

MAY / JUNE 2013



diakonia

ONE LORD ONE MISSION ONE HEART

MISSION DYNAMICS

Discovering Riches in China

**Emmaus International
Conference**

Remembering Elena Cooke

**Klang Gospel Hall:
100 Years of God's
Faithfulness**

**Agape Chapel:
A Story of God's Love**

Succession for Success

A PUBLICATION OF CHRISTIAN BRETHERN SECRETARIAT MALAYSIA • FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome!



Diakonia has to cater to the interest of a wide range of readers in our assemblies, from youths to elders. That's a tall order. Consequently, it runs the danger of trying to please so many that it appeals to nobody in particular. Nevertheless, this is the best option for now. Diakonia is the only assembly magazine and it is only produced once a year.

This issue follows the same content formula. There are 3 articles covering topics of current concern among our assemblies, articles giving historical perspectives "lest we forget", reports of significant events which had taken place and updates of coming events. Diakonia also keeps our assemblies mindful of missions with reports of assembly involvement and information of interest. To maintain the "human touch" two personal accounts under the segment "Defining Moments" have again been included in this issue.

On the surface, it would appear that there are many articles and contributions for the editor to select from. The truth is, there is such a paucity of contributions that all materials that were submitted to me have been put into print. Scarcity is the problem facing every issue. Assembly people are just reluctant to write, to share in order edify others. By the grace of God, somehow there are just enough materials to compile into one annual issue. Therefore I'm truly thankful to those who have contributed the materials that went into this issue.

Humanly speaking, the prognosis for Diakonia is rather bleak. Should we continue to flog a dead horse or a dying one? If you feel that more could be done and should be done, you are right. Give us your suggestions. Better still, contribute articles, photographs, in fact any helpful material that can build up a pool of resources for the editor to draw from for future issues. With so many assemblies and so many gifted Christians, surely we can meaningfully sustain one 40 page annual publication?

Diakonia is not just a communication instrument for our assemblies. It is, to some extent, a reflection of their health and vitality. With God's help, let's persevere to ensure that Diakonia continues to be the servant that it is meant to be. ■

Yap Kok Keong

NOTE: All views expressed in the reports and articles contained in Diakonia do not necessarily represent the views of CBSM

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Message from The CBSM Chairman

By Wong Sai Weng

Greetings to you all in the precious Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

It is with much joy that CBSM has been given the privilege and support of the assemblies to undertake the responsibilities to spearhead and manage a number of new developments and projects mandated at ALC for the betterment and growth of the assemblies during the past couple of years. In the previous issues of the Diakonia, some of these have been highlighted for your information, prayer and continual support. In particular, we are happy to report that CBSM has been mandated by the Christian Brethren of Malaysia Property Trust to play a pivotal role in the bringing together church leaders and educationists to further the cause of our Brethren involvement in the field of education. This turned out to be a monumental task involving many parties, including various levels of senior Government officials as well. We praise God that this very longstanding stewardship responsibility with regard to the mission schools left behind by the early missionaries has been set on firmer footing, with a clearer sense of direction to move forward. With the establishment of a formalized structure linking the various Boards and committees under the newly created Christian Brethren Education Board (CBEB), CBSM can begin to withdraw from a pro-active role to a supervisory and eventually, an advisory role. The chairman of this newly established CBEB, is bro Yap Kok Keong. More about CBEB can be found in this present issue of Diakonia.

I am also happy to report that bro Stephen Lew, an elder of Kepong Gospel Chapel, has come on board CBSM as General Secretary since January 2012. He is a great asset to the work and ministry of CBSM as he efficiently coordinates and manages the administration of the many developments and projects undertaken by CBSM. He is key to the continuation of ongoing assembly projects given that all CBSM Trustees are to retire and subject to reappointment, if re-elected, biennially at ALC in accordance to the Trust Deed of CBSM. Please do uphold him in prayer as he needs the Lord's wisdom and strength as he carries out his responsibilities in the running of the CBSM office. In addition, he shoulders the many coordinating and administrative duties concerning projects, development and their

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Yap Kok Keong



Chew Sai Kee



Jimmy Chok



Stephen Yam



Frederick Tan

updates on behalf of the Trustees as well as for the assemblies where appropriate. He needs our every encouragement and support.

This will be my last message in the Diakonia as Chairman of CBSM. My term of office will end in early December 2013 at the next ALC scheduled from 30 November to 4 December 2013 in Penang. On behalf of all CBSM Trustees and others who have worked along side me during my two terms of office, I wish to thank the Lord, the assemblies in the country and everyone who has contributed and supported the work of CBSM. Please do forgive us if we have in any way not met your expectations in the discharge of our collective responsibilities. We do realize that there are still many challenges and opportunities for growth among the assemblies. CBSM needs committed and dedicated people to come forward and join hands to help serve the assemblies that the Lord will be pleased to bless and prosper His people and the work of His Kingdom.

Last but not least let us hold fast to the profession of our faith as individual believers and as assemblies that the Lord will preserve the work and testimony of every assembly both now and the future in the face of the many challenges and opportunities that the Lord has laid before us. Pray for all assembly leaders that they may remain steadfast and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be used for God's Glory in the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the extension of His Kingdom until He comes.

May the Grace of Jesus Christ be with us all. ■

From The General Secretary's Desk

By Stephen Lew

Greetings in the name of our Lord! As the General Secretary of CBSM, I would like to say a BIG thank you for your unceasing support in the past year. I do hope that our fellowship for the sake of the gospel will be strengthened further as we faithfully serve the Lord in 2013. It is my pleasure to share with you the activities of CBSM in the past year as well as those still on-going.

1. Trustees' Meeting

Each year, the CBSM Trustees are required to hold three meetings. The first meeting for 2012, the fourth in the series, was held on 6 February at the CBSM office. The next (5th) meeting was held at Sg. Nibong Gospel Hall on 5 May, and the last (6th) meeting held at Taiping Gospel Hall on 24 November 2012.

2. Consultations and Conference

[a] Christian Brethren Agencies Consultation (CBAC) 2012

The 3rd CBAC was held on Saturday, 17th March at The Life Chapel. 21 participants representing nine agencies were present. As highlighted in the paper "The King's Highway—A Networking Roadmap for Brethren Agencies", all brethren agencies and assemblies must endeavour to work more closely together to achieve greater synergy, fruitfulness and efficiency in the building and extension of God's Kingdom. The agencies were encouraged to furnish information of their activities so that a more complete master calendar of events could be prepared to help ensure optimum utilization of resources as well as avoiding clashes of events/dates.

[b] Assembly Elders and Commended Workers Consultation (AECWC) 2012

The 3rd AECWC was held on 8 September 2012 at Gospel Hall Kuala Lumpur and attended by 36 elders and commended workers. Several matters were discussed including Follow-up actions to ALC 2011, Assembly or Agency Admission to ALC/CBSM, progress report on Project Paul and Nepal Mission, Bukit Bintang Private Mission School Development Project, and Practical Issues of Commended Workers. The meeting also discussed preparation for ALC 2013 and the Biblical Eldership Training Seminars, and the responsibility of hosting APAC 2016.

[c] Asia Pacific Assembly Conference (APAC) 2012

CBSM coordinated the participation of the Malaysian contingent of 50 believers from 14 assemblies to the APAC held in Taichung, Taiwan in August 2012. The theme of the conference was "Transformational Leadership" and Alexander Strauch was the main keynote speaker. From feedbacks received, the talks and fellowship at the conference were excellent. Malaysia has been asked to organize the next APAC in 2016.

3. Projects

[a] Project Paul Mentakab (PPM)

PPM, the first pilot project undertaken by the CBSM, was handled over to Temerloh Gospel Chapel at the end of September 2012.

[b] Project Paul Kampar (PPK)

This new project will be implemented based on the model established for Project Paul Mentakab. Necessary adjustments will be made to cater for the unique needs of Kampar. On 9 March, the CBSM team visited Kampar Gospel Hall and the three apartments available for use by PPK, and explored potentials for extension work in Mambang Diawan and Malim Nawar. A subsequent vision casting session with some believers of Kampar Gospel Hall was held on Sunday, 2 September 2012.

[c] Nepal Mission Project

CBSM office continues to receive and remit love gifts to finance the operations and activities of the Katmandu Mission Centre (KMC). In November 2012, the general secretary together with bro. N. Thiran made a brief visit to Kathmandu to attend to matters related to the work of KMC and our commended worker Bro. Amar Tamang.

4. Bukit Bintang Private Mission Schools Development Project

CBSM played a key role in pushing for greater Christian Brethren Involvement in Education (CBIE). The process was not easy and the journey is long. We thank the Lord for His guidance and provision. An organizational structure for CBIE has been drawn up, the Christian Brethren Education Board (CBEB) and the Bukit Bintang Education Berhad (BBEB) formed. The application for a license to operate a private pre-school at our primary school

in Section 8 has been submitted to the Ministry of Education and, hopefully, a positive response will be insight soon.

5. Opening of Bank Accounts

Banks have tightened the conditions required for churches to open their current account. However, under the arrangement worked out with Public Bank Berhad, CBSM was able to assist two assemblies and one brethren agency to start their bank accounts with the bank. CBSM will be ready to assist other assemblies and agencies who faced difficulties opening bank accounts.

6. Retirement Home

The subject concerning a retirement home was first raised during the ALC 2011. CBSM has since written to Peter Mackie, CEO of Christian Brethren Community Services in Australia, met with Dr. Tay Siew Leng from Singapore who is establishing a home for the aged in Bentong, Pahang. There is still a long way to go if a project of this nature is to be adopted. Presently, the thinking is to have a home that caters to the changing phases of a retiree's later years – from being independent to partially aided and finally to being fully aided..

7. Partners in the Harvest (PITH) 2013

The "Partners in the Harvest" (PITH) conference in 2009 was intended to be a one-off event. However, the leaders of participating countries decided to continue with PITH. The Philippines will host the next PITH conference in May 2013. CBSM is providing some administrative support to the PITH Secretariat.

8. CBSM Office

We thank the Lord for providing an office for CBSM to operate from. With this privilege comes the responsibilities and obligation to meet utility bill, annual assessment, quit rent and various other payments. MMS, MMM, IBAYD and more recently the CBEB and BBEB are using the CBSM office as their postal address. CBSM is thankful to the assemblies for the annual love gifts to help keep the operations going. However, the amount of financial support received (from only 16 assemblies - 9 from KL/PJ, 3 from Penang and 4 from other states) falls short of our operating budget. The average

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The Teachings of Grace Extremists Movement

By Dr CK John



There are repeated warnings in the New Testament against the possibility of false teachings creeping into the Christian church. Peter warned against false teachers offering

false freedom based on false promises (2 Peter 2:1-22). John warned his readers about the false teachers as they could spoil the life of Christians. (1 John 2:18-19; 4:1-6). Jude very strongly warned about the false teachers (Jude 17-25). Paul repeatedly warned about this possibility.

Today we are facing a similar situation concerning the Grace of God. Those who are spreading the false teaching concerning the extremism of grace are called by many names—Grace Gospel Movement, Grace Ministry, Grace Revolution and many other names. But for the purpose of this paper we shall call them Grace Extremist Movement (GEM). The purpose of this paper is to briefly review the prevalent teachings of GEM to see whether they are based on Scripture. So, let us look at some of their teachings.

1. Confession of sin and forgiveness

The GEM teaches, "Since we have been forgiven from all sins—past, present and future- and since God has made us righteous in Christ, there is no need for a believer to ask forgiveness for any sin committed after his/her conversion".

Let us now consider a few things concerning the confession of sin in the life of a believer.

How to deal with sin we commit as believers?

1 John 1:8-9 says that in order for us to walk in fellowship with God and our fellow believers, we *must confess our sins*. When we do that, God is faithful and just to forgive us. The forgiveness that John talks about is *parental* and not *judicial* forgiveness. Judicial forgiveness is what the sinner received when he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a one time thing. But we need parental forgiveness, throughout our Christian life and that comes when we confess our sins before the Father. So, we should not hide behind the judicial forgiveness of our sins; it has been dealt with once and for all. What we need is parental forgiveness, and that is what John talks about in 1 John 1:8-9. This should be a daily exercise for all believers.

But GEM teaches that since we are already forgiven at the time of our conversion, we must never ask God to forgive our sins again. They also say that 1 John 1:8-9 is in reference to non-believers, which is not true.

2. Law and Grace

GEM teaches that Law in its entirety including The Ten Commandments was done away with, and it was nailed to the cross by Christ.

God's Law in the Old Testament has three main components: The Moral Law of God (including the Ten Commandments); the Ceremonial Law (the rituals of the sanctuary services); and the Civil Laws. It is true that when Jesus died on the cross, the Ceremonial Laws were completely fulfilled in Christ. But what about the Moral Law of God? Was it also nailed to the cross? Can a believer truly say that he is not required to observe the Ten Commandments, which is part of the Moral Law of God, because he is under grace? The first of the Ten Commandments says, "I am the Lord your God, you shall have no other gods before me" (Exo 20:1-2). If we follow the GEM teaching we could now have any number of gods, as the Ten Commandments are no more applicable to a believer, as the believer is under grace?

What did Christ say about the Law?

Did Christ condemn the Law? Christ Himself said, "I have come not to condemn the Law but to fulfill it". So we conclude that Christ did not condemn the Law, but he fulfilled the Law by revealing the spirit of the Law and the New Covenant. On the basis of this we can conclude that a believer is expected to observe the Moral Law of God, although we are under grace.

3. The Holy Communion (The Lord's Supper)

This is one of the highlights of the GEM teachings. They say, "God ordained the Holy Communion not as a ritual to be observed but as blessing of health and wholeness. When you hold the bread in your hand and partake of it, you celebrate and release your faith to receive His health and wholeness in exchange for your sickness and disease. The bread which is for His body is for our healing. So, when you partake in the bread, you become strong, healthy and wholesome and you live longer. So, partake of the Holy Communion as often as you can" (Joseph Prince—Holy Communion).

Now let us look at the Biblical meaning of the Holy Communion.

The Lord Jesus instituted the Holy Communion and said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (1: Cor 11:24). When we participate in the Holy Communion we proclaim the Lord's death (1 Cor 11:26). So, how this portion of Scripture can be turned around to say that partaking of the Lord's Supper brings healing, healthy life, wholeness resulting in long life, is beyond any ones comprehension. This is a classic example of how false teaching can be brought into the church by twisting and turning God's Word to make it to mean something totally different.

4. Working out our salvation in Christ

GEM teaching is strongly against the working out of our salvation because we are under grace. They further say that working out our salvation is going back to the Law.

The New Testament teaching about the working out of our salvation in Christ is very clear. The salvation we have received is a free gift of God, worked out through Christ by grace, unto good works (Eph 2:10). Good works are not the basis of salvation, but the result of salvation (Titus 2:14). It means that now we have received this salvation, and now we are part of the kingdom of God; we must workout that new kingdom life to the fullest. There are clear teachings concerning the working out of our salvation, and a few cases are mentioned below.

Paul gives an active command to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12-13). A believer does that with the help of God. "It is God who works in you" Paul said. It means bringing to pass or finishing something which has already been commenced. The seed has been planted. And our business is to allow that seed to grow and develop until it comes to its final perfection, with the help of God.

James gives us even a stronger teaching (James 2:14-26). He says that faith and works must go together. So he argues that a faith that does not result in good works cannot save; and such a faith is dead.

The Lord has given us ample teachings through the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) concerning His expectation as to how a believer should live in this world. He concluded by saying that a believer who

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works out his salvation will be the salt and the light of this world.

5. Words spoken by Jesus before His death on the cross

GEM vehemently teaches that words spoken by Jesus before the cross are not applicable for the Church to day. Joseph Prince has said, "Some of Jesus' words are part of the Old Covenant. They were spoken before the cross, as He had not yet died. The New Covenant only begins when the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost" (Destined to Reign).

Is there anything more misconceived than this? If we accept this GEM teaching, we are forced to ask a number of questions about what the Bible says about Christian faith:

- Is the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) applicable to Christian's today?
- Are the Parables of the Kingdom (Matt 13 etc) applicable to our day?

- What about the teachings of Jesus spoken before the cross such as The Lord's Supper, signs of the end of age (Matt 24) etc.

The Lord's teaching is timeless and for all generations; there is no separation of them as being before and after the cross. But according to GEM teaching these are not meant for Christians, as Jesus spoke about them before His death on the cross.

6. The methodology of GEM teachings

It is interesting to note how GEM develops these false teachings. They come to such a teaching by twisting and turning Scripture in the way they want. First they evolve a theory and are rather pleased with it. Then they go back to the Bible with this theory. "There is nothing as dangerous as to come to the Bible with a theory, with a preconceived idea, some pet idea of your own, because the moment we do so, we shall be tempted to overemphasize one aspect and under emphasize another" (Dr Martin Lloyd Jones).

When they develop such a teaching, it may have the appearance of being Bible based. But when you really dig into it, you see a very different thing. This is a very effective way of spreading the false teaching. So, a Scripture-based believer must be very careful. We must be like the Berean Christians (Acts 17:11).

7. Conclusion

This paper deals with some of the teachings of the Grace Extremist Movement (GEM), to see to what extent its teachings are Biblical. We specifically looked at five issues: (1) confession and forgiveness of sin; (2) Law and grace; (3) the Holy Communion (The Lord's Supper); (4) working out of our salvation in Christ; and (5) Words spoken by Jesus before the cross. The definite conclusion that one can reach is that the GEM teachings that we dealt with are absolutely unbiblical. There is no Scriptural basis for their teachings, and therefore their teachings are to be considered as heretical and therefore unacceptable. ■

For more on this subject by Dr CK John, visit www.cbsm.com.my

FROM PAGE 4, FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S DESK

monthly expenditure is RM4,100 per month but CBSM only received an average of RM1,700 per month over the last 2 years. Please pray that the assemblies will take note of this need to enable CBSM to continue its service.

9. Christian Brethren of Malaysia Property Trust Bhd (CBMPTB)

During the AGM of CBMPTB in June 2012, CBSM confirmed its willingness to provide administrative services to the Trust. It is left to the CBMPTB to decide on the timing for the transfer of administrative functions.

10. Publications, Books, Resources and Archive

The Diakonia is published annually and distributed free of charge to the

assemblies. A monthly prayer newsletter is sent out via email. With permission from the publisher, CBSM printed Alexander Strauch's book "Biblical Eldership" and the accompanying Mentor's Guide and Study Guide. These books are now available at RM60 per set of 3 books. CBSM ordered 60 copies of the book "Church Doctrine and Practices" from Precious Seed Publications, UK and the book is available at RM30 per copy.

CBSM is in the process of building up an archive of materials relating assembly work in Malaysia. Assemblies and individuals with useful materials, church magazines, photos, etc are encouraged to send copies to CBSM.

11. Coming Events

[a] Assembly Leaders' Conference (ALC) 2013

ALC 2013 will be held during 30 November to 4 December in Penang. It will start with the elders' consultation and fellowship followed by the 3-tracks catering to the men, women and youth sessions. The keynote speaker is Mr. Alexander Strauch. All participants come together for the daily keynote talks, devotion, plenary.

[b] Biblical Eldership Training Seminars (BETS)

Two BETS by Alexander Strauch will be organized – one in Kuala Lumpur and the other in Penang. In preparation to attend the BETS, all participants are encourage to purchase and read the BE books beforehand. ■

TITLES AVAILABLE FROM CBSM

	PRICE
Biblical Eldership	RM30
Mentor's Guide	RM25
Study Guide	RM25
Biblical Eldership + Mentor's Guide	RM50
Biblical Eldership + Study Guide	RM50
Biblical Eldership + Mentor's Guide + Study Guide	RM60
If You Bite & Devour One Another *	RM15
Church Doctrine and Practices *	RM30
Biblical Eldership (booklet)	FOC
Shepherd The Flock of God	FOC

* Limited copies available



Succession for Success: Transitioning Future Generations of Leaders

By Colin Kirton



Leadership succession in our assemblies has sadly often been reactive rather than proactive. Who will take over from us when we are gone, and will they only take over from us *when we're gone*?! What are we doing to actively prepare them future leadership? This pertains not just to principal leadership roles like eldership and deaconship but in every ministry at every level within church life.

The Biblical Model

Scripture provides clear examples of leaders training their successors. Moses, for example, took on Joshua as his assistant. Joshua accompanied Moses to receive the Ten Commandments. Moses sent him on the mission to spy out the

promised land, and over the next forty years, he was by Moses' side, learning from him and observing firsthand the difficulties that he faced in leading the Israelites. Perhaps this was why on Moses' death, Joshua had doubts about taking on Moses' mantle. But Moses had wisely already prepared the people for the eventual handover of leadership to Joshua, and so the people were ready to accept Joshua as their leader when the time came. In fact, along with God's personal encouragement to Joshua (Josh 1:1-9), the people also encouraged him, affirming his call and exhorting him to "be strong and courageous" (Josh 1:16-18).

Jesus himself followed the same pattern, spending the bulk of his ministry time preparing twelve disciples to continue his earthly ministry, with particular attention given to an inner circle composed of Peter, James and John. Jesus called his disciples first and foremost "to be with him"

(Mk 3:14). He then gave them tasks and supervised their work (e.g. Jn 4:1-2). Later, he sent them out on preaching missions and debriefed them after (e.g. Lk 9:1-6,10). It was, once again, an apprenticeship system with increasing responsibilities over time.

After their training, Jesus told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem after his ascension until they received the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49), given to them at Pentecost. While Jesus' example shows us that preparation, training and experience are important, true leadership in the Church is always *spiritual* leadership and therefore must ultimately be directed by the Holy Spirit.

Paul's relationship with Timothy is a particularly clear example of biblical leadership principles. With the Holy Spirit's confirmation (1 Tim 1:18), he identified

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Timothy as a potential leader. He travelled with Timothy, taught him, modelled good leadership, and then sent him out on a variety of assignments, eventually entrusting the very important church in Ephesus to his leadership.

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul reminds Timothy assigns to Timothy a vision of spiritual leadership that includes a succession plan: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."

Like Joshua, Timothy seems to have been apprehensive about taking on leadership (e.g. 2 Tim 1:7), but his mentor made effort to encourage him (2 Tim 2:1).

Clearly, the biblical model shows us that effective leaders must actively plan ahead for the time when they can no longer lead, including preparing their successors. They spend time with them, teach them, model leadership, give them responsibility, supervise their work, and mentor them. They encourage and stretch them, push them out of their comfort zones, and prepare them to take their place in advancing the Kingdom.

Biblical Leadership Succession in Our Assemblies

The health, growth and eventual survival of our assemblies today critically depends on leadership heeding the call to prepare for succession. These are but a few thoughts in regard to ensuring a healthy succession plan.

1. Leaders must learn to relinquish authority.

Some assemblies have suffered from leaders who have overstayed their time in leadership, or, even if they have stepped down in name, continue to assert themselves. In so doing, they stifle the growth of the next echelon of leaders, who are either therefore loathe to take on leadership, or who continually defer to their predecessors out of respect, exasperation or because they feel curbed. I have always admired the example of the late Mr David Boler who was an elder for many years. I remember him telling me once how important it was to know when to step down and to trust those taking over without meddling or complaining. I know for a fact that Mr Boler didn't always agree with the decisions made by his successors, but he very graciously submitted to their leadership nonetheless.

2. Leaders need to trust the next generation.

We fear they may mess up, or that they may bring in new methods, practices or paradigms that we are uncomfortable with. While there is nothing inherently wrong with tradition, we must beware that tradition does not become a sacred cow, at the expense of the growth of God's Kingdom. We need to allow upcoming leaders the freedom to discover and implement new ideas and fresh expressions of biblical truth. And we need to be encouraging them, cheering them on! Leadership is not an easy task, and encouragement, other than being a biblical mandate, has immense power (see the examples of Joshua and Timothy above). Yet sadly we are often quicker to criticise than encourage, to tear down rather than build up. We will lose our potential leaders when we mistrust them. A piece of advice I was given many years ago has augured me well in my dealings with the next generation, and would be good for us all to heed: "It is better to err on the side of trusting people, than on the side of mistrusting them."

3. Leaders need to empower early.

We need to start empowering potential leaders not when they reach their 40s, but right from their teens. I was asked to preach my first Sunday sermon when I was 21, yet we seem averse to giving the pulpit to our younger ones today. In the past, many became deacons or even elders in their 20s. Today that is a rarity. Why? If we don't start equipping and empowering our younger ones, we will soon find it is too late to "teach old dogs new tricks", as they say.

4. Leaders need to invest quality time in upcoming leaders.

The biblical model includes *being* with those we are preparing to take over from us. This cannot be restricted to Sundays or committee meetings. It is a passing on of the gospel through a passing on of our *lives*. A former youth group student and mentee of mine, now a Christian leader in his own right, once told me, "I think I learned more from hanging out with you at your house or at the *mamak*, or going on trips together, than I did in your classes." Personal investment in younger lives is undoubtedly a time-consuming calling but an extremely rewarding one nonetheless. Apart from providing opportunities to impart, spending quality time with them also builds good relationships, which augurs well later when it comes to trusting them for the work of leadership at hand, as well as being gentle with them when they err or fail.

5. Leaders need to ensure the right 'mix' for upcoming leaders.

We must be careful that in identifying upcoming leaders, we do not resort to worldly benchmarks. *Skills* are important, as they are in corporate life, but in the context of the Church, skills alone are insufficient. Otherwise we will end up with CEOs in our churches instead of true biblical leaders. Beyond skills, biblical leaders must also be *firmly grounded in and committed to the principles of God's Word*. They must be *Spirit-filled* people of *sound character*. And, one that I feel is lacking in many of our leaders: They must be *relational*. A shepherd's role is primarily a relational one rather than a functional one. The Chief Shepherd himself models that for us in John 10:1-18: "I am the good shepherd; *I know my sheep* and my sheep know me" (v14). Since the biblical model for succession also calls for relational commitment, without it, the simple fact is that we will not be able to pass on our leadership effectively.

How can IBAYD contribute?

IBA Youth Development runs a number of programmes targeted at the youth and young adult age group (18-30 years old). Some of these are primarily for the means of outreach. Others are for the express purpose of discipling youth. The periodic Assembly Youth Leadership Consultation (AYLC) provides a platform for those leading youth ministries in our assemblies to gather, network, encourage and learn from each other.

While some of these programmes may be a starting point for leadership development, IBAYD's contribution cannot replace the role of individual assemblies, each of which are unique and different in its composition, needs, and focal points for ministry. These can only be learned in the context of a mentoring relationship in the local assembly.

Conclusion

When it comes to leadership, the vision is not to be a church that *maintains* itself, but that *reproduces* itself. We must resist the urge to concentrate on the masses all the time. We need to be actively identifying, preparing and mentoring our upcoming leaders to succeed us.

It is no coincidence that 'success' and 'succession' have the same root meaning. ■

GENERAL INTEREST

Mentoring Young Preachers

By Dr Daniel Wong Wai Yan

"... and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also". ... "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."
2 Timothy 2:2; 2:15



Introduction

I believe there are three areas of church ministry to which we must pay careful attention to if we are to see the church grow in Malaysia—namely Word, prayer and fellowship. Our little project in Melaka, addresses the first area. There is a clear and present need to grow and mentor speakers in a structured manner. Mentoring young preachers requires deep humility, openness, time and a concern for pulpit ministry. There are huge opportunities for preaching on various platforms within a local assembly and this should be maximised for the training of young preachers.

A Brief Personal Journey as a Preacher

I shall begin with a little personal background and a disclaimer. I have never had formal theological training. My experience in preaching on a regular basis started at The Life Chapel, my home assembly, where like most children from Christian families, I went through Sunday School and Youth Fellowship.

However, at a relatively young age, I was given the opportunity of preaching the Sunday sermon a few times a year as well as at the Senior Members Fellowship. The occasional "thank you brother, I was blessed by the sermon" or "God spoke to me this morning through your sermon" from a church member or elder was such an encouragement for a young would-be preacher.

I had benefited much from the few training sessions on preaching organized by The Life Chapel. So too the time I spent in study and work in Sydney and Birmingham where I was exposed to good, persuasive expository preaching in evangelical churches. In

my profession as an oncologist, I had to spend a lot of my time communicating with empathy, helping people understand complex medical concepts, breaking bad news and giving hope even in fairly bleak situations. There were opportunities too to give the occasional lecture at public forums. My brother Andrew Wong too was a particular help and inspiration because we share the same vision, passion and approach to preaching. All these have contributed to my development as a preacher of the Word.

Melaka Gospel Hall

When our family moved to Melaka in December 2010, we joined the 40 or so other regular believers worshipping at Melaka Gospel Chapel. We noticed that there were two regular preachers, both of whom were in their fifties. The preaching programme was filled by many outside speakers who were given open topics. Among other matters, I was concerned about the potential lack of continuity. I also noticed that there were a number of young men who song-led, chaired meetings or shared passages at various levels. These young men had the potential to be moulded and groomed to be preachers.

So at the beginning of 2011, I discussed the idea of a young preachers development programme with elder Rodney Tan, who was very receptive to this idea. So very quietly and quickly, I got hold of several young men to meet at my home after church one Sunday to share with them my vision for faithful, clear, passionate, systematic expository preaching of the Bible in the local assembly.

The Programme and Process

At the beginning, whilst we spoke a lot about godliness and character building as an integral part of this project, our primary focus was very much on the practical nitty-gritty issues of studying various passages, discussing and interpreting these in light of the rest of Scripture, preparing sermon outlines and applications.

We started with the Gospel according to John based on the theme "Jesus—The Man You Simply Cannot Ignore" in January 2011. We completed this book in May 2012. From

May 2012 to September 2012, we covered the Book of Joshua and we have recently started on Hebrews. We started off having a larger group meeting looking through four passages at a time. We discussed outlines and approaches to the sermons corporately and then followed up on individual speakers. More recently, we decided to meet in smaller groups of one mentor and two to three trainees.

These young preachers were scheduled into the pulpit ministry programme according to the difficulty of the passages and their level of spiritual maturity and preaching ability.

Some Essential Features of the Mentoring Programme:

1. Preaching preparation requires hard work.
2. "Devotional exposition" preaching was strongly emphasized.
3. Preparation should be done well in advance.
4. Meditation on the passage and its applications to personal and assembly life.
5. Exposure to and use of various materials—internet based ones such as E-sword and Bible Gateway, introductory books to the OT and NT, commentaries and bible dictionaries.
6. Consultation and feedback especially with and from mentors or elders.
7. Listening attentively and learning from one another.

We felt it was important to link a particular sermon with sermons before and after, so in the middle of this year, we scheduled the young preachers and their mentors for consecutive sermons. Earlier this year, we had a hands-on sermon preparation workshop over 2 sessions with brother Philip Lim for additional input to the programme.

Modelling and Confidence Building

There will always be some modeling

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GENERAL INTEREST

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE, MENTORING YOUNG PREACHERS

involved in the mentoring process. For me, I tend to pick up 3 main points in most passages—each then broken down to three sub-points. I write out verbatim the message and perhaps modifying things slightly during the actual sermon presentation. This was borne out of a conviction that the words we use in preaching must be clear and precise. Some of the young preachers have picked up on this pattern. Others have been more comfortable with a less rigid approach.

Sermon delivery in front of a crowd does not come naturally to all. Confidence is always a challenge at the beginning especially when preaching in front of an older congregation. In recent months, we realised that sermon delivery was an area we had neglected. There were concerns about vocal monotony, the inadvertent use of fillers such as “hmmm...” and “ah...” as well as the lack of formality in the overall approach to preaching. Some have struggled along the way. But all are improving and are beginning to appreciate and understand better the nature of communicating God’s Word in a congregational setting.

We have not done biblical languages as yet, including the use of *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. At some point, I hope to organise a couple of sessions on biblical languages and its relevance to contemporary preaching. I also look forward

to our group developing specific skills for preaching to un-churched folks.

Continuing Challenges

There is a need to pray fervently for God’s grace upon those whom one mentors. There is an infinite array of distractive influences out there. We need ask God for spiritual integrity, focus and discipline. Keeping our young men is a major challenge for us. Three from the original fellowship would have left at least for the short to medium term by the end of this year. We trust that those who have been through our programme will be a blessing to people wherever God leads them. So the ministry cycle to identify and mentor new candidates continues.

It is a real challenge for a mentor in full time employment to consistently follow up on two to three young men. We try to meet every six to eight weeks, at some point to increase frequency to once a month in the near future. This year, my small group spent some time talking about a passage from Malachi each time we meet to draw out lessons for our individual lives and that of the assembly.

Some Parting Thoughts

Assemblies need to have a renewed vision and desire to mentor a new generation

of men who will be able to handle God’s Word rightly and to communicate it faithfully, clearly and passionately to the church in Malaysia in the 21st century. Many assemblies and oversights would be aghast at what we have done over the last 2 years. Having a mentoring and training programme like ours is risky business. There were numerous occasions when I felt more effort and practice could have gone into the sermon. But, as they say “no pain, no gain”. The key is not to expect top of the league sermons in the first year or two but to see steady improvement in preaching and growth in godliness over time as we journey alongside these younger men.

Mentoring lends itself to more than just improvement in preaching competency of younger men. It creates a wonderful environment for discipleship and leadership development. So I am expecting many spin-off benefits over the next few years. The book, *The Trellis and the Vine*, has been helpful to me as I thought through these areas.

I thank God for my brothers, Philip Lim and Rodney Tan for their partnership in this ministry and for sharing their knowledge and experience in preaching. To God be the glory! ■

MISSION DYNAMICS

A Letter from Nepal

by Amar & Shanta Tamang



Ree Village, Nepal

Warm greetings from Katmandu Mission Centre in our precious Saviour’s Name!

We praise and thank God for His abundant grace and help in providing all the needs during the past year in 2012 and also for enabling Kathmandu Mission Centre to be a vibrant centre of witness for Him.

To think that it was just two years and three months ago that we began our wonderful journey with tentative steps. We encountered some trials and difficulties along the way but the Lord has never let us down. He helped us overcome the trying circumstances and made us stronger in our faith. “Those who sow in tears will reap

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MISSION DYNAMICS

Discovering Riches in China

By Chong Kam Hoe



It seems very unfair but on hindsight, my conversion and brief Christian journey helped me to understand why C.S. Lewis described God as a chess player who engineered every

move so perfectly to the point he felt cornered and there was not much room to turn except to wait for God to checkmate.

“Pastor, missionary, church planter and etc.,” labels so strange and even scary to be associated with, have been put on me now by those among whom I served. Though there is little unwillingness left, I am constantly amazed at how it all happened.

I was born into a business-oriented family that had survived through the tough times in the 1970s in Malaysia. Politics was chaotic and being Chinese, working extra hard and being thrifty was the way of life. My dad, who did not finish his primary school and relied solely on his survival instinct, continued to make breakthroughs in his life and has done fairly well up to this point. From him, a philosophy had been deeply ingrained in me and all my siblings, “rely on nothing else but money”.

I started my first business venture even before I finished my Master in Operations Management in the University of Manchester. I submitted my final thesis and did not bother to turn up for my thesis review because the business venture had already started rolling. At the same time my dad was waiting for me to help him out in his business and was surprised to realize how much of his stubbornness has been inherited by me.

My business has to do with a very niche segment in the information technology. I had a nothing-to-lose attitude. The business attracted the attention of many investors. Investments poured in and the business was launched in Singapore and Hong Kong. The company expanded very quickly as money was easily available. In the end, the company went crashing down due to some poor decision-making and also the lack of business fundamentals.

Soon, the huge debt incurred by a bad acquisition had gangsters making abusive phone calls and threats that I was not prepared for. The Hong Kong police

could do little until something happened. Business partners were too far away and family help was not considered at all for fear they might be too worried. It was a life lesson learnt a little too late. However, this was God’s intended turning point in my life. I realized how uncertain and untrustworthy the world system is.

My spirit was still upbeat and I was still hungry for success in the world. I was reading and taking up secular courses to equip myself believing that it would take only one opportunity to get back on track. I read books like “Secrets on Closing Sales” and “Leadership 101” where the authors highlight the point that the foundation of their success has to do with their faith as well. At this point, I really know nothing about Jesus Christ but now I recognized He was trying to reach out to me and to prepare my heart for what was to come.

In 2001, I had the opportunity to throw the “big questions of life” at two of my close business associates whom I knew were trustworthy Christians. This couple, Chin Khuan and Terry gave me a booklet “More than a Carpenter” to read. Surprisingly, it was Wan Yeen my wife-to-be who made the leap of faith after reading the booklet. She grew up in a devout Buddhist environment and took the step of faith knowing full well she would come under tremendous pressure from her parents and relatives. She was totally convinced that if Jesus is the real God, there is no other option but to believe in Him. She prayed the sinner’s prayer on her own by following the instruction at the back of the booklet. From that point, there was no turning back for her and her conversion has a powerful impact upon me.

Shortly after this, we went to see this couple again and I too prayed to receive Jesus as my savior. But sadly there was a huge difference between the level of Wan Yeen’s commitment to the Christian faith and mine.

Another important turning point for me was the tragic event which occurred on 9/11. My business was doing really well again and we had just moved into an office on the 62nd floor of the world tallest building at that time—KLCC. Seeing the second tower of the World Trade Center tumbling down right before my eyes on TV reminded me again of the uncertainties and the

vulnerability of the world system. This has a lasting impact on me.

When Wan Yeen decided to get baptized, I was still reluctant to do so. My parents had voiced strong objections and I also saw no urgency to do so. However, Wan Yeen was steadfast in her decision to be baptized and I finally decided half-heartedly to follow suit. We were baptized together in Subang Jaya Gospel Center, the church we were attending at that time.

The expansion of my business took me to many parts of China. I stayed in Kunming, on and off, for almost a year. During that time, my amateur badminton skills came in very useful as a means of bridging the cultural gap. My one year in Kunming changed my whole perspective of the mainland Chinese and allowed me to learn much of their culture from close quarters.

2004 was a memorable year. My company took on such good momentum that it went for public listing. That same year I married Wan Yeen, (the girl whom I knew since first year of high school) in Petaling Jaya Gospel Hall. Her dramatic change from a devout Buddhist to a Christ follower was a major catalyst to my own growth in Christ.

But even at this point, I was still playing hide and seek with the Lord, thinking I could outsmart him. However, He used a banker who had helped me with my company’s public listing to draw me to a small group at the Beijing International Christian Fellowship. The adventure has begun.

In the whole of 2005, I wrestled with a thought that kept coming into my mind. The thought was to leave the company and explore what I can do for the Lord in China! It was definitely not my plan nor my prayer. With a newly bought property in a highly sought after area back home, with the company wanting to shift focus to the larger China market, with no one being able to take my place in China, with so many things to lose, I could not believe I even entertain the thought.

In an immature way to get verification from the Lord, I set three wishes to be fulfilled. First, I asked for a suitable apartment in Beijing, where I was now based. Secondly, I asked that He would prepare my wife’s

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MISSION DYNAMICS

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE, *DISCOVERING RICHES IN CHINA*

heart so that she would have no objection in staying in Beijing and finally, that I would be able to come out from my company smoothly and tidily for I was holding some directorships and heading the expansion in China.

Miraculously, the Lord granted each one of them and on the 23rd of December in 2005 I knelt before Him with my wife and said, "Lord, now it is all up to you".

With no theological training, with no consultation with our home church (Subang Jaya Gospel Center), with little or no understanding of missions and no idea where the whole "new 'Lord's business" was heading" we just tried our best to serve Him. Very quickly we found ourselves enthusiastically involved in every available ministry at the BICF—from organizing leadership seminar to major sports evangelism events to summer camp for the university students. The Lord has put us onto a steep learning curve. In no time, we exhausted ourselves.

A foreigner can stay in China for years and not mix with the local Chinese. However, the Lord guided my path gradually into the

Chinese community. At the same time He began to place the burden in my heart to reach out to the local Chinese people.

A meeting which started with only one local business woman soon became a small group and then into a not-so-small "home church". My wife and I were constantly praying "Lord, let them not ask us too much questions on the bible" for our knowledge of Scripture was so minimal. In about half a year, we started to have 50 to 60 people that would consistently turn up and close to 150 in membership.

Due to special circumstances, the group merged with another group and has now turned into a Church serving both the white collar and also the blue collar workers in Beijing. We have different services for them but constantly promote the integration of both congregations.

This is only the 4th year Wan Yeen and I have in the so-called mission field. I am in the midst of finishing my Master in Christian Studies. Besides that I have also been appointed as the representative of the Prison Fellowship International for China in August, hopefully to start developing

something to kick-start prison ministry in China. In the last 4 years I have made tons of mistakes which I believe could be written into a what-not-to-do guide in China for the mission field. In spite of everything, above all, I only have praises and worship for the One who has slowly guided me into a path filled with adventure, passion and love and most importantly, His grace. ■



Kam Hoe and Wan Yeen, Hee Tung, Hee Kit & grandma

FROM PAGE 10, *A LETTER FROM NEPAL*



Walking to Ree Village



Worship Service at Ree Village



Amar leading a Bible study

with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow will return with songs of joy, carrying the sheaves with them" (Psalm 126:5-6). Now it's our time to sow and wait upon the Lord of the harvest to come to reap with joy.

We have also experienced many blessings and answered prayers. To list down all these wonderful experiences would take pages.

Some highlights at KMC—the fruitful GLO Malaysia Mission team in May which brought such encouragement to the small band of believers; the special baptismal service in the Dhapakhel River at Lalipur, the Bible Training Seminar in October and the annual Christmas Outreach Programme. As we reach out to others we are blessed as well. We praise and thank God for His love and concern on us. To God Be The Glory!

May our Lord encourage all the saints in the assemblies throughout Malaysia as you press on to serve Him. One day, we shall see every tribe and nation standing before the throne of Grace. May God's precious grace be with each one of you. It has been a great privilege and honor to serve our gracious Master the Lord Jesus Christ. ■

MISSION DYNAMICS

The Emmaus Asia Conference 2012

By Wong San Tosh, Emmaus Director (Malaysia)

Emmaus ministry started in Canada by R.E.Harlow in 1942 and later shifted its office to Chicago USA in 1946. The main focus of this ministry is to spread the Word of God to the world via correspondence courses, which to date distributes over 1.4 million courses each year worldwide.

A total of 24 overseas delegates from 15 different countries attended the Emmaus Asia Conference 2012 held in Genting Highlands. Mr.Jim Fleming the International Coordinator of Emmaus from U.S.A. organized this event with the assistance from the Emmaus Committee in Malaysia via Jalan Imbi Chapel. Mr.Peter Ferry was the main speaker at this conference. At this conference each country were allocated sessions to present their report on the Emmaus Courses distribution.

These are just some of the reports presented during the five-day conference. The other countries represented are Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, Korea, Taiwan and New Zealand.

Emmaus in Japan

A few Emmaus courses were translated into Japanese far back in the 1950's. At present there are ten courses had been translated and another nine courses on the way. The normal usage of the courses were for those interested in the Christ faith, for new believer's follow up and assembly teaching. These translated courses were also used in radio broadcasting. The English courses were used in prison ministry for the US military prisoners and for students who wanted to learn the English Language. CDs have also been produced and distributed for the courses available.

Most of the promotions are done through the promoters in various assemblies with the support of the Elders. The Emmaus Courses were also made available via Christian book wholesalers.

Emmaus in China

There are two levels available comprising of six courses each. These are widely used in group studies. Currently there are four correction centers to mark and resend the question papers to the participants.



Participants at the conference (Wong San Tosh & Chow Wai Mei are seated at extreme left)



Jim Fleming

Courses are distributed through private couriers via correction centers and the response has been very encouraging. To date individuals and church house groups of 11 different provinces had requested and received the courses. The prison ministry in Macau and Hong Kong uses the English courses as well.

Emmaus in India

15 main languages are used in the country and the translation of 12 courses into these languages is in progress. Every year more than 10,000 courses are corrected by the correction centers all over India. Through the Emmaus courses many people have come to faith in Christ and as a result new assembly gatherings were started. 25% of the people of India are still illiterate and Emmaus courses also serve as useful literacy development material. More promoters and workers are needed so that God's Word can reach out to them in a simple form through these courses.



Peter Ferry

Emmaus in Nepal

Four courses have been translated into Nepalese. To date nearly 1,000 have enrolled in the courses in Nepalese as well as in English which are also available. Pray for more courses to be translated. Promotion is through newspaper advertisements and radio. Due to poor postal and communication services most work has to be done by individuals. More trustworthy and faithful brethren are needed to expand this work.

Emmaus in Bangladesh

Only 0.3% of the population are Christians. More than 3000 have enrolled in Emmaus courses each year for the past three years. Each year about 8000 courses are distributed. Upon completion of certain courses Bibles was distributed to them. Those doing the courses are

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MISSION DYNAMICS

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE, THE EMMAUS ASIA CONFERENCE 2012



[Clockwise from top left]: Mano, Katayama, Okamoto, Jacob & Ms Chow // Certification service at Jalan Imbi Chapel // Book display

invited to attend rallies organized five times each year which usually attract about a 100 participants each. More than 1,500 people have heard the gospel in this way and many have been saved and enrolled follow-up courses to know more about God. Promotion is mainly done through personal recommendation by students to their friends.

Emmaus in Australia

The Emmaus Correspondence School just celebrated their 60th anniversary. Each year more than 2,500 courses are distributed. The courses are also widely used in the prison ministry all over Queensland. For those who are interested in academic studies there is the Emmaus Bible College accredited through the Sydney College of Divinity and the NSW Vocational Educational Training Accreditation Board since 1959. This college offers Certification and Diploma in Christian Ministry and Theology, Associate Degree and Bachelor of Theology. Courses are available full-time, part-time and online too.

The conference ended with a certification service held in Jalan Imbi Chapel for the students who had completed 12, 24, 50 courses and above.

The Malaysian Emmaus Scene

Over the decades, Emmaus courses have helped to build up men and women for God through the study of His word. Currently the Committee for the Emmaus work in Malaysia comprises of Wong San Tosh (National Director), Wong Sai Weng, Lee Min Choon, Stephen Lew, N.Thiran, Philip Ng, Lim Theam Kee, Titus Chong and Ms Chow Wai Mei. Our Emmaus office is located in Jalan Imbi Chapel,

There are 82 correspondence courses available and other workbooks for seekers, new believers. There is a wide range of follow-up and discipleship materials as well.

We are also promoting Emmaus Correspondence and other materials in our assemblies. Setting up book tables in at assembly meetings, special inter-assembly

events and conferences where materials are promoted and sold. These promotional efforts can also be accompanied with the exhortation from God's Work upon request. Next year we will be ordering and distributing materials from Everyday publications which covers many book studies of the old testament and other topics. ■

For further enquiries on booklists, ordering procedure and ministry appointments please contact us via e-mail at: emmaus_my@yahoo.com

Detailed Emmaus correspondence courses can be found in the international website: www.ecsministries.org

Address: 154, Jalan Imbi Chapel, 55100 Kuala Lumpur.

Tel/Fax: 603 2144 4787

Office hours: Mon/Wed/Fri, 10am-1pm

Remembering Miss Elena Cooke (16 Dec 1922 – 2 May 2012)

By Miss Moey Yoke Lai (An extract from Jalan Imbi Chapel's 50th Anniversary Publication)



Elena Cooke was enrolled in Chinese Girls' School in Davidson Road in 1928. The school was subsequently moved to Bukit Bintang Road and became known as the Bukit Bintang Girls' School. She constantly asked questions of her teachers. This instinctive curiosity was a hallmark of her life and by it she learned much about things, issues and more importantly, people. Surrounded by family and teachers of the Assembly, Elena was much loved and she learned to love people in turn.

Her Calling

In 1958 Elena Cooke became the principal of BBGS. The enrolment of the school was 520; it grew to 2038 by 1977 when she retired. In her twenty years as headmistress, she instituted many societies and clubs. At the same time, there was an emphasis on excellence in academic standards and the school achieved premier status. Choral speaking was deeply entrenched as a tradition; food and fun fairs to raise funds for new buildings, class and toilet cleanliness competitions built a sense of responsibility and cleanliness in all the girls; gardening and landscaping of the school grounds enabled the school to win the inter-school cleanliness competition at state level. She used her lovely soprano voice to teach the girls many beautiful songs. Every girl had something to do and all worked happily together like a family. "Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might" was the principle by which we lived.

Her Significance

Such a light could not be hidden under a bushel. She was founding Chairman of the Teachers' Christian Fellowship and held that post for thirteen years. For three years she was Chairman of the Malayan Christian Schools' Council. She served the Ministry of Education in various committees and was Chief Examiner for Geography for the Lower Certificate Examination and Chief Examiner for Bible Knowledge as well.

In church she taught Sunday school to Form Five students, sang in the choir, helped to prepare questions for Bible Studies, served as a deaconess and spoke at Ladies' Meetings. Her home was always open to visitors and members of the church dropped in to be counseled or to have fellowship with her. She was very close to her brother Mr. Harold Cooke with whom she had many discussions concerning the school and the church. Together they helped many members of the Church with prayer and with their substance.

Is it any wonder that the church was filled to capacity for her thanksgiving service? This beloved handmaid of the Lord willingly submitted her life to Him and He was able to touch thousands of lives through her.

We have beheld greatness personified in her and she certainly has gone on to greater glory.

"She was a role model for generations of Christian teachers in this country. She saw her profession clearly as a calling and a mission and gave to it her all. She encouraged her students to become teachers and brought them along to the annual TCF conferences to motivate them. She believed passionately in the teaching and learning of Bible Knowledge and BBGS was the inspiration and benchmark for this subject. In fact, she continued to teach this subject to SPM students for as long as she could after retirement.

Though small in stature, she had a powerful influence in education, not only on the students and teachers in her school, but also fellow principals and senior education officials as well. This was because she spoke out unhesitatingly, with clarity and boldness for what is good and right in education especially in defence of students and teachers.

Miss Cooke could speak and act from a position of high moral authority, not just because the school she headed, the Bukit Bintang Girls' School was among the very few in the nation's education system which set the highest standards of all round excellence but also because of her steadfast faith in Jesus Christ and the Biblical principles and values she believed in and uncompromisingly practiced."

— Yap Kok Keong, Chairman,
Malayan Christian Schools' Council ■

LEST WE FORGET

Wong Non Chin: A Story of Steadfast Commitment

By Yap Kok Keong

There are many brothers and sisters travelling long journeys during weekends to our many Orang Asli (OA) centres to give help in any way they can—encouraging, teaching, sowing, planting and reaping a rich harvest for the Lord. We thank God for their labour of love. Here is a story of one such ordinary Christian whose heart was moved like many of us by the many needs there; made a commitment and stayed faithful to that commitment for more than 40 years.



Wong Non Chin was born at Cheng village, 12km from Melaka Town. Starvation during the Japanese Occupation of Malaya (1941–1945) and the terrifying experience of almost falling into an uncovered well but for the timely flash of lightning, was God's way to prepare him for the message at a Gospel meeting held at Gospel Hall Melaka—"I am the Bread of Life and I am the Light of the World". He confessed his sins and accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Non Chin was baptized on Easter Sunday 1955. Being a teacher, he had many opportunities to serve the assemblies especially during the holidays.

His introduction to the needs of the OA people was in 1965 through a godly couple Dr. Lim Seang Chye and his wife. God planted the seed of concern which grew into a life-long passion and devotion to the OA ministry.

Correspondence began with bro. A. Philips, one of the elders of Kampar Gospel Hall and the first visit to the OA village was made in 1977. *"Leaving Malacca in the morning by bus with bundles of used clothing weighing more than 10 kilos I finally reached Kampar by late evening—more than a little lost. Praised be the God, an Indian stranger on a bicycle, who turned out to be a fellow Christian, offered to carry the bundles of clothes on his bicycle carrier and to lead the way to brother Philip's house. What a timely help from God indeed? Together with bro Sinappan and bro Philips, we met up with Pak Cherbah, an OA leader in Batu Enam and Pak Padak of Lubukubong and other OA believers".* Thus began a long challenging but rewarding ministry among the OA.

In 1979, Non Chin was medically boarded out from teaching, due to poor health. Though he draws a monthly pension of only RM510 now, he was glad that he would have more time to help in the Lord's work

among the OA people. In late Nov 1984 he left for heart surgery in Australia. Barely two months after that, in early March, after two weeks of rest at home, he made his usual bus trip from Malacca to Tapah. This was because of unsettling news that the Kampar brethren were no longer welcome in the OA village. Some other denominations had taken over the work. So, upon arrival in Kampar, with a heavy heart, he went straight to Batu Enam by bus to attend the meeting there. It was conducted by a lady from Kuala Kangsar who spoke on God's love and Christian love for one another based on 1 John 4:7-12.

"Immediately after the meeting, she approached the OA leaders concerning who that old man sitting at the rear was. She told them to ask that old man to balik Malacca. The leaders were shocked. That old man had been helping them and teaching them for seven years. They could see that what she had just taught them contradicted her action. That evening the OA leaders decided to stop her coming back to the village again. A crisis had been averted and assembly testimony among the OA continued."

He continued his regular visits to the OA villagers, preaching and teaching God's precious Word, witnessing with joy, the coming and going of many faithful brothers and sisters used by God to build up the work there. He was glad to be counted amongst them. The OA work in the Tapah area grew rapidly. Over the years more than 3000 were baptized.

"After seeing how marvelously the Lord has blessed the work in the Tapah area, I decided to visit bro. Charles in Temerloh. So in 2002 I was able to travel by bus to Temerloh. Bro Charles took me to visit the many villages and OA leaders there. I remember Bah Lenggiti. Bah Kelawar and Pak Hussein." Thus began another chapter of interest in the OA Ministry.

The crowning moment for Non Chin was the "Dedication Service" on 9th December

2007 of the new church in Batu Enam which could sit 300. The OA leaders requested that Non Chin be given the opportunity to say a few word. What an honour after 33 years in His Majesty's service!

"Therefore my beloved brethren who are still on 'His Majesty's Service', be ye steadfast unmovable always abounding in the Word of the Lord among the OA in as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord!" ■



With OA Leaders in Tapah



With Charles & OA believers in Temerloh

LEST WE FORGET

Klang Gospel Hall: Celebrating 100 Years of God's Faithfulness

By William Doraisamy

Klang Gospel Hall celebrated her 100th Anniversary on the 16th of September 2011. We had two days of revival meetings before that auspicious day. The celebrations began with an anniversary service at the Port Klang Gospel Hall followed by an anniversary dinner at the Klang Executive Club. Christians from various assemblies and churches in Malaysia and abroad attended the function. Among the notable guests were Dr. and Mrs. Alastair McGregor from Perth, Australia.

The assembly in Klang began after Mr. Chew Boon Hean, who was in prison for opium abuse, was led to the Lord by Mr. T.R. Angus. On his return to Klang, Mr. Chew brought his whole family to the Lord and then started a small meeting in a shop in 1911. In 1912 Mr. Chew, with the help of other believers and by God's grace, built a meeting place and thus the assembly now called the Klang Gospel Hall began. Two assemblies were formed for both the Chinese-speaking and English-speaking brethren.

The two World Wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 disrupted the work of the Lord somewhat, but the believers remained faithful, and continued to worship and preach the gospel. We thank the Lord that the missionaries from Britain, Australia and New Zealand faithfully and fearlessly stayed in the country and helped in the work in the Klang assembly. Klang Gospel Hall is deeply indebted to missionaries such as Mr. and Mrs. T.R. Angus, their son David Angus and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. E.V. Brewerton, Mr. S.S. Adams, Mr. Bill Wilson, Mr. A.E. Phillips, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Stott and many others who toiled for the Lord.

On the local front, Mr. Ma Tham Shun, Mr. Chew Tian Fong, Mr. Chew Shiu Swee, Lim Teik Hock, Soon Seow Khai, Ng Liam Choo and Mr Lim Chin Kheng were the pioneers of the assembly. Others who came to know the Lord and played a pivotal role in the development of the assembly during those difficult years were Mr. Ng Eng Yen and his son Mr. Ng Kong Lam.

After the Second World War, Mr. Ng Kong Lam, Mr. Goh Keng Siew, Mr. and Mrs Chellappah Abishegam and many other faithful brethren worked diligently to spread the gospel in Klang and the surrounding areas. Open-air meetings were held and



[Top]: Klang Gospel Hall in the 1940s // [Bottom Left]: Early leaders of Klang Gospel Hall: [Seated, L-R]: Mr Ng Eng Yen (Ng Kong Lam's father); Mr Lim Teik Hock (Lim Seok Hoay's grandfather); Mr Soon Seow Khai [Standing, L-R]: Mr Lim Kheng Liat; Mr Ng Kong Lam (Philip Ng's father); Mr Ng Liam Choo. Note: All have gone home to be with the Lord except Mr NgKong Lam // [Bottom Right]: Klang Gospel Hall today

a children's work began in Port Klang and a distant village named Jenjarom. In the early fifties, an assembly was established in Jenjarom. Miss Daphne King and Mr. and Mrs. Tom Watt with the help of the brethren from Klang helped to build the church there. A new building was erected and Chinese and Tamil work began to grow by the grace of God. A beautiful new building has been built for the Jenjarom Assembly in 2011 and has been occupied since 2012.

The work in Port Klang also progressed well and a shop-lot was used to conduct

meetings in 1973. The elders in Klang Gospel Hall felt it necessary to build a new hall on a piece of land already designated for worship. In 1979 a new building was built and subsequently renovated and enlarged in 2004. The building can now seat 300 people.

The work in Klang Gospel Hall grew by leaps and bounds. The young people in the late forties and early fifties had now become responsible young adults and began to take

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DEFINING MOMENTS

My Home, My Mission Field

By Lily Tan



"Lily, I need to talk to you." My husband then voiced his heart's desire one day in July 1972. We were two government school teachers in Kuantan whilst his parents and five younger siblings were living in a squatter house in Kuala Lumpur. He felt that as long as his parents and siblings stayed in Kuala Lumpur and we in Kuantan they would never get to know our wonderful God and Saviour Jesus Christ. How do we share Christ with them when we are so far apart? "Even if we were to send half our salaries to them, it would still be insufficient to support them in the long term", he reasoned.

My heart sank. True, we had been sending money back monthly but it was just not enough to support such a large brood. Kok Keong reasoned that if his whole family were to relocate to Kuantan, two families could live more cheaply under one roof and we would have the opportunity to influence them for Christ. The proposal was to invite them over at the beginning of next year. "The choice is yours, Lily, please consider and pray about it." What kind of choice was that!

Cold shivers went up and down my spine. We had been married for four years, had two lovely daughters, happily settled in Kuantan and suddenly I was confronted with the prospect of having my husband's parents and five siblings staying with us in six months time and that we could be responsible for them for years. All sorts of imponderables and many unthinkable scenarios went through my mind:

- Two families under one roof (my nuclear family and Kok Keong's parents and siblings—the youngest brother only ten years old;
- Thirteen individuals staying in the same little house. where are they going to sleep in our small rented house;
- Our small salaries going to support this large brood for years and years;
- The language barrier—I speak no Cantonese; my parents-in-law speak no English; and
- Culturally my in-laws and I were worlds apart.

All my friends, even Christians, warned me against such a move. Yet I knew I would hurt my husband if I said 'no'. Above all, I really wanted to do God's will. Could this be His will? As I prayed and agonized over it, moving from a position of "No, Lord, please no, I can't take it!" to eventually coming to the point of saying "Not my will but yours be done. Only show me Lord, if this is your will."

Looking back, making the decision to obey God was a defining moment in my life as a Christian. So, in early January 1973, the Yap clan moved to Kuantan.

A verse in the Bible, Ecclesiastes 11:1 stood out so clearly:

"cast your bread on the waters for after many days you will find it again. Give portions to seven, yes to eight: ..."

I knew God was speaking to me through it. "Cast your bread on many waters ..." I had been lamenting inwardly that supporting Kok Keong's family of seven members would absorb a lot of our income. We had started out with nothing and were just beginning to build our home. Our meagre monthly salaries going into support this family was just like throwing money into the seas—'casting bread on the waters'—a rather foolish act. And God was asking me to do just that. There was of course the promise that I will be rewarded - "for after many days, you will find it again." The words "give portions to seven, yes to eight" became much clearer later because there were seven members in Kok Keong's family and later on, his brother, Kok Weng was to ask if his girlfriend, Siew Mui, could come from KL and stay with us to help in the florist shop which he had started. I was prepared, readily consented, feeling this too was in His will. At that time, I only wanted to do His will, believing that if it was in his perfect will, God would cause all things "to work together for good". This also played a major part in causing me to offer to his newly married sister, Siew Chin, and her husband Lee Kin to stay with us that first year they were in Kuantan. What a home! What a mission field!

Thus, when Kok Keong and I visited his family in Kuala Lumpur during the December school holidays, he invited them move over to stay with us in Kuantan.

Kok Keong told his mother the if they were to come they would have to leave the household idols and ancestral tablets behind. Naturally, his mother was most upset and said that in that case they would remain in KL. But God overruled. When she informed Kok Keong's father, a man of few words, that night he merely said "Just put the idols in a temple and pay temple people to house them there." Problem solved.

A week later, at the Teachers' Christian Fellowship Conference, the speaker Mrs Kuhn, asked us to write down one big thing we would do for God and also one big thing that we would ask of Him. We were to write this on a piece of paper, which would be mailed back to us exactly one year later. I wrote:

"Father, the hardest thing for me, the biggest sacrifice I ever have to make is to take Kok Keong's parents and five siblings into my home. It is not only the costly financial burden, Lord, it is also the loss of my privacy. You know I am such a private person. I dread having his mother stay with me. She talks incessantly, on such trivial inane matters and worse, I don't even understand Cantonese and she speaks no English. Also I can see his dad is going to be a big problem. And so this is the one big thing I am doing for you. And the one big thing I ask of you, Lord, is that by the end of this year, the two youngest siblings, Kok Leong and Wai Lin will accept you as their Saviour."

A peace came into my heart, my struggle was over and I know that my precious Father was pleased with me.

We rented a bigger house with four bedrooms. Kok Keong, me and our two babies shared one (I loved this room. Here I had wonderful privacy when needed, spent precious time with my daughters, prepared my school lessons, etc), Kok Keong's mum, his two sisters and Siew Mui, shared another, His father, and two brothers shared the third, and the married sister and husband shared the fourth room. Thirteen people in all to start with, but the numbers gradually lessened through the years.

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DEFINING MOMENTS

Where was God?

By Daniel Lee

From Dan Lee's Facebook post on Monday, 7 January 2013 at 4:54pm

It's a week into 2013 now and as I look ahead to the great things that are to come this year, I would also like to put down my thoughts of how the year 2012 has been to me. It was a year of many adventures, trials and testing of my faith; yet God has been faithful through it all and brought me through 2012 and I am looking ahead to 2013 with greater faith in Him and greater hope in His plans for me this coming year. 2012 can easily be split up into two parts, based on two life-changing events that took place in my life.

Firstly, early last year, God sent me someone who has been my best friend and companion whom I can share my life with, and would be my pillar of support through the most difficult times that I did not know I was to face later that year. She is my better half, my dearest friend, my beloved, Hosanna. The circumstances that surrounded how we met back in 2011 and how we have helped each other grow personally and in our faith in Him throughout the months assured us of the Divine hands that brought us together, of which, I am thankful to God each day.

On May 16, 2012, I woke up feeling as though the whole world around me was spinning at high speed. I couldn't balance myself and started feeling really sick. I rushed to the toilet, vomited continuously, and was barely able to open my eyes without feeling as though I'm sitting on a spinning top. To cut the long story short, I was diagnosed with 'cavernoma' in my brain stem (The Federal Highway of nerves), where an irregular blood vessel in my brain stem ruptured and caused several side effects to the nerves around the area. I lost my balance, coordination of my limbs on the right side, facial muscle control and sensation on the right side, slight loss of hearing on the right ear as well as double vision. That was the second life-changing event that took place last year and the beginning of a long journey of recovery, which I am still on now.

It has been seven long months since the day I fell sick and literally lost all control of my life. I had to re-learn many things, including walking, feeding myself, bathing myself and doing simple task that requires balance. It was one of the longest seven

months I had to face. I thank God for my parents who have been supporting me and taking care of my needs every single day for the past seven months. Their sacrifices, even up till now, in caring, praying, providing and even driving me around are immeasurable.

God has also been faithful in His presence throughout this period of time, not just through His Word, Spirit and Voice but also through the many relatives and friends who have shown their concerns, visited me and prayed for me. Hosanna never failed to make time to accompany me, even through the nights in the hospital and I thank her for sacrificing her time, energy, and money to support me physically, emotionally and spiritually these past seven months.

My relatives, especially my Poh Poh, tried to pay me a visit every single day when I was in hospital and their presence really lifted me up and gave me an assurance that everything will be alright. One of the most touching moment I experienced while I was in hospital was how my Poh Poh volunteered to pray for me on a few occasions, in Cantonese, and reminded me that she is praying for me every day.

Truly, the presence of God and His love was manifested through every one of them who have been there for me, not just during the time I was in the hospital but right up till this very moment.

So, how do I exactly feel throughout these seven months, especially during the initial stages where I had to go through brain surgery to remove the ruptured blood vessel? It was very scary and something very unimaginable happening to me at that point but at the same time, God's presence was always there. There was always an underlying peace and confidence that God is in charge of all things and nothing escapes His attention. Doubts of His love and His plans, though come to mind occasionally, never managed to drown my trust and faith in the Sovereign God. One of the Psalms that spoke to me a number of times was Psalm 18:

- ¹ I love You, Lord;
You are my strength.
- ² The Lord is my Rock, my Fortress,
and my Savior;
my God is my rock,
in whom I find protection.

*He is my shield, the power that saves me,
and my place of safety.*

- ³ I called on the Lord,
who is worthy of praise,
and He saved me from my enemies.
- ⁴ The ropes of death entangled me;
floods of destruction swept over me.
- ⁵ The grave wrapped its ropes around me;
death laid a trap in my path.
- ⁶ But in my distress I cried out to the Lord;
yes, I prayed to my God for help.
He heard me from his sanctuary;
my cry to Him reached His ears.
- ¹⁶ He reached down from heaven
and rescued me;
He drew me out of deep waters.
- ¹⁷ He rescued me from my powerful
enemies,
from those who hated me
and were too strong for me.
- ¹⁸ They attacked me at a moment
when I was in distress,
but the Lord supported me.
- ¹⁹ He led me to a place of safety;
He rescued me because He delights
in me.

- ³⁰ God's way is perfect.
All the Lord's promises prove true.
He is a shield for all who look to Him
for protection.
- ³¹ For who is God except the Lord?
Who but our God is a solid Rock?
- ³² God arms me with strength,
and He makes my way perfect.
- ³³ He makes me as surefooted as a deer,
enabling me to stand on mountain
heights.
- ³⁴ He trains my hands for battle;
He strengthens my arm to draw
a bronze bow.
- ³⁵ You have given me Your shield of victory.
Your right hand supports me;
Your help has made me great.
- ³⁶ You have made a wide path for my feet
to keep them from slipping.
- ⁴⁶ The Lord lives! Praise to my Rock!
May the God of my salvation be exalted!
- ⁴⁹ For this, O Lord, I will praise You
among the nations;
I will sing praises to Your Name.
- ⁵⁰ You give great victories to Your king;
You show unfailing love to Your anointed,
to David and all his descendants forever.

Indeed, God is my Rock, Strength, Refuge and Saviour. Despite all that has happened,

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

DEFINING MOMENTS

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE, *WHERE WAS GOD?*

I believe God was present and in control. Looking back, I thank God that it happened while I was sleeping, not when I was driving, climbing up a flight of stairs, repairing something on a ladder or diving in the ocean. He saved me from the ropes of death and gave me another chance to live.

How could I still be so calm and peaceful after all that has happened? Well, God is the God of the impossible. He can calm the raging storms and His Spirit can certainly calm a stormy soul. Besides His spiritual presence where human eyes could not see, it was again men and women of God who reflected God in their lives that helped me understand and experience His peace even as I went through my own valley of death.

Back when I was in primary school, my aunt fell sick and she passed away in a matter of two weeks, even before the doctors being able to identify the problem and offered any solution (or at least that was how I remembered it). What I do remember clearly was how she was weak and ill at the hospital bed but yet she never doubted God's faithfulness and love for her. She never questioned why these things happened to her and instead, she asked my mom to sing this song below:

*Does Jesus care when my heart is pained
Too deeply for mirth or song,
As the burdens press,
and the cares distress,
And the way grows weary and long?*

*Does Jesus care when my way is dark
With a nameless dread and fear?
As the daylight fades into
deep night shades,
Does He care enough to be near?*

*Does Jesus care when I've said "goodbye"
To the dearest on earth to me,
And my sad heart aches till
it nearly breaks—
Is it aught to Him? Does He see?*

CHORUS:
*Oh, yes, He cares, I know He cares,
His heart is touched with my grief;
When the days are weary,
the long nights dreary,
I know my Savior cares.*

That was the faith and trust she had in Jesus, even when facing death in front of her eyes. Not just her, but how the whole family reacted throughout the time, including my parents, showed me a real-life example of a faith that can never be shaken.

I'm thankful that this experience has shaped me and enabled me to continue to trust in our loving Father, our faithful and Sovereign God. He never fails and He always have plans that are good, full of hope and a future.

I have, after much reflection, seen on several occasions, how He allowed something "bad" (at least, that was how

I felt at that time) and turned it to good, something beyond my imagination. As of now, I do not know what He has in store for me, or why this actually happened but I trust in His promise that He has a plan written out for me, a plan that never harms me but for my good.

Where was God in 2012? Emmanuel, God with us. God has always been and will ever be with us, no matter what we go through. It is up to us to be still, seek, and listen to Him. We can find Him in His Word and His people but most importantly, He is with us and in us through the Holy Spirit. Just listen... ■



Daniel with parents, Lee Koon Yew & Foong Leen, of Shah Alam Gospel Centre

FROM PAGE 17, *KLANG GOSPEL HALL: CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS*

on heavier roles. With the able direction of Mr. Ng Kong Lam, Mr. Tom Watt, Mr. Chellappah Abishegam and later Dr. and Mrs. Alastair McGregor, the church grew into a vibrant community.

In the late seventies, The Greater Klang Evangelistic Crusade was launched. The English assembly was divided into three home fellowships with the aim of setting up three new assemblies. As a result a new assembly, Klang Jaya Gospel Hall, now known as Bethany Chapel was set up and given autonomy in January 2009. Then in 2009 another assembly was established and known as Setia Alam Gospel Assembly in Setia Alam, a new township about six miles away from Klang Gospel Hall.

The Chinese work also progressed after the establishment of Jenjarom Gospel Hall. Believers who spoke Chinese also opened

the Lord's table in Port Klang Gospel Hall and a Chinese assembly began there. The Chinese work is growing although there is a decrease in the number of children in the Sunday School in Klang. The Sunday School and the Youth Work in Jenjarom Gospel Hall is very encouraging. The brethren from the Chinese assembly have worked hard to spread the gospel among the Chinese-speaking community and have worked tirelessly to oversee the work in the three Chinese assemblies.

We also began a Tamil ministry in 2002 and soon a Tamil assembly was established in Klang. The work has now been transferred to the Bethany Chapel with the support of the other assemblies.

We thank the Lord for His faithfulness and protection. By His grace and mercy He has seen us through difficult times. The work

has been very encouraging and we trust in the Lord to direct us into more avenues of service. We now have five commended workers serving the Lord in our Assemblies.

In all we have, by God's grace and only by God's grace and to His glory, established four English-speaking assemblies, three Chinese-speaking assemblies and one Tamil Assembly in the last century. And thus when we celebrated our Centenary on the 16th of September 2011, we rejoiced at the greatness and goodness of God. We pray that if the Lord tarries, we will move with greater courage and resilience into the next century. ■

Elder William L. Doraisamy is an elder of assemblies in the Klang region and was chairman of the centenary celebration.

DEFINING MOMENTS

FROM PAGE 18, MY HOME, MY MISSION FIELD

The first year was the hardest. Two strong-willed women should never share a kitchen. My mother-in-law believed in the traditional Chinese systems of beliefs (including many superstitious ones) and had her ways of doing things. She had expected her daughter-in-law to be respectful and obedient to her. But I was western educated, and financially supporting the family and knew my own mind. I also loved to cook and bake. Sparks flew often but we also made peace often. My mother-in-law was just 50 then, rather hot tempered but also forgiving, thank God. I often thought I 'tamed' her for the later daughters-in-law! Kok Keong was wise enough not to favour one over the other! I often felt so sad too for my babies (3+ and 1+ years old), thinking that they had been neglected in the overcrowded home as each person had individual needs.

In that year too, I felt I had "lost" my husband to the many concerns not only of school but also of the extended family. In the past there was just Kok Keong, me and our babies but now, with nine extra people, his attention was diverted elsewhere. He had to help them settle in, and adjust, especially his mother, so used to having her own way in everything. Kok Keong had established his role as the head of the home and many hours were spent counseling his mother and his wife and helping his brother to get a decent start in life. I generally attend to managing the affairs of the household and guiding the two youngest siblings.

Those were stressful years but it was so worthwhile. All the small sacrifices pale into insignificance as all the nine in my household came to know and accept the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour.

The first two were Wai Lin and Kok Leong at a Gospel Meeting in Kuantan Chapel at the end of 1973. It was exactly as I had asked from the Lord! Praise Him. The

next three—the mother, Wai Kuen, the second sister and Siew Mui had been going regularly to the Chinese Baptist Church. At various times they too accepted the Lord. My mother-in-law had come a long way from her idolatrous beliefs and superstitions. But I think what finally clinched it in her mind and heart was in 1978. After Kok Keong had gone on a British Council scholarship to UK. She was fearful—though she never voiced it—that with the son away, the daughter-in-law would reveal her true colours and treat his parents and siblings badly; the theme of many Cantonese dramas. But when she saw that I remained the same—normal and loving, her faith in the Christian God increased. One day she brought all the 'fu', the charms and other 'sacred' objects that she had smuggled into my home years ago, and asked me to destroy them. I took them outside my house to burn them while she peered fearfully from the bedroom window. As the weeks passed, and nothing bad happened to us, the 'strongholds' were dismantled in her mind. After this she used to pray so faithfully to the Christian God for each member of her family.

The next two to come into the Christian faith were Siew Chin and Lee Kin. When they returned to Taiping on transfer in 1975, I was so sad as I felt the opportunity to share Christ with them was lost. Years later they were both to become Christians. Lee Kin's mother also accepted the Lord; and Lee Kin was responsible for bringing some of his relatives, the Lee clan, into the Christian faith. So the love of Jesus grew to claim more lives. Lee Kin shared much later that he was influenced for Christ when he stayed with us, seeing the way we lived. I felt humbled by this. To God be the glory!

In time Siew Mui influenced her husband, Kok Weng for Christ. Then years later, the last of the Yip clan, the stubborn father, came stumbling into the Kingdom. And there was one more. God presented a

bonus to the Yap family—one day in 1969, just one year after our marriage, Kok Keong came home one day with a skinny boy walking sheepishly behind him and declared that he will be staying with us for two years. I was taken aback. Yong Nin, from a small town, had passed the form 3 exam but had to drop out of school as there was no upper secondary there. Besides he was the eldest of many brothers and sisters and their father had passed away. He started work as an apprentice in a medical shop. Kok Keong came to know about him, sought him out and brought him home. So Yong Nin stayed with us for two years until he completed his fifth form. He was extremely hard working and studious; he learnt English staying with us, but best of all, Christ found him and he became a Christian too. Wonder of wonders how the Lord worked. Somehow many years later, after his studies in New Zealand, he met and married Wai Kuen, Kok Keong's sister. Today he is an elder in his church. The wonderful thing is that all of Kok Keong's siblings married good Christian men and women and from them, we have five strong Christian families.

Just after I graduated, I wondered if the Lord was calling me into full time Christian service. In 1967, I went to an OMF missionary conference and I told the Lord that if he was calling me, please to make it clear at that conference. Well He did not. I was a bit disappointed then. Now looking back, that moment, when against all common sense and all my personal disinclinations, I said "yes" to Kok Keong to bring his family and extended family to stay with us, the door was opened for God to express His love and salvation to many more. This indeed has always been the Heavenly Father's desire. He did not send me to the mission field but brought the mission field into my home. Isn't God so amazing and awesome? His ways are perfect. Praise Him! ■

HAPPENINGS



ASSEMBLY YOUNG LEADERS' CONSULTATION
[BEYOND TOMORROW]
 Inspiring//Bridging//Equipping

Participants at the Assembly Young Leaders' Consultation (AYLC) 2013 held at Malaysia Bible Seminary, Kundang from 5–7 April 2013.

UPDATES FROM ASSEMBLIES & MINISTRIES

Christian Brethren Involvement in Education

By Yap Kok Keong

What motivates the small motley band of brethren missionaries and believers to launch into the field of education? The challenges must have been extremely daunting—to purchase land and build buildings to realize their vision and mission. Although Bukit Bintang Girls' School (BBGS) as an institution is no more, their faith, struggle and hard work have left behind lasting legacies in the lives of countless students who benefited from the education of these schools and through them the generations which follow after.

Today we still have three schools situated in two locations (Section 8, Petaling Jaya with 5+ acres and Section 14, Petaling Jaya with 7+ acres). What shall we do with them? What is the Christian Brethren's responsibility towards the students studying there?

Humble Beginnings



BBGS in the 1893



BBGS in the 1980s

Founded in 1893 to provide education for girls who would otherwise not be educated, it had over a period of a hundred years, produced thousands of outstanding women whose impact on home, church and society is incalculable. The BBGS ethos, culture and tradition of excellence continue in the lives and homes of many here in Malaysia and beyond.

Our Continuing Legacy Today



Bukit Bintang Primary School in Section 8, Petaling Jaya



Proposed BB Pre-School Location



Bukit Bintang Secondary School in Section 14, Petaling Jaya



The Christian Brethren of Malaysia Property Trust (CBMPT) building at the back of Bukit Bintang Secondary School

Tragically, where the hallowed school once stood, the glittering Pavilion now stands. Many old girls wept for their alma mater which is no more.

4. Maximising the use of under-utilized land and buildings to continue our role in education to future generations.

The Big Picture of Christian Brethren Involvement in Education (CBIE):

1. Restoring our rights and responsibilities as the Mission Authority
2. Restoration of Christian ethos, character and traditions—our vision & heritage—a place of Christian testimony
3. Re-establishing BBBS as a school of choice—improving all round standards

Rationale & Vision for BB Pre-School

1. One step towards CBIE—more productive stewardship of assembly assets;
2. A non-profit self-sustaining centre of excellence for pre-school education in line with national education aspirations;
3. An informal teacher training, resource and catalyst centre to encourage and

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

UPDATES FROM ASSEMBLIES & MINISTRIES

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE, CHRISTIAN BRETHREN INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

facilitate the setting of pre-schools in our assemblies to enable our assemblies to re-connect and impact community;

4. A centre for the development of Christian ethos and character-building in early childhood education.

Since early 2011, the leaders of Petaling Jaya Gospel Hall, The Life Chapel and SS Gospel Centre started the CBIE ball rolling with formation of the Steering Committee under the leadership umbrella of CBSM. This led to the setting up of various Task Teams to study the feasibility and the practical aspects of CBIE and the options available,

One of the options agreed upon and pursued was the setting of BB Pre-School (Private) in Section 8, Petaling Jaya, utilizing four classrooms and an unused portion of the field. Formal application for the pre-school licence was sent in on 1 October, 2012. Over the last few months, much prayer and effort—numerous letters, several visits to meet senior Education Ministry officials in Putrajaya, etc. followed. The Lord opened many hearts and many doors and we are hopeful that we will get the green light to go ahead soon.



1st Gathering of CBIE people on 2nd March 2013: Assembly representatives of various School Boards and Committees (Note: A few key members were not present)

Setting up our BB Pre-School of excellence will signify the beginning of our new and arduous journey in CBIE. On reflection it is a mission much less daunting than what our

brethren pioneers had to face when they first started our BB schools. ■

Klang Valley Assembly Elders Committee



1st KVAEC Fellowship Night held on Saturday, 4 August 2012 at The Life Chapel.

UPDATES FROM ASSEMBLIES & MINISTRIES

Agape Chapel: A Story of God's Love

By Peter Tan

This is a story of God's faithfulness and grace in establishing His witness. It is also a story of small beginnings. In January 2002, SS Gospel Centre brought together a small group of believers, who having heard the call of God was willing to step out and plant a church. They were of various ages, had different gifting, even different temperaments but they were willing to go where God would send them and do what He would place in their hearts. This was the small beginning of Agape Chapel.

It began with a small group meeting weekly to pray and seek God's will for over a year. We started in the upstairs of a shophouse owned by a Christian brother in Kota Damansara, a 4,000-acre growing township with an estimated population of 500,000. Sunday Worship service began on 8 June 2003. We had by then over 30 believers who had joined us to establish this new congregation. Now we occupy three and a half floors. We are poised to expand God's work in this community and beyond.

At Agape Chapel, our mission is to love God in a way that reaches another generation, and to take His love to the ends of the earth. And within that mission is an understanding that God has given each of us a divine assignment and the divine ability to carry that assignment through. Every member plays a different yet equally important part in that mission. At Agape Chapel our ethos is formed by a motivation to genuine compassion and love. Doing everything in love for Christ's sake is inherent in our church name. The gospel of love is central in all our ministries, taking God's love to our community and beyond. "Agape" or sacrificial love has been and will continue to be our motivation towards our mission.

We believe in a wider welcome of sinners and saints. We encourage each other, difficult as it may be, to become all things to all men so that by all possible means we might save some (1 Cor. 9:22). When new people do join us we must be prepared to accept and adapt to the fresh and different ways that they carry out their spiritual gifting and callings. Therefore the ethos of Agape Chapel will always be "love" above all, above all cultures and traditions. God has a great sense of humor when He brings into our midst exactly what we asked for, people of every culture, nationality and



Members of Agape Chapel with Audrey & Peter Tan (seated, fourth and fifth from left)

walk of life. People, who are different from us, people whom God loves, and He says to us, you love them! The joy exceedingly of seeing people turn to God and taste of His goodness is our greatest reward. Our Touch Ministries where we reach the community include, Tuition Classes for Children and Adults, Children's Playschool, Children's Library and Financial Literacy Program. We have every opportunity to meet and love people from every walk of life.

Our call as witnesses extends beyond our physical location and we have sent teams on mission to our OA brethren and also beyond our country's boundaries to Philippines, India, China and Myanmar. Our present focus on Philippines includes two planned Missions a year and regular visits to OA villages. We support local missionaries and mission organizations as well as missionaries in foreign lands. We have the privilege to show Christian love by supporting more than 40 students over the years in Philippines on scholarship programmes in partnership with their local churches. Each year we have seen increased giving towards Missions and we are humbled at how God continues to provide, as we become His channels of love.

At Agape Chapel we also take seriously our call to make disciples. The word "disciple" literally means someone who pledges to be a "learner." It involves commitment, and time to undertake the learning, and, as a Christian, a yearning to imitate Jesus. We fail in our call, if we fail to teach the whole counsel of God's Word and we fail in disciple making when we do not challenge believers to grow. We continue to provide every avenue for the church to grow in

Word, life and ministry. We believe there is no short cut; all of us need to grow through the Word, the very foundation of our faith. Outside of our Sunday pulpit ministry, weekly adult bible study, care and share group studies for adults, children's Sunday school and Youth Meetings, we introduced formal Theological Studies in partnership with Moore's Theological College, Sydney and introduced "Intentional Discipleship System" (IDS). The Word of God is central to our worship life and ministry work, and we have seen such wonderful spiritual growth among many individuals by staying true to the study of God's Word.

We believe in the importance of having strong and spiritual families. Troubled and problematic families will affect our Christian lives and ministries. Strong families make a strong church. To protect and care for our families, we encourage family based bible studies at our care groups and empower parents to teach and live godly lives, that through them, their children will learn to also lead godly lives. Care groups are our pastoral link and godly marriages and families are modeled and taught through the care groups, supplemented by women's bible study and men's fellowship.

Church planting is an exhilarating experience, an emotional roller coaster ride of ups and downs. Through it all, we see God revealed in the fullness of His grace and mercies, using ordinary people to do extraordinary things for His Glory. We would not have been able to travel this far if not for the many saints who have walked this journey with us. We had the support of the Oversight of SS Gospel Centre (SSGC)

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

UPDATES FROM ASSEMBLIES & MINISTRIES

Assembly Fellowship Camp 2012

By Daniel Ong

Assembly Fellowship Camp (AFC) 2012's theme was *Church: Some Assembly Required*. We learnt what the Body of Christ really meant and how we could contribute to God's Kingdom as single adults along with the challenges that comes with it.

AFC 2012 was held in Penang in conjunction with the Georgetown Festival 2012. Campers enjoyed every moment—from Penang's infamous glorious food to the nostalgic journey along Penang's heritage trail. Who would forget the different varieties of durians, the BBQ by the beach, the seafood dinner, the outdoors, the boat rides and most of all the fellowship we all had? One of the highlights of the camp was the heritage trail. Campers had a real treat with bro. Timothy Tye explaining in detail the historical aspects of the trail while Mr. Ung Kim Cheng retraced the footsteps of the early assembly pioneers who started the work of the assemblies and how the work grew in South East Asia with Penang as its starting point.

We also invited "storytellers" from around the region to share something about the Church. These storytelling sessions are little bite size sharing of real people putting their faith in action. These sessions were initiated by us for the very first time to motivate, challenge and spur us into action. We had bro. Leong Yan sharing with us about the open kitchen project of Kledang Community Chapel, sis. Ee Ling reported on the work in Kazakhstan, Mr Ung Kim Cheng reminded us of how the assembly work started in Penang, Mr. Teo Pek Bing shared about his walk with God in his early Christian life, Mr. Lee Kim Seong told us about all the smaller assemblies in Malaysia that existed and persevered without us knowing. These story tellers gave us a wide colourful spectrum of how ordinary people can be used mightily for God's Kingdom.

The World has Grown a Little Smaller

What used to be a Malaysian Assembly Fellowship Camp has now become an International Assembly Fellowship Camp. We anticipated people joining us from overseas like Austria, Singapore and Germany in past camps. In one of the camps two sisters from Hawaii found out about AFC and eventually signed up! In AFC 2012, we had Mr. Kenneth Wong from



Campers enjoying the cool breeze on Penang Hill during our outdoor devotion at Penang Hill.

Bethesda Ang Mo Kio Singapore as our camp teacher and we all greatly benefitted from his messages. Bro. Kenneth has a way of putting his messages in a self-reflective manner, as though as God is speaking directly to you through him.

Moving Forward

At AFC 2010 themed "For Such a Time as This", AFC embarked on a project to deal with issues facing Christians today, in particular, single adults. At AFC 2011, we had a good bird's eye view of the various issues. Four key areas were identified, namely, Church, Country, Work and Family. However, we were not able to get more depth and traction, so we thought focusing on the topics, Church, Country, Work and Family one at time would do more justice. Last year (2012) was on the theme of the church, and this year 2013, we will look into the aspect of "country" as our focus.

Why AFC?

One of the outcomes of the Assemblies Leaders' Conference in 1994 was to look into needs and means of fellowship among single adult Christians at an Inter-Assembly level. The common understanding was that the assemblies around Malaysia have

tailor-made many retreats and camps for families, youths and children, but none to cater to a niche group of people – the single adults. Thus, the Assembly Fellowship Camp (AFC) was conceptualized. One of the prime movers of AFC was none other than bro Ung Kim Cheng who has continued to support AFC through the years

We all know that these single adults will eventually form the church leadership one day, and we also know when youth reaches an age of acquisition, perspectives, priorities, and sometimes, values may change. AFC provides opportunity for like-minded saints to take a rest from their work-schedule to come together to share and minister to one another as they sit under the sound of God's Word dealing with matters of mutual interest in a healthy and congenial environment.

The Assembly Fellowship Camp has taken an active role in providing (at a cross-assembly level) our young working adults with a "retreat" they can call their own. Our prayer is that God will use this platform for interaction and learning among individuals who wish to live out their lives meaningfully and purposefully in His kingdom. Therefore, I would like to urge all assemblies, especially the leaders, to encourage single adults in your flock to participate in AFC. ■

Daniel Ong has been in fellowship with Sungai Nibong Gospel Hall since 1990 and was baptized there on 12 October 1997. He has worked among the Orang Asli people, in music & drama ministries and among young adults. He has a great passion for music, arts and technology, and has helped many assemblies & Christian organizations, including CBSM, to function more efficiently using internet and cloud technology. Daniel is the current chairman of AFC and is now residing in Singapore.

UPDATES FROM ASSEMBLIES & MINISTRIES

Residential Bible School 2013

By Colin Kirton, Principal, RBS 2013

Fifty-six students from 23 Brethren assemblies (and some non-Brethren churches) across the country converged in Highlands Christian Centre in Cameron Highlands from 1 January through 7 February 2013 for Residential Bible School (RBS) 2013. RBS is an annual five-and-a-half week discipleship school for school leavers organised by Inter-Brethren Assemblies (IBA) Youth Development. Its programme is designed to engage the heads, hearts and hands of the students, who are called to a committed lifelong walk with God, based on the foundation of the principles of Scripture, which should govern every area of our lives.

God again worked in many hearts in different but equally wonderful ways. Many students testified to how they had come to own their faith in a deeper way, and grow in the daily disciplines of meditation on God's Word, prayer, reflection and seeking after God. Others were challenged to serious soul-searching with the help of the Holy Spirit and confronted areas in their lives that needed realignment with the truths of God's Word. Here is but a sample of the students' testimonies:

"RBS has been a wake-up call for me. God has shown me how I should be living my Christian life and He has revealed to me the changes I need to make. God, have your way in me!"

— Ian Ho, Bandar Sunway Gospel Centre

"God has shown me revelations of Himself every day as I spent time reading His Word and reflecting. I have discovered that He has to break me and mould me to use me as His salt and light to the world."

— Wong Wei Lyn, Klang Gospel Hall



Students and staff of RBS 2013

"RBS has taught me to be a more disciplined and responsible Christian. After RBS, I see not only words in the Bible, but God's truths for us. I have learned that I still have a lot to learn about God but I am hungry for God's Word and will continue to seek Him every day."

— Soh Wei Wern, Kuantan Chapel

Students applied much of what they had learned in a weekend mission to the orang asli villages in the Tapah area, and a 4-day mission exposure towards the end of the school in various small towns across the country. We are grateful to the following assemblies for hosting the RBS teams this year: Bukit Mertajam Gospel Hall; Kledang Community Chapel, Ipoh; Temerloh Gospel Chapel; Kuantan Chapel; Cameron Highlands Gospel Hall; Melaka Gospel Chapel; and Teratai Mewah Gospel Centre.

After their mission exposure weekend, the students once again converged in Petaling Jaya for the final three days of the school before their Graduation Night at PJ Gospel Hall.

Year after year, the Lord has proven His faithfulness to us in the running of the school—from the provision of all our needs, to His working in the lives of the students. It has also been encouraging to see RBS alumni returning to serve in this ministry. The majority of our 14 mission team supervisors and six full-time staff this year are alumni of the school.

"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy." – Psalm 126:3

To God be the glory! ■

FROM PAGE 24, AGAPE CHAPEL: A STORY OF GOD'S LOVE

who sent us out with their blessings, encouraged and guided us through the years. We remember with grateful hearts our many friends and partners from within the assemblies and beyond, for their encouragement and practical help especially in our early years.

As I reflect on all that has happened in our journey as a church God's faithfulness.

All we have to do is follow, dwelling in the shadow of the Almighty. Church planting has taught us much perseverance, patience and reliance on our Sovereign God. Today, we declare His goodness and faithfulness in the life of His church. What does God have in store for us in the future? We look forward to purchase our own premises in Kota Damansara to accommodate growth and ministry opportunities. Our desire

is to further impact the community in Kota Damansara with God's love as His witnesses and to birth a new congregation. To God be the Glory great things He has done! ■

Highlights of Coming CBSM Events



Biblical Eldership Training Seminars

CONDUCTED BY
ALEXANDER STRAUCH

27 & 28 NOVEMBER 2013, KUALA LUMPUR
6 & 7 DECEMBER 2013, PENANG

Assembly Leaders' Conference (ALC) 2013

Be Shepherds of God's Flock

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
ALEXANDER STRAUCH

30 NOV – 4 DEC 2013, PENANG

Note: 30 Nov – 1 Dec for Assembly Elders Only // Programme for all participants commences afternoon of 1 Dec 2013

About Alexander Strauch

For the past 40 years, Alexander Strauch has served as a teaching elder at the Littleton Bible Chapel in Littleton, Colorado. Additionally he has taught philosophy and New Testament Literature at Colorado Christian University. A gifted Bible teacher and popular speaker, he has helped thousands of churches worldwide through his expository writing and preaching.

Alexander Strauch was raised in New Jersey and converted to Christ at a Bible camp in New York State. He received his undergraduate degree from Colorado Christian University and went on to earn his Masters in Divinity degree from Denver Seminary.

He is the author of more than a dozen books, including *Biblical Eldership*, which has sold over 250,000 copies, *The New Testament Deacon*, *Men and Women: Equal Yet Different*, *The Hospitality Commands*, *Agape Leadership* (with Robert L. Peterson), *Meetings that Work*, and *Leading with Love*. Mr Strauch and his wife, Marilyn, reside in Littleton, Colorado, near their four adult daughters.

TALKS ON

Setting Up & Running Retirement Homes

@ Assembly Leaders' Conference 2013

CONDUCTED BY
PETER MACKIE



About Peter Mackie

Peter Mackie has worked in the Health and Aged Care sector for most of his career. He spent seven years as Chief Executive Officer of two public hospitals and then a private hospital in New South Wales. He then joined IBM Australia and was part of the market development team for the Asia/South Pacific

Region. He also held the position of IBM's Health Industry Program Manager for Australia and New Zealand. Following more than seven years with IBM, he took up the position of Regional Marketing Manager (Australia and SE Asia) for Atwork International, a company providing software solutions to the health care industry.

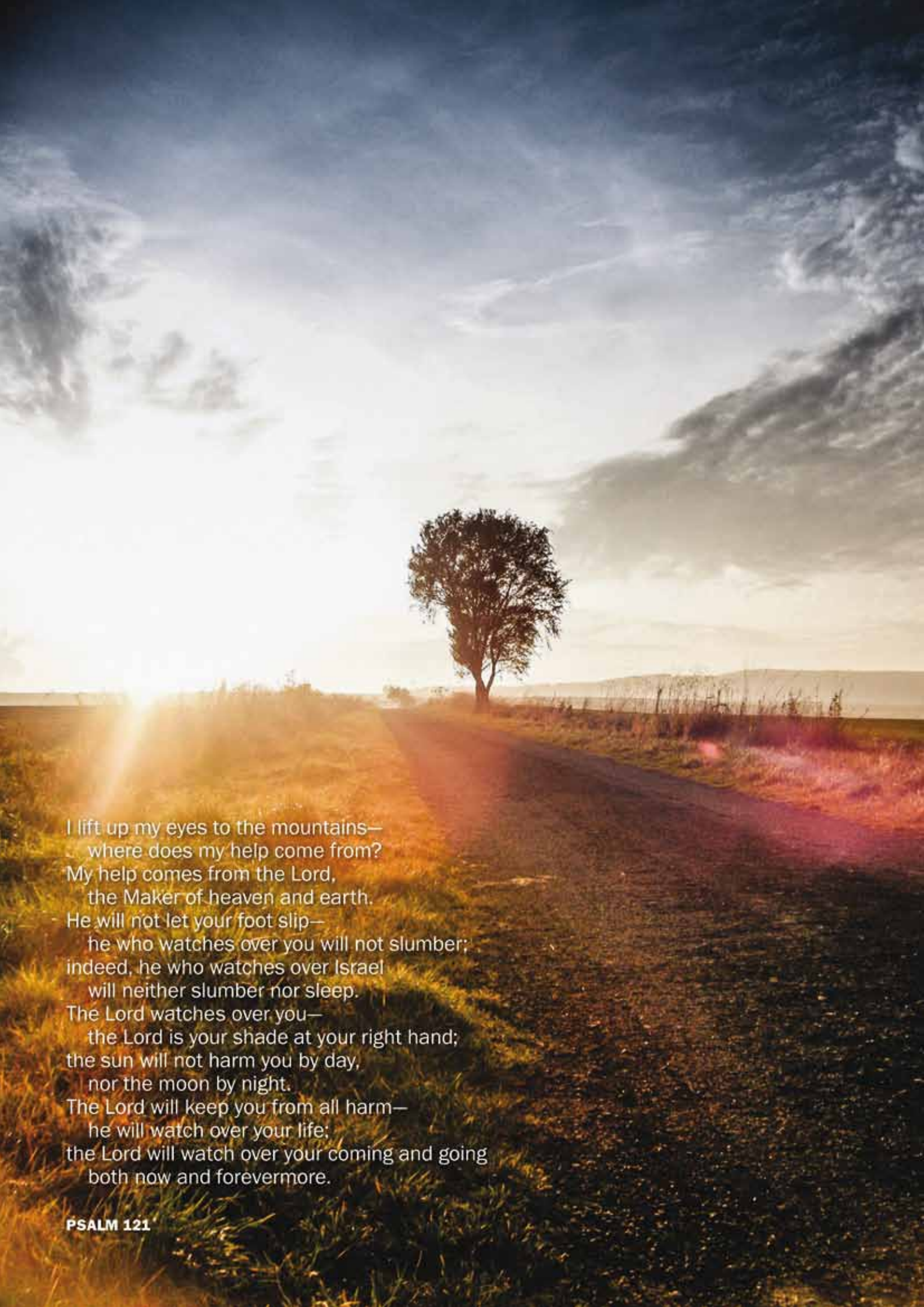
Peter also worked as a management consultant specialising in the management of health information systems, with assignments in Australia, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

In 1997 Peter was appointed to the position he now holds as Chief Executive Officer of Christian Brethren Community Services, an organisation that owns and operates retirement villages and residential aged care facilities. Peter has guided CBCS to a 10-fold growth in turnover to more than \$15 million per annum. The organisation now has total assets of \$100 million and provides accommodation and care for approximately 450 residents.

Peter holds a Bachelor's degree in Health Administration, is an Associate Fellow of the Australian College of Health Service Executives (from which he received the State President's Award in 2011) and is an Associate Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management.

In a voluntary capacity, he is the Secretary of Christian Media Services Inc., and has held the roles of Director of The Lakes Christian College Ltd and of Lutanda Children's Services. He is also the Australian representative for Ireland Outreach International.

Peter is an Elder of the Blaxland Gospel Chapel in the lower Blue Mountains, is married to Janet, has 6 adult children and has 19 grandchildren. He is a regular speaker at his home church and at other churches in the Sydney region.



I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;
indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord watches over you—
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;
the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.
The Lord will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;
the Lord will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.