept		SPAC MW 3rd Annual Meeting
31 Aug – 2 Sept		CAC Youth Camp

September

1-4	Mon-Thu	SCAC Emmaus Walk (in Chinese for men)
8-11	Mon-Thu	SCAC Emmaus Walk (in English for women)
13	Sat	TAC Malaysian Missionary Movement Celebration
15-20	Mon-Sat	9th General Conference Session
25	Thu	TRAC Board of Ministry Meeting
26-28	Fri-Sun	TRAC Joint Boards / Executive Board Meeting

October

4	Sat	TAC MMM Board Meeting
6-8	Mon-Wed	SPAC Meeting of Conference Boards
10-12	Fri-Sun	TAC Methodist Seniors Fellowship Camp
13-16	Mon-Thu	SCAC Emmaus Walk (in Chinese for women)
18	Sat	SPAC East District Meeting
23	Thu	AC DS / Board of Ministry / Board of Finance
24	Fri	TAC Executive Board Meeting (IV)
25	Sat	SPAC West District Meeting
31 Oct – 2 Nov		TRAC School for Intercessors Trainers Retreat

November

1	Sat	TAC Board of Laity Meeting
4-6	Tue-Thu	Sengoi Mission Conference
6	Thu	SPAC Ministerial Members Meeting
7-8	Fri-Sat	5th Session Sabah Provisional Annual Conference
10-13	Mon-Thu	33rd Session Chinese Annual Conference
14-17	Fri-Mon	33rd Session Tamil Annual Conference
18-21	Tue-Fri	33rd Session Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference
20-21	Thu-Fri	TRAC Board of Ministry & Pre-Ministerial Session
22-25	Sat-Tue	33rd Session Trinity Annual Conference
26-27	Wed-Thu	SIAC Pastors and Lay Seminar
27-30	Thu-Sun	33rd Session Sarawak Iban Annual Conference

December

9-14	Tue-Sun	TRAC Youth Leadership Development Programme
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Isuru R Sirisinghe	Monash University Malaysia	Medicine
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Meera Chandrasekhar	Asian Institute of Medicine, Science & Technology	Medicine
Parvin B Devan	Cyberjaya University College	Medicine
Koh Pang Ezen	International Medical University (IMU)	Pharmacy
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