

# BERITA TRAC



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## From the President's Desk

### Content

#### From the President's Desk

Rev. Ong Hwai Teik

#### Youth

- 03 • Tracking the Year of the Youth
- 05 • God at Work (Jeremiah School 2006)
- 06 • A Life Changing Experience at Jeremiah School
- 07 • Blessed at Jeremiah School
- 08 • Blessed Through a Mentoring Experience at Jeremiah School

#### Prayer

- 10 • 3rd TRAC Prayer Conference - Mdm Chan Lai Ping
- 11 • 3rd TRAC Prayer Conference - Ai Hua

#### Laity

- 13 • Open Heavens, Global Missions

#### Testimony

- 14 • A China Experience
- 17 • Divine Intervention, Divine Encounter and Divine Plan

#### Announcements

- 19 • Prison, Drugs and Special Awards 2005
  - TRAC School for Intercessions
  - Summary of Scholarship/ Loan... Foundation
- 20 • The Da Vinci Code: A Quest for Answers

"The Avian flu has affected our sales by 30% or so lah!" "Wah! With the 30 sen petrol price increase, don't know what's going to happen-lah". These are some common comments that I have heard recently from some of my friends. Even if we wanted to, we cannot avoid the migratory birds "landing" in Malaysia; neither can we prevent the recent escalation of crude oil prices around the world from affecting us. Such is the limit of our control and the "integrated-ness" of God's world.

Without the advantage of having lived in a "global village", the psalmists of long ago declared with eyes of faith that "You are the hope of everyone on earth" (Ps 65:5). They declared assuredly - "Shout joyful praises to God **all the earth**" (Ps 66:1) and "May the nations praise You, O God. Yes, may all the nations praise You" (Ps 67:5).

In the New Testament, the early church called on God to extend His glorious Kingdom in the **world** as they prayed - "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." **They called on God** for the fullness of the Holy Spirit so as "to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope" (Eph 3:19-20) in the

work of the Gospel. **They called on God** to save unbelievers (eg Rom 10:1). They called on God specifically for boldness in proclaiming the Gospel... "Praying at all times in the Spirit... and also for me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery the Gospel" (Eph 6:18-19). **They called on God** to send out reinforcements... "Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest" (Matt 9:38 and also Acts 13: 2-3 - "Then after fasting and praying they laid hands on them and sent them off"). **They called on God** to establish leadership in the newly found outpost churches (Acts 14:23 - "... when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer & fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed"). They called on God for "**OPEN HEAVENS**" of answered prayer that will bring glory to the Father by bearing much fruit (John 15:8) - in local and **GLOBAL MISSIONS**. **Prayer is for the glory of the Father:** it is our open admission that without Christ we can do nothing. Prayer is the demonstration of the turning away from ourselves to God in the certainty and confidence that He will provide the help needed to do His will.

» » continued on page 2



## From the President's Desk



» » continued from page 1

Prayer "tangibilises" our humility as dependent and needy creatures, who exalt God as an all-sufficient and willing Provider. Prayer is closely linked to the release of the power of the Gospel (Rom 1:16 - "I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes..."). It is God's "instrument" to release the power of the Gospel, that this message or Word becomes the immediate regenerating tool of the Holy Spirit that brings new life to those who open their hearts to receive it.

It is our joy to witness the gracious work of the Lord in strengthening the **prayer movement in TRAC** as we had a fruitful time of encountering the Lord at the 3rd TRAC Prayer Conference (17-19 Feb 06) and the 2nd TRAC Youth National Prayer Retreat (11-14 Mar 06) - both held in the PD Methodist Centre. 117 from 18 churches attended the former while about 80 were in the latter event. We want to see even more of our pastors, leaders and members attend these Prayer Conferences and Retreats. Arising from the 3rd TRAC Prayer Conference we are now ready to move on to having a "School for Intercessors" - which is scheduled for 16-18 June 2006 in Penang. It is heartening to note that over 70 attended the Southern District Leaders' Retreat (hosted by Melaka Wesley) that was based on the theme of prayer as well. We want to see TRAC as a praying Annual Conference. "**Watch and Pray**" will be the theme of TRAC Youth Missions trip

to Myanmar (May 27 - June 06 2006) as our team seeks to share this with the church and the young people there.

We must continue to maintain the **focus on prayer** so that we can see the "outflow" of authentic missions "glocally". Genuine prayers cannot but be connected to the "fear of the Lord" and godliness - which results in the flow of ministries and missions. Our TRAC Jeremiah School IV had its largest intake thus far, as there were 40 participants (a number of whom are children of pastors and leaders in TRAC and the local churches). Our youths will be going on mission trips locally and overseas. More of our TRAC churches are planning to make visits to bless our 4 adopted countries of Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and North Vietnam.

In all that we seek to do, let us as individuals, as congregations and as an Annual Conference never forget to call on the Lord, as prayer honours God and bring His will to pass on earth as He opens heaven.

"And a great quantity of incense was given to him to mix with the prayers of God's people, to be offered on the gold altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, mixed with the prayers of the saints, ascended up to God from the altar where the angel had poured them out." Rev 8:3-4 ☆

**Rev. Ong Hwai Teik**



# Youth



## Tracking the Year of the Youth

A number of churches have asked questions ranging from “How do we launch the Year of the Youth - can you give us some ideas?” to “We have launched the Year of the Youth. Now what?” Personally, I am not so concerned with how we launch it but more with how we end it. Will we get to where we want to go this year?

### Purpose and Objective

The Year of the Youth is not so much about the youth or youth culture, but more about youth ministry. In order to raise a new generation with leadership potential and capabilities, a godly generation of a different breed who will be a channel of blessings and growth in TRAC, we need to look at the environment, structures and relationships that provide for sustainable growth and transformation of our youth ministries. The Year of the Youth is to provide us with a framework to pursue the development of the resources and structures that would enhance the growth of youth ministries in the local church long term. How that works out in the local church will vary from church to church. But there are distinctive elements of emphasis (outlined in the previous issue of Berita TRAC) that will guide us and in some ways suggest how growth may be tracked and what it means to end well this year.

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» » continued from page 3

## Tracking the Year of the Youth

By tracking the growth of youth ministries in our churches this year, we will know that we will end well if we take note of the following (place a check mark for each item for self-tracking):

### Items based on Year of the Youth Emphasis

1. Your local church has plans and is working towards setting aside an additional 3-4 adults for youth work (MYF, BB, GB)
2. Your local church has plans and is sending potential youth and adult leadership for training in youth ministry either through Board of Youth Work training programmes or STM modular courses on Youth Ministry
3. Your local church youth ministry leader are networking with other youth ministry leader in regional youth counselors network or youth ministry consultations
4. Your local church and its adult leadership understand and express the importance of nurturing the next generation
5. Your local church intentionally creates opportunities for youths to be part of mainstream church ministries
6. Your local church intentionally creates opportunities where youths can understand adults and adults can understand youths in cross-cultures, trends, and ministry
7. Your local church intentionally sends/trains youths in cross-cultural missions and outreach in financial giving, prayers and participation
8. Your local church youths learn how to connect with people cross-culturally and this is seen practiced in the local church in the ways they connect with adults individually and in ministry to the adults
9. Your local church has plans and is working towards having a mature adult mentor for every youth leader who will help them grow deeper in the spiritual disciplines
10. Your local church intentionally guides/trains youths in prayer and ministering in prayer
11. Your local church has plans and is mobilizing youths for concerted prayer locally and nationally
12. Your local church has plans and is working towards developing strong family ministries as a foundation for youth ministries
13. Your local church intentionally guides/trains youths in the regular study (not mere reading) of the Word

### Has Plans

### Has Action

In the end, it is not merely about programmes but about how our youth ministries are growing. Numbers and activities do not necessarily measure success but quality of growth in the lives of the youths that are adult-led, deep sense of community across generations, and youths having a broader vision of God and His work conference-wide. 🌸

by Dr Herbert Tan



'These are my children. I love them and I am at work in their lives.' I felt God was laying those words in my heart at the commissioning service of Jeremiah School 2006 which was held at Wesley Methodist Church in Kuantan. The school was well attended this time. We had forty youths and five full-time counselors (mentors). It was held from January 4 to February 26 with a break in between (January 26 - February 6) for Chinese New Year.



When I reflected on what took place at Jeremiah School, I am amazed at the work of God in the lives of our young people. Managing a school of forty students was a challenging task for us. We saw many struggles taking place: relationship conflicts, disciplinary problems, physical limitations, painful experiences and so on. Furthermore, the depth of pain, isolation and struggles in the hearts of our young people was tremendous.

Beneath all these struggles and difficulties, we also discovered a sincere desire and a deep longing for God in the lives of our young people. As Mentors, we learned many valuable lessons from our youths. 'Never judge a book by its cover,' as the saying goes, was a lesson so true when it came to working with our youths. Their sincere desire for God, their passionate pursuit for

the things of God, and their willingness to sacrifice were some reminders to us once again of how we should love God.

Personally, I have been ministered to deeply by this year's Jeremiah School. At the foot washing ceremony one youth prayed for areas of my life that were in need of God's touch and healing. Tears just flowed as I felt God's presence and healing flowing through me.

Although many have gained much from Jeremiah School, I have discovered that those who came to the school with a willingness to learn and change experienced great blessings. They were more willing to receive instruction and handle correction constructively. Even when we are so called 'misunderstood' or 'misconstrued' it is important to respond in an appropriate manner that reflects a deep faith and trust in a loving God who knows fully well our present situation. The good news is that for those who are willing to go 'all the way', God is able to work marvelous miracles in their lives. The greatest miracle is the transformation of one's life!

There were many evidences of God's work throughout the seven weeks. Here are some:

- † Acceptance of self and God's view of one self
- † Healing of past hurts and experience of inner healing
- † Healing of broken relationships, resolving relationship conflicts, learning to live in a community
- † Experiencing forgiveness of sins and forgiving those who have sinned against us
- † Deliverance from bondages and evil spirits
- † Capturing a passion for the lost
- † Excitement in sharing the gospel
- † Establishment of spiritual disciplines

I guess there are many other areas that could be listed but I must say that the process of life transformation has begun. I want to thank God for the mentors who have loved our youths and laboured sacrificially. Dr. Herbert Tan, Chang Choy Quin, Rhema Rao and Grace Yong - your investment in the lives of these people have resulted in God's name being glorified. Praise be to the Name of the Lord! ✿

**by Rev. Christopher Rao**  
National Youth Director



## A Life Changing Experience at Jeremiah School



Jeremiah School was a very enriching and great learning process for me. God spoke to me in many areas of my life. One area in my life that God touched and revealed Himself to me during JS was "self acceptance".

Throughout JS, I struggled with the whole area of self acceptance. God revealed this to me during the first few days of JS. I told my mentor, Grace, about it in tears. It was a problem that I had been struggling with since Form 1 and I never realized that it was there. She read Psalms 139:13-16 to me.

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

I was comforted by it but I still had not

gotten over the problem yet. Whenever I talked about this topic with my quiet time group or mentoring group, it would bring tears to my eyes. A healing process had started in my life but it had not been completed yet.

Then a few days before our Chinese New Year break, I was troubled by the problem again. I sat down with Pastor Christopher Rao and Rhema and had a good cry over it again. All the accumulated bottled up feelings caused a great pain in my heart. Rhema prayed for me as I cried and cried. A question that kept on ringing in my mind was, "How can God love me when my own friends don't really love me?" At that time, I felt that only my parents love me for who I am. Rhema reminded me that true acceptance is not found in my friends but in Jesus; nevertheless, this question kept on bugging me.

This went on until four days before JS ended. Pastor Christopher and Rhema were praying for me during the foot washing session. He started off his

prayer by thanking God for giving me to my parents when they asked for a child. Then, the fact that God answered their prayer through me struck me like lightning and I simply knew that GOD LOVED ME!!! He just touched my heart in such an awesome way and revealed His love for me! I was so overwhelmed by the experience that I just could not stop crying the whole night. That Thursday night, I just went around telling my close friends and mentor that God loved me with tears in my eyes. I was healed!

Jeremiah School is definitely one of my life's unforgettable events. There, I experienced God's goodness and love for me. Besides having a great personal encounter with God, I have also grown to know and appreciate many new friends who love me and accept me for who I am! I'm so glad I attended JS! ✿

*Submitted by Hannah Ong*







My name is Johanan Lawrence. I was born and bred as a Christian. Yet, I only began to take my relationship with God seriously in the year 2005.

Attending Jeremiah School (JS) was truly a wonderful God-given experience. For one, it provided an atmosphere where God was the centre of focus. I was able to spend time seeking God and allowing myself to be ministered by Him. The Lord allowed me to experience His love in very tangible ways. It is one thing to be taught that God loves you, but to experience His love is another thing. The Lord began to convict me of how much I needed Him, to fulfill His purposes, to live a holy life. I just wanted to please Him. I realized how much I hurt God by sinning against Him. I found renewed strength in overcoming sin because I wanted to please God. I could only live in obedience to God if I loved Him.

God used my experiences in JS to teach me to put my trust in Him alone, not in my capabilities, gifts or even other people. This gave me an insight into God's character. The Lord truly is a jealous God, jealous for those He loves. This also taught me to see things from God's point of view and not the world's. This means knowing God's truths (the Bible) and applying them in my daily life.

The Lord also convicted me concerning the area of my worship to Him. I realized that I was obligated to worship God in all I do at all times regardless of whether I wanted to or not. Many times we rob God of the glory He deserves. The Lord also brought me deeper in my prayer life. He showed me that the only way to truly pray was to have an intimate relationship with Him.. I experienced the overwhelming joy of praying in the spirit, with my heart, emotions and mind.

Towards the end of JS each participant was given a book authored by Warren W. Wiersbe. What was written on the back struck me, "To be broken before God and bold before men." This is boldness not out of personal courage but from the assurance that comes from God when you do His will, knowing that His hand is upon you, guiding, sustaining and protecting you. Broken, because before God all our sins are laid bare,

all our works are but filthy rags. Yet there is a joy from being broken before God, just as Psalm 51:17b says, "a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."

In JS, God blessed me with many close friends, particularly among the participants. It was truly a memorable and joyful time, living in a community with friends that you had come to love. True enough there were conflicts along the way but God used them to teach us to be open and forgiving towards one another.

The mission trip to Kuantan, was really an eye-opener for me. I realized that I had been totally neglecting the Great Commission. Furthermore, sharing the gospel with complete strangers was not as hard as I thought it would have been. How much easier it would be to share the gospel with my friends. I also learned of the need to pray before sharing the gospel, for evangelism and spiritual warfare go together. I understand better now that it is not my duty to convert people to Christ but nevertheless I do have the responsibility to live a good testimony as a Christian.

Returning from JS, I really am excited to share what I have learnt and to impact the lives of those around me, just as a beggar telling another beggar where to find food, especially the boys of 2nd Penang Company Boys' Brigade and members of Joshua House.

I thank God for creating JS, for using it and the mentors to bless my life so that I may in turn bless others. I thank the mentors Pastor Christopher, Aunty Rhema, Aunty Choy Quin, Uncle Herbert and Grace for their love in teaching and mentoring me. I also would like to thank my home church Penang Wesley for sponsoring me. Lastly, I thank also Dr Samuel Ong and his mother for generously sponsoring the study bibles and books . In closing I urge all those who have the opportunity to attend Jeremiah School. Go and be blessed. ✿

*Submitted by Johanan Lawrence*



## Blessed Through a Mentoring Experience at Jeremiah School

Fancy a 2-month programme changing your life and perspectives of it? Well, it really doesn't sound all that impossible, because Jeremiah School 2006 did that to me.

When I applied to go to Jeremiah School, I had 2 things in mind. One was to rediscover God, and the other, to give and share whatever I had in terms of my personal journey with God with the youths. It did not exactly cross my mind that I would come back ministered to, and definitely not expecting to bring home many deep relationships formed in the 7 weeks.

So what were some of the things that I brought back with me? Firstly, it would be head knowledge. The facilitators were an excellent lot. In my opinion, they are probably the best in their respective fields. Secondly, I brought back experiences, experiences that mainly taught me about God's goodness and faithfulness in my life. Let me assure you that my 7 weeks was not all a bed of roses. I had my share of

pain and obstacles. But God taught me more things even in the midst of pain. He loves His people more than I ever could or would. Thirdly and finally, I brought back the knowledge that God never fails to deliver. The question is whether I am willing to wait, on His terms and timing?

What I found out about mentoring was that it is not only about sharing my life experiences with others, but also walking with them, encouraging them on, and pointing them to God when all they can see is darkness. It is also about helping them to see that they can become MORE than they are in the present, no matter how terrible a state they think they are in. God has definitely given each of us a great future, so it is really an honour to be one of those people who believe in our youths as the leaders of the future and to spur them on in their walk with God Almighty. The greatest satisfaction I have as a mentor is to see some of them throw off things which hindered their walk with God, and walk tall because of

the truths from God that they began to adopt and believe in for their own lives in JS. Their love for each other encouraged me in my faith. Haven't we been called to love each other as we love ourselves? There is hope for the church of Jesus Christ!

God is indeed working in our midst and in the lives of our young people, even though sometimes all that we see discourages us. Our greatest hope and trust should be in God, because He knows what He is doing and He is definitely in control. Maybe then the challenge is for you to put aside that 2 months, and come join us, the JS mentors, in this short journey with our youths. Trust me, you will not regret coming to Jeremiah School! ✿

**Submitted by Grace Yong  
- DUMC**







## 3<sup>RD</sup> TRAC Prayer Conference 2006

# Prayer

Twenty-nine of us - members of Canning Garden Methodist Church, Grace Methodist Church, Bercham Methodist Church and Ipoh Wesley Methodist Church - traveled together to attend the 3rd TRAC Prayer Conference. There were a total of 117 participants at the conference, with 18 out of 38 TRAC churches represented. The age group of the participants' ranged from the youngest member, being only 15 years of age, to the most senior member, an 80 year old sister from Emmanuel Methodist Church.

The speaker for the conference was Miss Wee Lay Ching, a coordinator and facilitator of prayer, networking and development of the "One Hope Centre", a para-church organization born out of the network of churches in Geylang (one of the hottest red-light districts in Singapore). She pointed out that the key to "Open Heavens" begins with obedience, and it begins with us. The speaker led us through a series of self-examination, where we were called to acknowledge our sins and seek his forgiveness.

TRAC churches have awakened and responded to God's call to be 'Houses of Prayer.' Prayer movements have already begun among some of our churches as testified by representatives from six TRAC churches. TRAC churches are crying out for REVIVAL!

The presence of God was greatly felt by many of us. We came together and prayed in one accord just like on the day of Pentecost in the Book of Acts. Coming together to pray in one accord will indeed move God's hands and trigger the waves of revival in Malaysia and the region of Asia. One Pastor commented that he thought that he was on the Prayer Mountain in Korea, when we prayed in that way. He didn't know that Methodists could pray so powerfully. A sister from Penang Wesley shared on the

manifestation of God's power and grace over the church as they delivered a young girl from demons and now her family declares Jesus as their Saviour. We are encouraged by what God is doing through this church.

Bishop Dr Hwa Yung was present on Saturday night. He shared with us some of the concerns of the Methodist Churches in Malaysia. Our TRAC President, Rev Ong Hwa Teik also shared with us some of the concerns of our TRAC Churches and the areas that require the empowering of the Holy Spirit. The concerns were brought before God as we prayed corporately.

We had a great time together over the weekend of learning, sharing, encouraging and at the same time of being encouraged. It was a time of refreshing as we worshiped in His Presence. However, the greatest time of all was when God's Holy Presence was felt by many of us and that brought forth renewal and restoration of our spirit and soul. Indeed, we look forward with eagerness and anticipation to the Methodist Prayer Conference that will be held in August 2007.

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➤ ➤ ➤ continued from page 9

Here are some of the comments by participants from various TRAC Churches:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>1</b> Brother Steve Nyu, a young man worshipping in Wesley Methodist Church, Kuala Lumpur said it was his first time attending a prayer conference and he was greatly blessed. The prayer conference had brought him to a closer relationship with God and he will definitely encourage more of his church youths to attend future prayer conferences, particularly the nation-wide Prayer Conference scheduled for August next year.</p>   | <p><b>4</b> Brother Khor Teik Hooi came all the way from Wesley Methodist, Alor Star. A first timer, he found the prayer conference inspiring and encouraging. He was deeply encouraged by the sharing of others present and believed the Holy Spirit was moving in our midst. encouraged by the sharing of others present and believed the Holy Spirit was moving in our midst.</p>   |
| <p><b>2</b> Sister Pauline Choo from PJ Trinity Church came with 16 others from their church. She wanted to learn to pray and, indeed by God's grace, she was blessed at this prayer conference and can now pray more confidently without getting cold feet. She is deeply encouraged and can now engage in an open conversation and relationship with God. She will definitely come back again and will encourage her cell group members to attend the next Prayer Conference. Alleluia! Praise be to GOD!</p> | <p><b>5</b> Sister Lucy Sim, the most senior participant in our group came from Emmanuel Methodist Church. She received a lot of spiritual food. The prayer conference had encouraged her to walk faithfully and daily with our LORD</p>   |
| <p><b>3</b> Sister Mary Kok from Sg Way Subang Methodist Church gave praise and glory to God for the spirit-filled prayer conference. It was indeed the empowering of the Holy Spirit that enabled us to repent, to seek God's forgiveness and to walk in His ways and His righteousness.</p>   | <p><b>6</b> Sister Lucrece Loo, from SS Methodist Church, Kayu Ara sensed the waves of change taking place in the Methodist Church in Malaysia. She was filled with gratitude to God for His faithfulness, for He has placed leaders who are people with the passion, heart and vision of God. She felt privileged to be part of the prayer conference and she was excited to hear testimonies of the hand of God raising an Army which is the church, marching forward to fulfill His purposes.</p> |

The 2 ½ days of learning, sharing and encouraging each other came to an end as we bade each other farewell on Sunday. God was with us and continues to be with us. We shall come together as a body of Christ to pray not only for our church and leaders but also for our nation and for the world, especially for those who have yet to know and receive our JESUS CHRIST. We shall be the light and salt of the world just as our Lord has commanded us to be. ✿

***All Praise and glory to him!!***

***Mdm Chan Lai Ping & Ms Wong Mui Fong***  
Wesley Methodist Church, Ipoh





After a long six-and-a-half hours drive, we finally reached the PD Methodist Centre. The journey was long but God was good and He paved the way with good weather. Even without knowing the theme of this year's prayer conference, I decided to attend. I believe it would be beneficial for me to participate in TRAC events as I'm now working in the church office. I knew God had something in store for me at the conference.



## THE STORY OF JONAH...

On the first night itself, God reminded me that I must not avoid God's call. After the first session on the story of Jonah, God gave me an understanding that beyond the love and grace of God, there are the issues of judgment and consequences of disobedience. I've pledged my life to God, to serve Him full-time after my graduation. My calling and the covenant that I made with God were confirmed and renewed at the Prayer Conference. Besides that, God also impressed upon my heart to impact lives and influence them to be involved in "World Missions". God is my helper. We also learned that as we progress in our prayer life and as we desire for "Open Heavens", we must not carry our old baggage of pride with us. The three 'P's that we have to rid ourselves of, are prestige, position and possession.

## PRAYER BEYOND THE WALLS..

I'm deeply encouraged when Lay Ching shared on extending our prayer boundaries. We should never limit our Lord. I believe that God is beginning a new work in our midst as we gather as a conference, united in one spirit to seek Him. We are to wake up from our slumber and to expand our prayer boundaries to cover 38 local conferences, expand our network beyond the Methodist Church into the larger Body of Christ and to expand the prayer shield to cover all leadership beyond the local church. This has truly encouraged me for it affirms that we are slowly leaving our comfort zones to embrace the call from God to reach the nations through prayers.

## MISSIONS...

Praise God that we also had a session where we prayed for the nations. The four countries of our focus were Nepal, Vietnam, Myanmar and Bangladesh. My heart was truly touched when our TRAC President shared on "Focus Your Giving Globally Through A Faith Commitment Offering For Missions". I read a book on "Challenge to Missions" quite recently and it talks about faith offering (committing ourselves by faith to a specific sum for missions that God has convicted our hearts to give and that our faith will grow as we stay committed to that promise). Little did I know that President Ong would share on that very same issue. It was a confirmation and a reminder for me that besides being involved in missions and being a full-time worker, I can still give a faith offering to the Lord, believing that God sees the heart of those who love Him and surrender their all to Him. My heart was deeply touched by our President's burden in giving "Globally" and mobilizing people to do so as well. Be faithful in your giving as God enables us. ✿

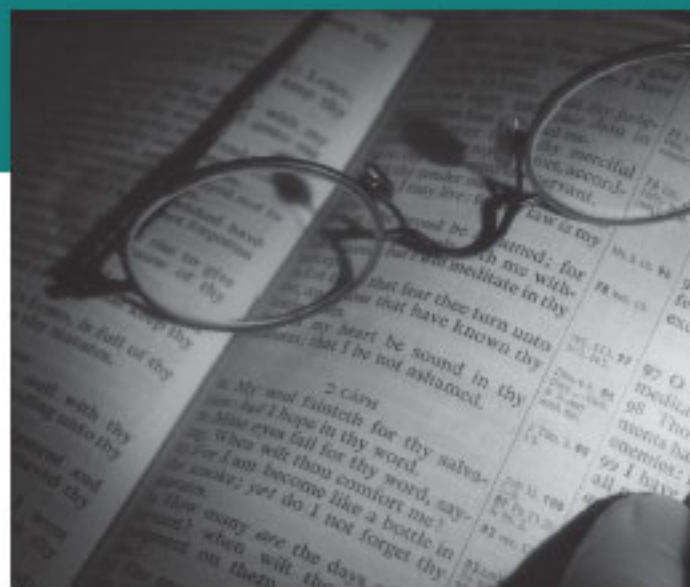
**Praise be to God for we can see Him working in our midst.**

**Ai Hua**  
Penang Wesley



# Laity

## Open Heavens, Global Missions



### TRAC (Transforming, Redeeming, Abiding, Community) in Christ

The Vision for this quadrennium, "Open Heavens, Global Missions" covers the period 2006-2009. We ask for God's guidance for us to be transformed into a community that reaches out not only to the people in our country but also to the rest of the world. After all, our founder John Wesley said "the world is my parish". It is our prayer that our church members catch the vision and become champions of the vision by translating it into action.

#### The 5 Essentials:

#### 1. Leadership Development

In the past our growth rate had been hampered by the lack of leaders. While altar calls to challenge the people to enter into full time ministry have their purpose, there are other avenues to explore like investing in our youths after they have finished their SPM through the Jeremiah School. These young and vibrant youths while waiting for their results are encouraged by their parents to attend a two-month stint at the Jeremiah School. To date we have exposed 3 batches and we will follow up with them even as they enter into universities and higher institutions of learning.

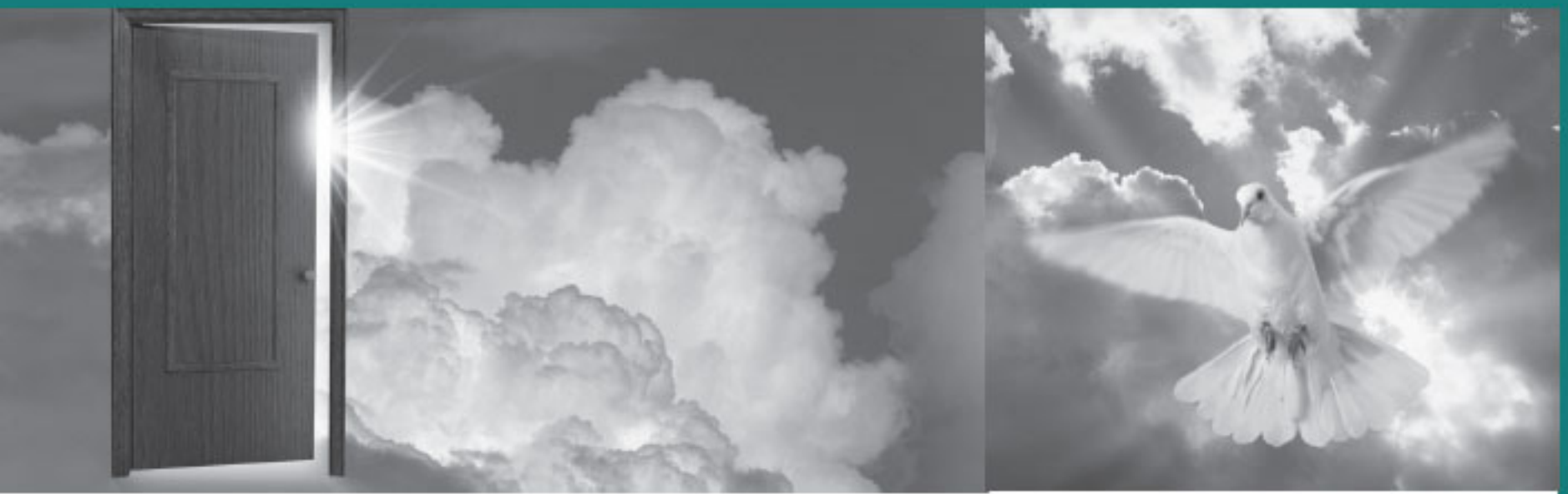
The second approach at the local level is for each church to challenge their people to take up the Local Preacher's Licence (LPL). Upon graduation they are encouraged to move on by taking up either the Approved Supply Pastor (ASP) posts or be full time ministry staff. The Board of Ministry in collaboration with Board of Laity are looking into this.

#### 2. Community Building

As we seek to build God's family in the church let us also diligently seek to draw our own family into the family of God. God is in the business of saving souls. This has always been God's vision for us. Let us pray about it. In Isaiah 55:1-13 we are reminded that God's word like rain and snow will not return to Him without accomplishing the purpose for which He sent them out. Such faith we must have in community building in the church and in our homes. We must start with our family. In the church family - have we baptized our children, youths and seniors for them to become members? Is your own family in oneness with God? Start with your family before moving to your neighbours.







### 3. Deepening Spirituality

There is generally a decline in spirituality. Due to modern ways of communication, there is loss of passion in prayers, distraction in thoughts and faith is threatened as people become impersonal. However God's word "will lead us out in joy and lead us back in peace" (Isaiah 55:12). Therefore we are reminded "to be rooted strongly in the word" by attending Bible Studies, Prayer Sessions and Care Groups. This will be emphasized this quadrennium. We are to build up the momentum of our prayer life at church, District and TRAC levels, leading ultimately to the General Conference Prayer Conference in 2007. For a start, each church should finalize the appointment of a prayer coordinator.

### 4. Missions and Outreach

Presently, coordination of missions work in TRAC has started. The Board of Missions will build a comprehensive database of statistics of churches that are doing missions work overseas. From the data collected, TRAC can have a more focused outlook of where to concentrate our efforts and be able to forecast where future missions will be. There is also a need to explore the synergy between missions and the other ministries. Finally there is a need also to prepare a report on good practice, guidance on missions and outreach, assessment of uncertainties and risks, and changes that are likely to happen in the foreign countries we are involved in.

### 5. Family, Children, Youth and Seniors Ministries

Youth and Seniors Ministries: Present day trend shows children are being cared for by maids from Indonesia or Philippines as both parents are working. Youths spend more time on the internet surfing. How do we reach such a group that lacks social interaction as they stick to their TV screen? Because of this rising trend, family ties become loose. We want to make 2006 a year of the youth. There is a need for the seniors to play their part - doing grand parenting duties and guiding the youth and children by sharing their rich experiences. To make ourselves more relevant in this 21st century we must communicate that in this lonely society. The cell group will replace the disintegrating family in providing family care.

Let us pray and together make "Open Heavens, Global Missions" a success. ✿

***To God be the Glory!***

Submitted by **Chan Kook Weng**



# Testimony

## A China Experience



What is the Church in China really like? Are the house churches still being persecuted? Do the registered churches follow the party line and are not allowed to preach the Gospel? How big is the Church in China? If these are some of the questions you sometimes ask, you will understand my desire to visit China and find out what the situation about the Church in China is.

I took the opportunity to visit China as part of my three-month short study leave in August 2005. Through the kindness of some friends and relatives, my wife, Tsyh Yong, was able to travel with me. It was a good thing too, as travelling together as a couple opened doors for us that would not have been possible if I had travelled alone. This was a first visit to China for both of us.

We had several options for planning our trip and we settled on contacts made by our friends Rev. Khoo Cheng Hoot (CAC Singapore) and Mr Larry Chok who is presently based in Hong Kong. The itinerary took us to Guangzhou (Canton) and five other places in Fujian Province.

The very first church we visited was a house church in Guangzhou. We were not disappointed. When we arrived, we found the church was already packed to overflowing, and there was a spill-over crowd in the court-yard and in the alley,—both men and women, young and old. As visitors, we were given seats and we took part in the worship service in a hall packed with people. We found out later the pastor was actually speaking on the third storey of

the house and the message was being sent to us by close-circuit TV. The whole church was quite open and people were coming and going very freely. The halls were brightly lit with fluorescent lights, and the air-conditioners could have been used if the weather had been too warm.

After the worship service, the senior pastor (who was in his 70s) spoke to us and a few other foreign visitors,—for over an hour. He himself had been jailed for a total of more than twenty years, but he does not anticipate any more arrests from the authorities. Nevertheless, the Bureau of Public Security (BPS) would still occasionally 'harass' his co-workers and question them for not being registered.

We also saw the worshippers buying Bibles and song-books quite freely. Small groups of people were gathered here and there for fellowship, counselling and prayer. It was obvious that this church, even though unregistered, was no longer an underground church.

That same afternoon we went to a registered church\*, for a youth service. Even though it was raining heavily, the church was almost full. They sang just as enthusiastically as in any youth service we can see in Malaysia, and the sermon was solidly biblical. This came as a surprise after all the different stories we had heard before. What was even more impressive and encouraging was that the place was filled with young adults, even though there are so many other things they could have done on a Sunday afternoon in a big city like Guangzhou. Certainly, no one could have forced [\*It must be noted that the terms used





Over-flow Crowd from a House Church

for the churches are: (i) official, registered or TSPM church, and (ii) unofficial, unregistered, underground, or house churches. TSPM stands for "Three-Self Patriotic Movement" to which all registered churches belong. Neither the TSPM churches nor the house churches are homogeneous. As we were to find out, they vary from place to place, and both groups have differences among themselves. We also found out that, while there is no official interaction between the leaders of the registered and unregistered churches, quite a number of believers actually attend both kinds of churches.]

It was rather sad to note that the old church building was badly in need of repairs,--following years of neglect and outright destruction by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. The furnishings looked old and not well-kept, and the roof was leaking in several places. That church in fact was in the midst of a rebuilding campaign, with a projected cost of RMB 1 million!

From Guangzhou, we went on to Fujian Province, where we visited churches and other Christian ministries in five different cities. These were mostly former Methodist churches, including the one in Putian (formerly

Hinghwa) where Dr John Sung's father once pastored.

The churches are all a study in contrast. The main town churches are all large by Malaysian standards, seating easily up to a thousand people. In Fuzhou, we visited a church that was as beautiful and ornate as a London

theatre. In Nanping, it was awesome to see at the head of a T-junction of a long straight road a big church with the words from John 3:16--"Shangdi ai shiren"(God loves the world)--emblazoned on the church tower. We also visited some "village" churches. One of these was a very simple church next to the village market, but which could easily seat 200. Another was found in the basement of a community hall which was rented from the municipality. On Sundays, the preacher's voice had to compete with the noise from the mahjong tables one floor above. On the afternoon of our visit, two groups for old folks were doing Bible study.

In Xiamen (Amoy) is found the oldest Protestant church building

in China - the work of pioneering Methodist missionaries. We had to walk through several small alleys to reach it,



What you may see when you enter this town in Fujian

» » continued on page 16





➤ ➤ continued from page 15

and I could not help but think that there is no way a bride could get to church in a bridal car - a trishaw maybe! One evening, we went to the Bamboo Church (next to the main market) to attend a Young Adult Fellowship, and there were more than 50 young working adults present. We heard one of the best sermons on "Marriage and Family" ever, and I found out later the speaker was actually a lay person. All in all, in our three weeks there, we heard three talks on marriage and family, based on different texts by three different speakers in three different towns! All were carefully crafted, thoroughly biblical and exegetically sound talks/sermons. It was also a reflection of the concern in the churches of the state of morality, even among Christian young people.

The Church in Fujian has been undergoing 'restoration' for less than 30 years, and so there is an obvious shortage of senior pastors. The older generation of pastors that came through the many years of tribulation are now in their 70s, at least. While many are stepping aside for the younger ones to take over, some are still hanging on. The church leadership has fallen upon those who are now in their 40s. Under them are many full-time and part-time church workers who may be unordained; and there are also many full-time 'volunteers' who are paid only a small stipend for expenses.

But the responsibilities are tremendous. In a number of cases, the senior pastor is the pastor in charge of the main town churches, with a membership numbering in thousands. Under him may be 20 ordained pastors and unordained church workers (preachers: chuandao), each being in charge of one or more smaller churches in the surrounding towns and villages. In other words, each 'Local Conference' may be even larger than one of our District Conferences, both in terms of churches and members.

They have regular training courses for the church workers and pastors, and monthly gatherings which are actually on-the-job training/teaching workshops. As a visiting pastor, I was asked to share the Word a number of times. Typically, it would be: "Oh, Rev. Hwa, we will take you to visit our co-workers in the District meeting tomorrow. You will share the Word, and the session will be an hour long." On two occasions, there was not even any advance notice! By the wonderful grace of God, I was able to share appropriate (I think) messages each time. This was done in Mandarin, though in the villages and among the older workers, the messages had to be interpreted into the local dialect.

One of the most heart-warming experiences for us was to see 31 teenagers baptised after a Sunday worship service. (The ritual used was actually like ours.) The church had taken these young people for a one-month stay-in intensive training camp - all the expenses were paid by the church - to equip them before they leave home to go to college or university in the big cities. It had been a joy to teach them and see them responding to the Word. After the baptism service, I asked the pastor if it was not illegal to baptise them. His answer was: "Yes, it is illegal to baptise anyone under 18. But we do it anyway." He and his co-workers also get called up every now and then by the BPS for questioning, even though theirs is a registered church. This church (and many others) also run child-care centres on Sunday while the children's parents and grandparents attend the worship service. What a wonderful way to run Sunday School and youth meetings - in spite of the ban on imparting religious teaching to children.

This can only be a work of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Do pray for the church in China. 🌸

By **Rev. Hwa Jen**

\* (In the next issue will be Part 2: Lessons to be Learned.)



## A Testimony of Rosie Teh Lee Beng

I have a story to tell the whole world. It is about how God is merciful and has healed me emotionally, spiritually and physically.

## Divine Intervention

Sometime in March last year Rev Paul Christie preached the sermon on "The Rages of Storm". It concerned him undergoing a colonoscopy. I sensed the message was meant for me. I felt that God was giving a double warning through pain not only in the stomach but also at the lower abdomen. God also intervened through The Star newspaper. On 15th April 2005, I had turned to the Health page, and there was an article on colon cancer. After reading and digesting the information I decided I would consult a gastro-enterologist.

After the endoscopy procedure, he asked me to do a colonoscopy. On 25 April 2005, when the colonoscopy was performed, the scanning needle could not go through as there was a growth in the colon. He took samples from the growth for a biopsy. He also recommended an X-ray, CT scan and blood test in Colombia Hospital for confirmation.

The scan results showed that all parts were normal except for the colon. The biopsy result confirmed that the growth was cancerous and it could be stage 2 at the worst.

Through my trials and tribulations I have learned that under all circumstances to give thanks to God. That evening, before the operation the next morning, Pastor, in spite of his busy schedule came to pray. Before being wheeled into the operation theatre Kook Weng and I prayed from Psalms 23 and 121 and asked God to guide the hands of the surgeon. I had the peace of mind and calmness as I was wheeled in. I knew that God was my refuge, my rock and sustainer. The operation took three hours and was successful. Praise and glory be to God.

➤ ➤ continued on page 18





## Divine Encounter

After the operation I unceasingly prayed and meditated day and night. On the fourth day, I saw a group of men forming a circle with one man in the center just outside my room praying for all the patients in the hospital. I knew they were praying but their prayers were so silent that I could not hear a thing. But shortly afterwards I could see a preacher from a distance telling me "Rosie God has not forsaken you". I looked for the verse and found that the verse was from Isaiah 42:16 which says,

"I will lead the blind by ways they have not known along unfamiliar paths. I will guide them. I will turn the darkness into light before them. I will make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do, I will not forsake them".

As I reflected and meditated on the verse, I thanked God for turning my darkness into light and making the rough places smooth for me. Although I had to undergo chemotherapy, I am grateful that I did not have to undergo radiotherapy.

## Divine Plan

When I was told that I had cancer, I did not ask "why me?" or "why not me?" I asked God what Divine Plan He had in store for me.

### 1 His Divine Plan was to draw me closer to Him:

This is because I had backslidden and had not been serving God. Ever since my sickness I started to read the Bible more frequently once more and looked for articles of case studies of people who had suffered from pain and sickness, especially from cancer.

### 2 It was a period of testing and reconciliation:

Those six months, had been most trying for me. My eldest son's mother-in-law was down with thyroid problem and had to undergo an operation. My youngest son's mother-in-law experienced a mild stroke but has since recovered. My eldest sister had a fall which needed eight stitches on her head. My brother was almost choked to death with phlegm. My younger brother had a biopsy to confirm that the lump in his tongue was non malignant. As for my younger brother, our sicknesses drew us closer and it became a period of reconciliation. Without God sustaining me I would have collapsed. God will carry us through during these difficult times if only we trust and obey. God's divine plan indeed was to strengthen me. I was reminded of the verse from Psalms 18:35 "God, you give me your shield of victory and your right hand sustains me."

### 3 God is preparing me for a new ministry:

I have always been interested in the healing ministry. God did not allow cancer in me without a reason. After six months of undergoing endoscopy, colonoscopy, surgery, chemotherapy and medication I am more equipped to counsel people in similar circumstances. God is preparing me for ministry and those six months had been months of equipping. The Divine Plan is also to prune, discipline and to refine my character.

### Conclusion:

I would like to thank God for the gift of life and love. I thank the doctors, and nurses, relatives and friends for their prayers, kindness, help and concern. I thank the brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those in the Abraham and Moses Care Groups for upholding me. I want to thank all my friends in TRAC both pastors and laity for their constant prayers. I thank God that the cancer was detected early and operated upon immediately. As to where I will go from here, I am certain that I will go around declaring that our Lord and God is alive. I will go and serve Him mightily. I am reminded "as for me and my household we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15. Thanks and glory be to God. Amen. ✨

Submitted by **Rosie Teh Lee Beng**



# Announcement

## Prison, Drugs and Aids Special Award 2005

Every year, the Prison, Drugs and AIDS work of Malaysian Care recognizes and shows appreciation to individuals or groups who have been exemplary and faithful in serving the community at their annual Christmas Thanksgiving dinner.

We take this opportunity to congratulate the Social Concerns Committee of Wesley Church, K.L. which was selected to be one of the recipients of this special award. The committee's outreach work to the street community, prisoners, drug dependents, people living with HIV/AIDS and their families over the years was recognized at a Christmas Thanksgiving Dinner held on 10th December, 2005

## Summary of Scholarship/Loan Funds from The Methodist Council of Education & Methodist Education Foundation

Type of Scholarships	Eligibility	Contact Person
<b>Methodist Education Foundation Scholarship Loan/Grant</b> [ closing date: one month from advertisement date, 3/4/06, in the NST/Berita Harian]	Malaysian citizens who have been accepted for admission to or are already studying in institutions of Higher Learning in Malaysia.	Secretary, Methodist Education foundation, 67, Jalan 5/31, 46000 Petaling Jaya.
<b>Ho Seng Ong Scholarship Loan/Grant</b> [ closing date: 31 May 2006]	Malaysian citizens who have been accepted for admission to or are already studying in institutions of Higher Learning in Malaysia and choose teaching as their future career.	Education Secretary, Council of Education, 67, Jalan 5/31, 46000 Petaling Jaya.
<b>Council of Education / Raffles Education Group Scholarship Fund</b> (Tuition fees only-waived)	Needy and deserving students who seek admission to the Methodist Private Schools/ Institutes/Colleges or the Raffles Education Group of Institutions (Olympia College SB)	Education Secretary, Council of Education, 67, Jalan 5/31, 46000 Petaling Jaya.

## Upcoming Event

## TRAC School for Intercessors

“ Growing in the Intercessory Lifestyle  
& Developing Models of Prayer ”

**CONTACT:** Mrs Rhema Rao at TRAC HQ (03-79542836 or rhema@trac.org.my)

This will be especially helpful for:

- Pastors, Church Leaders, Local Church Prayer Coordinators, those who had attended the last three TRAC Prayer Conferences and others in the church who have a heart for the prayer and intercession ministry.

**VENUE** : Stella Maris, Tanjung  
 Bungah, Penang  
**DATE** : 16 - 18 JUNE 2006  
**Facilitator** : Ms Wee Lay Ching  
**Cost** : RM150 per person





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