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## Announcements

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

It is quite a sight to behold - when we stood outside the gate to see the 'new' TRAC Headquarters after its renovation and extension has been completed. We are featuring some pictures for you to see what it looks like.

For us, it will be the symbolic on-going fulfillment of the Lord as He continues to renew TRAC so that we look forward to the dawn of a new age as 'ambassadors of Christ' called to remember His main agenda for us -'to bear the message of reconciliation' to a lost world (2 Cor 5: 18, 20). For us, it will be something like the hopeful anticipation of greater new things from the Lord, as Joshua the high priest experienced in the beginning of the postexilic era when he was given a change of garments, which symbolized 'the good things to come' (Zech 3: 4, 8). The Temple will be rebuilt and its 'future glory will be greater than its past glory' (Haggai 2: 9).

I recall with joy how we have shared the vision of this need in 2002 at the 27th TRAC Session (Further TRAC HQ Development) to cater for the growing needs of our Annual Conference, where we shall need infrastructural provisions for more ministry staff, training, storage and ministry. We shall be able to become a more integrated ministry and administrative 'center that empowers' our churches. It will mean a more streamlined information centre with proper records, data & resource stocking. We shall have increased potential to be the venue for training, planning, ministry & prayer meetings. This is also the 1st major project undertaken by the TRAC Millennium Ministry Fund - our churches have in common ownership responded to giving to the TMMF

so that this TRAC Extension & Renovation Project is now realized. Concerned individuals have also stepped forward to generously offer their gifts to this project. To all our churches & donors - we say thank you.

We can rejoice that we have unitedly accomplished this goal by the Lord's sovereign grace. It is also an accomplishment for the call over the last 4 years in our Annual Conference - to attain a growing national 'synergy through unity' mode. When we are united, together we can accomplish more in the Lord. We shall continue to seek and glorify the Lord together as we prayerfully watch and then 'join Him in what He is doing' in and through our Annual Conference.

We also express our appreciation and thanks to Dato' Michael Cheah, Chairperson of the Development Board and his team for their hard work put in especially in the past 10 months when the work was in progress. We are also grateful to Ms Yin Kam Yoke and the Council of Education, for making the necessary arrangements for the TRAC Office to be short-term tenants on their premises whilst the project was in progress. We hope to move back to our newly renovated premises by 1 September 2006. May the TRAC HQ be "An Empowering Centre of God's Presence, Glory & Prayer".

As I viewed the new TRAC HQ, I cannot help but recollect the metaphor that I felt led to preach during the Opening Service of the 28th Session TRAC in JB ("The Anticipation of A New Day"). It came from Isaiah 54: 2 (NLT) - "Enlarge your house; build an addition; spread out your home!". Let us go on to recover more and more of the apostolic ministry of the New Testament that John Wesley practiced - we are sent people to reach our parish, the world, for Jesus. Indeed the similarity of the meaning of the words 'missionary' (Latin root -"mitterre" ie "send") and 'apostle' reminds each of us personally of our main calling as well as identity - messengers of reconciliation and ambassadors of Christ sent by God.

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We must not be so caught up in a one-sided manner of church life that our activities are only fitted into a 'chaplaincy' mode (ie,: emphasizing the 'keeper of aquarium mentality' of 'our church...our activities...our projects...our pastor to care for us regularly' etc.) and forgetting our primary call to be 'fishers of men' - women, children, the foreigners, the impossible (unreached people groups etc), and the unreachable (eg addicts etc).

Distinguished Professor of Church Growth & Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary, Dr George Hunter III (in his book "Radical Outreach") cites the evidence of the dysfunctional 1st century church at Corinth to remind the church today that "churches are not called to become 'renewed' or 'healthy' first, then to reach out. Pathological churches experience renewal and greater health as they abandon their narcissism, reach out, and experience new people who have just discovered grace entering their ranks." As we

obey the Lord's Great Commission and Great Command to love Him and our neighbours, we shall experience renewal and health.

As we pray with expectant faith for the 'dawning of a new day' from the Lord in TRAC, let us also remain vigilant and watchful as our enemy, the 'accuser of the brethren' (Revelation 12: 10) is prowling around 'like a roaring lion' (1 Peter 5: 8) to strategically attack our leaders, members, ministry - to bring about discouragements, divisions and decimation. I am glad that our TRAC churches are growing in awareness and strength in the intercessory and prayer ministry, which is a necessity in our lives and ministry. That is why we shall be having the School For Intercessors Part II on 3-5 Nov 2006, also in Stella Maris, Tanjung Bungah, Penang.

We had 55 participants from 8 churches attending the SFI Part I (16-18 June 2006) recently. As we humble ourselves in prayer and forgive others - the words of Paul in 2

Corinthians 2: 11 will be ours: "And we do this so that we may not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs."

May our hearts be warmed as we read of what the Lord is doing in His Church, which we know is but only a fraction of all that He is graciously and wonderfully doing!

"For I am about to do a brand new thing. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness for My people to come home. I will create rivers for them in the desert."

~ Isaiah 43: 19

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning..."

~ Lamentations 3:22 - 23a �

by **Rev Ong Hwai Teik** President, TRAC







## Know Your

Being a Christian is all about growing in our relationship with God - to know Him, to love Him, to fear Him and to serve Him. In John 17: 3, Jesus said, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

One of the goals of TRAC Board of Christian Education for this quadrennium is to encourage church members to go back to the fundamentals of Christian life - to know God. The following article is the first of a 4-part series on the importance and the ways to deepen our relationship with God:

- 1) "Growing in God's Word"
- 2) "How to Spend Time Daily with God"
- 3) "How to Study God's Word for Yourself"
- 4) "How to Pray"

May these series help encourage each of us to continue to seek & know Him, and to be transformed to become like Him.

## Growing In God's Word

## Introduction

Christian Education or the teaching of God's Word is essential for the Church to grow into maturity. In Ephesians 4: 11-16, Paul tells us to be a growing, mature and united people. Here, he sets forth 4 issues in God's design for growth.

## I. Foundation For Growth: Ministry Of The Word (v11)

Following His resurrection and ascension, Jesus gave the Church gifts of leaders who are Word-based to His church. In doing so, He established the Word to be foundational to His church.

Paul listed four of these offices, namely apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers. What do these offices have in common? Scriptures! The foundations for growth come not from church programmes, but from the Scriptures. Scriptures must undergird all the programmes of the Church.

What distinguishes the Church from societies? Scriptures! Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them by the truth: your word is truth." (John 17: 17) Our behavior based on our beliefs distinguishes us as God's people. The Bible is our family book. Our Sunday Service, on which our

Christian community is focused on, is a Service of the Word. The prayers, hymns, sermon confession of faith, benediction, etc., are all based on the Scriptures.

## II. Priorities Of Growth: Knowing Our Job Description (v12)

Paul's next point is that these office holders, (for us, namely the pastors and teachers) must have a clear understanding of their job description. The ministry of the Word should prepare God's people for the works of service.

According to v12, how are the pastors and teachers to minister?

- 1. Equip or prepare the saints through teaching and training.
- The saints then do the work of ministry.
   As the work of ministry is being done,

While many of our churches have conducted Bible Studies and seminars, some members go from one study to

some members go from one study to the next without moving into ministry involvement. The way to grow, after we have been equipped or nurtured by God's Word, is to exercise our gifts and commit ourselves to ministry.

## III. Goal Of Growth: To Attain Maturity (v13-14)

## A. What Is Maturity (v13)

v13: until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

This sounds like a mouthful. John Stott interprets this as the church's maturity which comes from knowing, trusting and growing up in Christ. As the church matures corporately, the fullness of Christ is manifested in her. This growth in unity cannot take place without faith and knowledge in Jesus Christ. In other words, corporate unity is not possible without spiritual growth.

## B. Marks Of Immaturity (v14)

concept and so it logically depends on the maturing of individual members. Paul proceeds to say in v14, "Then we will no longer be infants tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming."" Unstable children are like little boats in a stormy sea, entirely at the mercy of wind and waves. They lack the basic and essential truths that will settle their convictions and stabilize the living out of Christian faith. They are easily attracted by the new fads of teaching that may not be sound.

This growth into maturity is a corporate

## IV. Means To Growth: Three Marks Of Maturity (v15-16)

There are 3 marks of maturity in faith, which are also the means to maturity. We do not arrive at perfect maturity but we must be arriving; we must be on the way to maturity in the faith. Do we have these 3 markers?

First, in our community, God wants us to always link truth to love. v15 should be translated, "Being truthful in love". It's not just referring to our speaking, but to all forms of our communication: our body language, the ideas we imply, the things we don't say. If we are to grow spiritually, we must be truthful in love. Truth without love is brutality; love without truth is hypocrisy. Keeping that balance is difficult, but choosing to always be truthful in love is our first step to growing up toward Christlike maturity.

Our second mark of maturity is to stay closely connected in fellowship with other members of the Body. Paul speaks in v16 of "the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament".

Selwyn Hughes asks, "What is one word that will describe Christianity best?" His answer is "relationship." According to v15 the joints and ligaments connect us with other parts of the Body. Without the joints, we would be a dislocated mess! We need those connection points of relationship in order to grow. How does one grow in grace - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control - if one is not in relationship with other brothers and sisters?

Our third mark of maturity is to always be willing to do our part of the ministry. At the end of v16 Paul describes how the body "grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." As each part of the local Body of Christ uses his/her spiritual gift to serve in a ministry, the result is that the church grows bigger (in quantity) and it grows stronger (in quality) - only as each part does its work.

## CONCLUSION

God has designed the Body of Christ to grow. First, He has laid the foundation for growth - namely the Word. He gave His Church ministers of the Word from apostles to prophets to evangelists to pastor-teachers to equip believers. Second, having been equipped we are to do the works of service. Third, when we minister to one another truthfully and lovingly, staying connected to life and exercising our gifts, the Body of Christ grows and builds itself up. God has given us everything necessary for growth. ❖

by **Rev Andrew Tan** 



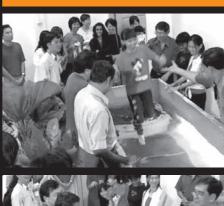
Participants at TRAC MSF Annual Camp 2006

## 15thTRACMSF AnnualCamp2006

The 15th TRAC MSF Annual Camp 2006 was held at the Paradise Sandy Beach Resort, Penang from 14 - 17 March. The Speaker, Bishop, Dr. Hwa Yung, delivered the keynote address and successive sessions on the theme 'Committed to God, Empowered to Serve'. The newly-appointed MSF Director, Rev. Hwa Jen, presented 'A Vision for TRAC MSF' and the TRAC President, Rev Ong Hwai Teik, installed the TRAC MSF Board of Management and preached on 'What are we looking for in life' at the closing worship service. More than 270 participants from all 14 local MSF chapters and also from GYM (Glowing Years Ministry) of TRAC Singapore, attended this camp.

TRAC MSF Board Members 2006-2007 together with Rev Ong Hwai Teik, TRAC President & Advisor to TRAC MSF & Rev Hwa Jen, Director of TRAC MSF.













Pastor Lim Keong Goo conducting the baptism.
A 5-strip of video stills.

# Easter **Baptism**Service at Wesley Methodist Church, Kulim

• Date: 15 April 2006

Praise God for His goodness and faithfulness! For the first time in the history of Kulim Wesley, we saw six young people baptized during our Easter Service this year. We rejoice and thank God that it is also the first time we could have baptism by immersion in the church hall itself as we can now accommodate a mobile baptism pool in the recently extended church hall. No more having to travel far away to a polluted stream in Junjong!

Following the baptism, five of those baptized plus another four of our regular worshipers were also received into church membership on that day. It was indeed an occasion to celebrate

We take this opportunity to congratulate the following who were baptized: Titus, Daniel, Lid Ren, Hui Ting, Sara, Elizabeth. We also received into membership: Mr. & Mrs. Chia, Cendria, Cebrina and Nelly, they were baptized and received into membership a month earlier.

We truly thank and praise God for bringing three-fold 'newness' to the church: new souls, a new pool, and the 'new' building."
His mercies never come to and end; they are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness!
- (Lamentations 3: 22b-23)"

Incidentally, we are happy to announce that our extended church will be dedicated to the glory of God on the 5th of August, 2006. We are greatly excited about it, and we look forward to welcoming our TRAC President, friends, and brothers & sisters from other churches, especially those from the Northern District, to join us in this celebration.

We also take this opportunity to thank all friends and churches who have so generously contributed towards our recent church extension project.

All glory be unto Him.

by **Mrs. Molly Chow** & **Bro. Giap Seng**, WMC Kulim



Group photo with Pastor Lim.

Experience







**TRAC National Youth Missions** Herbert Tan (BOYW Chairman & Team Leader), Chang Choy Quin (TRAC Youth Ministry Coordinator), Alvin Chan (Wesley Methodist Church, Sitiawan), Tan Chian Ming (Wesley Methodist Church, Sitiawan), Ling Yong Huat (Wesley Methodist Church, Sitiawan), Chan Weng Ken (Faith Methodist Church, Cheras), Foo Yi Hui (Canning Garden Methodist Church, Ipoh), Liow Chit Shen (Trinity Methodist Church, Petaling Jaya) Long Lamai, Sarawak

Eight of us began a trip into the inland of Sarawak where 450 Penan native people live in the village of Long Lamai. We started out at Miri, Sarawak with Ezra as our guide who was probably the only university graduate from Long Lamai thus far. After about 11 hours in two 4-wheel drive vehicles over mountainous roads and timber truck tracks, we arrived at Long Puak, the nearest village to our destination which is accessible by road. We were too late to catch the boats that had waited for us, so we spent the night at one of the longhouses that welcomed us.

March 27 - April 4, 2006

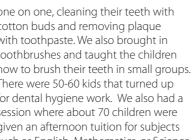
The next morning, we (equipped with building material, food, used clothing and other resources) took a 40-minute ride in 5 longboats into Long Lamai, where we spent the next 6-7 days working and ministering in the midst of this group of Penans. They have left their nomadic way of life, learned to cultivate and settled down in a village since the early 50s. We were working in partnership with the SIB church in Long Lamai and we trusted God as we lived in a village that has no modern piped water supply, with a electricity generator that could only last for 3-4 hours every night for the church and where we stayed (not including the rest of the village).

## Our formal work included:

- 1. Teaching/preaching services (average attendance of about 100 people) - the Penans met daily to hear the Word of God. Oral ministry is the key in this village where many are either illiterate or do not have access to the whole Word of God in their native language. Herbert shared the Word of God in the teaching/preaching sessions whilst most of us shared our evangelistic testimonies during those services.
- 2. Working with primary school aged children - many of whom do not own a toothbrush and know nothing about dental hygiene. We worked with them

one on one, cleaning their teeth with cotton buds and removing plague with toothpaste. We also brought in toothbrushes and taught the children how to brush their teeth in small groups. There were 50-60 kids that turned up for dental hygiene work. We also had a session where about 70 children were given an afternoon tuition for subjects such as English, Mathematics, or Science.

- of the hill we had the opportunity to participate in the beginning process of rebuilding their Prayer House which was being destroyed by termites and weather. We spent between 2-3 hours trees to get the place prepared for the rebuilding process. The wooden pillars were cut and the rebuilding would be completed by end of April, 2006. This
- after the morning worship service. In Christian Education for the Kaum Bapa and Sunday School Teachers (about 20 people), a session on God's love for the



3. Rebuilding of Prayer House on top one morning with 20 Penans cleaning up the place, chopping down and clearing has been made possible by funds raised by Sitiawan Wesley MYF and the Sunday

4. **Sunday ministry** - We ministered in prayer to 20-30 people that came forward the afternoon, we broke into groups and simultaneously did a training session on







Kaum Ibu (about 20 people), a session on Samson for the youths (about 20 youths), and an activity-based learning session for the Sunday School (about 40 kids).

## Our informal work included:

- 1. Connecting with their lives in the football field, in the kitchen, in the river (bathing & washing clothes), and in the longhouse.
- 2. Visitation of families with children from broken homes.
- 3. Bathing children using Dettol soap at the
- 4. Minor treatments for wounds, fever, sore throats, and gastritis. We handed over some medication to the village, which was donated by a doctor.
- 5. Gotong-royong cleaning up of the environment of modern nonbiodegradable garbage to teach the children environmental hygiene.

Evidence of God's presence and work

- 1. Great hunger for the Word of God among the Penans. They arranged daily teaching/ preaching sessions to hear the Word of God when we were there.
- 2. Intense seeking for God in prayer among the Penans. They have prayer meetings every morning at 5:30 am.
- 3. God's visitation through a vision that was given to an individual but processed together as a community - calling the Penan people in that village to seek God and His Word, and not to be uncertain of where they stood.
- 4. God's unusual lavish provision for our food and lodging within the village compared to the experience of a team that went in last year.
- 5. God answering their prayers for a bountiful hunt - the last day, God blessed them with meat (3 wild boars & 1 deer) for a farewell community dinner attended by almost 150 people.
- 6. God answered our prayers by clearing the skies in the morning of departure so that

the Twin-otter 14-seater plane would be able to fly us out to Long Banga, which is a 60 minutes longboat ride from Long

## Prayer needs:

- 1. Pray for the translation of the Old Testament into Penan the language.
- 2. Pray for the building of a Biblically strong moral foundation in matters of sex and marriage for the Penan people.
- 3. Pray for the development of the young ones (academically and socially) so that they have a secure future.
- 4. Pray for God to send in Medical & Dental mission teams, Christian Education mission teams, Youth Ministry mission teams, Music Ministry mission teams, and Economic Development teams. \*

For more information on other possible avenues of resourcing and ministering to the Penans in Long Lamai, contact Dr. Herbert Tan at 019-3820277 or email him at herbertt@mccc.org.my

## **Comments**from **Mission** Trippers



Whole-hearted generosity - that's how I would describe the Penans. They gave us the best of what they had - be it food, electricity, or help repairing our torn slippers. The challenges I faced and survived (the mud, the river, the 'toilet', the jungle, scattered animal disposals everywhere) could not compare to the lives that have touched me - they whom I have begun to love.

Wesley Methodist Church, Sitiawan

Throughout the whole trip, God blessed us abundantly, more than I have expected. It was an incredible experience seeing the Penan people worshipping and seeking after God. Truly, God is the Lord of all, even in such an isolated place far away from modern civilization. I learned to look at life from a different perspective and realized how precious some of the things which I have normally taken for granted such as a comfortable bed. I really have to salute all the missionaries that have moved out of their comfort zones into the harvest field that God has called them to.

## Foo Yi Hui

Canning Carden Methodist Church, Ipoh

The people here are friendly and helpful. They live a poor and simple life. I found it hard to communicate with them because they don't really understand Bahasa Malaysia fully. But God is great, He saw me through. I enjoyed the food here. The river, the mountain, and the woods are so beautiful. All these are God's creation for us, His children.

## Ling Yong Huat

Wesley Methodist Church, Sitiawan

I think that this trip has helped me to trust God for providence all the time. Even within limited resources and also unforeseen circumstances, God still provided lodging and food. I realized that more time and effort is needed to minister in this church. Some of the old practices can still be seen. Despite all this, there is a younger generation that is eager to serve God.

## Chan Wena Ken

Faith Methodist Church, Cheras

This trip has been an eye opening experience to me. At first, I could not adapt to the new environment and culture. It was something beyond my imagination and out of my comfort zone. From the very first day we arrived, the people here have been very kind and generous. They have given their best to us such as abundant food, hospitality and services. Coming into this place, spreading the Good News to them and interacting with them have been a life experience to me - something that I can never forget and will be rooted strongly in my heart. I believe God has been there for me throughout these few days especially during my difficult moments. His presence and His works among the people here have really touched my heart. There's a burden in my heart that wants me to help them in any way I could. I trust God that He has a plan for them, not only to bless them but to prosper

## Tan Chian Ming

Wesley Methodist Church, Sitiawan

We were sticking to our daily schedule and everything was going on smoothly when suddenly Dr. Herbert told me that I would be sharing with the Kaum Ibu of the village! What!? Kaum Ibu!? I am not married. What have I to share with them? I was really stressed and lost. I was trying to find ways to get out of it but I couldn't. So I just asked the Lord what to share with them. In the end, I shared about God's love. I hope they understood what I have shared! I was sharing in Bahasa Malaysia. Thank God for giving me the words to share. At the end of the sharing, I asked them to break into small groups to pray for one another. It was a new experience for them but with explanations and understanding, they were able to pray for

## **Chang Choy Quin**

TRAC Youth Ministry Coordinator

Tears filled my eyes as I waved goodbye to about 25 villagers who gathered at the riverbank to send us off. Despite the lack of widespread illiteracy among the adults, the non-existence of a translated Old Testament in the Penan language, lack of monetary and modern resources, they have showed a tremendous hunger for God and His Word - wanting to learn and grow. But the best for me in my experience was to be able to sense and experience God and His work in a deeper way. This is one place I will return to and be God's instrument in contributing to the shaping of God's story in Long Lamai.

## Dr. Herbert Tan

TRAC Chairman of Board of Youth Work

## Youth Mission Trip to Myanmar •27 May - 5 June 2006







he Youth Mission Trip to Myanmar was held from May 27 to June 5, 2006. It was participated by 8 youths and 2 adults. The aim of this trip was to bring awareness of the significance of prayer and intercession especially to Youths in Myanmar. The main programme was to facilitate a Prayer Conference in Yangon, which was participated by 55 Myanmar youths. In this Prayer Conference, Rev. Christopher Rao preached about the importance of Prayer and Intercession in bringing revival to the land. The message was taken from Judges 5, which talks about how God used Gideon to deliver the Israelites from the oppression of the Midianites. Besides these messages, youths from the team had also the opportunity to share their own personal testimonies about how prayer has impacted their lives.

Another significant highlight of this Mission Trip was the prayer ministry of our team to the Myanmar youths. From the very beginning of this trip to the very end, everything was covered by prayer. We saw the reality of answered prayer every step of the way. As the team ministered to the Myanmar youths, God anointed their prayers and made it relevant to meet their needs.

It was wonderful to see how they dealt in a personal, gentle and loving manner to those youths who came forward to be prayed for.

We saw God working clearly and powerfully at this prayer Conference as more and more Myanmar youths gave themselves to the task of prayer and intercession for their land. We also give thanks to God for the salvation of a few Myanmar youths who attended the Prayer Conference as unbelievers. Although we did not share the gospel message at the Prayer Conference, the Lord's presence convicted the hearts of the unbelievers to receive the Lord Jesus as their Saviour!

Besides the three-day Prayer Conference, the team also had the opportunity to be involved in ministry at the various church services and youth groups in Yangon, Thanylin, Dala and Bago. At the English Methodist Church in Yangon, the team was able to share a testimony on how God answered their prayer through a sketch and songs. At Thanylin Methodist Church, the team participated in a revival service. In both of these ministries, we felt the strong presence and anointing of God and many responded to the message that was preached.

In the various youth groups, our team (youths) were given the opportunity to conduct the entire service. It was heartwarming to see our youths preaching, sharing testimonies, leading in worship and praying for people. Moreover, God empowered our youths to inspire and challenge the Myanmar youths from various churches to be fervent in prayer.

The response from the Myanmar youths was overwhelming. We realized that God had been preparing their hearts to receive the message that He has laid within our hearts. We also saw how the Holy Spirit moved in touching and ministering to the needs of the people. We realized that it is so important for us to be in a right relationship with God and with one another if we are to be effective ministers of the Gospel. (One of the ways that the evil one will try to hinder our prayers from being answered is by enticing us to be at war with one another.)

As I reflect on this trip, I find that the trip has been meaningful for the following reasons: Firstly, it gave opportunities for our youths to step out of their comfort zone and to rely on the Holy Spirit to minister to the needs of other people. In doing this, I believe they have learnt valuable lessons about walking





with God, which would be translated to their daily living. Secondly, in a small group setting like this, I believe mentoring and coaching between adults and youths take place effectively. I believe that God has placed us, adults, in this position to speak life and truth into the lives of our youths. As we model ministry to our youths, we also give them the opportunity to exercise their God given gifts in ministering to the needs of people around them. In doing so, we are allowing the Holy Spirit to empower their lives for the work of the ministry.

Finally, on behalf of the team, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to this Mission Trip. We know that many churches and people have been praying for us and in many ways we would not have been able to do God's Will if it was not of your prayers. Special thanks too, to the President Rev. Ong Hwai Teik, the Board of Missions, the Prayer for Myanmar Committee and Mark and Alice Goodwin who have prayed for us. Also, we would like to thank the following churches for entrusting their youths to participate in this Mission trip: Wesley Alor Star, Wesley Penang, Wesley Johor Baharu, Wesley Kuantan and Grace Sentul. \*

by Rev. Christopher Rao







## Testimonies from the YOUTH Mission TriptoMYANMAR





## TRUSTING GOD

**Phoebe Tan** (Kuantan Wesley)

This trip was in many instances a first for me. My first time to a foreign land (excluding Singapore), my first flight, my first mission trip, my first time praying for people during altar calls, my first time learning a Burmese worship song and my first time sharing a short message in a church. During the prayer conference, the Myanmar youths got down on their knees and prayed for their nation. I was stunned and ashamed by what I had witnessed. I realized that I never got down on my knees and cried out for my own country and nation before.

Throughout this trip, I experienced God's love and His peace within me. I learnt to trust Him in all circumstances and that He will use me - even if I am sick, have nothing to offer but myself, am weak or small. I saw the many creative ways He spoke to each of us and answered our prayers. I saw how faithful He was with us and brought us through our trials. Praise be to God!

## **TOUCHED BY GOD**

**Lee Sze Wei** (Alor Setar Wesley)

Before the mission trip started, I was astray in my walk with God. I did not enjoy reading the bible anymore and lost interest in praying. I even desired to back out from the mission trip before it started. But God in His great mercy and divine purpose did not allow that to happen. Instead the glory of God manifested in my life. I was prayed over during the mission trip and was totally transformed. From that moment onwards, I was able to pray out loud, sing and lift my hands to God without any hindrance. Healing and restoration began to take place in my life as well. Through this trip, I really experienced the love, grace, and mercy of God in my life.

For those who think and feel that God cannot use you because of what you had done in the past, I'd like to encourage you that the opposite is true. Rahab (the prostitute), Moses (the murderer) and Saul (the persecutor of Christ) were all used by God. As long as we are willing to repent and humble ourselves before God, God is always there to accept us. Glory to God, forever and ever, Amen.

## **CRYING FOR A NATION**

**Charleen Tai** (Kuantan Wesley)

During the prayer conference, I was given the opportunity to share my testimony. However, it was different from what I had prepared. The words just came out as I felt the Holy Spirit leading me. During the altar call, we prayed for them individually. I know that God will work greatly in their lives and He will answer every single prayer.

The youth in Myanmar really poured out their hearts to pray for their nation. This is my very first time seeing people cry out to God for their country. We believe by faith that revival and breakthroughs will take place in Myanmar soon. I have learned to intercede for them in a very specific way. I have also been encouraged by them to pray for our nation. Prayer really works and makes a difference.

## SIMPLE FAITH

**Lawrence Chin** (Penang Wesley)

I was really moved and encouraged by the people in Myanmar. The way they trust in God is really amazing. They do not focus on the problems that they are facing, but they put their trust in God and believe that only God



can heal their land. The way they pray for their land and nation is really encouraging. One of the things that I've experienced is this: B is facing a financial problem. When he realized that I got to know about his problem, he refused to receive my help. He said that I had done enough for the people and I should not be bothered by his problem anymore. He believes that God will provide for him at the right time. So, I told him that I would pray for him, but he asked me to pray for his country and the churches instead. He said he knows that God is always with him, and God will provide everything he needs.

## **PRAYER LIFE DEEPENED**

Erreekka Ellberra Laisin (Grace Sentul)

God used each one of us in His own way and personally, it was really an eye opener for me! We visited some of the churches in the city and villages. All of us shared our testimonies and some of us shared the Word of God. God has taught me a lot of things through this mission trip. The people really love God very much and this can be seen during the Youth Prayer Conference that was held in Yangon. The Lord also brought me deeper into my prayer life such as standing in the gap for the nation and interceding for others. We have been very encouraged by the

youths there. Their sincere desire for God, their pursuit of the things of God and their willingness to sacrifice really taught me a great lesson on how much these people love God. Tears just flowed as I felt the presence of God which was so real in our midst. I really thank God for giving me this opportunity to be used by Him as an empty vessel.

## LIFE'S PURPOSE

Koay Su-Jian (Alor Setar Wesley)

Looking at all the various villages, the burden in me for the people in Myanmar just grew deeper and deeper. The people there are just hungry for God. I remembered when we were in one of the villages called Dala, the people staying there just wanted us to come to their houses to pray for them. They were so happy to see us. I have never seen a group of people so thirsty for God. They showed that their main purpose in life was only to know more about God. Sadly we can't really see this attitude in our own country. Sometimes we put other things first. The people there reminded me that my main purpose in life should be learning more about God and serving Him with everything I have.

Throughout this mission trip, I have learned many things about being an intercessor for a nation. It is not easy to be one for we have to be really committed. God has never placed such a burden in me before. The eagerness to see Myanmar experience a revival just kept me praying. God has promised us that revival will take place in that country by giving us visions and words of assurance. All we need to do is pray. God will surely bring revival to that nation honoring their faithfulness to Him.

## PASSIONATE PEOPLE

**Tiffanie Tan** (Kuantan Weslev)

I always wanted to go for a mission trip and was privileged to go for my first trip outside of Malaysia. The moment I stepped into Myanmar, I told God to use me the way He wants to use me. I am glad to be there in Myanmar especially meeting people who are so passionate for God and who hunger and thirst for God's presence. Though I may not understand their language, all of us see how much they wanted to learn from us. Apart from that, something that I'll never forget is the visitation to churches, villages and a bible

The people there were not as I expected - on the contrary, they were so warm, loving and just different! I can still hear their voices worshipping and praying to God in my ears.







This trip has taught me many lessons and one of it is, we will all one day go to heaven and praise God in our own mother tongues. It only means that in the days to come, language can no longer be a barrier to me when I serve Him.

## **USE ME LORD**

Edwin Lai (Johor Bahru Wesley)

At the beginning, I didn't know what I was doing and felt very useless among my friends in the team. I could clearly see God using each and every one of them but somehow I failed to see God using me. I was desperately crying out to God to use me in any way that He pleased. God encouraged me through the story of the boy with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. We can see that Jesus took the little which the boy had to offer and blessed it to feed 5000 people. In our lives, the little talents and gifts that we have may seem small and almost useless at times, but as long as our hearts are willing to serve God in whatever way God wants to, He can use our little talents and gifts to do mighty works for the extension of His kingdom. From then onwards I began to see that God was already beginning to use me. And throughout the mission trip, the way God used all of us was really just beyond our imagination.

When I look back at how everything took place back then. I began to see the big picture of God's perfect plan. I believe God wanted to teach me a lesson on humility first before He was going to use me. During the times when I felt useless and incapable, that's when I realized I cannot rely on my own strength to be used by God. I had to admit my weaknesses first and then acknowledge that God is Almighty. And so whatever I did in Myanmar was nothing by my own strength, but entirely through the power of God, and I give all glory and praise unto Him. Amen.

## CALLED TO RETURN

Salome Mon Mon Myat (Secretary, Conference MYF, Myanmar)

On the last day of the prayer conference, Pastor Christopher invited those who wanted to be prayed for to come forward and I came out and knelt in front at the altar. I prayed a lot. Suddenly I heard three voices praying for me. I was praying with tears and I felt pain on my back and I heard God saying to me, "Why have you stopped going for prayer meetings? Why don't you come back to My House? I want you to pray for your nation, your neighbours and your churches". After my prayer, I returned to my seat and I heard His voice again. He told me the same thing twice. Although I felt bad in my heart, I knew that He called me again.

I'm re-invited to come to our heavenly Father's presence once again. Hebrews 4: 16 tells me, "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need". Father, thank You for showing me Your way. I know Your desires and You want me. Now I'm going to participate in the prayer meetings of my church once again. I also thank You for Tiffanie, Charleen and Phoebe who were the three who prayed hard for me.

## **NEW EXPERIENCES**

Khin Maung Latt (MYF, Telugu Methodist Church, Myanmar)

We give thanks to God for the Youth Prayer Conference. We had many new experiences with God. Many of our youths are still talking about the Youth Prayer Conference because they are very excited with what God is doing among us. .

## **TRAC**SCHOOLfor **INTERCESSORS**

• 16 - 18 June 2006













During the last Prayer Conference that was held in February this year, the leadership felt that the intercessors needed more training in this whole area of intercession. Thus, the idea for a school for intercessors was birthed. Ms. Wee Lay Ching who was the speaker at the 3rd Prayer Conference in February was asked to do the training at the School for Intercessors. With the gracious help of Penang Wesley, TRAC was able to organize the School for Intercessors, Part 1, from June 16 - 18 at Stella Maris in Penang. Some 55 participants from 8 different churches came together to spend time in prayer as well as receive training in the area of Intercession.

Ms Wee Lay Ching did a series of teaching in the 1st part of this School. We received teaching on the "Biblical Basis for Intercession", 'The Makings of a Movement', 'Dealing with the Roots of Prayerlessness' and 'Developing Prayer Models'. Under Biblical Basis for Intercession, we examined the heart of what Intercession is about and contextualize intercession into the redemption work. In Dealing with the Roots of Prayerlessness, we not only examined the causes of prayerlessness but we were also

made aware of the importance of being prayerful as opposed to being oblivious to the influence of the kingdom of darkness. We learnt about knowing where the Spirit of God is moving and seeing the prayer movement like a river in 'The Makings of a Movement'. In 'Developing Prayer Models', we were encouraged as individual churches and TRAC as a whole to strategically focus on prayer through different 'watches' that would best suit us for this time.

Through these sessions and the actual prayer times, many of us, if not all, were deeply ministered to by the Lord. Many of us were set free, delivered and received healing when we were prayed for by Ms Wee Lay Ching and our TRAC President, Rev Ong Hwai Teik. The Lord in His goodness revealed many things to us concerning, ourselves, our churches and TRAC. The Lord also led us into keeping a special watch in the 3 areas of 'God's Visitation of Unreached Peoples Group', Open Heavens' and 'Global Missions'.

On the last day, Rev Ong Hwai Teik closed the "School for Intercessors" by delivering a sermon on "Intercession: Called To Work

With God, Not For God". We were very much blessed and encouraged by the Word as it helped us to see things differently from God's perspective. We were also given the "Intercessors Covenant of Conduct" (ICOC) prepared by TRAC Prayer Director, Rev Ong Hwai Teik, to take back home with us and pray through the aspects of the ICOC before personalizing it to our local context.

As we spent 3 days in prayer in a place where the Tsunami of December 26, 2004 hit, we believe that a 'Spiritual Tsunami' will take place in TRAC even as we repeatedly proclaimed 'the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea' (Habakkuk 2:14). As we hear God, discern what He is doing and make history through intercession, we wait in excitement for Part 2 of the School for Intercessors, to be held from Nov 3 - 5 in Stella Maris, Penang. Maranatha! �

by **Rhema Rao** 



Part 2: Lessons to be Learned

Uring our three-week exposure trip to Guangdong and Fujian in China in August 2005, we were reminded repeatedly how big China is and how many more people she has compared to Malaysia. Therefore, it is dangerous to try to make generalisations about the country; even on the issue of religious freedom or restrictions. Two comments that have stuck are: "China has so many people, there is really no way the government can control everyone." and "China is so big that whatever we say about it may be true, especially when it comes to religion." Thus, we need to humbly remind ourselves to study and read more widely to acquire a more balanced perception of what is happening in China

As we share some of the lessons we learned from our visit, we must specify, therefore, at the outset that these are our tentative findings from a rather short visit to a very limited region of China. And this is from our very first visit!

## 1. The Lord is Sovereign

Again and again we have heard testimonies of God's faithfulness in the lives of the believers, - not just during the dark days of the Cultural Revolution, but even today. One pastor shared how as a small boy he was hunting around the house for food one day, and discovered a portion of the Gospel that his parents had hidden away. After the

Cultural Revolution, shortly before he had to take his entrance examination to the Seminary, he discovered among a rubbish heap a collection of theological books! He studied them hungrily and passed the examination with flying colours.

One woman had a dream of 'following an old man with beard who led her to meet God'. When she told her husband of her dream, he said that he might have been Jesus, which started them on their journey of faith with the Lord. Now she serves as a volunteer worker in a village church.

Our impression is that the Lord God has always watched over His church, in the underground churches that refused to be registered and also in the registered churches that had cooperated with the authorities! While there had been those who subscribed to liberal theology and the social gospel, and still do; many others appeared to have compromised in order to survive and minister to the flock of God. Most of the older Christians had suffered for their faith; those from the underground/house church movement as well as those from the registered Three-Self Churches. Many of the older pastors are deeply respected because they have paid the price of their witness with repeated imprisonments, while some other pastors may be held in suspicion.

Why does God permit such a state of affairs? There can be no easy answers. We can only acknowledge that God is both sovereign and gracious in all His ways. With the relaxation of religious persecution, buildings and property are being returned to the church. Worship services and ministries are multiplying and people are flocking to the churches once

## 2. The Hunger for God

In every church we visited we found lots of people of all ages. And everywhere we went, there was an emphasis on the teaching of the Word of God. There were CE classes for children and youths and Bible Studies for the old people during the day. Discipleship and nurture classes are conducted to equip young people when they leave home for further studies or for work in the big cities. Some churches also have missionary training programmes to train young adults for missions in the country-side or in other provinces.

It is the simple yet consistent teaching of the Word of God that has grounded the believers in love for God, the Church and the people. After the many years of suppression, there is a tremendous hunger for the truth - for some standards and values to guide them in the midst of a fast changing society. The old Confucian values have been set aside and Communism has proven to be a false god

A China Experience (Part 2)



with no hope or future. The church has been able to meet this need with the message of an Unchanging and Faithful God, who loves the world and reaches out to save His people and to give hope to them.

## 3. Creative Ministries

In some churches, CE classes for children and youths are conducted quite openly. Other churches run nursery classes and kindergartens, ostensibly as day-care centres while the parents are at work. (These have benefited from the fact that even before the Liberation in 1949, church and mission schools had a reputation for excellence. The former Anglo-Chinese College in Fuzhou is now an English Language Institute.)

There is clearly a proliferation of classes and institutions to teach English. The bookstores are stocked with all kinds of books on learning English, and of varying qualities. One church has a youth centre where English is taught, and during the summer, groups from overseas (Singapore, HK, USA) would come and spend two weeks to teach basic English to the young people. (Anyone interested to

Many churches are channelling their resources to establish Old Folks' Homes too. There is a great need for this ministry in many places as the extended family support

structures are slowly disintegrating. With millions of workers migrating to industrial centres and the enforcement of China's one-child policy, the old people are left on their own. The churches have developed this ministry first to help their own older members, and then have expanded this into an outreach ministry to non-believers also. In the same way, a Christian hospital we visited was started to meet the needs of the people in a rural district. This hospital keeps running out of space and facilities as more and more people come to know about it as one that provides good medical care at a reasonable cost

Another ministry that has a vast potential is through publications. The demand for Bibles is so great that the authorised Amity Press has not been able to meet the needs, and Bibles still have to be brought in. However, Bibles are not available through book-stores, but only in churches and no registration is required. (We were informed that sometimes registration is required in the interior where Bibles are in short supply to ensure a more equitable distribution of the Bibles available.) On the other hand, the book-stores are stocked with many translations of Christian literature, both the classics and the more contemporary ones. In one Christian book-store, there were works of John Stott, John Drane, James Dobson, etc. which are translated and published in China. (We even saw one book that was published

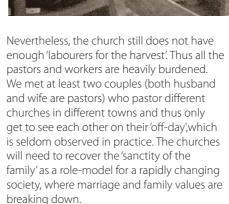
in Inner Mongolia!) The church has capitalised on the emphasis that the Chinese place on education, and are using books as a means to spread the Gospel.

We are challenged to ask ourselves what are the current needs in our Malaysian society for which we can provide the ministries peculiar to Malaysia as a means of Christian witness.

## 4. A Rapidly Growing Church

Both government figures and missionary reports indicate that the Church in China is still growing rapidly. Nevertheless, the church workers and pastors will insist that it is still less than 10% of the population and that many places and ethnic groups are still largely unevangelised. They still need a lot of resources, especially in terms of pastors, missionaries and teachers. In the places we visited, most the pastors have had two years of basic theological studies, and then they start their ministry apprenticeship under a senior pastor. After several years, they are ordained, but in some churches only after they are 30 years old. Later on they are sent to one of the major seminaries for another two years of studies. Some more 'fortunate' ones get to continue their studies overseas, in Hong Kong, Singapore or U.S.A.

There are also many volunteer workers (either part-time or full-time), who receive no salary.



There is a real need to provide a better and stronger foundational training to all the pastors and church workers. The zeal is there, but there have been too many cases of deviant and heretical teaching. While the need for Bibles is slowly being met, good theological books are in short supply, and the importation of such books is highly restricted. Thus, any books brought from the outside are taken up readily. But the pastors in charge have been constantly on quard against the infiltration of wrong or deviant teachings.

## 5. Continuing Training

One bright spot in the midst of this need is that churches are doing their best to train and equip their workers. Monthly fellowships at the district level are actually training seminars and discussion forums where the pastors,

church workers and volunteers can meet to deal with issues and share ministry successes and difficulties. We attended two such gatherings of 80 to 100 persons comprising young adults, college and university graduates, retired civil servants and older village workers. Because the districts can be quite large and roads are not good, a one-day meeting can actually mean two or three days away from home and station. Yet this is the price they are willing to pay for their ministry training. For many of them, the Bible is their only source book.

Because such local training is available, some of the church workers may actually have had little formal education and even less theological background. But with on-the-job training and close supervision from more senior colleagues, they gradually grow in the ministry.

## 6. Financial Needs

We were often reminded of the financial needs of the churches throughout our visit. After the Cultural Revolution ended in the late 1970s, church buildings were gradually returned to the churches. Generally, there are much work that needs to be done in terms of rehabilitation after years of misuse and neglect.

For example, the building in Putian was 'restored' to the church in 1979. (This was the church where John Sung's father was pastor.) There was much damage done by the Red Guards and the church had to be extensively repaired before it could be used again. In 1984, there was a huge Thanksgiving Service in which 3000 worshippers were present with the Communist Party officials seated as VIPs in the front row!

Often there is also the need to expand the facilities due to the drastic increase in the number of worshippers. While some churches do spend large sums of money to have a 'beautiful church', most would in fact focus more on function rather than form. We saw a few of the churches that are still partially completed - only the sanctuary and the main meeting rooms are functional with the rest to be completed when more funds become available. Maybe Malaysian churches can take a lesson from this practice.

## 7. Word of Caution

The church is growing and changing rapidly, even as the whole of China is changing tremendously. There are tensions. We could sometimes sense an undercurrent of competition among pastors and churches - both within the Three-Self churches and also among the house churches. It is guite easy to





be distracted by another person's successes and forget to look to God and His Kingdom, which is what really counts. In the registered churches, the struggle for position can lead to compromise. Many of the younger leaders are frustrated when the older ones hang on and stifle church growth. Among the unregistered churches, there is also the issue of financial accountability.

More critically, there is the need to put aside the years of fear and suspicion between the house churches and Three-Self churches. Humanly speaking, it is painful and difficult; yet it has to be done. It is encouraging to see many Chinese-speaking churches outside China (especially from Hong Kong and the U.S.A.) coming in to bridge the divide. They are able to do so even as they minister to the churches through teaching and training, conducting evangelistic meetings and providing financial support. Our prayer is that, in time to come, the past hurts and bitterness will be set aside, and the church will work together in unity for the truth of the Gospel and proclamation of God's love and reconciliation among all the peoples.

## One Last Word

Is there still persecution in China? The answer has to be: Yes. But it does not happen everywhere throughout the country. The coastal regions and big cities are certainly more open but in the interior, the situation varies from place to place. We must not forget that there has been a strong anti-Christian sentiment among many Chinese because of the painful legacy of Western imperialism in the past 150 years and of the strong Communist propaganda in more recent times. Pray that, even as the country prepares for the Olympics in 2008, there will be greater and more lasting openness and

China - ZhongGuo, the Middle Kingdom, actually has another very ancient name, and that is "Shenzhou", which means God's Country. The origin of this name appears to have been lost in the mist of time, but today the Chinese church has gladly appropriated this name for their homeland as they believe the time has come for God to truly re-claim this land for Himself. Pray for China that the church will remain faithful to God, to the Bible, to the Gospel and to the evangelisation of the whole world.

Rongyao qui yu Shangdi! To God be the glory! ❖

by Rev. & Mrs Hwa Jen

## Some suggestions:

- 2. There are many opportunities to serve in China, like English Language teaching, both short-term and long-term. Ask around,



A Malaysian "Samaritan" in

## NewOrleans

uring this Spring Break, together with 4 Ustudents from Calvin College, I took an eighteen-hour road trip south to New Orleans, fleeing the bitter winter cold for the summer sunshine on the southern coast. Our trip was mainly sponsored by fellow Christians and the US government.

Hurricane Katrina has taken place half a year ago, but many areas have yet to be restored and half the population has not returned. Volunteering with Samaritan's Purse, a Billy Graham organization, we would "mud-out" houses in preparation for rebuilding.

We soon found there was more than mud to move. We hauled out the entire contents of houses and stripped them down to their frames, knocking down plaster walls and tearing up floors and ceilings. Our efforts seemed insignificant, but we brought hope with us. Many who were ready to leave because they did not know how to begin

reconstruction, later took down "For Sale" signs and decided to rebuild their communities. The work we did provided opportunities for evangelism and prayer. One day, we were able to give out four Bibles to various families on the street we were on - a Bible for each family who accepted Christ. The trip also helped us to see the results of our regular volunteer work - results we often do not know of because of our limited interaction with those we have helped.

It is easy for us students to be caught up in our non-stop studies and activities, but we need to stay engaged with the world around us and experience things that will open our eyes, challenge us, and help us to grow. We often feel we have little to offer but the little we can give, God takes and multiplies beyond our imaginations. �

## **David Tan**

Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan

## TRAC**School** for**Intercessors**: Part 2

"Growing in the Intercessory Lifestyle & Developing Models of Prayer"

Dates: 3-5 November 2006

Venue : Stella Maris, Tanjung Bungah, Penang

Facilitator : Ms Wee Lay Ching Cost : RM150.00 per person

Contact : Mrs Rhema Rao at TRAC HQ

03-7954 2836 or rhema@trac.org.my

## Part 2 Highlights

- 1 Intercessor's armoury
- When the armour falls apart
- 3 Exposing the darkness from within
- 4 A clean heart and a right spirit
- 5 Pitfalls an intercessor has to watch for

This School will be especially helpful for:
Pastors, Church Leaders, Local Church Prayer
Coordinators, those who had attended the last three
TRAC Prayer Conferences and the School for Intercessors
- Part 1 as well as others in the church who have a heart
for the prayer and intercession ministry.

Exercise: Developing a prayer model: Model 2

## TwoMethodistsAppointed toNationalHumanRights Commission (SUHAKAM)

Two out of the four new Human Rights Commissioners appointed to SUHAKAM this year are members of the Methodist Church. They are DATUK DR. DENISON JAYASOORIA who has also been appointed as SUHAKAM's Economic, Cultural and Social Rights Committee Chairman and DATO' DR. MICHAEL YEOH who is also appointed to be SUHAKAM's liaison with the Police and a member of SUHAKAM's Complaints and Investigations Panel.

Both Dato' Dr. Yeoh and Datuk Dr. Denison also served in the Royal Commission on Police. Dr. Yeoh is a member of the K.L. Wesley Methodist Church, whilst Dr. Denison is from Sentul Grace Methodist Church.

Any members of the church who wishes to raise any complaints on abuse of Human Rights or any issues pertaining to Human Rights can email

Dr. Denison at denison@yss98.com or Dr. Yeoh at dmyeoh@asli.com.my