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Reconciliation

Can the Christians of this nation take the initiative to bring about reconciliation in our country through truth telling, forgiveness and costly love?

BY BISHOP HWA YUNG



Moment



Topping Up Service

Praise be to God! We thank God for having guided the church thus far in the redevelopment of The Port Dickson Methodist Centre (PDMC). It was just about a year and a few days since the ground-breaking on the same land set apart for the building of a training, retreat and camp site known as the PDMC, back in July 2011. The topping up service is held for putting up the cross on the roof top of an open air chapel, Pavilion.

Bishop Hwa Yung accompanied by Daniel

Lim, the Chairman of PDMC Task Force and Rev. Paul Christie, pastor in charge of Wesley Methodist Church Seremban hosted the ceremony.

The ceremony began with singing of hymns at the dining hall. Around 60 people came. This included Rev. Philip Siew (Nilai CMC), Rev. Ng Kok Soon (Port Dickson CMC), Pastor Ronald Yap (Seremban WMC) and members from the churches nearby to witness the ceremony.

A tractor was used at the Pavilion to lift

bishop to the rooftop. Then he said a prayer and put the cross.

The centre with 6 blocks of hostels is able to accommodate 460 people. The choices of rooms are Studio Units, Twin Rooms and 6-bedded dormitory. Each room is attached with a toilet. The dormitory rooms have two toilets each. The centre also offers rental for conference halls and catering. The construction work is now 50% completed and projected to be fully operational on beginning of 2013.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LIM CHENG HIN

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UMS September Intake Students

Wesley Methodist Chapel, Kingfisher, Kota Kinabalu, is ministering to students coming over from West and East Malaysia to study in UMS (University Malaysia Sabah).

This September is the new intake of UMS and we wish to provide

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Malaysia National Prayer Network

BELOVED (like Christ in His compassion)

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”; “The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!” Jesus stopped and called them. “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. “Lord,” they answered, “we want our sight.” Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.” (Matt 9:36, 20:31-34)



Pray that

- | For the divine compassion to dwell within us, inspiring and ruling all our sentiments and motives.
- | The Father’s will may be to us what it was to our Lord, reaching out to others in compassionate love.
- | We may be the vessel that is filled with God’s love, always ready to be instrument of divine compassion, that we may be a living fountain of compassion toward others.
- | Our spiritual leaders for protection.
- | We continue to lift up our brothers and sisters who face injustice and suffer for the name of Christ: for patient and overcoming faith to withstand difficulties, unity among various evangelical groups, be encouraged and continue to share the Good News despite the restrictions.

Continue to Pray

- | For wisdom and courage for the *rakyat* to “elect a government that will ensure justice with equity and the wellbeing of the nation”, be good and responsible citizens.
- | For “a nation free of corruption, members in state and public institutions to conduct themselves with integrity, transparency and accountability”.
- | For a PM of good judgment who gives stability to the nation
- | For reduced crime rate, and a home minister who prioritizes security and a safe environment for the *rakyat*.
- | For those who continue to spread racism and religious bigotry to be silenced.
- | The *raykat*: to be touched by divine compassion.

Special

The Christian and Nation Building

Michael Cassidy, Bishop Hwa Yung, Eugene Yapp Spoke on the General Conference Laity Conference 2012



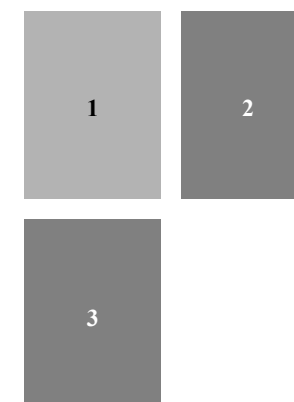
The Christian and Nation Building

The General Conference Laity Conference organized the Methodist Laity Conference on the 20th and 21st of July 2012. The theme of the conference was “The Christian & Nation Building”. It was attended by about 180 Methodist from all the conferences in Malaysia. We had the privilege of having Bishop Hwa Yung, Dr. Michael Cassidy and Eugene Yapp from NECF as plenary speakers at the conference.

Bishop Hwa Yung as quoted from the program booklet states that “Just as ‘Man does not live by bread alone’, a nation like ours cannot be built by political process alone! The process of building a nation which is strong, economically vibrant, just and free, righteous and not rife with dishonesty and corruption and in which all are equal irrespective of race, religion or creed is a long and difficult road.” This conference was organized to address some of these issues and help the participants to know how best to live responsibly and faithfully as Christian citizens of this land.



Speakers



1. Michael Cassidy, South Africa | He spoke on “The Role Of The Church In Nation Building” and on a public seminar “Prayer & Reconciliation In The S. African Context, 1994 & Before”.

2. Bishop Hwa Yung | He spoke on “Challenge to The Church Posed by Our National Context” and “The Way Forward” in the closing plenary.

3. Eugene Yapp, NECF | He spoke on the “Islamization In History And Its Implications for Malaysia”



Group Photos

1

1. Group Photo | Speakers and participants of the conference.

2

3

2. Organizing Committee and Speakers | From front left, Bishop Hwa Yung, Mrs Cassidy, Michael Cassidy, Eugene Yapp, Hii Ching Chiong (Council of Laity Chairman), Jenny Qua; Second row from left, Dr. Sam Ong (TRAC Lay Leader), Rev. Steward Damat (President of SIAC), Rev. Ling Heu Uh (President of SPAC), Rev C. Jayaraj (President of TAC), Rev. Boh Chee Suan (President of CAC), Rev. Ong Hwai Teik (President of TRAC), Clarence James (Council of Laity Secretary), Richard Lim (CAC Lay Leader), Last row from left, Anthony Row (General Conference Secretary), Dr. Yao Sik Chi (SCAC Lay Leader), Jonathan Ugek (SIAC) and Wong Hai Yew (SPAC Lay Leader)

3. Opening Prayer | Committees from the Council of Laity bow their heads while listening to prayer led by Dr. Sam Ong.



Hundreds Gather To Pray For The Nation

Chinese Annual Conference Hosted Prayer Convention 2012 at Makhota Hotel, Melaka

BY CHUA EE CHIEN

On 12 to 14 July, a total of 700 Christians from all over Malaysia gathered together in Century Mahkota Hotel, Melaka to pray for the nation at the yearly nationwide Methodist Chinese Annual Conference (CAC) Prayer Conference. This year's theme was "The power of prayer – renewal and transformation in the country, home and church."

In the opening ceremony, President of The Methodist Chinese Annual Conference (CAC), Reverend Boh Che Suan talked about the biblical concept of Christians being called to be watchmen in the family, church and society - with references to the lives of Job and Nehemiah who watched over and prayed for their families and country.

Over the two days, special guest speaker-

Dr Michael Cassidy from African Enterprise shared his powerful testimony on how prayer transformed the nation of Africa. Dr Michael Cassidy is the founder of African Enterprise, a mission organisation in Africa and he has spent 50 years doing evangelistic works in Africa, seeing thousands come to know Christ.

Focusing on transformation, Dr Michael Cassidy's message emphasized the importance of renewal of self by having a regular devotional life. He mentioned that it was only when one was renewed in his private quiet time can revival take place in the church and the nation.

Another keynote speaker at the conference, Bishop Hwa Yung from the Methodist Church Malaysia delivered an insightful message regarding John Wesley and his life on prayer and holy living. Making refer-

ences to the John Wesley's life, he shared with all participants how John Wesley took prayer seriously since the age of 21 and how he subsequently influenced tens of thousands to pray. He also mentioned that the Wesleyan revival sustained for hundreds of years because of John Wesley's emphasis on prayer and revival.

During the conference, participants also had the opportunity to witness a special performance from a team from Taiwan and listen to many testimonies about mission work done in many other countries. Many participants testified that this prayer conference provided a time of renewal and strengthening of their faith in God. Many were encouraged to pray and fast for the nation after attending this conference. [Reported by Chua Ee Chien from Chinese Annual Conference]

Photograph provided by Chinese Annual Conference

Christians & Nation-Building (6): Reconciliation

by Bishop Hwa Yung



One of the major hindrances to nation-building throughout the world is that of ethnic or racial conflict, which is often complicated by religious and cultural factors. The 1990s alone saw violent ethnic conflicts in numerous places such as Bosnia, Chechnya, Rwanda, Sudan, India, and Myanmar. Elsewhere, in many other places, including in our own country, Malaysia, ethnic tensions continues to lie simmering beneath the surface, always waiting to erupt when sufficient pressure builds up.

The history of the 20th century shows all too clearly that this is not a problem that can be solved purely through modernisation or education or even Christianisation. To illustrate the point, beginning in early April until July in 1994, racial conflict led to the murder of an estimated 800,000 people in Rwanda. From the Christian perspective, the greatest tragedy of Rwanda was that more than 90% of the people were Christians, and the country had been at the centre of the East African Revival in the 1930s. Sadly, even some pastors and priests were implicated in the massacres!

The gospel calls us to 'strive for peace with everyone' (Heb 12: 14). More importantly, Paul reminds us that God 'through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation' (2 Cor 5: 18, 19). Careful study of the Bible will show that reconciliation lies at the heart of the gospel of salvation. We are first to be reconciled to God. Having been reconciled to God, we are called to live in unity with each other in the church. Following this, the church should then strive more and more to bring reconciliation into our deeply divided world. Christians forget too quickly that one of Christ's beatitudes in the Sermon of the Mount is, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God' (Mat 5: 9).

We cannot enter here into a detail discussion of how this can be done in practice. But the example of Christians in South Africa has much to teach us. When apartheid ended in 1994, many wondered how old scores would be settled with tens of thousands having been murdered or unjustly killed, and millions of lives

Can the Christians of this nation take the initiative to bring about reconciliation in our country through truth telling, forgiveness and costly love?

economically devastated and socially dislocated. Yet as a Christian, Nelson Mandela knew that without forgiveness and reconciliation, his country would have no

future. Thus upon his election as the new President, he invited his jailer to join him on the inauguration platform, as an example to the whole nation! He then set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission under the leadership of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Over the next two and half years, all those who came forward to confess publicly crimes against those on the opposing side of the political struggle at the Commission's hearings, and could demonstrate that the acts were politically motivated, received full pardons. Many rightly complained about the injustice of the whole exercise. Countless numbers had suffered terribly and unjustly over many decades. How can the nation just forgive and forget? But Mandela knew that the nation needed grace more than justice, and forgiveness more than revenge. As a result, healing and reconciliation followed, and South Africa has since become of a model of reconciliation for the whole world!

One of the key reasons for the success of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was the strong emphasis on truth-telling. Those who sought pardon for their wrong-doings had first to admit them in open court! Without that, there could be no real reconciliation.

It is helpful here to compare the responses of Germany and Japan to the horrible crimes of both nations during the Second World War. The records show that, over the years after the war ended, Germany repeatedly and openly admitted their national wrong-doings during the war. As far as possible, Germany compensated financially all the countries ravaged by their war efforts, with West Germany paying Israel US\$60 billion in particular. When the communist regimes finally fell in Eastern Europe, and East Germany was able to elect its first truly democratic Parliament in 1990, its first official act was to issue a public apology to the Jewish people for the Holocaust and the murder of 6 million Jews by Hitler and his fellow Nazis!

In contrast, sadly, Japan has always been foot-dragging whenever confronted with its war crimes during the Second World War. Sure, like Germany, it also paid out billions of dollars in war reparation to other nations. But to this day, there has never been a full and honest investigation into, and admission of guilt by the government for, many of the country's war crimes, including the Rape of Nanjing, where at least 300,000 people were killed in a mad orgy, and the issue of the 'comfort women' all over East Asia. Thus almost 70 years after the end of the war, Japan is still being regularly dogged by unresolved charges of

wrong-doing related to the Second World War! The point is this—without truth telling and honest admission of guilt, there can be no genuine reconciliation!

Could this be the biggest problem confronting our own country Malaysia? The issues are so emotive that rarely have we been able to look at them with real openness and honesty. Let cite just two examples. When the then Dr Mahathir (now 'Tun') wrote his book, *The Malay Dilemma*, in the late 1960s, there was a public outcry followed by his subsequent expulsion from UMNO! But as it is, Dr Mahathir was subsequently reinstated into the party and eventually became the Prime Minister. Again, in 2006, when ASLI published a report that bumiputras already own more than 30% of the country's corporate wealth, it was immediately slammed as being distorted and inaccurate. Among the reasons made by the government for charging the report with inaccuracy was that the report based the bumiputra holdings on market value of the shares, instead of the par value of the shares (i.e. as it was originally valued at when the companies were formed years ago) which is the more accurate measure. Any economist worth his salt will immediately tell you how silly that response is!

It is not my purpose to pursue the logic and the validity of both the above examples. But the point I am simply making is that Malaysians do not seem to be able to deal with these two issues, as well as numerous other related ones, reasonably and truthfully! Instead whenever things of such nature are brought forward, they are immediately labelled sensitive, or even seditious, with police reports against them following quickly in order to gain political mileage for some group or other.

I have no simple answers for this. But I would simply assert that I believe that it is precisely here that the church in our country must seek to take the initiative. What can we do to challenge the nation to take seriously the importance of truth telling? There are hundreds of difficult and painful issues that are regularly swept under the carpet in polite conversation and in public discourse. What can we do to get the country to talk about this openly and rationally, and get our facts right and clear? What can we do to encourage the task of admitting guilt, and forgiveness to another ethnic group for the wrongs they are perceived to have committed against us or others? And to what extent are we willing to listen to the charges that other communities have against us for the selfishness and wrongs of our own ethnic group? Can the Chris-

tians of this nation take the initiative to bring about reconciliation in our country through truth telling, forgiveness and costly love?

Allow me to end this essay with a short story, again taken from South Africa. The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is well-known. But less well-known, but no less critical to South Africa, was the work of some Christians whose efforts made the first democratic elections possible. Space does not allow the whole story to be told, but only its climactic moments at the end. But you can read the details in Michael Cassidy's book, *A Witness For Ever* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995).

After decades of apartheid rule, the country was preparing for free elections for the first time ever. Yet everything was not well, with racial tensions, having built up for centuries, finally ready to explode into a massive civil war! The three main political groups, the National Party, Inkatha Freedom Party and the African National Congress, representing the Afrikaans, the Zulus, and the majority of the blacks in the country respectively, could not agree to a formula for the transitional government. To find a way forward for reconciliation in the nation, two of the world's most highly respected negotiators were brought in, namely Henry Kissinger and Lord Carrington. But by 14 April, the negotiations had completely collapsed and the international advisors flown off. South Africa was on the verge of imploding, with thousands or even millions of lives at stake!

But some Christian leaders who had been working hard in the reconciliation process refused to give up. Instead, they called on the whole country to prayer. Then three days later the vital breakthrough came. Leaders from all three parties suddenly could agree on a carefully worked out formula, thus ensuring that a new unity government could be formed and a bloody civil war averted. All these happened in the VIP room of the King's Park Stadium, Durban, where 25,000 Christians were praying at the same time for national reconciliation at a Jesus Peace Rally! When news of the breakthrough was finally flashed throughout the world, the word that summed up headlines everywhere was MIRACLE! The church, through persistent believing prayer, had become God's instrument of a miraculous healing for a deeply divided nation. Meanwhile, not too far away in another part of Africa, around exactly the same time, a blood bath was taking place in Rwanda!

Living

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

Mission | Worship | Fellowship | Discipleship | Care & Concern



Myanmar Ministry

The Tamil Annual Conference has been conducting these two projects the Gift of Hope and The Vacation Bible Schools in Myanmar for the last five years

BY A.E. ASUDAS

Myanmar is a nation of many restrictions and control. It has been a ‘closed’ country for such a long time. But despite the restrictions, it is a land with many opportunities for the Gospel. As its doors are recently opening, we need to grab the opportunity to plant the seed of the Gospel.

One of our main aims in MMM TAC for the Myanmar Ministry is to nurture youths and children that they will eventually be a blessing to the nation and to raise up as a generation that would chart the future of the nation. This we hope to achieve through our being involved in the school education (Gift Of Hope) and sharing the Gospel of Jesus

Christ (Vocation Bible School Myanmar).

The Tamil Methodist Churches in Malaysia has risen to accept this challenge through their sponsorships and donations. We want to thank and praise God for all the TMC churches for their kindness and generosity. As for the Gift of Hope Project, we had to peg at RM150.00 per child (previously we were collecting RM120 per child). This is because the Myanmar currency ‘Kyat’ rose to almost 30% against the U.S. dollar. The school items such as uniforms, shoes, socks, bags and stationeries for the school children too became expensive. The cost of living in Myanmar is rising. But God is Good! He saw us through this difficult times. A special appreciation to our Singapore Partner-

the Emmanuel Tamil Annual Conference, The Methodist Church in Singapore who is our major contributor towards the Gift of Hope. May God Bless You. It is a joy to see the cheers and smiles on the faces of the children and their parents on receiving these gifts. It was the contribution of individuals and TMC churches that had brought the sunshine to these little children. The families are basically poor and the parents simply can not afford to send their children to schools. It our hope that our little contributions would eventually help to break the vicious cycle of their poverty.

We had Vacation Bible School in Myanmar from 3rd – 11th May 2012 in five different locations in South Myanmar. It



It has been very rewarding and we see the fruits of our labour increasing yearly

was attended by about 1000 children. The locations were Bayint Naung, Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology (MICT), Emmanuel Lutheran Church Yangon, Than Lin and Bego. The theme for this year’s VBS is “Jesus Is God” and the VBS materials were prepared by Mrs. Ruby Vilson of TMC Tamil Settlement. The children were

taught Bible stories, memory verses and handcrafts pertaining to the lessons learnt. At the end of the VBS, almost 95% of the children who were mainly non Christian accepted Jesus as their personal savior. Praise be to God. We were overwhelmed at such a response but it was actually the flow of the Holy Spirit like a river that brought the children to the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ. These born again children are then adopted by our Community Centers and local Myanmar Methodist Churches to be nurtured and groomed into discipleship. The donors and TMC churches have every reason to be proud because you have been part of the success story of the VBS. God will surely reward you for your kindness.

The Tamil Annual Conference has been conducting these two projects the Gift of Hope and The Vacation Bible Schools in Myanmar for the last five years. It has been very rewarding and we see the fruits of our labour increasing yearly. There is a great opportunity for the Gospel in Myanmar. We invite fellow Methodist Churches in Malaysia to be involved in this dynamic ministry. You are welcomed to participate, pray or

come into partnership with us. The harvest is plenty!

One of the greatest opportunities in Myanmar is to work among the poor and the down trodden. There is lack of employment, infrastructure, basic health care and sanitation, housing and education. But God is at work in Myanmar! May the Lord fulfill what He had purposed in His heart for the people of Myanmar in Myanmar. And this can only be done through You. [A.E. ASUDAS is a member of MMM from TAC]

மியன்மார் அதிகமான தடைகள் கட்டுபாடுகள் உள்ள ஒரு தேசம். நீண்ட காலமாக அது மூடப்பட்ட ஒரு நாடாக இருந்து வந்தது. இந்த நாட்டினில் அதிகமான கட்டுபாடுகள் இருந்தபோதிலும் சுவீசேஷத்திற்கு பல வாய்ப்புக்கள் உள்ளன. சமீபத்தில்தான் இந்த நாட்டின் கதவுகள் திறக்கப்பட்டன. இந்த வாய்ப்பை பயன்படுத்தி சுவீசேஷ விதையை பயிர் செய்வோம்.

நம்முடைய த.வ.மா. மியன்மார் அருட்பணி ஊழியத்தின் முக்கிய நோக்கம் என்னவென்றால் வாலிபர்களையும் சிறுபிள்ளைகளையும் பேணி வளர்த்து



நாளடைவில் அவர்கள் அந்த தேசத்திற்கே ஒரு ஆசீர்வாதமாக மாறவும் பிறகு தேசத்தின் எதிர்காலத்தை நிர்ணயம் செய்யும் ஒரு சந்ததியாக எழும்ப வேண்டும் என்பதுதான். இந்த நோக்கத்தை, பள்ளிக்கூட கல்வியில் (நம்பிக்கையின் பரிசு) கலந்து கொள்வதின் மூலம் மற்றும் இயேசு கிறிஸ்துவின் சுவீசேஷத்தை (மியன்மார் விடுமுறை வேதாகம பள்ளி) பகிர்ந்து கொள்வதின் மூலமாகவும் அடைய நம்பிக்கையாயிருக்கிறோம்.

தங்களுடைய ஆதரவினாலும் நன்கொடைகளாலும் மலேசிய தமிழ் மெதடிஸ்ட் திருச்சபைகள் இந்த சவாலை ஏற்றுக் கொள்ள முன்வந்துள்ளன. தமிழ் மெதடிஸ்ட் திருச்சபைகளின் கருணைக்கும் தாராள மனதுக்கும் கர்த்தருக்கு நன்றியையும் துதியும் செலுத்துகிறோம்.

“நம்பிக்கையின் பரிசு” செயல் திட்டத்திற்காக ஒரு பிள்ளைக்கு மலேசிய ரிங்கிட் தலா 150 என்று நிர்ணயத்திருக்கிறோம். முன்பு ஒரு பிள்ளைக்கு ரிங்கிட் 120 என சேகரிக்கப்பட்டது. ஏனெனில் மியன்மார் நாணயமான “கியட்” அமெரிக்கா நாணயத்திற்கு எதிராக ஏறக்குறைய 30மு உயர்ந்து விட்டது. இதனால் பள்ளி சீருடை, காலணிகள், காலுறைகள், புத்தகப் பை மற்றும் எழுதுவதற்குரிய பொருள்கள் எல்லாம் விலையேறிவிட்டன. விலைவாசியும் இந்த நாட்டில் அதிகரித்துக்கொண்டிருக்கிறது. ஆனால் தேவன் நல்லவர். மிகவும் கஷ்டமான சமயங்களிலும் நம்மை வழிநடத்தி வந்திருக்கிறார். நம்பிக்கையின் பரிசு திட்டத்திற்கு பெரும்பான்மை உதவி செய்த சிங்கப்பூர் பங்காளர்களான - இம்மானுவேல் தமிழ் வருடாந்திர மாநாடு, சிங்கப்பூர் மெதடிஸ்ட் திருச்சபைக்கு விசேஷமாக பாராட்டுக்களைத் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்ளுகிறோம். தேவன் தாமே உங்களை அசீர்வதிப்பாராக. சிறுபிள்ளைகளும் பெற்றோர்களும்

இந்த பரிசுகளை பெறும்போது அவர்கள் முகத்தில் காணப்பட்ட உற்சாகத்தையும் சிரிப்பையும் பார்க்கும் போது மகிழ்ச்சியாய் இருந்தது. தமிழ் மெதடிஸ்ட் திருச்சபைகளும் தனிப்பட்ட நபர்களும் கொடுத்த நன்கொடைகள் இந்த சிறுபிள்ளைகள் வாழ்க்கையில் ஒரு வெளிச்சத்தைக் கொண்டுவந்துள்ளன.

இங்குள்ள குடும்பங்கள் பரம ஏழைகளாக இருக்கிறபடியால் பெற்றோர்கள் தங்கள் பிள்ளைகளைப் பள்ளிக்கூடம் அனுப்ப வசதி இல்லாதவர்களாக இருக்கிறார்கள். நம்முடைய நன்கொடைகள் நாளடைவில் அவர்களின் ஏழ்மையின் கொடுரத்தை உடைக்கும் என்ற நம்பிக்கை எங்களுக்கு உண்டு.

3-11ம் தேதி மே மாதம் 2012-ல் தென் மியன்மாரில் ஐந்து வெவ்வேறு இடங்களில் விடுமுறை வேதாகம பள்ளிகளை நடத்தினோம். அந்த ஐந்து இடங்களின் பெயர்கள் பின் வருமாறு: பேயின்ட் நவுங், மியன்மார் கிறிஸ்தவ இறையியல் கல்லூரி, இம்மானுவேல் லூத்தரன் திருச்சபையாங்கோன், தான் லின் மற்றும் பெகோ ஆகியவை. இவ்வருடத்தின் விடுமுறை வேதாகம பள்ளியின் கருப்பொருள் “இயேசுவே தேவன்” என்பதாகும். த.மெ.தி. தமிழ் செட்டல்மெண்ட் சபையை சேர்ந்த திருமதி ருபி வில்சன் பள்ளி பாடங்களை தயாரித்திருந்தார். பிள்ளைகளுக்கு வேதத்திலிருந்து கதைகள், மனப்பாட வசனங்கள், படித்த பாடங்களிருந்து கைவரினை பொருட்கள் செய்வது போன்றவை சொல்லித்தரப்பட்டன. பள்ளியின் இறுதியில் 95மு பிள்ளைகள் இயேசுவை சொந்த இரட்சகராக ஏற்றுக்கொண்டனர். இவர்களில் பெரும்பாலான பிள்ளைகள் கிறிஸ்தவர் அல்லாதவர்கள். கர்த்தருக்கு ஸ்தோத்திரம். இவ்வளவு பெரிய மறுமொழியை பார்த்து நாங்கள் மலைத்துப் போய் விட்டோம். ஆனால் பரிசுத்த ஆவியின் அநுக்கிரகம்தான் ஒரு நதியை போல பிள்ளைகளை இயேசுவினிடத்தில் கொண்டு வந்தது. இயேசுவை சொந்த

இரட்சகராக ஏற்றுக்கொண்ட பிள்ளைகளை நமது சமுதாய மையமும், ஸ்தல மியன்மார் மெதடிஸ்ட் திருச்சபைகளும் சுவீகாரமாக எடுத்துக் கொள்ளப்பட்டு சீஷத்துவத்திற்குள் போஷித்து, பேணி வளர்க்கப்படுவார்கள்.

தமிழ் மெதடிஸ்ட் திருச்சபைகளும் நன்கொடையாளர்ளுமாகிய நீங்கள் இந்த விடுமுறை வேதாகம பள்ளியின் வெற்றிக்கு ஒரு அங்கமாக இருக்கிறீர்கள். உங்கள் கரிசனைக்காக ஆண்டவர் உங்களுக்கு வெகுவாக அளிப்பாராக. கடந்த ஐந்து வருடங்களாக நம்பிக்கையின் பரிசு மற்றும் விடுமுறை வேதாகமப் பள்ளி ஆகிய இரண்டு திட்டங்களையும் தமிழ் வருடாந்திர மாநாடு மியன்மாரில் நடத்தி வருகிறது. இது மிகவும் பயனளிக்கக்கூடியதாகக் உள்ளது. ஆண்டுதோறும் இவ்வழியத்தின் பலன் அதிகரித்துக் கொண்டு போகிறதைக் காண்கிறோம். மியன்மாரில் சுவீசேஷத்திற்கான வாய்ப்பு மிகவும் அதிகமாக இருக்கிறது. மலேசியாவிலுள்ள சக மெதடிஸ்ட் திருச்சபைகளையும் இந்த உற்சாகமான ஊழியத்திற்கு வரவேற்கின்றோம். எங்களோடு கூட இணைந்து ஜெபிக்கவும், பங்காளர்களாக செயல்படவும் உங்களை அன்புடன் வரவேற்கின்றோம். அறுவடையோ மிகுதி.

மியன்மாரில் ஏழைகள், ஒதுக்கப்பட்டவர்கள் மத்தியில் ஊழியம் செய்வதை பெரியதொரு வாய்ப்புகளில் ஒன்றாக கருதுகிறோம். அங்கே வேலையில்லா திண்டாட்டம், அடிப்படை போக்குவரத்து மற்றும் மின்சார வசதிகள், அடிப்படை மருத்துவ வசதிகள், சுகாதார வசதிகள், குடியிருப்பு மற்றும் கல்வி வசதிகள் மிகவும் குறைவாக இருக்கின்றன. ஆனாலும் காத்தர் மியன்மாரில் கிரியை செய்து வருகிறார். மியன்மாரிலுள்ள மக்களுக்காக தேவன் தமது உள்ளத்திலே தீர்மானித்ததை உங்கள் மூலமாக செய்து முடிப்பாராக. ஆமென்

Features

Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference

Feeding a Penan Child

The formation and development of unique cultural traditions and characteristics of every ethnic group are influenced by the natural environment and social conditions in their native land

BY Dr Wong Sung Ging



As I recall my mission trip to the Penans in Ulu Belaga about two years ago, my most meaningful experience was feeding a Penan child. A team of 13 members from Bintulu Emmanuel Methodist Church and Limbang Methodist Church ministered to the communities in three Penan longhouses.

Besides medical services and health talks, we also reached out to them through children ministry, Jesus movie, prayer, haircut and motivation to grow vegetables. Our greatest joy was the opportunity to share our food with the Penan children.

You Have to Meet Them in Their Place

You must have heard about the plights of the Penans from the newspapers, reports from our missionaries and the testimonies from various mission group members. However, you may not perceive a good picture unless you meet or interact with them personally. Staying one or two nights with them would give you a chance to see with your own eyes how they live their lives one day at a time.

My first contact with the Penans was back in 1981-1983 when I was working as a

medical officer in Kapit. I was in the Flying Doctor Service (FDS) team providing medical services to different longhouses every month. Some were Penan longhouses. A few elders recognised me when I visited them this time. They are a simple and gentle people, friendly too.

The road to Asap resettlement has been busy especially after the completion of Bakun Dam not long ago. The Kenyahs and Kayans took a few years to adapt themselves to the new way of life in the Asap resettlement. Their longhouses and lands

Photograph by Peter Yong

were submerged in water which covers an area as big as the island of Singapore.

As we drove further in from the Asap junction toward our destination, I was amazed. We saw huge fully-loaded logging trucks passing by us every few minutes for the next 2 hours. I lost count of the numbers. There are logging camps and a wood based industry. We also passed by long stretches of oil palm estates. You would be equally surprised to see the extent of their activities if you were with us.

If I were to look down from a helicopter the landscape would be very different from that some 30 years ago during my FDS flights. Now there are bustling activities in the jungle carried out by big companies. Another dam is going to be completed soon – the Murum Dam. This time seven Penan longhouses and 1,500 villagers will be affected and they have to be relocated soon.

Bringing Change to the Penans

One thing has not changed much. There has been very little improvement in the livelihood of the Penans. Except for some young people who are working in the logging companies, most are still living in poverty. They said that they did not know how to read when we handed them some Gideon bibles. Neither did their children receive any formal education. They still depend so much on the jungle for their food. They are yet to make good use of their land in terms of agriculture. The government helped them occasionally but the assistance is not sustained. Many have blamed the Penans for their resistance to change and development. I think it is unfair to make such a general statement without understanding their tradition, culture and mindset.

Our church is doing a noble task in sending missionaries to teach these underprivileged Penan children. I salute our missionaries for their sacrifice and hard work. I jumped for joy when I saw how their lives have been touched by the love of Jesus. One fact is obvious: We have to live among them if we want to bring significant positive changes in their lives.

Facing the Uncertain Future

Resettling the affected Penans is a big concern not only to the government but even more so to the Penans themselves. The Penans are quick to say that they are different from the Kenyahs or Kayans. Many are not keen to be settled in newly allocated areas. Even the younger adults are so determined that they would move deeper into the jungle. I understand this because the jungle is their way of life. They are not well prepared for such a drastic change of lifestyle when

I was shocked to hear from him [Eken] that he had not eaten any food for the whole day because there was no food to be found

their longhouses and lands are submerged with the completion of the Murum Dam.

What I saw is more the concern of the present. It was during our last day of ministry when we were to stay overnight in Long Menapan, the most remote longhouse of the three. It was about 4 pm after I had finished my medical session that I chatted with Eken. He was in his late 20's, married with two children. I was shocked to hear from him that he had not eaten any food for the whole day because there was no food to be found. My heart sank when I heard that even his children suffered the same fate! Eken had searched for two hours in the jungle that morning and came back empty handed. He told me that all the animals had gone deeper into the jungle. The fish had also gone because of river pollution. Prior to this so-called "development", food was within easy reach and took less than half an hour to find. This is the heavy price to pay for the invading bustling activity.

I thought I was wise in advising Eken that he should have kept some stock ready at least for a day in advance. I felt such a fool when he responded that he could not even find food for today, what more to think about keeping some reserve for the next day! They live one day at a time. Eken anticipated that life would be more difficult and uncertain in the near future.

Feeding the Penan Children

As the sisters were preparing our dinner, we

brothers were lingering at the back of the longhouse. Our seasoned driver who had made several trips to the Penan longhouses invited us to count the number of households that had firewood smoke coming out from the kitchen. Only one! That is right, only one family was cooking a hot meal. Others were not cooking, or had no food to cook.

I surveyed some of the connected kitchens and found out that indeed most had no food at all. We were told that sometimes they needed to tie a towel around their stomachs to relieve their hunger cramps.

As we were about to have our dinner, we were surrounded by many hungry children. One brother voiced out, "We must share our food with all these children." His voice was choked with emotion. All the children ran to their respective homes and came back with their plates. It was with much pleasure that we scooped the food onto their plates. I personally invited Eken to join us. We only cooked our own share, but somehow it turned out to be enough for all. God is really good and wonderful. Everyone was full of joy.

The Farewell Celebration

That evening, we decided to cook a special breakfast for them the next morning before we left. The next day, our sisters put in all their love in preparing two big pots of instant noodles. Most of us had only a glass of hot milo and a piece of biscuit, just enough to sustain us for our trip back. It was a celebration for the Penan children. I spotted a toddler below the age of two sitting alone among the whole crowd of children, struggling to spoon the slippery noodles into her mouth. I walked over to feed her, just like a grandfather feeding his beloved grandchild. I cannot even begin to describe the satisfaction I saw on her face as she swallowed the last spoon.

We had to leave after the prayer of blessing. We bade an emotional farewell to these lovely children. I was thinking hard on the way back. I could not believe that there are still people in our land who are reachable by road yet still living in such hunger. Shouldn't they be provided more assistance in the long term at least to meet their basic needs? Shouldn't the Penans be better prepared in the coming resettling scheme? What about their children's education and their future? What else can we do as a church?

I had no answers. But it had been a rewarding mission trip for me. At least I had a chance to feed a Penan child. [Dr Wong Sung Ging is a member from Emmanuel Methodist Church, Bintulu]

General Conference



SIAC Woman Leads Next Quadranium of Methodist Women Malaysia

BY ALICE JAWAN

The General Conference of Methodist Women Malaysia 10th Session was held from the 14-16 July 2012 at the Olympic Sports Hotel in Kuala Lumpur. It was attended by 66 Methodist women from all states in Malaysia representing the six (6) Annual Conferences.

In the 10th Session, Ir. Alice Jawan from the Methodist Women of the Sarawak Iban Annual Conference (SIAC) was elected as the President of the General Conference of Methodist Women (GCMW) Malaysia for the next quadranium serving from the year 2013 - 2016. Other elected officers are:-

Vice President - Mdm Wong Hie Ching of the Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference,

Secretary - Ms Ng Su Yin of the Trinity Annual Conference,

Treasurer - Liew Chew Shen of Sabah Provisional Annual Conference,

Coordinators - Mdm Mary John and Lila Chelliah both of the Tamil Annual Conference, and Margaret Chan of the Chinese Annual Conference,

Counsellors - Datin Judy Lau & Mdm Mary Davadason, Chairman of Nomination Committee – Mdm. Diong Siew Ling

This 10th Session was a historical moment with the election of Ir. Alice as the President; making this the first time in 4 decades, since the formation of the Methodist Women Malaysia, that Methodist Women SIAC representative leads this Christian women organization. Methodist Women SIAC or commonly known as "Bala Indu

Methodist" was formed 48 years ago.

In her maiden speech as the President of the GCMW Malaysia, Ir. Alice hoped that:-
a. the Methodist Women collectively will make a Difference to the growth and development of the movement,

b. the new EXCO will strive to create new traditions to reflect and meet current time and needs,

c. to have a new mindset, and to think 1 Methodist instead of East & West.

She also indicated that the election of a Methodist Woman from the Sarawak Iban Annual Conference as the President is a historical moment, an honor, and reflects the spiritual, unity, and holiness of the Methodist Women in Malaysia. [Ir. Alice Jawan is the President of Methodist Women Malaysia.]

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(on Scholarship)



Loh Kai Lynn
Politics, Philosophy & Economics
University of Pennsylvania
(on Maersk Scholarship)



Joshua Ong Chao Hong
Commerce
University of Melbourne
(on Scholarship)



Abdul Haq Shamuel Kamar
Liberal Arts
New York University
(on New York University Scholarship)



Andrew Tan Hui Joo
Engineering
Ulster University
(on Scholarship)



Serene Chua
Liberal Arts
Cobby-Sawyer College (on
Cobby-Sawyer College Scholarship)



Ooi Qi Wei
Civil Engineering
University of Sheffield (on
University of Sheffield Scholarship)



Wickram Rajaguru
Accounting & Criminology
Keele University (on Securities
Commission Malaysia Scholarship)



Lee Zheng Ern
Law
University of Southampton (on
University of Southampton Scholarship)



Kimberly Hong Gin Mei
Accounting
University of Bristol (on Securities
Commission Malaysia Scholarship)



Timothy Ong Tze Wei
Architecture
Kent State University
(on Kent State University Scholarship)



Nigel Ngiam Kee Kit
Chemical Engineering
University of Edinburgh
(2nd Year Entry)



Kish Ann Kooen
Politics & International Relations
Maastricht University



Julius Chan Jun-Chang
Medicine
Universiti Sains Malaysia



Yogi K. Nadarajan
Electrical & Electronic Engineering
Hong Kong University of
Science & Technology



David Chew Wei Shon
Dentistry
International Medical University

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