



Christian Brethren Secretariat Malaysia

September 2017

# diakonia

ONE LORD, ONE MISSION, ONE HEART

## Matthew 17:20

“ ..... Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

*Photo of Mount Cook with Lake Pukaki in foreground, NZ, courtesy of YL Khong*

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## Editor's Note

Getting the Diakonia out this year was challenging. But then again, it was so last year as well. So, truly, through God's grace, another issue of the Diakonia made its way to the printers. Due to lack of time, we were unable to do a more thorough proof reading this round. I apologize for any errors present.

As per the previous years, we are grateful for those who put thoughts to words for the edification of others. For some of authors, it has been quite an effort with their frenetic lives as they juggle many priorities. Without their contributions, this issue would not have been possible. May the Lord bless all those who contributed to this issue.

Align with the Assembly Leadership Conference 2017, we put emphasis in this issue on the younger generation. The pace of change accelerates, thanks largely to technology advances. Through these advances, society at large is impacted. Are the assemblies ready to face the challenges associated with those changes? What are the issues that arises as a result of those changes? How do we respond to them? What are the headwinds to the Faith for our young people ahead?

In this issue, we have given space for the youths and young adults to express their thoughts on these questions. Rightly so, as most of these questions are what the next generation of leaders will have to deal with. In 1 Timothy 4:12, Paul told Timothy to *"Let no one despise your youth .."*. Part of not despising our youths is to allow space for them to have a say on the issues that they face in the world today and to work together on approaches in tackling these issues.

While, in a rapidly changing world, obsolescence is the order of the day for many things of the World, the essential matters of Faith are largely eternal. In this issue of the Diakonia, we hope you will get some insight into where the intersections of the World and Faith are and the implications for practical Christian living, especially for the next generation.

*Khong Yoon Loong, Editor*

## CBSM Board of Trustees Chairman's Message

Over the years, we've seen assemblies flourish (grow in numbers, in faith and in missions) and others who dwindle and fade away. We hear of those in some countries where buildings that once housed saints singing praises to the Lord, are now converted to businesses or even mosques. Understandably, Paul did say that "perilous times will come: <sup>2</sup>For men will be lovers of themselves ... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup>having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Tim 3). However, one cannot help but think if there is something we missed when some assemblies seem to be growing.

Worldviews have evolved and are constantly evolving. Are we ready and able to help our younger generations to be "more than conquerors" in the face of these challenges? They face difficult lifestyle choices, career decisions, and leisure and entertainment choices. They are bombarded with worldly views through social media and their peers. Are we prepared? Do we even know or understand the issues?

Our Lord knows and understands His sheep (John 10:14a), and He was made like His brethren (Heb 4:15), tempted in every way so that He is able to empathize

with our weakness. In the same way, under-shepherds will need to step into the shoes of their young flock, to see and feel the pressure they feel. In so doing, under-shepherds will be more equipped to guard and feed the flock of the younger generations.

Additionally, we need younger brothers and sisters who can identify and lead the flock. Too often we have elders who love the Lord and the flock but are unable to keep up with the worldviews and technology changes. How do we prepare, equip and train the millennials to be ready earlier or at least assist under-shepherds to better shepherd the flock?

ALC 2017 is shaped to address these vital issues. Even as I write, we are gathering inputs from the believers who are from the millennial generation. From these, we are praying for a Leadership Conference that will produce some concrete understanding and actions that assemblies will be able to pick up. There will be follow up sessions to help assemblies implement the actions and ideas.

Pray with us as we embark on this effort for the sake of the Lord's assembly in Malaysia.

*Teo Pek Bing, Chairman*



# From the Secretary's Desk

Greetings in the name of our Lord! It is again my pleasure to share with you some of the activities of CBSM. This brief report is not merely for your information but also to solicit your prayers for CBSM and the ministries we are driving or coordinating.

## 1. CBSM Trustees and Meetings

The current Board of Trustees is made up of 15 elders representing states where there are Brethren assemblies. The trustees are: Teo Pek Bing (Sg. Nibong Gospel Hall), Lee Kha Kooi (Sg. Ara Gospel Hall), Dr. Khong Yoon Loong (Bukit Mertajam Gospel Centre), Cheah Huck Leong (Bidor Gospel Centre), Stephen Yam (Kampar Gospel Hall), Chris Tay (Bandar Puchong Gospel Centre), Michael Fun (Bandar Sunway Gospel Centre), Wong Sai Weng (The Life Chapel), Peter Tan (Agape Chapel), Lian Mung Yee (Petra Gospel Centre), Jimmy Chok (Gospel Hall Kuala Lumpur), Frederick Tan (Nilai Gospel Chapel), Rodney Tan (Melaka Gospel Chapel), Dr. Stephen Chang (Southern Cross Gospel Chapel) and Chiew Sai Kee (Temerloh Gospel Chapel).

In accordance to the Trust Deed, CBSM Trustees held three meetings in 2017. The 1st Trustees' meeting was held on 14 January at The Living Room (Agape Chapel's outreach centre in Ara Damansara). The 2nd meeting was held on 8 April at Bandar Sunway Gospel Centre, while the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final meeting before ALC2017 was hosted by Sungai Ara Gospel Hall, Penang on 22 July 2017.

A new Board of Trustees will be appointed at ALC2017 in October 2017.

## 2. CBSM Office

All necessary documents for registering the CBSM office property in the name of the Christian Brethren of Malaysia Property Trust Berhad (CBMPTB) have been submitted to the lawyers. Hopefully, this registration process would be completed in the not too distant future.

CBSM is thankful for the continuous financial support from the assemblies. For the first eight months of 2017, CBSM received love gifts totaling RM30,100 from 19 English-speaking assemblies. Several assemblies have

yet to send in their annual gifts. In 2016, 32 assemblies gave a total of RM55,450 towards CBSM operations. We pray all assemblies will take note of the financial needs to enable CBSM to continue its service. All gifts should be made payable to "Christian Brethren Secretariat Malaysia" and sent to the CBSM office or deposited directly into CBSM's Public Bank account no. 3172570809.

## 3. Disaster Relief

### Closure of Nepal Earthquake Disaster Fund

The Nepal Earthquake Disaster Fund was established soon after a massive earthquake devastated parts of Nepal on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2015. An appeal was made to the Malaysian assemblies to provide assistance to our Nepali brethren affected by the disaster. The response from the assemblies and individuals was overwhelming and love gifts amounting to RM392,377 was received. Urgently needed materials including solar power sets, flysheet tents, rice, dhal, sugar, cooking oil, raincoats and medicines were distributed to the affected families in the Ree villages. Financial assistance were also given to affected believers in KMC and Madi villages. Funds were also utilized to rebuild houses of worship and the village school, restoring and replenishing the village clinic, and the construction of a stonewall to control soil erosion. The above constituted the relief phase. The next phase, i.e. reconstruction, was not carried out as the Nepal Government had stepped in to rebuild the affected homes. Since then, the situation in Nepal has largely returned to normal though tremors continue to be felt from time to time.

A total sum of RM123,976 was utilized for the relief efforts in Nepal. CBSM trustees, at their meeting in January 2017, decided to close the Nepal Earthquake Disaster Fund and transfer the balance of RM268,401 to the General Disaster Fund (formerly known as National Disaster Fund). The General Disaster Fund stands at RM317,525, and will be available for disaster relief efforts in Nepal and locally in Malaysia whenever required.

### Water filters

Availability of safe drinking water is critical in any disaster. CBSM purchased the "Sawyer Point One Filter" for distribution to needy areas. 12 sets of the filters were distributed to some OA villages in Temerloh and

to our outreach work in Madi village, Dhading Besi and to KMC in Lalitpur Kathmandu. This point-of-use water filters, developed using advanced kidney dialysis filtration technology, can filter contaminated water to levels cleaner than U.S. bottled water. They are small, portable, don't require chemicals, a power source, or trained operator for use or maintenance. A demonstration of the water filter was made at ALC 2015 and the PMOAM conference in October 2016.

#### **4. Nepal Mission Project**

##### **Kathmandu Mission Centre (KMC)**

Since its establishment, KMC operates from a rented building which houses the living quarters for bro. Amar Tamang and his family, a guest room and a small hall for the worship, as well as for the youth and children's ministries. The rental for the building increases 7% annually. It was felt that the time may have come to buy a suitable piece of land near the current location in Lalitpur, Kathmandu, for the construction of a Mission House cum church hall/chapel for KMC. CBSM is looking to the Lord's guidance in identifying a suitable plot nearby KMC, and necessary arrangements to be finalized in a timely manner. It is hoped that in the long-term, an assembly would consider taking over the Nepal Mission Project.

##### **Mission Trip**

A team of eight missionaries from Bandar Sunway GC, Subang Jaya GC, The Life Chapel and the SIB - went on a mission trip to Nepal from 1–10 September 2017. The team visited Madi village in Chitwan province, Dhading Besi and KMC in Lalitpur, Kathmandu. The team had several programmes planned and ministered to the children, ladies and always on the lookout for opportunities to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord.

##### **Mission Through Education - Nepal (MTE-Nepal)**

MTE-Nepal is a pan-Malaysian brethren assembly missions project, sanctioned and coordinated by CBSM under the Nepal Mission Committee and driven by the Nepal Education Committee. Generally, MTE-Nepal aims:

- i. to extend the Kingdom of God in obedience to the great commission,
- ii. to be the heart and hand of Jesus to help the Nepali people,
- iii. to open another opportunity for our assemblies to be actively involved in missions.
- iv. to augment the mission work already started in Nepal.

MTE-Nepal is a continuation of our commitment in answer to God's call in Nepal. It is to be located in Madi, a small town of about 45,000 people, about 8 hours by

bus from Katmandu. A small outreach base has already been established there and mission teams have visited to conduct children activities. Amar has also talked to the village and he has welcomed the setting up of a private education centre there for the improvement of his people. God-willing, we will begin with an English medium pre-school in 2018; and as the Lord leads, to higher levels as the work matures.

CBSM office continues to receive and remit love gifts to support our commended worker Amar Tamang and the operations and activities of the Katmandu Mission Centre (KMC).

##### **Funding for Nepal Mission Project and MTE-Nepal**

Assemblies are requested to prayerfully consider financial support for the projects. Designated gifts can be sent to the CBSM office or deposited directly to CBSM's Public Bank account no. 3172570809.

#### **5. Christian Brethren Education Advisory Panel (CBEAP)**

The Trustees approved the reactivation of CBEAP, a technical advisory committee under CBSM on educational matters. The Panel comprises the following persons:

Yap Kok Keong (Chairman)  
Rodney Tan (Deputy Chairman)  
Chiew Sai Kee  
Wong Sai Weng

#### **6. Opening of Bank Accounts and other assistance rendered**

To-date, CBSM has assisted some 24 assemblies (including a few Chinese-speaking assemblies) and brethren agencies to open current and fixed deposit accounts under a special arrangement worked out with the Public Bank. CBSM assisted two assemblies with the sale of vehicles registered under the church name.

#### **7. Assembly Leadership Conference (ALC) 2017**

CBSM Trustees chose the Methodist Centre, Port Dickson as the venue of ALC2017. The conference will be held during 18-21 October 2017. The theme chosen for ALC2017 is "**YOU ARE MY WITNESS**" and the focus is on Challenges of the Malaysian Assembly.

We really need to take a serious look at our role being a relevant Witness for Christ in the 21st Century and be aware, to consider and address the multi-faceted challenges and threats to the assemblies' health and growth in Malaysia.

ALC2017 will cover the following topics:

- Preserving & Building on the Unity of the Church.
- Challenges & Threats facing the Malaysian Assemblies today.
- Evolved & Evolving Worldviews challenging the Assemblies today.
- Changes and Evolution of Society.
- Moving Forward.

We pray that Lord will lead and guide all participants to be able to formulate actionable plans to prepare their own assemblies to grow their role as a Christian Witness in Malaysia.

## **8. Publications, Books, Resources and Archive**

The Diakonia, an annual publication of CBSM is distributed to the assemblies free of charge. CBSM's monthly prayer newsletter is sent out via email to the leaders for their dissemination to members of their respective assemblies. The CBSM office have a large stock of Alexander Strauch's book "Biblical Eldership" and the accompanying Mentor's Guide and Study Guide. The three books are available at RM60 per set. Promotional sales of these books will be held at ALC2017.

CBSM is slowly building up an archive of documents, church magazines, photos, etc relating assembly work in Malaysia. Assemblies and individuals are encouraged to send copies to the CBSM office.

*Stephen Lew, General Secretary*



## **CBSM Trustees 2017**

Teo Pek Bing (Sg. Nibong Gospel Hall), *Chairman*  
Lee Kha Kooi (Sg. Ara Gospel Hall), *Deputy Chairman*  
Stephen Lew (Bandar Puchong Gospel Centre), *Sec. Gen.*  
Chris Tay (Bandar Puchong Gospel Centre), *Treasurer*  
Cheah Huck Leong (Bidor Gospel Centre)  
Stephen Yam (Kampar Gospel Hall)  
Michael Fun (Bandar Sunway Gospel Centre)  
Wong Sai Weng (The Life Chapel)

Peter Tan (Agape Chapel)  
Lian Mung Yee (Petra Gospel Centre)  
Jimmy Chok (Gospel Hall Kuala Lumpur)  
Frederick Tan (Nilai Gospel Chapel)  
Rodney Tan (Melaka Gospel Chapel)  
Dr. Stephen Chang (Southern Cross Gospel Chapel)  
Chiew Sai Kee (Temerloh Gospel Chapel)  
Dr. Khong Yoon Loong (Bukit Mertajam Gospel Centre)

# FROM AROUND THE ASSEMBLIES

## Port Klang Gospel Hall Ministries

*Philip Ng*



### Brief History

The pioneering work in Port Klang Gospel Hall (PKGK) started with a Sunday School with six children in 1952 in a house, begun by Mr. & Mrs. William Stott, missionaries from Australia. In 1957, Dr. Walter Ansley-Young, a Town Sanitary Board member, applied for a State land for a church building which was granted to us on 7 July 1966 with a 60 years lease until 6 July 2026. A dedication and thanksgiving service was held at the new Hall on 1 May 1980.

Our Assembly will be focusing on 3 core areas namely - Edification of the Saints, Evangelism to the Lost and Engagement with the Community as shown in the chart with the various meetings and activities.

We would value prayer that our application for the extension of land lease will be granted soon.

We thank the Lord for the many years of testimony and witness of our Assembly where we continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. (Acts 2:42)

### Kitchen Ministry

The Ladies' Kitchen Ministry meets monthly in PKGH on Saturday at 3.30 p.m. with an average attendance of 30 ladies. The primary objective of this outreach work by the ladies was to invite their non-believer friends to a cooking demonstration coupled with a short singing session. Moreover, this is also a good opportunity to build contacts and invite them to our regular meetings.

One of the highlights was a Special Culinary Challenge and Cooking Demonstration held on 9 September 2017



in PKGH where 27 ladies attended. The objective of this was to cook the dish by reading and understanding the given recipe and also to finish it within the given time. Each participant was given a prize and a short gospel message was also shared.

Pray that God will grant us the strength to face the challenges ahead in this work.

### Vacation Bible School (VBS 2016)

The Vacation Bible School (VBS) was held from 3<sup>rd</sup> December to 4<sup>th</sup> December 2016 where 40 children (some first timers) from our Sunday School and Tuition students attended the 2 day session at PKGH.



The Theme was "Lost at Sea" and we used the story of Jonah to share with the children what repentance means and about God's mercy and grace. We also had the privilege of sharing the gospel with the children. There was also a good opportunity to build relationships with the parents of the students who came to the Prize Giving on the last day.



A good number of our believers also came forward to help in the preparation of the VBS and we thank the Lord for this opportunity given to us in this ministry.

## English Tuition

We thank the Lord for another year of serving our Community by providing free English Tuition since 7 February 2009. This is also to serve as a contact point to introduce children to our Sunday School and to reach out to their parents.



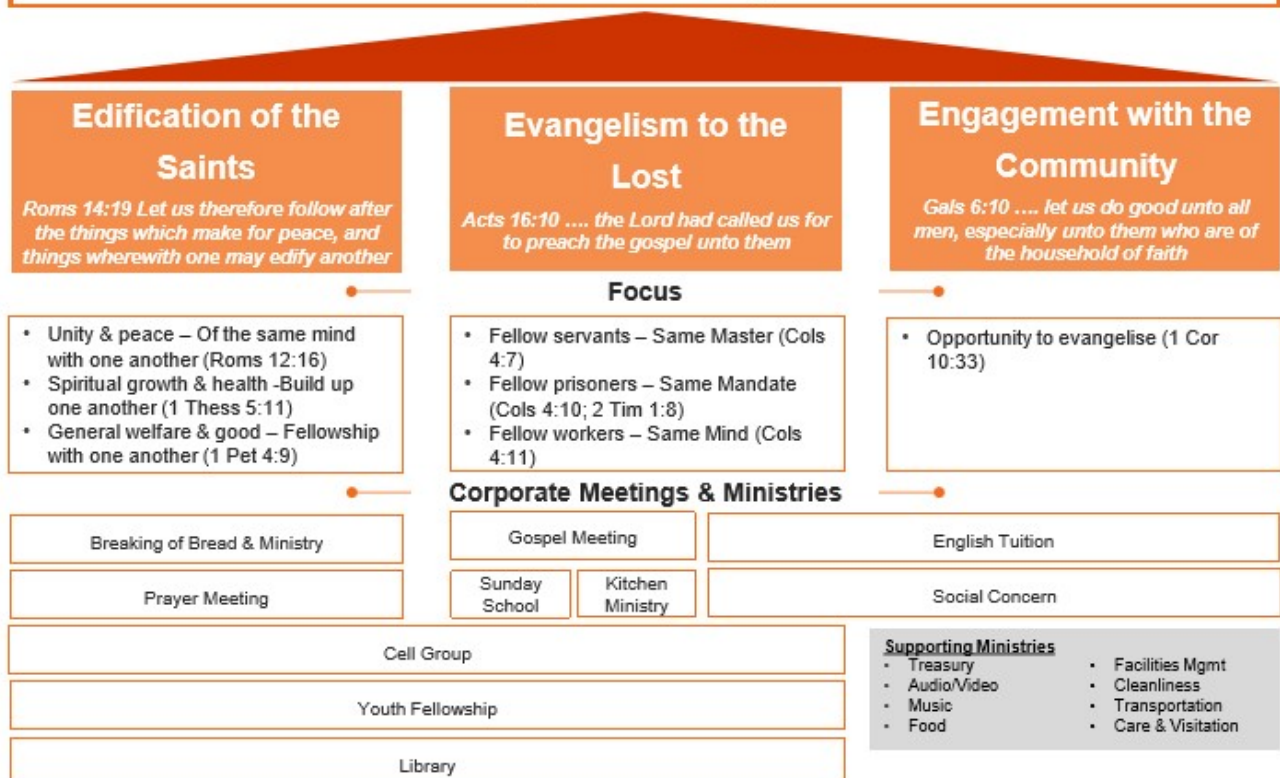
We have a total registered enrolment of 70 with an average attendance of 45 students weekly held on Saturday from 2.00 p.m. to 3.45 p.m. Our English lessons were aimed at helping the students to develop the 4 main skills in the English Language learning namely listening, speaking, reading and writing and using books from Dickens Publishing Ltd, UK.

A written and oral spelling competition was held and prizes were given out during the Sunday School Prize giving. Students were invited to participate in our Sunday Sports and also the Vacation Bible School (VBS). There was also a group singing of simple English Christian songs weekly to all our students at the end of their classes which we introduced on 1 July 2017.

Our challenge is that many parents especially from the other religious backgrounds are reluctant to send their children to our Sunday School and are often hindered by their extra activities. We will solicit your prayers.

Pray that God will bless this ministry for His Glory.

**And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together ... but exhorting one another : and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Hebs 10:24-25)**



The Lord is indeed faithful! By Nov 2017, the Kids English Club would have completed 3 years! For the first 2 years, we would gather with the kids at 9.30am each Saturday. Typically, 25-30 kids would attend. This year (2017), after much prayer, we decided to make 2 major changes. One was to change the Club time to 4.30 pm in the afternoon. This was because many of the older kids have school activities in the morning. The second change was to create a Teens Club that would be separate from the Kids Club. Quite a few of the older children felt that the songs (especially action songs) and Bible lessons were too childish for them. We started with the Std 6 and Form 1. There was also a great effort by one of our sisters who was a retired teacher in Balik Pulau. She would call all her ex-students to invite their children and grandchildren to the Kids & Teens English Club. She is such a blessing! The numbers this year surge to 35-40.



There is much to be done. Often times, it would look quite chaotic. Children range from 5 years to 4 years. Many are difficult to control, especially when instructions were given in English. Many have poor discipline in their homes, coming from broken families. To make matters worse, most of the teachers are also



the drivers that provide transport for the children. When the driver-teachers arrive with the children, they barely have time to get ready for the lessons. Do pray for more laborers.

Apart from the English club ministry, our sister, Ee Ling also continues with the English tuition on weekdays. She has good rapport with the students and the parents. She encouraged the parents to send the children to the English Club on Saturday, but not all responded positively. She continues her weekly Bible studies with 2 believing mothers. Pray for her as she ministers to the mothers and also the kids. She needs wisdom to deal with the rowdy kids.



We've also started a simple cell group fellowship once a month. The primary participants are the believing mothers and workers at the English Club. We've had a few meetings and they were in good spirit. The Word was shared and those who attended enjoyed the fellowship. We are praying that this will eventually be extended to a breaking of bread meeting on a Sunday once a quarter or a month.

We are praying that if possible, we would start an after-school care ministry next year instead of English tuition.

This would increase contact hours with the children compared to the 1.5 hour per week of English tuition. It would immerse them in English speaking environment for 5 half days and also give us more opportunities to share Bible lessons and teach discipline. We have to consider many things such as, licensing and meeting regulatory requirements, building safety, cleanliness and engaging the right workers. Pray with us as we deliberate on this.



A Case of Living Out the Love & Deed of Christ Our Lord

Opening Ceremony in 1931



An External photo of 1980's



An interior photo of 1980's



1988: Christmas Celebration Service



1988: Elder Khoo Ah Chye Conducted Christmas Service



2014: Elder Wong Sai Weng with late Deacons Tan Cheng Hoe (left) and Chia Yoong Thong (right)



“Recent Years”: A Brief Chronological Report as of August 2013

	When	What	Ref
1	MINUTES OF THE KLANG VALLEY ASSEMBLY ELDERS' COMMITTEE (KVAEC) MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 1st NOV 2010 AT 8.30 P.M. AT GOSPEL HALL, K.L.	<p><b><u>“SG BULOH GOSPEL HALL</u></b></p> <p>Since last meeting Kong Beng visited the place with JC and had a day outing with a meal with the residents of the place. JC suggested to schedule regular meetings at the place. New signboard ordered measuring 3' x 2'. Committee advised that a bigger board, 6' x 4' be made instead. Suggestion by committee to make regular visits by various assemblies and then farm out to nearby assemblies for starting an assembly there.</p> <p>JC reported that some young people wanted to reach out to some 100+ residents there in addition to about 100+ inmates. Apparently, the a portion of the settlement land there has been sold to MARA for the setting up of a university.”</p>	Jimmy Chok (JC), KVAEC
2	Since 2010	<p>“Youth Soldier” under Yi Sheng Resources Bhd has been making annual camp at Sg Buloh Gospel Hall and made contact with, (i) residents of the Leprosy Settlement; (ii) children of past residents; and (iii) individuals who are particularly concerned of the welfare of the past and present residents and who have written books and held awareness events.</p>	JC / Yi Sheng Resources

3	Since 2011	Kepong Gospel Hall has joined Gospel Hall Kuala Lumpur in annual visits to Leprosy Wards.	GHKL, KGH
4	28 April 2011 (Thurs)	<p>Event: Official Meeting with the Minister of Health - Re: Heritage Status for Sg Buloh Hospital</p> <p>Venue: Ministry of Health, Putra Jaya.</p> <p>Present: Minister of Health (Dato Liaw) with senior Ministry representatives, including the Director of the new Sg Buloh Hospital.  Tan Kong Beng - Official Rep of CFM  Wong Sai Weng - Representing CBSM/ Sg Buloh Gospel Hall</p> <p>Other heads/representatives of church denominations/religious bodies having their buildings within the proposed Heritage site.</p> <p>The meeting was cordial. The Director of the Hospital was very helpful and prepared to look into any request to provide upgrade of electricity supply and other services within his control. At the meeting we also requested a copy of the location plan showing the lots allocated to the different religious groups.</p>	Wong Sai Weng (WSW)
5	Since 2012	Senior Fellowship of Gospel Hall Kuala Lumpur, with the participation of Kepong and Jln Tiga Assemblies, conduct several visits to Leprosy Wards.	GHKL, KGH, Jln Tiga (PJ)
6	Since 1980s	I understand Full Time Worker bro Teh Weng Kong (now with JIC) has been making pastoral visits to Brethrens in the Settlement and leprosy wards.	JIC
7	Early 2013	The Board of Yi Sheng Resources Bhd revived a long outstanding agenda of "permanent office and camp site". Among other options, it was proposed to try to make better use of the site at Sg Buloh Gospel Hall.	JC / Yi Sheng
8	5th July 2013	As a preliminary step, under the letter head of Gospel Hall Kuala Lumpur and on behalf of Yi Sheng Resources Bhd, wrote to Pengarah, Hospital Sg Buloh, to explore the possibility of developing an office cum camp site at the back of Sg Buloh Gospel Hall (which is a land size of about 5 to 6 basketball court), with upgrade in utilities supply, sewage system, access road, etc.	JC / GHKL
9	26 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	<p>JC accompanied by Yi Sheng Worker Yew Kuan Yee, met Dr. Hj Khalid Ibrahim, Pengarah, Sg Buloh Hospital &amp; Leprosy Settlement. Details reported as per email of same date sent to Yi Sheng Board, as well as the following Elders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to Elder Anthony Too to keep JIC informed as bro Cheng Weng Kong (Chinese speaking section) continues to serve the Brethrens in Sg Buloh;</li> <li>- to Elder Lim Hong Sang who put in considerable effort in recent years for the upkeep of the church building in Sg Buloh;</li> <li>- to Elder Wong Sai Weng to keep CBSM/KVAEC informed and seek joint efforts.</li> </ul>	JC / Yi Sheng
10	22 <sup>nd</sup> Aug 2013	<p>Held Sg Buloh Gospel Hall Site Meeting with representatives of Sg Buloh Hospital Engineering Dept led by Puan Sarah. This meeting was attended by Elder Wong Sai Weng, Elder Lim Hong Sang, Elder Randy Chok (Yi Sheng), J Chok, Yew Kuan Yee and bro Tan Cheng Hoe (Sg Buloh).</p> <p>Apparently, 3-phase electricity supply can be extended from sub-station at Sg Buloh Hospital. Only telephone/internet connects need to be applied from Telekom directly. Puan Sarah will arrange for a copy of the site plan for us within a week or so. Thereafter, a development layout plan need to be submitted to the Sg Buloh Hospital for approval.</p> <p>It was proposed that an Oversight of Sg Buloh Gospel Hall be reinstated with the current two brothers there, bro Tan Cheng Hoe and bro Chia Yoon Thong.</p>	JC and other Elders who attended site meeting



**Yi-Sheng Camp**



**Sg Buloh Hospital Fellowship**

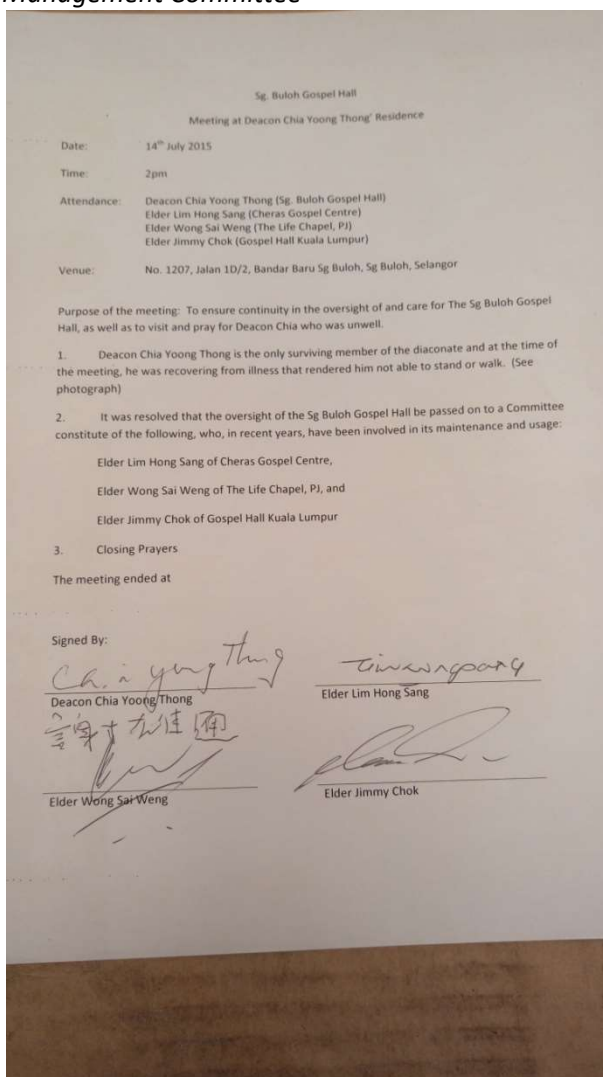


**Occasional Gathering of Local Brethrens**



**Since 2014**

### *Management Committee*



With the successful control and cure of the leprosy disease, the demographic of the Leprosy Settlement has changed over the years. As of now, about 40 patients are in the hospital wards, while the population of ex-patients who continued to live in the Settlement is about 50. (At the peak of the disease in the 1930s, the population was over 2000.)

Over the last 10 years, remaining members of the Assembly there have grown very old and could no longer regularly make their way to the church for worship services. As a result, pastoral care for these members is rendered through regular visitations to the respective wards.

In the 1990's till about 2013, many "un-documented Indonesians" moved into the Settlement and occupied many of the vacant small houses of ex-patients who have passed away. During these years, they planted lawn grass for sale in the compound of the houses, including the vacant land behind the Gospel Hall (for a small fee for the maintenance of the Hall). During this period, late brother Tan Cheng Hoe was the regular care-taker of the church building till he went Home to The Lord in 2015.

The last of local Deacon Bro. Chia Yoong Thong went home to the Lord in 2016. Mrs. Chia now continues to operate a small agriculture supply shop in the Leprosy Settlement.

Over the years since about 2014, the Authorities have "relocated" the Indonesians, but, in their place, we found local squatters have moved in. This was the period when the church building encountered much damaging intrusion and vandalism!

In spite of the disturbances, Grace School Ministry by Cheras Gospel Centre started. At the same time, a few young people came from TTDI Gospel Centre to conduct tuition lessons for poor and needy children.

**Fencing gone**



**Doors damaged**



**White Ants Damages**



**Electric wiring cutted, 3 of 4 ceiling fans stolen, all lightings except one stolen**



**Doors damaged**



**Room vandalised (bed subsequently stolen)**



By God's Grace, during this "damaging" period (including lodging police reports), new ministries started:

**Grace School by Cheras Gospel Centre**



**Grace School Christmas Team**



**Fridays Tuition Classes by young people from TTDI Gospel Centre**



Over the years since 2014, after several correspondence and meeting with the Sg Buloh Hospital Pengarah, finally, a reply letter dated 24<sup>th</sup> August 2016 was received with the information that the Leprosy Settlement is being classified by Jabatan Warisan Kebangsaan as Tapak Warisan Kebangsaan and Warisan Dunia (i.e. National and World Heritage sites). This led to several meetings with Jabatan Warisan through the office of JIC Elder architect Anthony Too, who then facilitated and undertook the necessary land survey and structural planning for security fencing, including written submission to the Authorities. Relevant approval was received from Jabatan Warisan.



In August, 2017, with funds support from, mainly, The Life Chapel, PJ, and remaining Leprosy Funds of Sg Buloh Gospel Hall, security fencing was completed.



Thanks be to God for this development, towards a new phase of the witness of The Gospel Hall, Sungai Buloh!

Sg Buloh Gospel Hall financial A/C as of 20 Aug 2017 :

**( Currently parked with “Gospel Hall Kuala Lumpur” (Maybank A/C No. 0140 4820 2519 )**

Type	Date	Num	Name	Memo	Amount
Deposit	14-Sep-14		Cash/cheques	From Sg Buloh Gospel Hall	RM5,000.00
Cheque	3-Nov-14	MBB 367061	Pest Pro Service	Termite service for Sg. Buloh Gospel Hall	-RM750.00
Cheque	5-Dec-14	MBB 367095	Chok Kwong Hon	Advance Payment for Sg. Buloh Gospel Hall to install water tank project	-RM2,500.00
Cheque	5-Dec-14	MBB 367096	Chan Ying Shyong	Balance payment of water tank installation for Sg. Buloh Gospel Hall	-RM700.00
Deposit	13-Apr-15			Leprosy Mission	RM9,378.67
Deposit	22-Dec-16		The Life Chapel	Love Gift to Sg Buloh Gospel Hall for building a security fence around the compound	RM22,000.00
Cheque	7-Jul-17	MBB 881436	E Fix Interior Design	Installation of new security fencing of Sungai Buloh Gospel Hall	-RM10,845.00
Deposit	13-Aug-17		Robert Tan	Love Gift to Sg Buloh Gospel Hall (Receipt no: 15731)	RM200.00
Cash			Maze Studio	Love gift from TV show filming on-site	RM300.00
Cheque	20[Aug-17		E-Fix	Balance of fencing payment	-RM21,989.56
AVAILABLE BALANCE					RM94.11

### Going Forward Prayers

- Extension of Tuition Class to other children:** This is being explored with both Cheras Gospel Centre and TTDI Gospel Centre. Another party in this exploration is a combined team of young people from various Chinese speaking Assemblies, in the context of recently concluded West Malaysia Gospel Hall Leadership Conference’s resolution on “Education Ministry of The Church” to, among other approaches, adopted a strategic plan to deploy outreach efforts through Tuition Centres.
- Refurbishment of The Hall:** To undertake rewiring with the installation of new fans and lightings and, also undertake all necessary structural repairs. The estimated cost was RM60,000 plus.

Do pray, that The Lord sends His Workers and resources needed, in the oneness of Assemblies of Brethrens, that God’s Love through this unique Legacy of The Assembly on this land, flows forth abundantly and powerfully! Amen.

### Questions to consider:

What steps are involved in planting a church?  
Why is there a need to plant a church in the first place?  
What exactly is involved in planting a church?

### Prayer

Always bask the idea of church planting in prayer. Why do you want to plant a church? What is the reason for it? Prayer is essential to anything and the purpose must always be to glorify Christ. The reasons to plant churches are plenty. The demographics change; the population shifts, and sometimes churches begin to teach watered-down theology as they trend towards seeker sensitive services. In March 2017, we would have been meeting at Agape Chapel's church plant called “The Living Room” regularly on Sundays for 3 years. We give thanks to God for providing a partnership of faithful and committed believers for His work in Ara Damansara. The church meets weekly and as often as required to pray.

Prayer is the number one thing, the first thing, the ongoing thing, and the last thing that needs to occur. God must be involved in this process. Psalm 127:1 says, “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain.” Jesus said that “I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18). Anytime you decide to plant a God-centered, God-glorifying church that is evangelistic, you will get spiritual attacks but remember it is the Lord Who builds and when He is involved in the building of a church, nothing can stop it.

Our Sunday worship meetings, which take place at 5pm, have between 15-20 regular attendees. We have also conducted Bible Study Classes prior to our Sunday meeting with a small group of believers. We thank The Lord for a small group of committed prayer partners who meet in church to pray and seek The Lord's direction for His work. Our weekly Prayer Meetings are on Thursday evenings at 9pm and we are having between 6-12 prayer partners meeting regularly for prayer. We hope to see more prayer partners gathering on Thursdays and believe that God will surely answer the cries of His people to see people turn to The Lord.

### Research

Do your homework. Talk to neighbors, talk to local citizens, talk to the local businesses, talk to anyone and everyone and ask if they have a home church. If not, ask them why? What is the reason that they don't attend a church? Sadly, the majority of people who don't attend church have never been asked! What you find is that many people who do not attend church have had bad experiences with a church or they are dissatisfied with organized religion. We believe that small things done with great love will change the world and turn people to Jesus Christ. We are blessed to have the third floor of our resident doctor; Dr. Goh Choy Foong who runs a clinic in the building offering us the space for our outreach work. Our call in the community at Ara Damansara is to reach families with the gospel. This being our primary calling, our activities will reflect touching families with God's love. While Dr. Goh meet the physical needs of her patients, she often times sends them upstairs for their spiritual needs! We launched the Alpha Program at The Living Room this year and saw how God met the needs of the unchurched families who came and found Jesus.



When you plant young, tender transplants in a garden, you need fertile ground, you need ground that is softened up or tilled, you need fertilizer, and lots of water. This means that you will need ongoing support. Practical support from the mother church, Agape Chapel is essential and spiritual support must continue throughout the church plants life. We always need to communicate our needs and involve the members from Agape Chapel in our ongoing outreach activities, without which we will lose our vital support. You will also need to look at financial support. The average



church plant needs from RM2000 –RM5000 to operate monthly and that assumes you don't have any full-time staff! God owns everything and so if it is His will to plant a church there, the gates of hell is not going to stop it!

### **Preaching the Word Of God**

Many churches begin as house-churches and they grow into larger churches only because they are glorifying Christ in the services and that the Word of God is taught expository-style. Is the Word of God being read and taught? Is the centrality of the cross spoken of? What about the subjects of sin, repentance, faith, growing in holiness, and living a life of ongoing sanctification? Be careful of the “real-good, feel-good” gospel that is, the watered down gospel, as Charles Swindoll once said, “If there's a mist behind the pulpit, there's a fog in the pew.”



“The Living Room” is mindful that we remain faithful to the Word of God and the centrality of the Christ and the gospel in our preaching. As a young church plant, we are even more mindful to preach the gospel in all our sermon series, always bringing them to the cross.

### **Purpose or Mission Statement**

What is our vision for this church? We need a purpose, a mission statement, and a goal-oriented focus for the church. Our church has a mission statement to the effect that we want members to take God's love to the ends of the earth.

Our Mission is to establish a Christian community who believe that small things done with great love will change the world and turn people to Jesus Christ. A vision or mission statement is vital to keep a focus on what is important to God. The church's mission statement or their vision must necessarily seek to

glorify God and to elevate His Word as the final authority in all things He is Truth. There is no other like our God. We try to keep the main thing, the main thing in all our ministries at “The Living Room.”



### **Evangelism**

A church that grows is one that goes! That is, they go into their own part of the world to evangelize and they share the gospel with the neighborhood. This involves engaging the local community wherever they may be. Jesus gave the church an imperative command to go into the entire world to preach the gospel and to make disciples. An imperative command is not a helpful hint, but a direct order from Christ Himself. The Great Commission is given by Christ to “Go!” In Matthew 28:18-20 it says, “Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” “The Living Room” celebrates Christmas and Easter with the community; our Vacation Bible School attracts many community children and reaches many parents. Children's activities are a great way to show our community that we care for them and are part of their community. We have embarked on Music Classes, Parenting and Health Talks to connect with the community.

### **Network**

Networking is essential. You need to talk to local church leaders. You will need the full support of your own church. Not just for prayer warriors, although you

cannot possibly succeed without prayer, but you will need church members with financial backing and partners in the gospel. Networking also involves reaching out to local leaders of established churches and coming together with church planters to discuss how they could form an effective partnership. Together with these churches, we need to ask, what if we could further the Gospel by combining the resources of established churches with the passion and potential of church planters? The PJ North Pastors Fellowship provides us with the essential networking as together, we reach the community for Jesus.

### **The Band of Brother (Sisters included)**

Relationships require cultivation. You will need a team of fellow church planters with a common philosophy of ministry and theology. You need to spend time with like-minded church members and prospective planters, which will yield a lifetime of relational dividends. The face-to-face time with this band of brother and sisters provides encouragement, equipping and empathy as we share our common experiences of challenges and celebrations. Existing relationships will be strengthened and new relationships shall be formed. Church planters need the opportunity to cultivate relationships with a band of brothers (sisters) who are embarking on the epic quest of church planting.

Establishing this team and meeting regularly provides these opportunities. During the early years of the planting I've been blessed with the experience of having met as a team praying, studying God's Word, strategizing, exploring possible locations for the church plant but most of all sharing our lives together. Learning to laugh together and cry together made us stronger for the challenges ahead as church planters.

### **Accepting Suggestions**

Always leave room for your suggestions. We've learnt the reality after planting Agape Chapel 14 years ago, and embarking on planting "The Living Room" that no two church planting experiences are the same although there are similarities. We have to be creative in your church planting endeavors or seek expert advice, much of which is free on the Internet. So, what do you think? What ideas can you contribute to planting a church? What can you contribute to this endeavor? No one should do this alone. The Bible is clear that "in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14). Always welcome ideas or ways to improve on what we have already done. I need to say this again, never try to plant a church alone! It takes prayer, God, and fellow believers. And the passionate desire to glorify God, preach the glorious gospel and elevate the Word of God, the Bible.

"The Living Room", Ara Damansara is a church plant of Agape Chapel, Kota Damansara.

"The Bible records that God made the world and everything on it. God made the universe, the sun, moon, stars, our planet Earth and other planets. He made the land, the sea, the plants and all the animals. Today we'll learn about the solar system, that is the planets and the sun..."

In January 2017, Sunday School was conducted differently in Island Glades Gospel Centre. Teachers taught bible lessons with accompanying English lessons for primary school students. Class started at 11am with action songs followed by a bible story. The students were then divided into 3 groups for English classes. Secondary students started with English at 11am, followed by a Bible lesson scheduled at 12.00 – 12.30pm.

Why did the Sunday School and Oversight decide to conduct English classes during Sunday School? Well, Sunday School attendance had been decreasing for years until numbers were something like 12 students. In 2016, a church sister who was a retired English teacher trained in England proposed conducting English classes to attract new students. The Sunday School teachers and helpers agreed with her so she planned the secondary lessons while another sister worked on primary classes. In November 2016, the church youths distributed flyers in the church neighborhood and nearby residential areas and displayed a large banner on the church wall.

In January 2017, church members rejoiced when around 30 children aged 7 – 12 came to Sunday School. However, the numbers dropped after Chinese New Year and attendance was also poor on long holiday weekends. Currently, around 20 primary children attend consistently. Some 10 teenagers signed up for English initially but presently 4 attends regularly.



A promotional banner for English classes. At the top, a boy with glasses is thinking, with a thought bubble containing the text "every Sunday 11am - 12.30pm" and "Ages 7 - 18". Below him, the text "English Class!" is written in large white letters on a blue background. Further down, it says "Spoken &amp; written English classes organised by U.K. trained teachers!" next to a large white smiley face. To the right of the smiley face, a speech bubble says "FREE!". Below this, contact information is listed: "Mr Chen 012-425 6238", "Ms Lau 016-459 3917", and "IGGC.penang-assemblies.org". At the bottom, it says "sunday school" in a stylized font, followed by "at Island Glades Gospel Centre" and "18 &amp; 20 Jalan Yeap Chor Ee". A small note at the bottom right says "For non-muslims only".

The English teaching materials were designed to follow the UK English curriculum to differentiate the Sunday School English classes from the Malaysian curriculum.

The secondary teachers found that most of the teenagers were not proficient in English so they found the comprehension passages challenging and they couldn't complete the work within an hour. The teachers themselves found the vocabulary rather tough. When teachers contacted the missing sheep, the reasons for not continuing ranged from time squeeze, commitment to many activities, no friends attending class with them as well as joining friends for tuition elsewhere.

Interestingly, special events such as Easter Day, Mothers' Day and Fun Games Day saw less teenage participants although the participation of primary school students was not unduly affected. However, printed invitations to their families and friends to attend special events did not work. Meanwhile, Easter Day saw the primary students learning the Christian meaning of Easter through the Color Gospel story and a color bead bracelet craft. The gospel will be shared again when the



children learn about the Birth & Life of Christ in September – November.



The Parable of the Sower is a good illustration of the Sunday School's plight. The sower sows seeds only to have some eaten by birds. Some seedlings die on rocky ground while others are choked by the thorns. However, some seedlings do survive the tough fight to live. Likewise, the Sunday school teachers and helpers and the church as the whole need to pray earnestly for wisdom in running the Sunday School and protection for the children and their families so that they will continue to attend and be set on the path to salvation. Pray too for the church and Sunday School staff to continue to serve lovingly and enthusiastically so we do not fall into the trap of the evil one who discourages and belittles the effort of leading children and teenagers to Christ.

## The Students' Haven

*Raymond Goh*

It all started when a few of our members were discussing the under-utilisation of the Church after so many years of testimony in Bukit Mertajam and the lack of youths and youth work for BMGC to be sustainable as shared in the previous issue of the Diakonia. After much earnest prayer to the Lord, the idea of setting up a community centre to cater to the needs of the students studying nearby was conceived. Prior to that, when we were considering reaching out more to the community, we agreed that whatever we do, it must fulfil a few criteria i.e. must meet a need, sufficient people with right skills to do the work and we have the finances to start and sustain the work. A student drop-in centre met all the criteria for us to proceed.

Jit Sin Secondary School, a cluster co-ed school with a student population of more than two thousand Form 1 to Form 6 students in two sessions, is just a walking distance away. The school is well known in Penang for producing top students for the various examinations. A number of tuition centres have mushroomed around the suburb of Sri Rambai with many 'kopitiams' and dessert corners joining in the fray. Students can be seen rushing here and there especially after school dismissals for their quick lunch and then to their various tuition centres for their classes. So there appears to be a need for students to have a comfortable place while waiting for their bus home or in between activities.

We have been prayer and seeking for a youth worker for several years. A youth worker would have been ideal for what we want to do. In one of the planning meeting we were wondering why the Lord did not provide a



worker for us after a couple of years of asking of Him and then it dawned on us, right around the table are all the available workers. The Lord has already provided!

With some of these in mind, the Students' Haven started on 27<sup>th</sup>. March, 2017. As the name suggests, it is a community centre for students to have a comfortable place to go to before or after school and for youth enhancement activities. The adjacent double storey shop-lot has been extensively renovated to provide for study areas equipped with computers and printers with direct access to high speed WIFI in an airconditioned comfortable environment for the students to study, or have group discussions or just to complete their school work. For those students who prefer a bit of privacy, a small comfortable room has been set up separately at the back of the hall for their exclusive use, free from other distractions.



Light snacks and refreshments at reduced prices besides water cooler dispensers are also provided for the convenience of the students as they hang out with their friends in comfortable settees watching movies from a large screen smart TV. In addition, shower facilities are also available for the students to have their bath and change of clothes if they have sports activities and cannot make it home.

From time to time, outings and other activities like custom jewellery making, bakery classes, IT related programmes, junior science programme, etc will be organised. These activities will be initiated in our 'Holiday Programme' sometime during the December school holidays to keep the students occupied and give them an opportunity to learn something new and exciting. Getting retired teachers to coach them in their school work is also in the pipeline.

Praise the Lord for the successful soft launch of the Students Haven on 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2017. In order to promote this place, we have waived all charges for the use of the facilities for the first three months. During this time, some regular lower secondary school boys came to have their bath and change of clothes after their school activities before proceeding to their afternoon classes while some upper secondary school girls came to study and do their school work before catching their school bus home at 6.30pm. Some of them just drop in to revise their studies before attending their tuition classes later on.

From 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2017 we started to operate the centre in a more organised way. The safety and comfort of the students were further streamlined with the installations of CCTV, fire extinguishers and an electronic lock system

with pin pad panel at the main entrance to the centre. First time registration fee of RM10 was imposed while a small fee of RM25 per month or a daily usage fee of RM2 only was charged for the use of all the above facilities.

We want to thank the Lord for His grace and blessing upon the centre for providing 33 registered students since its inception. Our target was 30 students. The centre was accommodating an average daily attendance of 10 students, mostly girls. The lower secondary students consisting of Form 1 to Form 3, will utilise the place in the mornings while the higher secondary students, Form 4 and 5 in the afternoons. Some of the supervisors who are also retired teachers were there to help the students in their school work.

Time really flies. It is coming to 6 months since the birth of Students Haven. We are truly thankful to the brothers and sisters of BMGC for their unfailing love of making themselves available to man the centre in spite of their busyness, coming in early at 10am to open the place and checking out at 6pm, Mondays to Fridays except public and school holidays. Most of all, we want to praise and thank the Almighty for providing this amazing place and the students for which we have the privilege to interact. We want to seek His wisdom and guidance for the right timing and boldness to share the good news to the students in simplicity and in truth even as we give all glory, power and honour to Him. Amen.

*Gal. 6:9-10 "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers".*

In the July 2015 edition of *Diakonia* one of us (Colin) touched on something called the Assembly Education Programme or AEP.

The AEP is a Burmah Road Gospel Hall programme that caters to believers who desire to delve into God's Word. In 2014 the students had an in-depth look at "Assembly Distinctives" and eight of the New Testament epistles and a bit of comparative religion. In 2015 the AEP underwent a minor format change. Besides the book study and comparative religion sessions, there are also Question & Answer sessions that allow the saints to deepen their understanding of the Sunday morning messages.

Several changes have occurred since then, and so we thought it good to expand and update that one-paragraph description.

In 2016 the CEP (Christian Education Programme) superseded the AEP. It may be thought of as a supplement to the pulpit teaching after the Lord's Supper.

Like the AEP, the CEP is made up of one-hour sessions, and these sessions take place on most Sundays. The typical session format is 45 minutes of teaching and 15 minutes of question-and-answer. The AEP's hour-long Q & A sessions are no more.

The most significant change is in the content. The CEP still offers book studies, doctrinal studies, and studies



on Assembly Distinctives. On top of those, it also offers character studies (e.g. Solomon and Lydia) and Biblical perspectives on contemporary and controversial issues (e.g. women's rights and gender equality).

At the time of writing, a committee of eight is running the programme with input from the Oversight. One of the things it does is to make decisions on the content. To avoid content duplication, the committee takes cognizance of the pulpit topics (planned by the Oversight). The committee also makes decisions on who teaches what. This is no easy task and is done through much prayer and deliberation. Nevertheless, we thank and praise the Lord because He has in a way lightened the committee's burden by blessing BRGH with an adequate supply of teachers.

It is our hope and prayer that the CEP will strengthen the believers and encourage them in the faith.

## INTRODUCTION

First and foremost, the Penang Assemblies Seniors' Fellowship (PASF), would like to give all praise, honor and glory to our Great and Mighty God, for His blessings toward PASF for 12 wonderful years of testimony among the senior believers in the 6 brethren assemblies in Penang. Its 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated with a thanksgiving buffet lunch at the Eastern & Oriental (E & O) Hotel on 21 July 2017. The Lord had blessed the occasion with the participation of almost 90 seniors and friends, who had a joyous and blessed time of fellowship and friendship, as well as enjoying the wide spread of sumptuous Japanese, Western and local cuisines with lots of salad, fruits and deserts.

## FORMATION AND OBJECTIVES OF PASF

Through the leading of the Lord, David Kam of Island Glades Gospel Centre (IGGC), came to realize that many senior believers in the brethren assemblies in Penang, could be feeling bored and dull after retiring from their hectic working life. According to one of them "Having all the time in the world and with nothing to do". This is especially so when a retiree does not have hobbies or a circle of friends where they can meet socially. Some even have to pay huge sums of money to join private clubs just to while away their time, while others just stay at home and become TV addict. Most probably the reason for this is they do not have the opportunity to fellowship with one another. The only opportunity for them to meet is the occasional combine gospel meetings and the annual Easter Conferences.

So, after getting the blessing of his oversight, David invited some members of IGGC together with some from the other assemblies that he came to know and met during the annual Easter Conferences for a "brainstorming" session on how the seniors could be brought together to interact, fellowship and to make or meet new friends. As a result of that "brainstorming" on 26 Feb 2005, the Penang Assemblies Seniors' Fellowship (PASF) came into existence on 16 July 2005.

With the Lord's guidance through the years, PASF has achieved its main objective of getting senior believers in the 6 assemblies in Penang to interact with one another as well as to strengthen the bond of love for one another just as the Lord commanded us in John 15:12 "to love one another as I have loved you."

Another objective of PASF is to encourage the seniors to stay active in serving the Lord even in their golden years. This was evident by the way the seniors happily participated in the activities held during PASF quarterly Fellowship Gatherings. They are able to:

- (a) share God's good news with invited non-believers
- (b) share testimonies on how the Lord had blessed them and their families
- (c) participate in solo, duet or group singing items.
- (d) act out Bible stories and characters

*They shall still bear fruit in old age. They shall be fresh and flourishing (Ps. 92:14)*

The Lord has always blessed the quarterly Fellowship Gatherings with an average attendance of 60 to 80 participants, with ages ranging from 55 to 80+ years, with a few in their 90s. Our oldest member, Mr. Khoo Kek Jin reached a century on 18 Jun this year.

Our Christmas Gathering in 2016 saw an attendance of 99 seniors.

Another objective of PASF is to promote prayer support for one another. We have started a WhatsApp chat group in which prayer requests, information and encouraging Christian articles could be posted for the knowledge and benefit of members.

As the years go by, members become closer and are now able to interact and meet more frequently in smaller groups. Visitations especially to members who are home-bound or in poor health and those staying in commercially-run homes are carried out by committee members in charge of visitation.

It is PASF's hope and prayer that assemblies in Penang could be motivated to come together to set up homes for home-alone seniors around their respective assembly. A companion or two will be better than staying alone (see Eccl 4: 9 -10).

David and his committee feel that this is what the Lord would want the assemblies to do.

*Do not cast me off in the time of old age. Do not forsake me when my strength fails (Ps. 71:9).*

Although PASF was set up for the needs of the seniors in our assemblies, the Lord has led many seniors from other churches to come and participated in PASF's programs and activities as they too saw the need to interact and make new friends. Apart from that, we also

have fellowship with the seniors of Taiping, Elim Gospel Hall, Klang Valley Family Life Ministry, the seniors from Singapore.

### TRIPS, TOURS AND FELLOWSHIP CAMPS ORGANISED BY PASF

2005	1 day trip to Gua Kelam and Padang Besar in Perlis 4D 3Ns Fellowship Camp in Highland Christian Centre, C.Highlands
2006	3D 2Ns Kuala Lumpur – Malacca Trip
2007	3D 2 Ns Bukit Tinggi – Kuala Lumpur Trip
2008	3D 3Ns Kota Bharu – Cameron Highlands Trip
2009	4D 3Ns Trip to Kuching, Sarawak
2010	5D 4Ns Seniors Camp at Dominic Villa Genting View with Perth seniors
2011	5D 4Ns Trip to Chiangmai and Chiangrai, Thailand
2012	3D 2Ns Fellowship Camp at the Seagull Beach Resort, Pangkor
2013	5D 4Ns Tour of Kota Bharu, Trengganu, Kuantan & Genting Highlands
2014	5D 4Ns Tour of the West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia 3D 2Ns Camp at Harvest Haven, Gopeng.
2015	4D 3Ns Holiday Camp at Port Dickson and Harvest Haven, Gopeng
2016	Boat Cruise along the Penang Harbour and Penang Bridge
2017	4D 3Ns Fellowship Camp at Highlands Christian Centre, Cameorn Highlands

### REGISTER

To enable the committee to pass on information and news on functions, events, prayer requests etc. it is necessary to keep a register of its members. In view of that, members are requested to fill in a registration form giving details on the address, contact numbers, email addresses (if any) and date of birth. With modern day technology, the chairman is able to wish all the registered members on their birthdays.

### FUNDING

God is good. PASF has managed to finance all its activities through free offering by members whenever they come together for its quarterly Fellowship Gatherings. As the fund grew, PASF is able to contribute to other areas of the Lord's work.

### THE CURRENT COMMITTEE

Chairman	David Kam	IGGC
Deputy Chairman	Ang Teik Kee	BMGC
Secretary	Mrs. Molly Kam	IGGC
Treasurer	Ng Chong Kau	BMGC
Tours & Travels	Tan Aik Meng	BRGH
Visitation	Albert Foo	BRGH
Indoor Games	Mrs. Ng Chong Kau	BMGC
Others	Mrs. Tan Aik Meng	BRGH
	David Foo	SNGH
	Eddie Lim Eng Huah	SAGH
	Chua Ah Jon	BWGH
	Raymond Goh	BMGC
Advisors.	Elders	

The committee meets at least once a year to plan the yearly program. Other meetings will also be called when necessary.

### APPRECIATION

PASF takes this opportunity to record its appreciation to  
(a) our loving God for His continued blessings and guidance to PASF,  
(b) all speakers who shared and teach God's word at our Fellowship Gatherings,  
(c) all professionals and doctors who spoke on topics of interests to seniors,  
(d) all elders for announcing and promoting the activities of PASF,  
(e) all the senior brothers and sisters who faithfully support PASF,  
(f) all present committee members for their faithful service all these years,  
(g) all those who had served in the committee previously. They are:

Mr. & Mrs. Yap Kim Wan – (Mr. Yap went home to the Lord on 9/12/2012)  
Mr. Wong Khye Khoo, (staying with children in US)  
Mr. Tan Kim Seng  
Mr. N. Sinnappan, (moved to Kuala Lumpur)  
Mr. Tan Bian Sun, (went home to the Lord on 27/4/2013)  
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Lee See Yeam, (moved to Port Dickson) but still serving in the committee whenever they come back to Penang occasionally. Praise God.  
(h) to all other individuals and groups who have in one way or another contributed service to PASF.

### CONCLUSION

PASF which has been in existence for the past 12 wonderful years has enhanced and strengthened the bond of love among the senior members of all brethren



assemblies in Penang. Apart from meeting and knowing more people within their age group, it also gives them an opportunity to stay healthy, happy and also have the satisfaction of knowing they can still be useful and active for the Lord.

Please pray that God will continue to bless PASF so that it will continue to be a blessing to the senior believers in the years to come. May God also raise up willing

## BSGC is 25 years old in 2016!

On 6<sup>th</sup> November 2016, we held a special Anniversary Service in church during the Sunday Worship Service to marked the assembly's 25 years of Christian witness in Bandar Sunway, Petaling Jaya.

### A step back in time

It felt like only yesterday, when the congregation of 9 members who met initially to pray for the commencement of an assembly work in the then developing township of Bandar Sunway, has since grown to more than 130 regular worshippers today and had even help spearhead the Petaling Jaya Gospel Hall's (PJGH) extension work to Puchong Jaya.

Retracing the steps to the birth of BSGC, the dream began as early as 1985, when the leaders of PJGH soon felt the urging of the Lord to start building "mission stations" in the mushrooming townships adjacent to



Petaling Jaya. The elders in PJGH back then were the late David Boler, the late Chang Kim Swee, Ang Chui Pek, Wong Chong Wah and Koh Gim Lam.

These 5 elders together with a team of very dedicated deacons were meeting at the annual Elders and Deacon retreat of PJGH at the Fraser's Hill on 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> January 1986. The main agenda on the morning of 28<sup>th</sup> January was the 5 years plan for the Church (1986-1991). A decision was taken that the church should seek to

younger seniors to lead PASF as most of the present committee members are already in their seventies.

### TO GOD BE THE GLORY GREAT THINGS HE HAS DONE!

increase its membership from 300+ (Jalan Gasing GC and SSGC combined) to 1000 in 5 years. To facilitate the growth the church will also need to establish 3 more centers by 1996.

A map of the Klang valley was laid on a table. Map pins were stuck into every location where there is already an assembly. It was prayerfully decided that the 3 new centers should be in Subang Jaya, Bandar Sunway and Bandar Puchong.



At about the same time when Subang Jaya Gospel Centre were birthed, the leaders were already monitoring the progress of development in the Sungei Way residential area. Towards the end of 1990, Koh Gim Lam began to visit member families staying in the new township of Bandar Sunway. There were only 2 couples, Chong Chin Hiang with his wife Jacqueline Chan Lee Kin and Koid Tian Wan with his wife Koh Siew Lan.

A meeting was held on February 12, 1991 to discuss the beginning of the work in Bandar Sunway. BSGC, like most other brethren assemblies in Malaysia, began with a two-pronged strategy – prayer and children's ministry. Prayer had always been stressed as the most key factor of success in any church-planting project. It is vital to enable the Spirit to guide and lead, and the obedience of the believers to act upon the faith they professed.

Nine believers met together to pray on 3 April 1991 at the home of Chong Chin Hiang and Jacqueline Chan, his wife. Their neighbors were Koh Gim Lam's sister, Koh Siew Lan and her husband, Koid Tian Wan who also attended the prayer. The other attendees were Tan Kiam Chin, Koh Gim Lam, and his wife Leong Yoke Ling, together with their two children, Koh Ming Wei and Koh Ming Kwang. At the gatherings, the members met to study a series of lessons on the Church of Antioch in the book of Acts.

In the following months to come, Lee Kam Loong and his wife, Fong Choon Peng also moved into the residential area and was in fellowship with the Group. Tan Kiam Chin's wife, Chee Siew Choo was later able to attain a job transfer to Kuala Lumpur and joined the prayer meetings as well.

Within months, God added to the group and by September 1991, the believers were ready to begin the Sunday School in Bandar Sunway. A double storey link house at 46, Jalan PJS 7/4 were rented for RM700 a month starting from 15 July 1991 to be used as the base for the outreach and children ministry. There was tremendous response particularly from the flats' residents nearby. Not long after, God brought Ong Gim Yan and his wife, who were from Malacca Gospel Chapel, to join the fellowship.

On 23 October 1991, BSGC had its' first worship meeting at the rented premise in PJS7/4 with the 7 families mentioned earlier.

God continued to bless BSGC, as other families began to join the fellowship. Starting almost from scratch, the Sunday School soon managed to attract a regular group of 35 students by the end of 1992. In early 1993, a group of young believers from Elim Gospel Hall Ipoh arrived to join BSGC under the invitation and encouragement of Alex Yap and the BSGC church members. The group from Elim soon grew and was actively assisting in the children and music ministry.

Over the years, many were added into the Family. As the little assembly grew in strength, we moved in 1993 to 26, PJS 9/4, Bandar Sunway and shared the premise with Scripture Union East Asia. Ong Hock Chye was appointed in 1994 to join the BSGC team as elder to assist in the oversight. In 1995, a corner link house at No 24, Jalan PJS9/16 was purchased and BSGC moved in at the beginning of 1996. Later on, Yap Kok Keong also joined the oversight in BSGC as an elder.

When news reached the church that shop-lots and condominiums in Sunway Perdana, the last phrase of Bandar Sunway, was opened for booking, on 30<sup>th</sup> April,

2000, after the church worship service, a small group of members went to view the new development plans within Bandar Sunway. 2 hours later they returned with 6 units of shop lots!!!

The act of faith from the leadership and the individuals, who stepped out trusting the Lord to put their individual names on the properties, were testimonies of the Lord's face shining upon the work in Bandar Sunway. We moved into our current premise in 2001 and since then we had added a 7<sup>th</sup> unit of shop lot to our extension work. Since then we have added many amenities and upgrades to the units, including recently adding an elevator to cater to the needs of the elderly to access our main sanctuary on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The Lord's name be praised!

### **Christian Witness**

We are grateful to the Lord for allowing individuals and families, from all walks of life, age, nationalities and culture to come through the doors of BSGC and allowing us to testify in the local community of Bandar Sunway for 25 years. Over the years we have ministered among Filipina and Indonesian maids by setting up Christian fellowship meetings among them and now the work has given way to ministering among the Nepali community who found their way into our fellowship through our local community events.

Children ministry remains a key outreach strategy and over the years, we have added community outreach programs like providing English tuition to under-privileged children from the area, providing care for children with special needs and taking part in local cleaning projects in a "gotong-royong" spirit with neighboring churches and with the local councilors.

### **Challenges**

Like many of our fellow assemblies, we had seen a fair share of struggles and challenges over the years and even now, we struggle to stay relevant with the needs of the local community's worshippers. We see a declining population of young adults, youths and children in our midst and have been seeking the Lord's direction and wisdom to addressing these challenges. We continue to pray for the church's leadership - to be bold in walking in the steps of the Lord and we pray for our members to be discipled and that all of us will always readily be fitted with the sandals of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray for wisdom and for fruits to be born out of the Lord's work through our labor.

May this short reminiscence be an encouragement to all of us, to remember that all our beginnings had its roots and foundation in the Lord Jesus Christ and that we do

not walk alone in such times. If we are to struggle, may we struggle in the Gospel and to see more coming to the Life. To God be all praise and glory!



## DMS Bible Quiz. A unique inter-assembly bonding

*Erik Ng and Dexter Ng*

There are 3 assemblies in Malaysia that can proudly lay claim to a special bond, one that has lasted for as long as 18 years, stretching all the way back to 1999! The foundation of this very fellowship was secured through the faithful participation of Shah Alam Gospel Centre, Melaka Gospel Chapel and Daya Gospel Centre in an annual inter-assembly competition.

Mind you, this isn't any regular inter-assembly competition because it involves 3 different assemblies from 3 different states!

If the paragraphs above have piqued your curiosity as to what sort of event could possibly generate so much excitement, we ask that you look no further than the DMS Bible Quiz!

(Note: DMS' initials are derived from the first letter of each participating assembly).

### What's the DMS Bible Quiz all about?

Basically, each participating assembly sends out a team comprising 5-6 members to answer questions based on a book from the Bible. On some occasions, it might even be based on 2 or 3 books!

The quiz consists of 3 parts: Individual Round, Team Round and the Floor Round (which consists of "True or False Questions").

Should the need arise, a tie breaker round will be held to determine the final placings of the final teams. Interestingly, past instances of tie-breaker rounds have contributed to some nail biting moments for spectators as they anxiously watch their own team attempting to score a last-minute advantage over their opponents.

### Conceived as a vision for Inter-Assembly fellowship

"The DMS Bible Quiz began with a vision which I shared with the Elders from Daya and Melaka back in 1999. My intention was to use this event to connect youths from different assemblies and also to ground them in Scripture," explained Elder Dexter Ng.

"Besides helping to bridge these inter-assembly youths, DMS has allowed Elders and other assembly leaders the opportunity to have an annual meet up of sorts," he added.

Moreover, it was decided that the quiz's venue would be rotated among the participating assemblies each

year, with the host responsible for arranging the programme, meals, accommodations, etc.

During the first DMS Bible Quiz at Daya Gospel Centre in 2000, the Elders from all 3 assemblies were pleased with the running of the event and as such, were in favour of continuing it the following year. Thanks to Elder Yapp Hock Kee of Daya and church members for being a great host!

Later, news of the quiz even spread to another assembly, Johor Bahru Gospel Centre, who would end up participating for a number of years.

### **Commemorating DMS 10th Anniversary**

God's blessing and providence was clearly upon this inter-assembly programme as it wasn't long before DMS approached its 10th year.

Wishing to celebrate such a momentous milestone, they all agreed that DMS 2009 (the 10th edition) should be held in a manner befitting its significance.

With that in mind, Shah Alam Gospel Centre, that year's host, organized a combined 4 days 3 nights camp at Golden Sands Baptist in Port Dickson, Negri Sembilan.

It was a given that the quiz itself would be a key element of the celebration, with the unique distinction of being implemented in an "All Stars" format.

This one-off arrangement saw the return of participants from past editions of DMS, which served to ramp up the thrill factor for this camp.

Yet, some might argue that it was the games and activities which really allowed campers from the different assemblies to have a good time of fellowship, strengthening their bond in the process.

### **The Blessings and Joys of DMS**

Elder Daniel Wong from Melaka believes that the DMS quiz has allowed for youths to engage in inter-assembly networking by meeting up during events organized by the Inter-Brethren Assembly Youth Development. He

added that this would create a deeper sense of collective identity among youths growing up in the assemblies.

Meanwhile, Sabrina Lee, a trainer from Daya shared that she learned much about God as she prepared the questions for the contestants under her tutelage. "One of the biggest challenges was that not all team members could come for revision due to their conflicting schedules. Still, I was impressed by their strong desire to memorize as many Bible verses as they could!"

Likewise, Lue Jun Yi from Shah Alam fondly recalled his years as a trainer. "I found much satisfaction in being able to study God's Word more closely. My hope is that contestants won't just focus on winning gold but will also know how and where to look for 'real gold' in the Bible!"

Despite being reluctant to join the quiz at first, 5-time contestant Caitlin Leong from Shah Alam did so out of the encouragement she received from her parents and church members. "They told me that while school lessons may seem important at the moment, learning God's Word should be prioritized because of its eternal value."

### **What's next?**

Elder Dexter believes that there is much value in continuing the DMS quiz for as many years as possible. This is due to his conviction that DMS has brought about countless blessings and benefits to those from Daya, Melaka and Shah Alam.

"It is my sincere wish that the younger leaders from all 3 assemblies will share our (the Elders') passion for keeping this programme alive. I would also urge other assemblies who have heard about DMS' successes to adopt a similar programme for themselves."

On a lighter note, the elder shared an anecdote of someone asking him what would happen if DMS were to finish all 66 books of the Bible. To this Elder Dexter cheekily replied, "We shall start all over again for the Word of God lasts forever lah!"



# Seremban Gospel Chapel Community Center Expansion Work



**The Seremban Gospel Chapel Community Center expansion work in Rasah Jaya, Seremban continues to progress steadily but surely under the divine hand of our Lord God Almighty.**



Key Milestones met for the construction of the Seremban Gospel Chapel Community Center (GCCC) as of end-June, 2017 are as follows:

- Appointment of the Main Contractor on 15th May, 2017.
- Prayers for the Lord's protection & blessing during the ground breaking on 27th May, 2017.
- Completion of the building's foundation.
- RM 1.25 Million raised for the construction of GCCC (Total construction cost is RM 1.873 Million)



Aside from the physical construction and funding aspects of the expansion work, the Lord has continued to bless the Outreach Ministry in the area spearheaded by Elder Lee Chek Tin, Pastor James Wong & Deaconess Vivien Lim. The Ministry has to-date visited more than 30 families resulting in:

- 3 new children regularly attending Sunday School.
- 20 children regularly attending daily tuition in various subjects.
- Holding of the first children's camp during the March, 2017 school holidays.



## Prayer Items:

- For the community in Rasah Jaya & Rahang, Seremban to be receptive to the truth of the Gospel
- For the right partnerships to be formed with the wider Christian Community for GCCC.
- For the Lord's provision of the RM 1.873 Million needed to construct GCCC.



If you wish to donate towards this project, kindly make bank transfers or cheques (within Malaysia) to:

**Seremban Gospel Chapel  
Public Bank  
Account number: 3202820218**

Kindly email us your full particulars & amount transferred to [sgc.gccc@gmail.com](mailto:sgc.gccc@gmail.com) for us to issue you an official receipt.

If you are making telegraphic bank transfers (outside Malaysia), kindly do so to:

**Seremban Gospel Chapel.  
357, Taman Bukit Lemon,  
70200 Seremban,  
Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia.**

**SWIFT CODE: PBBEMYKL  
Account number: 3202820218**

# FEATURES

## A Changing Church

YL Khong

*Change is the only constant in life*, so says the ancient Greek Philosopher Heraclitus. While God is immutable, historically, the same cannot be said of the Church. We see the Body of Christ take on many forms over time; as it should, in response to the changing environments in which the Lord has put various parts of her in.

There are sentiments around adherence to the practices of “the New Testament church” with the notion that we are more spiritual and better off by doing so. The question is this, which aspects of the NT Church practices should we adhere to?

A cursory examination of the book of Acts reveals that in the first 50 years or so, the church went through stages of changes as various situations arose. Take governance for example. Initially, the governance of the fledgling church was under the sole purview of the Apostles. Later a diaconate structure was put in place in response to complaints about food distribution by the Greek widows (Acts 6). An eldership structure was mentioned later (Acts 11:30) and Paul appears to be formalizing the eldership structure with description of the roles and character of elders in his epistles (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1). The point is this, the governance structure of the early church was amended several times to meet the needs of the church as it encountered a changing environment. It was an organic, not a static structure.

Take another example, the practice of circumcision and eating of meat offered to idols. As the number of Gentile believers grew, it was inevitable the cross-cultural issues will impinge on the early church comprising Jews and Gentiles. Is circumcision needed or not? The early position of the Church being made largely of Jews was straightforward; as it was the normal practice for the Jews, so just carry on. After all, the Old Testament taught it. Of course, when the Gentiles came onboard, the Church had to consider otherwise. It was not a trivial matter. It took the entire Church to come to a decision at the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) to make circumcision optional. Another change.

As to meat offered to idols, it was clear from the Council of Jerusalem the directive was to abstain from doing so. Later, it was equally clear from Paul’s epistles (1 Corinthians chapters 8 and 10 for e.g.) that absolute abstinence is not necessary but other principles comes into play. That of conscience, consideration to others who are weak in faith and love. So, yet another change.

One observation which I think is significant, is that such major changes DID NOT cause serious splits in the early Church. Judging from the splits in churches I observed in my lifetime, makes me wonder about how we are dealing with changes. We have much to learn from the early believers in this regard

and I think we should seriously consider the scriptural maxim “*knowledge puffs up but loves build*” (1 Corinthians 8:1).

I believe we are at the crossroad or maybe even beyond that now, with rapid societal changes that we need to confront and rather smartly as the Body of Christ. There are several drivers of massive societal changes that one can imagine like authoritative regimes, environmental events and technology advancement.

To quickly elaborate, authoritative regimes can bring about policies and regulations that forces the populace to change how they trade, live and work for e.g. contrast how the lives of the Jews changed from the Old to New Testament period with the Roman administration. When policies and regulations change, how you live will be affected. In our time for e.g., the recent implementation of GST created some excitement for us and of course also hit many pockets and change spending patterns. Environmental events like natural and man-made disasters like volcano eruptions, floods, earthquakes, pollutions of environment deprive those affected of their normal routines, causing them to move out and change how they live and work as their usual live is no longer viable.

Changes due to authoritative regimes and environmental events are largely localized. Of the three drivers of massive changes, technology advancement is the one that is global in scale. It not only brings significant changes in how everybody live, work and play; its main potency as a change agent is it does so rapidly and in such a widespread and impactful manner. And technology advancements will affect policies and regulations and also the environment. Disruptive is the word.

Things are really moving and moving fast in the technology front. Why now? The answer lies in the speed of communication. We can exchange information a lot faster now and findings can be quickly validated or discarded. With more information, we have to move that much faster in our work and our lives. We are continuously connected in our work and social lives, demanding that we respond speedily in our social media channels like WhatsApp, WeChat, Instagram, several emails accounts, etc. We pack in a lot more in our work days with more information we need to act on and think about. There are much more in the technology front that space does not permit to discuss here including Industry 4.0, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things (IOT), autonomous vehicles, quantum computing and more.

There will be quite a few occupations that will be obsolete in the near future. For example, driverless cars are expected to change the transportation industry and put 2 million people out of jobs in America alone. The way we educate and

transact business is also changing quickly. Teachers are no longer the *sage on the stage*. Fifty students in a lecture hall each with a mobile device collective knows more than the lecturer. So, what then is the new role of the lecturer? In fact, there is talk now why bother going for a physical class when there is MOOCS, massive open online courses. Recently, it was reported in some cities in China, cash is no longer accepted. You use WeChat Pay on your handphone to pay by scanning a QR code. In those localities, you will likely be stuck if all you have is cash in yuan; it may be difficult for you to buy anything. These are but a drop in a bucket of the many massive changes coming really quick.

I am of the opinion that because of the rapid technology advancements, it will NOT be business as usual for the Church and the Gospel moving forward. We cannot do most things the way it used to be done, much as we are comfortable with them.

In my humble opinion, therein lies the gap for the assemblies. While we continue to need sound doctrines, who are the watchmen on the continuous look out for the changes that are coming up? What teachings are relevant and should be emphasized to address the issues that arise due to these changes? What are the issues in the first place? Are there changes required with regards to how we reach out with the Gospel, how we teach, how we fellowship?

It appears, the assemblies are largely silent in these matters. Maybe it is an aversion to and suspicion of, developments that are new – traditional is always better and comforting. Maybe it is easier to stick one's head in the sand due to lack of understanding of the technology advancements and inability to discern. But we owe it to do the next generation to comprehend as best as we can what is ahead and provide the guidance and support they need in a very challenging present world.

## Pre-ALC Focus Group Discussion – Penang

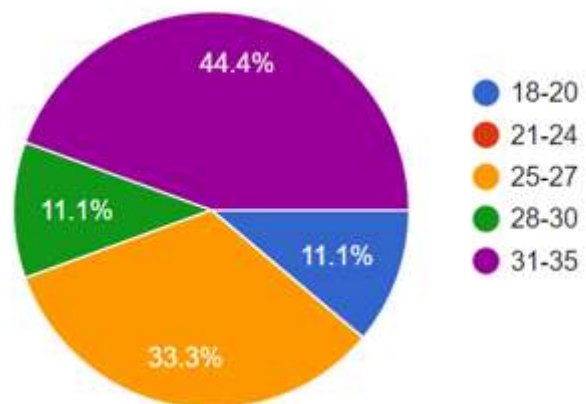
*The notes from the discussions taken by Teo Pek Bing, David Lim and YL Khong were compiled by Michael Fun and YL Khong*

As part of the preparation for the Assembly Leadership Conference in October 2017, CBSM has commissioned teams to conduct a study to determine the challenges facing the assemblies today in Malaysia especially for the younger generations. One of the area was to obtain feedback on where the younger age set is at with regards to some key areas of challenges that were felt to impact the assemblies. Another area was to try to understand why or if there has been a decline in youths and young adults among our brethren assemblies in the past decade. The anecdotal supposition has been the young adults are moving to other churches.

One of the approach of the team was to conduct focus discussion groups among the young adults in order to hear their opinions and thoughts concerning how the areas of career choices, worldviews and technology may have impacted the church. The open sessions were also designed to allow the young adults to suggest ways the church should be responding and preparing for the future in order to stay relevant as a Christian witness among the youths, young adults in the communities the assembly is ministering in.

### General Context and Background of the Penang Focus Group

The Focus Group for Penang was conducted on 31 August 2017 in the premise of Sg Nibong Gospel Hall. There were 8 participants who attended the sessions who were facilitated by Dr Khong Yoon Loong (Bukit Mertajam Gospel Hall), David Lim (Burmah Road Gospel Hall) and Teo Pek Bing (Sg Nibong Gospel Hall). The age of this group is segmented as below:



Seven of these youths and young adults have been a Christian for more than 12 years. The youngest believer, who accepted Christ in 2015, is from the oldest age group segment of 31-35.

Eight of the participants are from Penang whilst one person is from Pahang who has moved to Penang for work in recent years.

All of the respondents are regular worshipers in local assemblies in Penang, with six of them spending more than 10 years in the Penang assemblies – the longest being 28 years. The shortest tenure in a brethren assembly is 5 years.

The participants were split into groups and each group spent about 40 mins with each facilitator.

## GROUP 1 Careers Challenges (Facilitated by David Lim)

### Background:

All participants are holders of bachelor degrees except for one who holds diploma. All the participants are currently employed full time. Seven of them are professionals holding engineering or technical positions. The remaining two individuals work as a sales and marketing executive and as an agent.

When asked why did they choose their current choice of career, the following were their written responses:

Interest (2)
Of my interest
The Lord opened the door
Influence from friends
God's provision
Suits my personality
Own choice
Flexible and it's in Penang

### Q1. Describe some of your career challenges in relations to your faith.

The participants commented that the chief challenge is with regards to **Time**. The challenge with time seemed to be evident in areas like struggling to attend church meetings, keeping personal quiet time, serving in the church & even struggling to have enough time for the family (this includes adjusting to setting up a home e.g. family planning, etc).

**Relationships** development is another concerned area for the participants. This includes areas like Boy-Girl Relationships (BGR) for those who are not yet married, or dealing with in-laws for those who are married or dealing with work issues-related relationships at the workplace. There is also a constant struggle dealing with people & meeting the expectations of the leaders in church where it appears that it is expected of them to give their time to serve in the church but they are not being fed spiritually, nor were their emotional and physical needs being met.

In the pursuit of career advancements, there is a pursuit of more **Knowledge**, especially work-related subjects. There is no more time to read Christian materials or books and the church doesn't help them understand how to manage personal finances biblically.

As a result, it is easy to doubt God's existence and ability to take care of them. The relationship with God becomes less important. It is generally felt that most assemblies stress on

attendance of meetings rather than meeting their needs to grow spiritually and this affects their personal spiritual development and growth. Many admitted to entertaining the thoughts of leaving the assembly.

The discussion of this question has led to the sharing of other areas such as the ability to connect and communicate with each other in the church because only superficial relationships exist in church. The participants also adjudged that many young working adults are more distracted by worldly things.

### Q2. In what way has your career impacted your walk with God.

This question provoked a lot of thoughts that were previously not really considered in depth by the individuals.

A big change caused by moving into a working life was the change to their individual **lifestyle**. In terms of social interactions, not much time is spent with work colleagues. Compared to their time as students, they were able to spend more times with friends. Of course, with regards to money matters, they now have access to their own cash income as well as options to use multiple financial tools such as credit cards. This has resulted in lifestyle changes due to their ability to buy the stuffs they personally worked and saved for. This also meant they have to be responsible for all purchases and personal financial management.

When the facilitator asked what the church can do with this transition, the participants suggested that those in church who have gone through that period to share their experience, perhaps even volunteering to coach them, or perhaps the church can conduct a seminar or a workshop concerning adaptation to work-related skills like communication skills and financial management.

The church must realise that there is a gap between the young adults & teenager and also between them and the older adults. As such, any church programs designed to meet their needs have to be focused on their age group. Although the group realises the importance of church fellowship and acknowledged that there is room for such fellowships and relationship developments, the church must realise that due to the struggle with time availability, the group has limited time to be involved in too many groups or activities. The participants stress the important need for a church to cater to their spiritual and emotional needs and development, perhaps in the form of a young adult ministry.

The group also identified the need of suitable role models by mature Christians to be raised and trained by the church to help coach the young working adults through some of the challenges in the work place. Some areas where coaching or training is needed are in the area of money matters, relationships and time management.

Additionally, if the church aims to have the young adults take up any leadership or ministry position, the group hopes that



adequate training or coaching could be provided because at the present moment, no training has been provided.

The group added that the church needs to be a safe place for them to be and not to be another place where it's stressful, suggesting that the church can be a stressful place to be at the moment.

**Q3. What were the key challenges transitioning from being a student to working and how you think the church can be helpful with this transition?**

The group suggested that having mature believers in church giving good examples or being good role models will be very helpful. The group added that some form of practical training to prepare young adults to face the working world will be a good step forward too.

There should be a systematic approach to leading, training & organizing things for the church. At the present moment, there is no proper guidance or training provided for new leaders.

Regarding the subject of increasing biblical knowledge and spiritual development, the group suggests that the church could produce or forward short articles of sharing about their Christian walk for them to read - as they have less time to read full lengths books today. The social media platform will be a good medium to use by the church mature believers and leaders to share what they are learning about God and for creating prayer chain & etc.

**GROUP 2. Handling Evolving Worldviews  
(Facilitated by Pek Bing)**

As a preamble to this section, the participants were asked the question if they are regularly attending church, to which they all declared they all are.

**Q1. What do you see as some present worldviews as challenges for the church and your faith today?**

**Lesbians, Gay, Bi-sexual & Transgender (LGBT)**, are already rampant even in Asia, and especially close by in neighbouring Singapore. The participants believe that they have difficulty explaining to their children their stand and the biblical position on the matter. In fact, the group believes that the confusion on LGBT is slowly creeping into the church. Some are accepting it, i.e. ok with the sin, that it deserves no correction. The group suggests that those who have studied abroad, tend to be more open to LGBT as compared to those who had not gone abroad. Those aged 20+ tend to be more accepting of people who are LGBTs.

**Gender equality:** Women's rights in our brethren assembly is a highly contested issue among many younger female believers. The modern world advocates for a woman's ability do anything and everything a man can do. The younger female believers feel that they should be given equal opportunity. The group believes that this will have more

impact on the assemblies compared to other churches in other denominations.

The general claim is that the assembly is seen to be not fair to women. The believers in our assembly are getting questions from their friends from other denominations. Even when Biblical explanation is given, most people cannot accept the interpretation. Some of our assemblies' believers misunderstand and are not well informed on this teaching.

The thinking is that the best & abled people are the leaders whilst people working in the background (or behind the scenes) are for those who lack the right ability to lead. This mind-set led some to think there is discrimination against women who are not leading. Some women feel offended that they need to submit to males as stated in the Bible. The group acknowledges that this subject has been debated upon during CF discussions. In the modern world, Women are empowered.

**Sex & Marriage**

The general Asian public expectation is that a young adult male must have a girlfriend by 20-something and be married by 30+. As such, Christians who cannot find a suitable Christian partner will end up looking for non-Christians.

It is generally observed by the group that **Co-habitation** among unmarried couples is common in the Christian circle, and more so in the other church denominations. Although, they may not practise it, some Christians think that there is nothing wrong with it.

**Being "Unequally yoked"** – Marrying first then convert the spouse at a later stage. There is a general lack of direct confrontation from leaders although the group sees the trend happening among assembly young adult believers. The group had not observed any form of rebuke during the courtship stage. The younger young adults and youths are, as such, seeing senior youth (young adults) are marrying non-Christian spouses and setting the wrong example to them.

**Struggling** with partner of the Muslim faith. Muslims, mostly men, are approaching Christians female to be their girlfriends. In one such instance, the group recollects a real-life situation where a Muslim boy courted their Form 3 female friends in school

**Sex before marriage:** This belief is rampant among the guys - that "To be a real man, one must have sex by a certain age".

**"You only live once":** This view is described as one where life is to be enjoyed first and foremost. A product of holding such a view, is the reluctance to commit to marriage, or if the couple is married, then there not committing to having any children. The trend in Asia is already being observed in Singapore, and is now rapidly spreading to Malaysia to the friends of the participants in the group. Proponents also try to convince others of their views and this affects Christians as well.

There is a creeping **materialism** among youths. Such **influences** stem from social media where many youths are paid to promote a lavish lifestyle by advertisers to influence the youth. The pressure to achieve the lavish lifestyle, regardless of the means, is building a negative impact on the youths. Youths are chasing after this lifestyle and are getting into schemes to make more money, including illegal means. eg. smuggling, forex, etc. Most youths are willing to work on Saturdays or even Sundays, rather than observing the Lord's Supper. Youths are very eager to get high paying jobs. The focus is on spending earnings on things that they want, little or none are given to the parents, family or the church. Income is solely for "Self-enjoyment".

The pressure to **Scoring straight 'A's** is making the youths to focus on academic studies rather than studying God's word. Parents are pressuring the children to succeed academically. In many instances, parents stop their children from attending Youth Programs when exams are approaching or even for the whole year when there is a national major exam. This is also prevalent among parents who are Christians. There is also a tendency for parents to make comparison with other children. This creates peer pressure among the youths. Most Youths in the YP are unable to explain the purpose of scoring high grades. For many of the youths, going to church or for Youth fellowship has become a burden; it is no longer a relaxation from studies.

**Political:** There is a general perception among the adults that Malaysia has no hope that there is no point staying here anymore and that one should go overseas. Both Christians and non-Christians are convinced of the views. And the young working adults are struggling with this viewpoint. Parents are growing more concern for their children about staying in Malaysia. They are discouraged when they hear bad things about Malaysia, e.g. racial discrimination, education system, corruption. In the long term, we will see a loss of church members due to those seeking migration to other countries.

**Origin of Life:** Even our schools are teaching about the evolution theory and that life evolved from the Big Bang. eg. The group shared a real-life encounter about a Union School Form 5 teacher teaching such theories.

## Q2. What are your own thoughts and where do you stand on those worldviews?

Respondents generally hold strongly to biblical views.

**LGBT:** Respondents tried to get feedback from their Young People (YP) fellowship group. e.g in a girls' only school, some YP girls do see unpleasant behaviours (i.e. lesbian expressions). They don't know **how** to approach to tell them; to tell them what is not right. They also don't know **what** to tell them.

**Gender equality:** The group heard that there is a "split" among the assemblies in Klang valley on this matter. They heard that some assemblies allow for sisters to stand up to lead during the Lord's Supper. Respondents believe there is a lack of understanding of scripture, contrasting the rights

versus the roles of a woman. The poor examples of older ones, e.g. head covering, are affecting the younger ones too. The group concurs that the leaders should teach but be careful not to nag. YP will listen to some adults but not to others.

How do we make YP fellowship meetings enjoyable instead of a burden. Some leave YP fellowship meetings because there isn't a sense of **belonging**. Not to only make YP fellowship meetings enjoyable but it must also teach biblical truths.

## Q3. How do you think you would respond to those worldviews when asked by non-Christians.

**LGBT:** "Wrong is wrong". For e.g. not avoiding a gay colleague but maintain good relationship. Same time, not agreeing to the lifestyle.

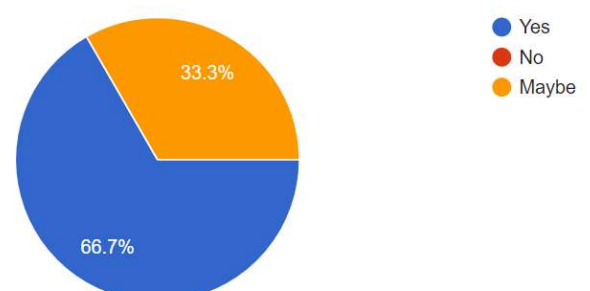
**Treasure opportunities to explain.** The group is concerned with how it might be explained as they are afraid that it might lead to a debate. Both sides will try to win the debate and this will close their minds. The group agrees that once a debate starts, it's best to stop. It is better to maintain a good relationship and allow for another conversation to take place some other time.

**Christians** who struggle with homosexuality feelings. How do we help and counsel them in their struggles? The group shared that during recent Bible camps, they are aware of youths who struggle with this issue. They don't know what to tell their parents. The group suggest that leaders need to be prepared and trained to handle such issue – not only to deal with non-Christians but also believers in our own assembly.

**Political:** Is the grass really greener on the other side? Malaysians have been sending their children to Singapore. In turn, the Singaporeans send their children to Australia – Where does it end? The group suggest that we need to learn to be contented. The group concurs that there is really no need to say too much – actions speak louder than words.

## GROUP 3 Impact of Technology on Faith (Facilitated by Khong)

Would you consider yourself a frequent user of technology? (i.e. you are always up to date with the latest social media app, smartphone, technology trends, etc)



What social media app do you use?

Whatsapp (2)	The two most popular platforms among the 9 participants are:
Whatsaap, Facebook, instagram	
Facebook, Instagram, Twitter	
Whatapps, facebook, we chat	WhatsApp (7); Facebook (7)
FB (only 1)	
Facebook, what's app, we chat	
Whats ap, google, facebook	
Whatsapp, FB messenger, Skype	

**Q1. Provide your thoughts on whether technology helps with Christian Living and Faith or otherwise.**

Technology is only a tool i.e. neither good nor bad and is to be used wisely.

Can be distractions for e.g. constant notification of incoming messages and disrupt normal activities. There was some comment that during youth meetings, people are spending time on their phones when the meeting is going on.

There are a lot of information available out there. It is important that there is collective understanding and knowledge on how to distinguish truth from false information. Mine field for those weak in faith and also poor in Bible Knowledge.

Technology both helps and distract from faith depending on how technology is used. Participants indicated wisdom is required. Technology helps with availability of useful and free tools for e.g. for Bible Study. There are also traps that some of the websites provide teachings that are not 100% right. Need to discern and have a warning system for the flock.

Youth group using technology to make meetings more interesting for example online quizzes. There is a youth group that creatively use phone apps for youth meetings. Maybe the increasing use of technology in meetings is inevitable.

**Q2. Give some examples and elaborate on where technologies help with faith and where it is detrimental to faith?**

Use for Bible Study and also use online materials for youth work. There are a lot of readily available useful material that helps in preparation.

Online search for sermons and Bible Study material can be located more efficiently. Learning can proceed a lot faster.

Good for connecting people and also reaching out to them for spiritual and other purposes.

Inappropriate information from the web and ease of access of these information– pornography, false teachings, material that can unnecessarily cause divisions and create controversies. Have to be on guard against them.

Addiction to devices and spending excessive time on them at the expenses of “useful” activities. Can make one anti-social and create barriers in relationships.

YP appears to prefer to meet online and less face to face. Even when they do come, they spend time on their devices. Relationships and bonding are affected.

Technology can make YP meeting more interesting if used properly. Need more ideas of how to use technology to make meetings more interesting as this is the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Technology can be time waster i.e. more time “playing” with devices and less time on taking care of the spiritual side of life and in fellowship with believers.

**Q3. How do you see technologies impacting your Christian life 10 years down the road.**

Need to generate repository of websites that are useful and harmful as more info comes from the internet. Have a blacklist and warning system for the flock. The rate of information generation and dissemination will accelerate, we need more “watchmen” who can quickly intercept inappropriate trends and quickly warn the rest.

Technology will continue to advance and will advance quicker with time, so elders have to be more savvy as guidance will be needed.

Can foresee in 10 years maybe people won’t use hardcopy Bible much. Not sure if this is good or bad. But not just the Bible is on device but other biblical related materials and references. So speakers have to be careful to ensure they are better prepared. Speakers as a source of spiritual nourishment could also be redundant if more of the messages and sermons are taped and posted online. There may be better sermons online than what you can get on a Sunday morning sermon.

More parental controls required for types of info accessed by children as access to all sorts of information good and bad will become easier in the future. Implementation of these controls may create conflicts in the home between children and parents. Maybe education from young about the various technological tools, the web etc. might be part of good parenting like how we teach children about being careful around strangers or to be careful when crossing the road.

Maybe people will stop attending Lord Supper and do so in their homes while connected. Will virtual bread and wine be accepted? We might need a definite stand and teaching of the need to come together highlighting relevant scriptures and to emphasize this right from Sunday school.

The Church may not be the physical church in the future but connection of believers virtually - believers may meet face to face less. Some YP are already thinking like this – virtual presence is as good as real presence i.e the difference in experience is minimal. Already seeing YP not so keen to meet for activities. Where do we draw the boundary on this?

It would get increasing common for couples to get hitched on social media – what controls are required for Christians? Would lonely single Christians be exposing themselves to the risk of being unequally yoke in matchmaking sites for example.

Would probably be impossible to control information access but more teaching needed so individual believers are better

prepared to make choices. The Biblical teaching has to jive with modern day circumstances. In 10 years' time, technology will become even more prevalent. Need more practical & biblical teaching related to the use of social media. We need to mix traditional teachings of the assembly with teachings that provide help and guidance on how to view and handle the new technologies and the social implications for Christians.

Other denominations appear to be more savvy in using electronic media channels for ministry. Maybe a systematic study would be useful.

## A Study of Current Concerns for Youths and Young Adults

*Michael Fun*

As part of the preparation for the Assembly Leadership Conference in October 2017, Christian Brethren Secretariat Malaysia (CBSM) embarked on a fact-finding study to gather data concerning the areas of concerns that are affecting the assemblies today in Malaysia. CBSM Trustees have had numerous discussions earlier and had identified several areas below that might be the chief challenges of the assembly. These challenges are :

- a. Technology developments and influences
- b. Government policies
- c. Career decisions
- d. Society changes
- e. Evolved and evolving worldviews
- f. Entertainment & leisure choices

In March 2017, Michael Fun, with CBSM's permission, conducted a closed online survey among the Klang Valley Assembly Elders and received 31 responses from the elders. The following are some excerpts of the data gathered and some observations that Michael had made.

However, before we jump into the data collected, here is a Preamble to the Online Survey:

1. The Online Survey was conducted between March 7 to March 25, 2017.
2. Email & WhatsApp Invitations were sent out to KVAEC, CBSM Trustees and through KVAEC & CBSM Trustee to their leaders.
3. The results below were based on 31 responses as at Mar 26, 2017.
4. There may be more than 1 respondent from an Assembly who participated in this Online Survey. Hence, questions related to an Assembly may not reflect the total number of Assemblies.
5. Since it was anonymous and that there were no geographical indication questions, it can be deduced from the responses that a large majority of the respondents would be from the Klang Valley.
6. The survey may not reflect all the elders or assemblies' views and feedback and was used to aid in the planning for ALC2017.

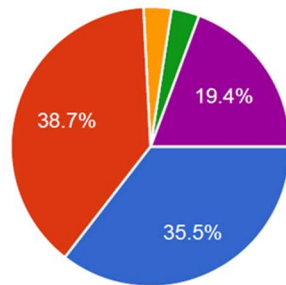
The Findings:

1. Assembly Health status

The leaders were asked about the current health of their assemblies. 11 of the leaders said that their assemblies are healthy and growing while the rest acknowledged that their assemblies are stagnant or has been declining. Of the 11 "Healthy & Growing Assembly" respondents, 10 agreed that the proposed factors by the CBSM (a-f) above are challenges and threats to the Assembly. Only one said they are not.



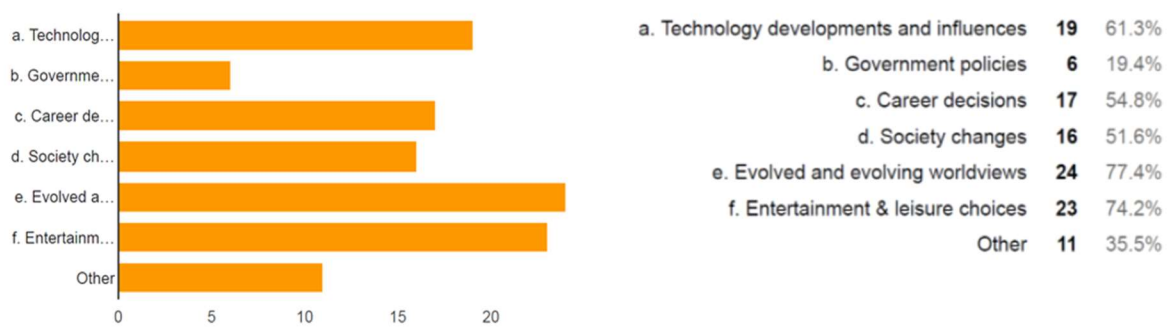
- a. Of the 12 “Stagnant for many years” respondents, 8 agreed that the proposed (a-f) are challenges and threats to their current health status while 4 indicated “Maybe” they are the threats attributing to their current health status.
- b. One respondent indicated his Assembly status as “Sick and Declining” and suggested a,d,e & f as the reasons for its status. The respondent also gave “issues related to old age and the lack of youth” as an additional contributing factor.
- c. The one respondent who offered “Not Sure” of its current Assembly status said that “Maybe” (a-f) could be contributing challenges/threats and offered c,d & f as likely factors. He suggested that the influence of the society from an economic standpoint, to meeting the needs of the family and the pursuit of leisure as the challenge his Assembly is currently facing.
- d. From the 6 respondents who offered “Other” as the response, the following are their comments”
  - i. Can do better
  - ii. Moving Sideways
  - iii. Recovery and slowly growing
  - iv. I believe some churches are growing in some ministries, while other areas are stagnant.
  - v. In the middle. Some are growing, some have become complacent
  - vi. Stagnant recently



Healthy and growing	11	35.5%
Stagnant for many years	12	38.7%
Sick and Declining	1	3.2%
Not sure	1	3.2%
Other	6	19.4%

## 2. Leaders comments concerning the suggested challenges above (a-f).

- a. Item e “Evolved and evolving worldviews” and “Entertainment & Leisure Choices” ranked the top two highest challenges and threats the leaders felt the assemblies are facing today. 6 respondents agreed that Government policies is a challenge the Assembly is facing today which is 19.4% of total responses
- b. Item a, c, d, e & f had more than 50% of total responses.
- c. From the 11 respondents who offered Other Challenges, they offered the following challenges/threat:
  - i. Lack of a concrete program opportunity for young working adults to fellowship with the brethren from other assemblies.
  - ii. Islamic Militancy;
  - iii. No safe measure for leaders to handle doctrinal differences;
  - iv. Discarding Brethren Assemblies' distinctive in favor of more ecumenical practices
  - v. Issues related to old age and lack of youth
  - vi. Member's attitude / heart
  - vii. the church has lost its fire and relevancy
  - viii. a need to evaluate what are traditions vs the fundamentals and for the traditional practices
  - ix. what new relevant practices can be incorporated
  - x. comfort zone
  - xi. Disunity
  - xii. Reaching out and Being relevant to the community
  - xiii. migration of our young people
  - xiv. Lack of Consistency
  - xv. Attracted to other churches
  - xvi. Internal Factors



3. Going deeper into the leaders' perception of the challenges and threats to their assembly health today, the leaders offered the following comments which are reproduced verbatim from the survey. (Only minor corrections to spelling were made.)

- a. Less committed to church and less spiritually inclined, more self-centeredness.
- b. Indifference to the need for spiritual & numerical growth.
- c. Lack of youth.
- d. Comfort zone, harboring some dislikes and upsets; no clear direction; not enough workers; youth and young adults in critical stage; poor discipleship making.
- e. Commitment.
- f. Living the good life. A believer for most, but not an authentic disciple.
- g. The church of God must grow or decline. The main threat is the lack of spreading the gospel to all.
- h. Lack of interest to grow in the Word.
- i. Complacency.
- j. 1. Aging church, not attracting the next generation; 2. Losing our young adults to other churches or to the world; 3. Reaching out to our community; 4. Being relevant to our community; 5. Obtaining spiritual maturity in truth and the way we live
- k. Time, relevance & lifestyle challenges.
- l. Motivating the youth, and next leadership.
- m. Priorities of congregation (career, entertainment-leisure, use of tech etc.) take over God's commands (Matt 6:24).
- n. Many believers are easily distracted from their devotion to the Lord.
- o. Key threat is the Islamisation agenda and the various attempts by the government to deter our work amongst bumiputra Christians.
- p. Our young adults struggle to find sufficient time to be involved or take up leadership roles.
- q. We have begun some changes to put the younger ones in leadership roles to develop them. We think discipleship and mentoring will be our key focus to develop and help our young leaders.
- r. Lukewarm and lack commitment.
- s. Influence of the society (economic), needs of family and leisure pursuits.
- t. How to get a handle of conflicts between Christian beliefs and new scientific theories/discoveries and the clash of Christian values and those of the world. How to set priorities in a tug of war between Kingdom/Christian commitments and career/societal demands. How to overcome the lure of the digital world (Internet, games, etc.) and be attracted to Christ and to fulfil the Great Commission.
- u. Lack of desire to evangelize, many programs are good but not effective, general apathy to the Gospel, lack of prayer, members have much head knowledge but very little fruits of evangelism to show, youths and YA fiddling with their smart phones during service. Lack of committed workers. Members not having a burden for the Kingdom. Short attention span. YA always thinking the grass is greener elsewhere.
- v. Spiritual apathy and easy access to entertainment via mobile phone.
- w. A constant struggle to prioritize the things of God over world pressures and expectations.
- x. Losing young adults and not able to attract and retain teenagers from the community. 2. Uncommitted adults who are not serving and getting involved with the church ministry 3. Not many are interested to study the Bible.

- y. Workplace are draining the passion/energies of our younger generation, and drawing away our emergent leaders either in active lay ministry or to enter fulltime ministry. Assemblies need mature, competent, equipped fulltime leaders to work alongside lay elders to expand God's kingdom. We have a church leadership gap of those in the 30 to early 40's, and this is becoming critical. This has contributed to a growing intergenerational gap in our churches.
- z. The media/entertainment culture has created a consumer's mentality in member's attitude, assessment, and evaluation of church ministry's success and impacts. Such culture has redefined what is success for a church in term of numbers in attendance, multiple ministries/services to cater to member's needs, size of budget and building. Our attempt to reach all people is now being more and more limited by govt's policies in curtailing freedom of all religions.
- aa. Nominalism
- bb. Some though uncomfortable where they are spiritually, lack the will to get right with the Lord and do something about it
- cc. Growing faster than the ability to produce Bible teachers and skilled Care Group leaders.
- dd. More can be had regarding pastoral ministry.
- ee. Young people (including working adults) are reluctant to step up to leadership responsibilities.
- ff. Could they be shying away from: (i) an over emphasis on youths and young adults as our future leaders; and (ii) adapting programs and ministries to suit their preference; (iii) without first instilling in them the disciplines of discipleship. I think this place undue stress on them associated with high expectations without first preparing them in important character-building and church-centered leadership capabilities. Possible reactions might include feeling that the assembly is only interested in using me, I'm not capable, this is not my cup of tea etc.
- gg. Along the way, are we losing out in not subjecting ourselves and our young people to the hard challenges of Christ's calling? Do we still need to carry crosses today? Could it be because the assembly leaders were mostly never trained systematically how to be Christ-centered disciples ourselves before? And we fumbled along?
- hh. Youths are not taking responsibility seriously and youths are very much distracted by technology.

In the survey, it is noted that all the leaders concur that we should hear the opinions and proposals from the youth and young adults before making any concrete plans to address the challenges as perceived above by the leaders. One leader even responded with the following comment, " I speak as one from the age bracket below 40. To answer the question just before this. It is not about the age group per say, it is the maturity and spirituality of the believers in question that is paramount. It is also how in touch they are with their own spiritual condition and that of the church. We've seen those in their 20s displaying wisdom beyond their years whilst we have observed many older ones lacking spiritual discernment."

With that said, many of our older brethren, now above their 50-60s, did not cultivate some of many bad habits of this current generation. They have different bad habits. They spent their early years as teens and adulthood inculcating strong spiritual disciplines of studying the Word, active involvement in church planting, weeping over the souls and praying for the work. Unfortunately, the reality with Gen X, Y and Millennials is that many are engrossed with the world, media and endless forms of entertainment. I speak in broad terms here and it doesn't apply to everyone of course. While there is value in attaining input from an age range, it would be unwise to merely grant them credence because of their representation of a younger voice.

We do well to remember the lesson of Rehoboam's companions. Suggestion: Perhaps perform a survey akin to this anonymous survey and gather the input within the 18-40 years age segment. It's hard work. I know how hard it is to create a survey like this. A lot of thought goes into each question. But this way, the findings can be looked at and as we seek wisdom from the Lord and with much prayer, we can look at usable quantifiable data to make some informed decisions."

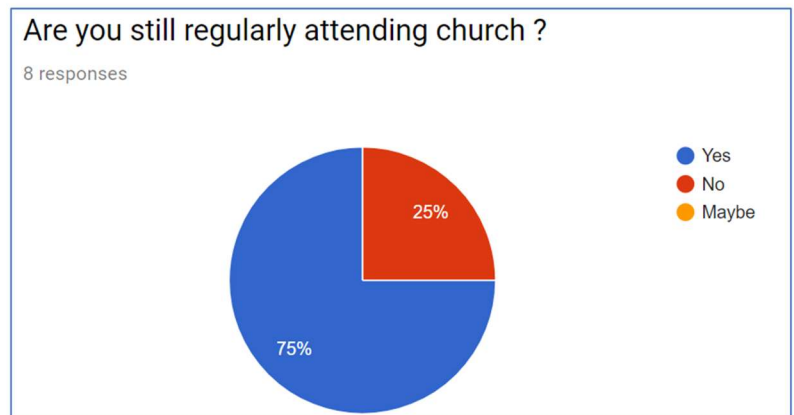
Hence, further efforts were taken to solicit the views and opinions from the young adults. Several ideas were bounced about to see how best to obtain their thoughts and opinions. It was always going to be difficult to get a fair representation of their opinions. As such, the editor of the Diakonia, proposed that a section in the coming issue shall be dedicated to making the voice of the youth be heard. In addition to that, we decided to carry out a small online survey as well to gather opinions from the young adults, but within a controlled grouping – in this case, we only opened the online survey to the young adults who attended the Young Adults Life Experience (YALE) camp recently held in MBS Rawang in August. We also solicited face-to-face meet ups with selected groups of young adults in Penang and in PJ.

## FOCUS OPINION GROUP – KLANG VALLEY

### General Context and Background of the KLPJ25 Focus Opinion Group

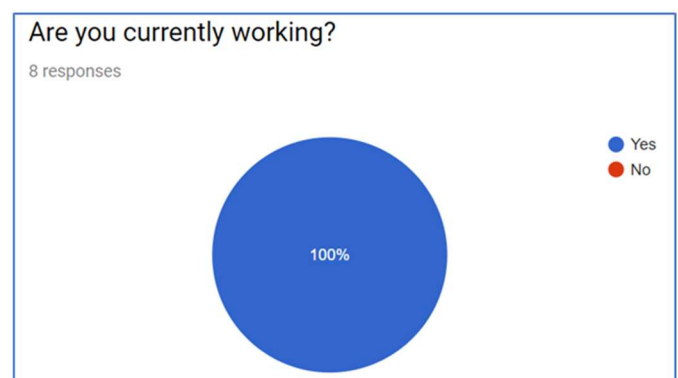
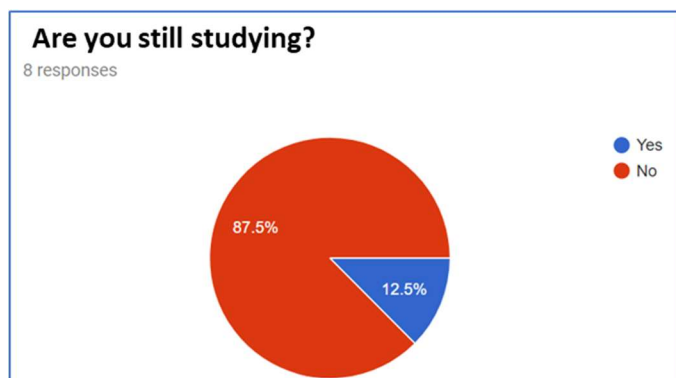
The Focus Opinion Group for KLPJ25 was conducted on 13 August 2017 in a shopping mall in Subang Jaya. It is called KLPJ25 because the group consisted of all who are 25 years old and currently residing in Petaling Jaya or Kuala Lumpur. There were 8 participants who attended the sessions who were facilitated by Michael Fun (elder, Bandar Sunway Gospel Centre). All the participants attended the Residential Bible School in HCC, Cameron Highlands and have been believers for between 8 to 20 years.

All of them had been attending church regularly for between 10 to 20 years. However, apart from two who are now not regularly attending church, the rest are all from seven assemblies. From among them, three have changed churches since they became a believer.



## CAREER

All the respondents have Bachelor's degree with one having a Master's degree. All of them are currently working.





## Career Choices

### 1. Does the working experience thus far match the expectations you had before?

Some jobs like teaching – it was not materially any different. The rest generally had different experiences from what they originally expected of such jobs. Most found working life to be very stressful, especially having to deal with the high cost of living. There is still a lot of learning that needs to be done including learning how to deal with relationships at the workplace. There is also the issue of politics at work – is there a choice not be involved in office politics? When asked, most are unsure if they would want to do what they are now doing for the rest of their life.

### 2. Do you have a sense of regrets with the choice you have made regarding the career choice?

One said no – she did not choose what she studied as something she liked but willing to settle into the choice if it means that how it's needed to survive in the world.

Still floating and trying out different job roles.

No job available after graduation, so the job chose him. There was pressure from home to look for a job after graduation. This individual is still in a stage of confusion.

Most have no regrets so far. One participant even shared that she received a confirmation from God concerning her career.

### 3. Did God play a role in your choice of career i.e. planted the idea in your mind? How?

Mixed answers. Some had similar experiences while serving in church events, ministries and projects. Most of them prayed about career and job opportunities and in instances where prayers were involved, working arrangements seemed to fall in place. Some are still seeking clarifications from God as to the reason they are where they are.

### 4. As you look back, do you think that God is in control or were you able to see God's hands in any way leading you to your job right now?

Generally, they can see God is in control. If it's smooth flowing and through opened doors, then it is God approving. However, they also agree that closed door doesn't mean a 'no' either and that they will try harder. One participant remarked that she took a course that she didn't dislike as she wasn't sure what she really like. She also commented that it was also pleasing the intent of others as well. Another participant also commented that for her, an opened door may not necessary be what she wanted or what God wanted her to do. Although she feels she is easily influenced by people whom she knows and respect, she will still go with her gut feeling as to what she feels is God's choice rather than listening to others.

### 5. Is the job God-approving? Did God play a role in getting into the job?

Generally, yes. Right choices are hard to make the decision. Hard to make decisions in work

### 6. How does the career choice that you have made affect your preferred lifestyle?

Being a teacher, cannot sleep late – must wake up early although the plus point are the long holidays.

There is also a dilemma when career contradicts the normal working schedule of most people and friends so she is unable to spend time with her friends, due to the nature of the job. It affects service in church as working hours are during weekends and nights. Church talks, event, weddings, camps, etc. are missed resulting in lots of hard decisions to be made although she feels it's God's plans for her in this current career.

Career choices may also lead one to a location that may be far from home and this will affect his relationship with his girlfriend and with the church. Some career requires one to work long working hours. The participant felt that it wasn't a choice not to. He stayed on the job so far as he feels that it will be honoring God to work hard.

Another participant shared that in her work place she is given the impression that a good worker must be the one who learns the fastest, moves the fastest, keep oneself updated to move forward and upward in the career. She is

made to feel that if she need to improve then she must put in extra effort outside of the normal working hours. She is unsure if that's what she should do. Another participant added, "When you are fast, you are good. When you are good, they give you more work." The rat race is very stressful to him and felt that the trade-off is not worth it. Moreover, the longer hours are affecting his time with family and friends.

One participant has the luxury of working flexible hours but has mixed feelings about the working hours. Working different hours is making it difficult to keep up with friends. Additionally, the environment of working with people of different age is not easy to adjust to.

## **Technology & Career**

### **1. How are you guys coping with technology today? Are you all enjoying the technology trends of today? Has it been a good development?**

Generally, yes.

Yes & No. most of them enjoy technology but hates how it is affecting social interactions. For example, one of the participant observed how kids at a wedding function had their eyes glued to the smartphone instead of running around and playing with their cousins. The group also shares that the scene is often seen in mamak restaurants where youths & adults spend a lot more time on phones instead of really talking.

Scary to see where technology is going and growing. The uncertainties of what's next can be quite unnerving. The ease of accessing information and the increasing lack of privacy are making things scarier. One remarked how she is afraid how technology will affect her own children in the future.

While technology developments have been generally a good thing, most of the technology today is usually used for entertainment and pleasure instead of learning and for gaining knowledge. She is fearful that technology is making us more "stupid" because the world of students today revolves around scrolling up and down on social media apps like Facebook and Instagram.

Cannot keep up with technology. Hates those who post multiple updates in a day and "promotes" themselves too often in a day. Commented that there is simply non-stop content in the internet. She feels that there is content and information overload for her. Staying in touch on social media is also taking up too much personal time. Our minds are too occupied on social media and the internet that many time, even she is away from the internet, the mind tends to stay on to what's possibly happening on the phone instead of immersing in social interaction events.

Technology distracts.

### **2. Technology & Church: With technology available today, what do you think the church should be doing? Is technology affecting the church?**

Yes – technology is already affecting all the young people – e.g. everyone is on social media all the time. The group comments that technology is good and bad. Church can use social media for advertisements and promotion of church events to attract the young and old.

Some church groups tend to go overboard. For example, when a church event is on the newsfeed on a social media platform and so during events, people are focused on making sure the event is being up-to date on "Story". People are assigned roles to 'story' worshippers and as such, misses the point of the worship. Sometimes it gets overboard like photo-shooting someone praying or worshipping. And it is distracting.

Applications like Spotify offers good worship songs and enables on the spot song selections for worship.

Technology also includes sound, lights and AV. It's like now, people cannot worship without lights, sounds, special effects.

If all these effects are removed, leaving the same people on stage – will it be still the same? Can people still worship? What if there is a power failure? The group shared an incident when there was a power failure during his school chapel service and there was only power for the projector. Everything else could not be powered up but the chapel service was one of the best experience when everyone sang louder. A reminder that it is still possible without all the effects enhancements when the worshippers are reminded to focus on God.

Another shared about power failure during a worship event and the drummer filled in and “performed” for almost 15 minutes to keep the crowd going until the power returned. She felt weird having to see the responses of the large young crowd responding to the drummer.

Music, lights does enhance worship but not to overdo it. It creates the atmosphere

### **3. Should the church adopt technology?**

If it is for the better, yes – e.g. projections, better music and sound system, something that will smoothen out worship service.

The Church should respond to what technology has done. When new technology arrives, everyone is trying to catch up and businesses are trying to make money from it. The younger people are hugely impacted by technology. Consequently, the millennials perceive life so very differently today. The Church should respond and educate their members, understand how technology affects the church members and the people around them and to protect their members from potential ills of technology.

### **4. How should the church respond?**

Before the social media and technology boom, people prefer to interact and talk over coffee tables. Today people interact over pictures, hot topics and everything is fast-moving. People are no longer dwelling on the same topic for long periods.

Instead of talking over coffee table, people are now thinking about what to post next on social media. This is so superficial and although it is a norm today, but is that how society should behave? Are we moving in the right direction? Why bother ‘staying on a streak’ and be absorbed in such a practice? (\*a streak is a continuous daily posting of messages/photos on a social media app). We should learn to control ourselves and know that it’s not real. This is a virtual world.

We need to relook at how do we do sermons? Today, it is not the same listening to a sermon and stories. Lifestyle today is different. People perceive life differently. And communicate differently and if we are to protect the precious thing about life, then we should communicate in a way that people can take in. Otherwise, we will lose them.

Church can do something but the group believes it begins from within the family. The family should be the ones doing something. It is our attitude. We need to learn to refrain and control. There should be moderation. Parents first and then individuals should learn to control themselves.

However, a participant also remarked that it is important for the church to provide support to the family – to teach and educate the young people, the newly wedded couple and young families. Where should the parents be going to get the training and resources to learn to be parents? Church plays a very important role to prepare, train and be responsible for building the right families. The families can fall back onto the church for support when stress and difficult challenges happen to them. The church should be a safe and approachable place for the young and new family to go to for support.

The church leaders must educate and advocate the right use or stand of certain practice and matters in church. E.g. the church should make a stand and discipline on the use of phones during worship or sermon and not just 'leave it to' the parents.

How would the members react to the church being the strict disciplinarian? It is the question of the approach. The matter should be challenged and addressed and not ignored. We should be careful as to the approach. It's important to explain why a rule is implemented. The church should not impose rules without explaining why. It shouldn't be said, "because it was done that way all this while."

The older people should learn to accept what's going on while the younger people need to be open to learn what is being taught. There is a lot of balancing to be done.

Young people relate to technology more. If technology helps them to relate to church and God more, then we should learn to adopt technology to help them but the church still needs to teach them how to use technology in the right way. E.g. using PowerPoint slides during sermons. Young people are visual people. It helps them to follow the sermon.

In the experience of one of the participants, her church has a guideline' of not screening bible verses on slides to instill and encourage the members to bring and use their own bibles. This is an example of encouraging technology without compromising the principles.

The church needs to know why we limit things and understand the opportunities where technology can be used. E.g. if the apostle Paul knew back then of the availability of such resources, he would have jumped at the opportunity to use it for the preaching and sharing of the Gospel.

The group warns that everyone has and is entitled to their own opinions. There is so much potential for conflicts to happen but if everyone approaches it with the right intent to understand the purpose, then such conflicts can be abated. Communication is very important between the church leaders and the members, and not the technology itself per se. Friction in communication occurs between the old and young. Both generations are sensitive. Friction in communication occurs between the old and young. Both generations are sensitive.

The group will accept a degree of adoption of new technology but will also accept the church position provided the church explains and helps the young people know why certain things are done in a certain way.

The group is a generation of 'why?'. The group explains that they are not doing so just to rebel but they are taught to understand why some things are being done in a certain way. E.g. church traditions and practices. It is hard to accept doing something if the purpose is not made clear or it is not explained how the bible teaches it.

The group acknowledges that the phenomena is a very global phenomenon. Perhaps the reason is because they have access to a wealth of information via the internet. Why is it ok in another church and not in our own church? The group feels that they also have a lot of things thrown at them by the society and they need to defend why they do what they do.

The group hopes that the older generation will understand that the younger generation wants to know the purpose, reason and have an answer for themselves as to why they have to do it. The group acknowledges that it is very hard, no doubt, to change for the young and old, as the church still needs to cater to the needs of both. The group suggests that perhaps the church should provide alternatives for each group. E.g. separate service sessions. If the needs of the younger generation are not met, they may go elsewhere when they are old enough.

The group feels that they have not received any Biblical explanations for the practice of "open worship". They see the same few people standing up and do not feel edified. Youths were asked to participate but they feel inadequate since no training was provided. Since participation was poor, they also do not understand why sisters are not allowed to participate. Is this the only format and is it effective? Are there other formats and still remain Biblical?



Also, the group commented that they don't understand some of the things the Church does, e.g. praying publicly for students to do well in exams –Are exam results so important? Perhaps, we need to re-look at our practices.

The group found it difficult to wake up for early church worship on Sunday. Given the heavy work commitments, Saturday is the only time for leisure and social interactions. Nevertheless, the group made the choice to struggle through. Some of their peers have opted for “friendlier” options.

The young people are taught to change for God and fit into the church which, they agree in principle but felt that the church should also understand their struggles and needs.

The group wishes that elders would come down to the young people's level and seek to understand them and their situation. Phrases like, “back in my days” and “I eat more salt than you eat rice” do not help. The group can accept a leader whose life is broken, rather than one who pretends all is well. They look to a leader who cares and not one who knows much. The group also noted that there are some issues which the elders did not act to resolve.

Many small churches are not catering to the youth culture. They become smaller and eventually dies. Is it wrong for a local church to close if it is no longer able to meet the needs of its people?

Some in the group believes that a more family church will continue to be more family church. A non-family church setup will continue to go the other direction, and the gorge between the two will widen. It is not easy for someone who is not from a family church to go or stay in a family-oriented church.

A church has so many ministries on paper and some wear many hats in it. The group feels some ministries and groups should close. Churches should work together to share resources.

The group agrees that there is already a gap between them and those who are just 5 years younger.

### **Summary of KLPJ25**

After 3 hours of listening to the group, I decided that it was indeed quite a revelation on many aspects of the youth that we have yet to truly understand. It is not about we ‘being once a youth’ before and we should be able to understand the new generations. The worldviews of our youths have changed very significantly over the years. Our education system has reshaped them. Internet connectivity has enabled the youths to be able to access many programs from other parts of the world and, in the process, being shaped by views from other communities.

Technology has reshaped our youths to think differently. I observed from this group that everything should be fast, instantaneous, short and precise for today's world, regardless of the age and generation. May I offer a possible reason for the many ‘why's – perhaps it's a result of their busy world – juggling between staying connected, updated and looking for more meaningful escapades – to review and decide if what they are to embark on is purposeful for them to allocate time to it.



**You can help with this study by taking the survey at :**  
<http://tinyurl.com/brethren2017>  
**or you can just scan the QR code**

# VOICES OF THE YOUTH

## CAREERS

### **Career Challenges for a Young Malaysian Christian.**

***Joanna Tan En Lynn, Port Klang GH***

*Joanna is a twenty plus finance and investment graduate currently working in real estate but looking for a permanent job.*

You would have thought that after four years of tertiary education, one would know what to do with one's life. When in reality, one is actually still as confused as when after completing SPM. Perhaps, a few may have already planned their lives ahead of them. Unfortunately, I was not one of them.

I think one of the challenges in transitioning from being a student to a working adult is the uncertainty about the future. Being a fresh graduate of Finance and Investment, the first question many asked me was, "so you've finished your degree; are you going to be working in a bank now?" To which my reply was, "I'm not sure." I wasn't sure because I didn't see myself working a 9 to 5 job permanently, I am also unsure because my ultimate ambition was really to be a teacher.

I have many interests, hence it is hard for me to just decide and focus on one career path. Many advised me to "pray to God and ask Him to show you a path". While I agree prayer is important, I also believe that it is not the only solution. I believe the church has a role to play in helping young adults find their path and that is through organizing career workshops where real testimonies from Christians working in different fields are shared. Only then can a young adult be more assured about a particular job after praying about it. I always felt that prayer without action is as good as not praying at all.

Another thing about prayer is the willingness to listen to God's will, which I think is a struggle many young

Christians face. I am not an exception. After much prayer, some of us might have actually had an answer given but many a times, we choose not to listen. Perhaps, it wasn't the answer we wanted. That's where a Christian mentor comes into the picture. Someone who is wise enough to give unbiased, constructive advice and encouragement.

During a youth discussion one day, I remember a young adult asking if Christians are allowed to be involved in politics and participate in political rallies. To cut a long story short, the answer given was no, which I thought was completely discouraging if that particular young adult felt the calling to serve the country politically. All the more reason to organise career workshops where Christians involved in politics can share their experience while at the same time, give advice as a mentor. It is so important as a young Christian working adult to have a mentor not only for career advice, more importantly as someone who will journey through faith together.

3 months after graduating, I am still searching; still praying. The journey to discover your career pathway is never an easy one, especially if it matters to you what God thinks about it. In the meantime, spend time rediscovering yourself, spend time with God, spend time learning a new skill, spend time with your family, spend time researching on different career paths, spend time serving in church...and things will fall into place in due time, God willing.

### **A Christian in the Work Place**

***Jason Lim Min Leong, PJGH***

*Jason Lim works in the field of risk management in a bank. He is active in youth ministry. An avid Liverpool supporter and nerdy by nature; football tactics has the same appeal to him as the Greek and Hebrew stuff of the Bible.*

As a teenager growing up in a "Brethren" church, one of the most quoted verses was "go make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19-20) and with this it somehow lead me to believe the only career for a Christian is to

be a missionary. Needless to say I wasn't looking forward to adulthood. Later, I discovered other "church endorsed" career path includes "full time worker", school teacher and doctor with the goal of mission work

in 3rd world countries! So true to form, I chose to indulge in my worldly way of thinking and chose a career as an investment banker! (in Risk Management to be exact)

The career challenge that I face as a young working adult in relations to my faith was somewhat self-afflicted. I had this mindset that Christian should not work so hard, as we are not to be part of the world and there climbing the corporate ladder is seen as worldly. By God's grace my mindset changed when having a casual chit chat with a fellow young adult (who was a full time worker) who shared the need to give what belong to Caesar his due (Mark 12:17)! I then realized my initial mindset was due to my laziness and as Christian we are under the obligation to perform to the best of our abilities to our employer. This is also a very strong testimony to our unbelieving colleagues that we very relatable, we face the same life challenges, but we have Christ to guide us through life.

Despite the “light bulb” moment, I struggled with dedicating time doing for work and dedicating time for God. I struggled to meet the long working hours of a “China-man” company. Work environment was toxic as the company bosses were micro managers and scolding out loud is the standard operating procedure. It brought me to my knees (I was burnt out) but it made me cry out to God more.

How ironic then, it is the secular job that made me walk closer with God. A secular job (with a high salary) is supposed to make you self-sufficient but the toxic work environment proved otherwise. The Psalms became more relatable, the cry of the Israelites in exile became

my cry and the daily dependence on God became real and practical. The “power of God made complete in my weakness” was no longer a cliché.

I'm still unsure on how the church could have done anything to ease this transition from a care free student life to a suddenly responsible long working hour adult. Perhaps the local Church should do more ensure their youths do not enter into adulthood thinking David and Goliath are just Sunday school stories but leave with correct understanding of scripture i.e. Genesis is about God, not Abraham, Jacob or Joseph!

As for my personal experience, here is what worked for me in transitioning from student life to working life;

1. Established a reputation with your boss that you can think and solve problems quickly.
2. Prove to management that you will always meet the timeline on deliverables (and the work is up to standard)
3. Show that you are proactive -don't wait to be asked to do complete a task

Have the mindset that work-life brings honour to God and the workplace is where we can love our colleagues as we love ourselves.

In conclusion, we are called to be the salt and light of the world. In Matthew 28:19-20 (in the Greek) the emphasis was about “making disciples” and not going! So it was never about going, it is being salt and light. It is about being a blessing to the nations (the Greek word also means Gentile). We are called to abide in Christ, and in abiding we will realize that challenges in work will never be too difficult to overcome.

## **Have God in the Picture**

***Sharon Raju, Bukit Mertajam GC***

*Sharon is an English lecturer at a local private college. She is active in children's work at Kepala Batas GC and also Bukit Mertajam.*

When I was young, I thought that by the time I was 25, I would have a great career, a big house and everything that comes together with it. In my defence, when I was younger, 25 years old seemed ancient.

### ***Learning to Trust God's Plan***

Well, things did not quite pan out that way. I am currently lecturing in a private college and I have to admit, I never really saw myself as a teacher. In the beginning, it was a temporary position I took up immediately upon graduation. At that time, I was also constantly looking for something else to do but nothing

worked. I gradually came to realize that I love teaching. I like interacting with the students. I just enjoy being around them. It might have taken me several years but I have come to understand that God has the perfect plan for my life. Whenever I find myself wavering, the verse that comes to mind is Proverbs 3: 5 – 6; trusting God to lead me in my journey. It has not been easy and I still struggle with it at times, but I have seen it over and over again, how wondrously God has blessed me both in my career and my personal life.

## ***Being Joyful in All Circumstances***

I would like to think that I am a glass half-full kind of person. At least for most of the time. Growing up in a close-knit family and a small church, I never really had any problems. Even in university, life was good. I had a great group of friends both in university and in church. I was definitely not prepared to enter the 'real world' and it was a big culture shock for me. On the first day of my job, a much older colleague told me, "Of all the colleges in Malaysia, why did you come here? This is not a good place to be. Leave."

To be honest, I had no idea how to respond. I only remember being very confused and scared. Being the rookie, I was assigned a huge load of work (more than I should have been given) and I was often made to take over my boss' classes. I was overwhelmed and frankly I could not see any water in my glass. This is when the speaker for one of the pulpit ministries shared from 1 Thessalonians 5: 12 – 28. I remember this specifically because the verses 16 – 18 from the chapter had such an impact on me. Rejoice always. It a very important

lesson especially for young people venturing out into the world.

## ***Learning to put God First***

The one last thing that I would like to say is this; it is very important to put God first as it would impact every decision we make in life. I remember, many years ago, when I attended a youth camp, the speaker said something to this effect, "When you look for a job later in life, first look for a church and then look for a job near it. Do not do it the other way around." I did not really think too much about it in the beginning, but looking back I now know that it was excellent advice. When God is our priority and we choose to follow Christ's command in Mark 12:30, we become better ambassadors for Christ.

The world is constantly changing and it is an extremely challenging place, especially for young believers. Do pray for them. Whenever possible, do encourage them perhaps anecdotes or better yet God's Word. Sometimes what you say impacts them more than you know.

## **Career Challenges for Young Malaysian Christians**

***Matthew Ngui, Sg. Nibong GH***

*Matthew is a technical trainer who enjoys sports and gaming. He is married to Lydia, a teacher who is passionate about teaching. Both of them hope that they will be able to glorify God in whatever they do.*

### **Challenge #1: Choices**

Which job should I take? Where should I go? Should I change my current work and venture into a new industry?

Baffling questions that dictate their future, those are the concerns that lingers in the young minds, especially during and after the college years. Today, career decisions can be overwhelming because of the sheer number of options and opportunities available. Factors such as salary, career outlook, job nature, interest and goals to climb the corporate ladder are influencing the career choices for many. In fact, greener pastures that provide higher wages, faster career promotions and a chance to enjoy world class institutions are some of the attractions for young Malaysians to pack their bags and leave the nest. Not only these decisions concern one's career choice, it also affects the youth ministry in local churches, as youth numbers dwindle due to migration and thus creates a generation gap, especially in smaller assemblies. Then again, as we mull

over critical choices, how many of us seriously consider God's leading and the church's need while planning for work advancement.

Reflecting back, I found myself in similar dilemma after getting my first job fresh from college. Not giving much thought to the nature of the career, I quickly jumped on the opportunity to join the workforce. However, as time passed, I was called to work on shifts and overtime including the weekends. Although it was a handsome sum of money, the irregularity of the working hours cost me to missed attending the Lord's Supper and youth fellowship, what more serving in it. Hence, I believed that there are many who are also facing similar challenges and have difficulty to commit themselves to the local assembly due to various work related reasons.

The Bible tells us not to forsake Christian fellowship and the importance to worship God with believers and be taught about His Word for our spiritual growth (Acts 2:42, Hebrews 10:25). Therefore, coming together as a church and as one body of Christ; all of its "body parts"



need to be present, active in participation and serving the Lord. As the saying goes, life is a series of choices. One of the greatest choices we can make is to obey God. In other words, we have to learn to establish our priority right before God and trust Him for providence as what Matthew 6:32-34 commands.

In addressing this issue, it is important for the youth community and church leaders and members to actively provide counsel and advice in terms of job selections and life choices to the youth. It is essential to provide them with a firm foundation on seeking God and asking for God's wisdom to make the right choice, one that honors and glorifies Him.

### **Challenge #2: Facing secular values & situations**

Working in secular employment, human interaction and communication are the common denominators for all. Whether we are in sales, technical support, administration, treating patients or education, we are surrounded by people of different values, beliefs and faith.

Here, Jesus commissioned us to be "fisher of men" and the "salt of the earth and light of the world". In this context, Christ has called each of us to be the salt, seasoning and preserving our community with Christ's love and to be the light, dispelling darkness and showing the right way through our work conduct and action. Though this calling is comparatively easy to grasp, it can be challenging to carry out.

Having stepped into the workforce for a couple of years, we quickly realize that work places are far more complicated than what it appears. As Oliver James explains in his new book, *Office Politics: How to survive in a world of lying, backstabbing and dirty tricks* (2013), office politics are simply inevitable. Management scholars have in fact identified a few factors contributing to office politics. The list includes personality differences, unfairness, lack of resources, misunderstanding and poor leadership. As Apostle James pointed out "What causes fights and quarrels amongst you? Don't they come from your desire that battle within you?" (James 4:1) We acknowledge that all these are derived from our sinful nature and self-seeking nature and pride. As Christ's followers, are we then ready to show grace and love, to be the salt and light when we are caught in similar difficult situations?

It's not easy to be a Christian in the workplace. Secular ideology is so pervasive in our professional environment that we often find it difficult to fit in. To quote another

situation, how many times have you got caught up in conversations such as gambling, money games, chasing after wealth, same-sex partnering, spousal infidelity and insensitive jokes thrown around carelessly? Some may simply "go with the flow", choosing to participate in the secular thoughts and values rather than be ostracized for holding onto Biblical truths. Faith itself is often challenged in the workplace and persecution is the stark reality for Christian living. As apostle Paul warned the Christians, "Everyone who wants to live Godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12).

In response to this, Romans 12:2 resonates that as born-again believers, we should not be conformed to the pattern of this world but be transformed by renewing our minds. Therefore, when dealing with difficult work scenarios and co-workers that hold different values, we should practice discerning and recognize who our real enemy is in the workplace. At times, it requires us to stand on our ground and show integrity in what we believed. Besides that, it is also helpful to keep ourselves accountable to fellow brothers and sisters-in-Christ and encourage each other in prayers when we share about our daily work struggles.

### **Challenge #3: Integrating Faith and Work**

Most of us spend the majority of our adult lives in the workplace, an average of 8 hours each day, 5 days per week. This accounts for one-third of our time just on working and the other two-thirds devoted to family, friends, fellowship and rest. Hence, in the practice of our faith, do we consider our workplace as an opportunity to share about our Christian faith or do we ignore this time and only think about God during the weekends?

Many would agree that the workplace today is perceived as a challenging environment for us to be open about our Christian beliefs. Political correctness, rigid company policies and the environment which encompasses of largely one race have led many of us to compartmentalize the Christian faith in an unhealthy and unnatural way. It is similar to saying, "I'm only a Christian when I'm with my family and church friends. I just leave my faith at the door when I get to work". Hence, many working adults struggle with integrating our spiritual selves from our physical workplace.

Representing Christ in the workplace can sometimes be risky and awkward. In recent years, "personal branding" seems to emerge as a trend especially for climbing up the corporate ladder. It is the image that we have to project about ourselves, the skills and talents we have,

so as to be more marketable and successful. Promoting our talents is important for career advancement. As Christians, we recognize those talents as God-given. However, for many people Christ doesn't fit the way they want to be known by others. In fact, they feel that their relationship with God is something personal.

On the contrary, we are called to be ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20), it is impossible to separate our workplace and God. Instead, we ought to be a living testimony in the professional environment through our character, attitude and behavior; one that reflects Christ. Living out our faith doesn't mean that we preach it out loud through every email, text or conversation we have in the workplace. Rather, it is to practice what we preach, make ethical decisions, work diligently and to live our personal lives that is consistent with Christ's character. In short, we are to give our best and do it all for the glory of God in preserving our personal testimony (1Corinthians 10:31).

## WORLDVIEWS

### Worldviews and the Church

*Tze Kwang is 22 years old and a final year Psychology student at the Monash University Sunway Campus. His passion is to help young people find and own their faith. He enjoys networking with others in hopes of doing future projects for God's glory.*

As the world changes from one view to another, I believe we as a church should remain consistent in the things we preach, that is ultimately based on the Bible. I am a firm believer on keeping it constant with the Bible and not with the times. With that in mind, it is important to mention the few worldviews that is affecting the church today.

On at the top of my head, the first worldview that is slowly creeping into the church is the idea of how the world is saying that all religions are the same. You get quotes such as "As long as you do good in life, you can follow any religion in the world" or "you can believe what you believe as long as you just act good and not force others to believe the same thing you do". These thoughts on how "doing good" is the only thing that matters affects the attitudes in the church. Furthermore, the idea of how all religions are the same is also affecting the minds of the younger generations. These views dilute the gospel message and is often different than what the gospel stands for. Christians would need to make a stand as to what they believe, to own their faith as their own and not leech off the faith of others

### Conclusion

Undeniably, there are more challenges and dilemma faced when we enter the workforce, be it choices that we have to make, secular values, acceptance amongst our colleagues or integrating faith into our workplace. However, Paul urges us to be a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, as this is our true and proper worship. As Christians in the workplace, we are called to exhibit an attitude that is worthy of the gospel and to work diligently with sincere hearts and reverence for the Lord. It is also important to constantly check our motives and have the driving desire to please God and hear Him say "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Ecclesiastes concludes this very well in chapter 12:13, *Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind..*

***Chai Tze Kwang, Bandar Sunway GC***

such as their parents or family members. The question remains, if the whole world suddenly proclaims that there is no God, or the true religion is something else, would you still remain a Christian?

The second world view that is creeping into the church is homosexuality. This controversial topic is often debated around the world, not just between Christians and Non-Christians, but also among Christians ourselves. The Bible is clear on how it sees homosexuality. With Romans 1:18-32 speaking out against this act of sin. To note however, this passage also mentions other sins such as coveting, boastfulness and disobeying your parents in the same passage. The point is this, sin is a sin, there is no one greater than the other. All of us are on the same boat. In addition, people may claim that homosexuality doesn't hurt anyone and causes no harm, but a sin is not just wrongdoings. Sin is rebelling against God. Homosexuality is rebelling against God, and asking people to accept homosexuality is openly rebelling against God with no sign of repentance. It is the same as allowing and encouraging people to accept men's lust towards other women and not expecting them to

change, and even more so, asking people to accept them and their lust as they are, whilst not seeing any wrong in any of it.

Hence, at the end of the day, we need to understand where our church is and what role it plays in all the chaos of the world today. We are not a group of people just meeting up every week just to share stories. We are not a gathering of perfect people trying our best to show that we are “holy”. We are not just a community where we come and help each other and then leave. The church is a place where sinners meet and sinners acknowledge that we need help. Not a place to act all high and mighty, but a place to come and repent.

## My View of Worldviews

*Steven Foong is the church education coordinator for PJGH. He holds a Master of Christian Studies from Seminari Theoloji Malaysia (STM) and enjoys a good game of chess and you can encourage him to play more by buying him a cup of coffee.*

As people living in a globalised world today, it is impossible to only meet those who think exactly like us. The world itself has become a melting pot of ideas, heritages, and worldviews. Some worldviews are relatively easier to meld. Others inevitably clash. Often the clash of worldviews results in violence and war. Naturally, it is imperative to find a way for people who hold conflicting worldviews to coexist if we are to live in peace.

An obvious candidate is postmodernism where knowledge and truth are treated as locally-applied social constructions. Once truth is relativised, no single truth framework is privileged as the objective reference over its peers. It is not hard to see why some people have faith that this arrangement can bring lasting peace and wholeness to the human project. We can live happily and free if we all agree that every point of view is equally valid and self-referencing.

It is not surprising, therefore, that some from the millennial generation, being digital natives, find it difficult to reconcile the postmodernism of the present age with the doctrines of Christianity that espouse something as exclusive-sounding as “Jesus is the only way to God.” To the postmodern ear, such a claim of exclusivity is arrogant, regressive, and – if Christianity is their heritage – outright embarrassing. In a day and age where the world is trying to be inclusive, Christianity is seen as dogmatic, anachronistic, and certainly a big part of the problem confronting the 21st century.

We often hear testimonies of blessings and wealth in the church, that is good and I’m not condemning that. But gone are the days where there are testimonies of repentance, where we share about how God helped us overcome our sins. That is how the church can remain relevant in today’s society, not by trying to fit in like everyone else, but to show everyone what they really need, and that is Jesus. Go back to the Bible, go back to the Gospel, just like how the new Christians did in the New Testament. Preach the thing that will save their soul, not to make their lives better. It is only through this, that the church can remain relevant in a chaotic world.

*Steven Foong, Petaling Jaya GH*

What then should the 21st century Christian church do? How do we bring the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a new generation who are sceptical of the very notion of truth? Millard J. Erickson’s article, “Can Deconstructed Horses Even Be Led to Water?” provides a framework to think through this question. Perhaps we can use deconstructed “water,” where we change the substance of the gospel message to suit the deconstructed “horse.” If we do so, in my view, we cease to become the church of Jesus Christ. Perhaps we can use deconstructed “rope,” where we adapt our method and means to lead the deconstructed “horse” to our unadulterated “water.” For example, we can use a more narrative-based and life-journey approach that resonates better with this postmodern generation. Or, perhaps we can first de-deconstruct the “horse,” that is, to convince our postmodern audience that postmodernism is ultimately unliveable. Francis Schaeffer favours this approach. Erickson prefers a combination of the latter two. I agree with Erickson but I suspect we may differ on the ratio. Regardless, one can be rest assured that if we doing nothing we will lose all our horses completely.

The world has undergone radical changes throughout the millennia. The truth of the gospel has withstood every challenge that came its way. There is no need to tinker with it. But methodology is not the gospel and, to paraphrase the apostle Paul, we ought to be modern to a modern generation and postmodern to a postmodern generation.

*Aaron is a Penang based journalist with a national English publication. His favorite pastime is reading and slurping bowls of noodles.*

**Being Right**

Christians are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5: 13 – 14). However, to be able to provide godly guidance in an ungodly world, the Christian needs to know to differentiate between right and wrong.

In a world where greys come in more than 50 shades, having the discernment to properly ascertain the truth properly is becoming more difficult. The Christian in the 21st century is beset everyday with differing and alternative worldviews on various topics. With a touch on a screen, a brother or sister can immediately access (almost) all there is on any single issue; the difficulty is shifting the wheat from the chaff; to discover information which is spiritually beneficial and not the direction which leads to damnation.

**Being Criticised**

An issue becoming more and more pertinent nowadays is the spread and possible acceptance of the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual) culture and practices in the Body of Christ. Although not overtly seen in the Malaysian Assemblies, the matter is becoming more widespread judging by the number of news reports.

A quick Google search will show how widely the affair is being reported where a search returned 15,200,000 results with the top results involving Christians in support of LGBT. It is safe to assume then that many reports are particularly on the responses of Christians for or against LGBT. Those Christians who are for this group are portrayed as moderate or progressive while those who are opposed are painted otherwise.

Far be it for the writer to lecture on understanding media practices but it is indeed worrisome that those who do not agree with such practices are depicted as anti-Bible or bad Christians. Nonetheless it is good to remember that Christians are to “abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good” (Romans 12:9).

**Being Biblical**

Before going further, it is best to have a solid understanding of what the Bible teaches. Recall that God in the beginning made both male and female (Genesis 1:27). The relationship between these two beings is further fleshed out in the next chapter where the man leaves his parents and cleaves unto his wife (Genesis 2:24).

Understand therefore that marriage is between male and female only and any sexual relationship outside this context is sin. With that in mind, a “marriage” between two persons of the same gender is not biblically sound and any act between these two is not what was established in the beginning.

Our Lord Jesus Christ also made the same point in His teachings when He was asked if divorce was permissible (Matthew 19:3). Would this then not presuppose a two-sex requirement for marriage?

The following link gives a good review of the issue:  
<http://www.robagnon.net/articles/ReformedReviewArticleWhyTheDisagreement.pdf>

Recollect also the Apostle Paul’s epistle to the Romans where he showed such practices originated from spiritual foolishness. We find him telling the readers (or his Roman listeners then) of how God is manifested through his creation (Romans 1: 19 – 20). Foolish humanity however changed the glory of God (v23) and so the descendants of Adam and Eve descended into the unnatural use of men and women (v26 – 27).

**Being Responsive**

With a sound biblical basis then, it is clear to see where a Christian should stand on the matter. The point however is how to present such a position in a loving manner as we all know love is patient and kind (1 Corinthians 13:4).

In the news, Christians who speak out against LGBT are illustrated somewhat negatively. To be fair, some of



*Seth Wong, 16, is currently in transition to tertiary education and serving as a teacher in the Sunday School and youth leader.*

*Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.” – Leviticus 18:22*

**1. What do you see as some present worldviews as challenges for the church and your faith today?**

I find that unnatural relationships are a major problem for the church to handle currently. Since it has become trendy to accept these practices, some Christians openly approve of these relationships and a growing number of churches (mostly in the west) even marry same-sex couples. As believers we find our authority in the Word of God, which states that God designed the world and its inhabitants to function in the fashion He determined. Regardless of this, people will always invent new ways to disobey God.

This issue does not affect my faith but I know several people whose faith are affected. The desire to fit in or to justify unbiblical beliefs often causes many believers to misinterpret the Bible or ignore it altogether. The compromising of God’s Word in order to fit one’s beliefs shows unwillingness to accept correction and this may cause backsliding in the faith.

**2. What are your own thoughts and where do you stand on those worldviews?**

I do not agree with this worldview because it displeases God and harms many relationships. The values that God instituted for relationships are undermined by the

adoption of unbiblical notions into Christian thinking. For example, if parents accept unnatural relationships or they themselves are in one, how then are they to instruct their children in obedience to God when they themselves disobey Him? Of course there are people who say, “God said to love and accept everyone for who they are.” Yes, but while that is true, it does not imply that we should approve of their wicked actions. We love them by telling them that they are disobeying God and that they need to repent. Failing to do so would be ungracious to people who are still living in sin because we know the truth and are obligated to show it to others.

**3. How do you think you would respond to those worldviews when asked by non-Christians?**

I would clearly state that I do not agree with this view because as a Christian, it contradicts my faith. However, it is important to be clear of the difference between homophobia and simply not approving of unnatural relationships. I do not hate gays, trans-genders, etc. as persons, but I disapprove of their choices to indulge in activities which go against God’s design of male and female interaction. I would explain to them what the Bible has to say about this matter and perhaps challenge the logic of this way of thinking in a non-confrontational manner. Should they respond with a hostile attitude despite my attempt to avoid hostility, I will not continue to bring up this matter until they want to talk about it again.

# TECHNOLOGY AND FAITH

## Smart Phones

*Melissa Koh, Port Klang GH*

*Melissa is 23 and currently pursuing her Certificate in Legal Practice while working as well.*

On 29 June 2017, we celebrated the 10th year anniversary of the release of the iPhone, a milestone in the history of computing. On 29 June 2007, the late Steve Jobs announced that Apple was releasing three revolutionary products on that day to an enthusiastic crowd. Greeted with cheers from the public, he announced that the first product Apple was releasing was a “widescreen iPod with touch controls.” The second was “a revolutionary mobile device,” the cheers grew louder. As Steve Jobs paced around the stage, he announced the third device, “a revolutionary internet communications device.” And then, he paused for a moment, “so, an iPod, a phone and an internet communicator. An iPod, a phone and an internet communicator. Are you getting it?” “This is not three separate devices. This is one device and we are calling it the iPhone. Today, Apple reinvents the phone.”

We buy into the idea that we are more connected than ever but that is far from the case. Instead, we have become less connected than any other generation before us. We have become more distracted than any other civilization in the history of the world and our smartphones are pulling our attentions away from what it means to be human. As Christians, the stakes are higher than losing a thousand likes on our latest Instagram post, it will be the difference on where we end up for eternity.

Let us not be fooled. Our smartphones manifested the original sin in the garden of Eden, choosing to live our life the way we want to and not as God intended it. At the root, our smartphones glorify us through the pictures we post on Instagram, the likes we hope our photos receive and the constant need to upload every minute of our lives on social media. Our lives become the image we project through social media. We are at the center of our lives and projecting the perfect life becomes our goal. We make an idol in the form of ourselves to take God’s place. As a result, the attractiveness of God dulls in comparison to the

entertaining value of our smartphones and the assurance we receive from the number of likes on our Instagram posts. We spend more time crafting the perfect post that we become spiritually malnourished.

To those with ears to hear, let him hear. Do not be like Esau who had two choices placed before him, a bowl of stew and the inheritance promised to him by the eternal God and he chose the bowl of stew, a poor and scandalous decision. Likewise, for us, weigh the instant gratification offered by our smartphones and the eternal relationship with God and I pray that you choose life. Choosing to live our lives the way we made it out to be is dangerous and has proved to be no good for us. We are terrible in defining what is good and what is evil.

To fight the temptation to be distracted by our smartphones, Paul makes it clear. Set your mind on the things of the Spirit. *“Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”* (Romans 8:5–8).

God calls us to a journey of discovering life with Him through the bible and prayer. The bible is so much more richer than a thousand likes on your smartphone. “Blessed is the one whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water which yield its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.” (Psalms 1:2-3). The words of Jesus will never pass away and they are a key to life eternal. “Regardless of what Apple may invent or promise tomorrow, there is no app for that,” (Segal 2017).

*Guna is a late Gen X-er and a Penangite. He is involved in the teaching, gospel and hospitality ministries. He works as a software developer for more than a decade.*

The fact that this article exists, points to an ambivalence Christians have towards the use of technology in private and assembly life. Why do Christians need to be careful about how we use technology? Why ask the question "Is this good or bad?", or "how does this affect my spiritual life?". This hesitation is often misunderstood, partly due to the notion that science is rational, and faith isn't, and this mutual exclusivity leads to Christians having to struggle with how to maintain religious purity while keeping up with the times.

Even though I believe this notion to be wrong, yet I maintain that discernment is indeed necessary when embracing technology in private and public spheres of our Christian lives. As believers who believe in a moral, righteous God, it is not unreasonable to apply biblical, moral judgement in the practice of our faith.

### BENEFITS

Technology, ("systematic treatment of craft"), is not the enemy of faith when used in harmony with principles, precepts and practices found in the Bible. Rather, it becomes a useful tool for:

#### 1. More Science.

Atheists will try in vain to deny this, but the biblical view of this world as the intelligent craftsmanship of it's Architect and Designer: God (Rom 1:20; Ps 19:1), has inspired a history of scientific discovery and technological advancement, some of which form the bedrock of scientific methods used today.

#### 2. More Gospel.

The early Christians used available technology (e.g. postal services, writing tools, transportation) to share the good news.

Today, you can find the gospel in every form of mass and electronic media, from radio to the Internet. Technology has been instrumental in enabling the gospel to reach millions.

Christians in every generation have strived to fulfil the Great Commission using whatever technologies available, and the mantle is now upon our generation's shoulders to continue this noble work.

#### 3. More Word.

When Gutenberg invented the printing press in 1455, the first book printed was a Latin bible. It is now estimated that more than 100 million bibles are printed every year!

When I open my Bible Study app in my iPad, I have at my fingertips access to multiples bibles, commentaries and dictionaries. Technology has enabled me to be able to study my bible anywhere, anytime! No more excuses for us not to read our bibles more!

An American Bible Societies survey (State of the Bible 2017) found that 69% of Millennials read bible content on the Internet. While printed Bibles have not declined in popularity, it is wonderful that God has made it possible that even a tech-savvy generation has access to His Word.

### DANGERS

Despite technology's enabling powers, discernment is still necessary when adopting it's use.

#### 1. Dependence

One of the hallmarks New Testament assembly life it it's simplicity in meeting around the person of the Lord Jesus.

An over-dependence of technology can introduce a situation where church activity ends up revolving around technology instead of the Lord Jesus Christ. For example, the use of elaborate equipment that requires people with special skills to operate, could disrupt church meetings if any of the technology fails.

In addition, we (believers) are losing interest in memorising scripture, since we can 'recall' verses by whipping out our mobiles and searching. But what happens if the battery is dead, or there is no Internet connectivity? We'd be without instruction! The bible teaches us that the safest place to store scriptures is in our heart. (Ps 119:11)

#### 2. Distraction

The mobile device is now a convergence of many functions, and it's easy for it to become a distraction. I

have found myself easily distracted when an email arrives, or a Facebook notification pops up, or receive a Whatsapp message, while I'm trying to read the Bible on my phone. The urge to attend to these notifications is very strong and is a real distraction, so much so psychologists have given it its own name - notification anxiety.

Also, technology now exposes both young and old believers, to vast amounts of opinion and material that is neither suitable nor beneficial for the Christian seeking to live a holy life. Many Christians have been rendered useless in the Lord's work because of addiction to social media, games, porn, etc.

### 3. Discrimination

The availability of the Internet, social media and always-on, always-connected devices has helped bring people together like never before, but this technology also has a certain cost-of-entry to it that not all can afford.

What happens when a person comes into assembly fellowship and cannot afford or learn how to use a smart phone, or does not use social media? They may feel left out and discriminated.

The New Testament teaches us the simple principle of not laying unnecessary burdens (Acts 15:28-29) and to condescend to the poor (Rom 12:16). Let us ensure that ALL believers in the assembly are able to participate in

assembly activities without being limited by technological minimum requirements.

### The Future.

The Christian Church will always be challenged to have a moral position on the use of technology, not only in its liturgical application, but also as voice of restraint in a world that is quickly abandoning ethical caution in its pursuit of technological advancement.

Recent developments in the field of AI, robotics and automation are introducing a new form of 'intelligence' that is capable of exercising 'free will' and making 'moral choices'. One day we will have to answer questions like "Is it OK to get an AI driven robot to nanny my child? Daycare is expensive, and the robo-nanny never sleeps, gets tired, loses its temper, complains, and knows who to call in an emergency.", or "If the automated car I'm in is in an emergency and is about to hit a pedestrian, who is responsible if the car decides to kill the pedestrian to preserve my life, or what if it does otherwise?!". Will AI be subjected to moral liability, and what will be the moral basis of that liability? The questions will get harder, but the Lord is in control and is able to give us wisdom to make the right choices.

We as Christians need to be brave in using technology to augment our Christian walk and further the Kingdom, and yet, not detract and distract us from doing what is right before our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## Technology Advances and the "666"

*Daniel Looi, Bandar Sunway GC*

*Daniel Looi is a young father of 2 young children working in a technology based MNC. He juggles travel, family and work enjoys the latest technology gizmos.*

Technology have been around since the start of Genesis and it have brought many advantages to both humanity & Christian living. We can see records in the Bible where technology played its part. i.e. advancement in writing/paper allowed Biblical records to be documented. Building technology allowed the Temple to be build. Transportation allowed Jesus and later his apostle & missionaries to travel across the globe in spreading the Gospel which saved millions of souls including mine.

Fast forward to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Technology allowed me to write this article in a plane 30,000 ft above sea level. We have seen the exponential advancement in technology in the last 10-20 years. This advancement actually helped the Faith where it allowed more Bibles to be printed, translations to more language be done in a faster pace. With the internet, the good news can be spread through a wider audience than ever before. Technology allowed the Gospel to be spread to all over the world on a scale and pace which could have be done before. On an individual level, it helped us to get access to resources i.e. Bible study materials/commentaries in



a touch a finger where traditionally countless hours have to be spent in a book store without knowing what to look for. Sermons and Songs can be access via the mobile throughout the day specially during a traffic jam.

However, there is flip side to all these advancements. Technology have been such a core part of our life that we might be overly dependent on it. A day without our phone and internet can be worse than without food for most of us. This can be a serious distraction from our Christian lifes. Apps have replaced a physical Bible in some ways, web-meetings/live telecast have also been an option to a physical church services/worship. These may be a conveniences to us but if misuse, can be a tool by the devil to distract us from God. We are moving towards the era where technology allows us to work in a global level, no barriers to language and ability to continuously create better technology year after year.

This very much reminds of the days of the Tower of Babel. Where we think that we can be like God by building/creating technologies to reach God or don't even need God.

Not too forget the mark of the devil "666" which is mentioned in the Bible. We might not know what is the mark about, but technology certainly have a part to play in this. Technology have been aiming towards a more converged and consolidated platform, One account, One drive, One password where everyone have a single unified ID/account which controls our identity, health, wealth etc, ie a apple/google ID. This points towards the "666" mark which is mentioned in the Bible. Ultimately, we need to be aware on how we use technology and not allowing it to turn us away from our faith. What is technology possible might not be Biblically right.

## Wise Use of Technology

*Tan Bing Hwang & Anne Marie, Sg. Nibong GH*

*Tan Bing Hwang and Anne-Marie are a young couple, married for about a year. His work deals with computer systems while hers is in the entertainment industry. They are actively serving in the assembly's youth ministry.*

The progress of technology is advancing rapidly whether we realize it or not. Its rapid growth does not depend on our acceptance and it is futile to deny its existence. We're living in a time where we're supposed to go paperless in order to save natural resources and reduction of carbon footprint in all our consumption. With the help of technology, we've been enabled to replace print media with the use of smart phones, tablets and computers. Most print media have been converted into paperless form in support of environmental responsibility and made accessible via many multimedia devices. Also with the help of the Internet, multimedia contents which includes books and magazines are easily accessible via download into the devices without having to hunt for the book from bookstores.

First and foremost, with the help of technology, a believer is given the access to many biblical resources such as all the available bible versions. Also, the believer is able to obtain bible concordances, biblical book references, and commentaries at their fingertips. This will greatly improve discussions among groups especially when dealing with difficult passages. Believers will be able to provide better input by accessing them and have a fruitful discussion. On the contrary, having this feature in hand would pose a

problem for the believer to choose the proper material if he/she is not familiar with the topic discussed. For example, if the topic is about eschatology, the believer would need to recognize the various references or commentaries to use in accordance to his/her belief. He/she might be using a reference from a resource that would not concur with conviction and that would further complicate the discussion.

Following that, with the rise of new media and technology, a presenter is able to communicate clearly to the audience with the help of visual & audio aides. The audience will be able follow to through the speaker during the sermon and is able to visualize the speaker's points when it is being displayed. Also, for those who missed the sermon, audio sermons can be downloaded via shared media from the Internet. Furthermore, sermons by international speakers can be accessible worldwide with a smart device. However, with the rise of this feature, the believers may not be so determined or committed to attend conferences and meetings whereby he/she might be able to obtain the resource via these podcasts. It is a subtle impact that would be detrimental to the faith of the believers when he/she has the option of accessing these resources without having to be physically present at the conferences/meetings. This would forfeit the believer

from the blessings of having fellowship with other believers.

In my opinion, young believers will definitely continue to utilize these devices for their personal growth in their Christian walk. Having said that, we cannot deny the

fact that these devices is convenient and accessible in most places but we need to know that we should not be too dependent on them. Moreover, let this verse in 1 Cor 6:12 remind us that we should not be slaves under the power of technology but to use them wisely for the growth of other believers.

## Impact of Technology on Christian Living

*Mark and Joyce Choo, Sg. Nibong GH*

*Mark is a technical writer for the last 10 years and is happily married to Joyce who was a nurse and now a home-maker. They have 2 toddlers and another baby on the way.*

I am on my laptop typing out this article on Microsoft Word. The following tabs are open in my internet browser:

- Gmail
- A Google search on "technology and Christianity"
- Facebook
- "How should Christians engage with technology?"
- "The Effect of Technology on Christianity: Blessing or Curse?"
- "Ways Technology Enables the Mission of the Church"
- "5 Dangers of Using Technology in the Christian Life"
- "10 Differences Between Being a 90's Kid And A Millennial"

My smartphone is next to me. Spotify is playing in the background and I have two unread messages on Whatsapp. Our life has become so intertwined with technology that it is difficult for me to write an article on the **Impact of Technology on Christian Living and Faith** without first "consulting" other existing articles on the internet (plus a few many distractions).

I personally believe technology is amoral, neither overwhelmingly good nor inherently evil. How we use it is up to us. I use the internet to look for illustrations to help bring my Bible stories alive. I use the internet to look up online commentaries and read online sermons on the topic that I am scheduled to share. My smartphone becomes a handy one handed bible so that my other hand can carry my sleeping son during bible study nights. The same smartphone is also used to read Whatsapp messages (*that are neither urgent nor important*) during Sunday sermons and that "research"

for my sharing became a three hour long "research" because I got distracted by some funny videos shared on my Facebook page.

For every good use that I can think of for technology and Christian living, I can also name an equal detrimental use. In the end, I suppose it depends on us. If our heart is like King David, a man after God's own heart, then I am confident that technology will help you grow in your Christian faith. If our heart has no place for Godly matters, then with or without technology, we will still find other means to distract or harm our Christian faith.

There is no denying that technology is here to stay. We will only grow more into it as we progress into the digital millennium. Should we be like the Amish and live our lives "free of technology"? Or should we be like our charismatic brethren and embrace technology fully, utilizing it in every aspect of the Church? Paul writes to the Corinthians "I have the right to do anything," you say--but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"--but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others. (1 Corinthians 10:23-24) I think that advice can be applied to our use of technology in our Christian living. Our use of technology should be for the good of others. Like money, if we allow it, technology can become our idol. If we are serious about putting God first in our lives, then I encourage each of us to look into how technology interacts with our lives and our faith and decide if we are using it to benefit ourselves or if we are using it for the good of others in the Lord's work.

As for myself, I could definitely do with a lot less distractions when using technology and learn to be in control lest it should control me. For what good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? (Luke 9:25)

*Davis Mathew Sam is a Corporate Trainer working with IBM Corp. Originally from India, he is based in Malaysia since 2011. A millennial professional, he enjoys cross cultural interaction and engages with different groups at workplace as well as socially.*

Every generation has seen leaps in science and technology. This influences the way we, as a society, interact and behave. As a Christian, how we embrace technology and use them makes for an interesting discussion. Should Christians oppose technological advancement because it dilutes our identity? From a stand point of a Christian, the biggest 'technology' is the Word! God created the heaven and the earth and everything above and on it with just HIS Word. We are still uncovering the mystery behind creation.

In current times, we mostly associate technology to connectivity, accessibility and digital. Keeping a traditional view, we might think that the younger generation is more comfortable with the technological changes and in many case it can be true. I have a colleague who is a fellow Christian and she keeps the 'Our Daily Bread' devotion book at my desk every quarter (to those who are not unaware, Our Daily Bread is a devotion book). I like to read the hard copy, there is something special about turning over the paper pages! She passes her hard copy because she uses the digital version. I am a millennial who loves books in it's hard copy while my colleague is a senior citizen who is just in love with technology. So how we use technology is purely one's choice and not necessarily our age group. Why this point needs to be reiterated? When we are engaging in a discussion on technology and how it influences our behaviours, whilst practicing our faith, we should draw our attention on how to positively embrace the changing technology. We should avoid falling into the trap of putting people in boxes during such discussion.

The Church is not so weak that technology will be a threat to its existence. In fact, with connectivity (including social streams like You tube, Facebook etc) Gospel is reaching far flung regions of the world. Half a century back radio was a new technology and many people came to the know the Lord through Christian radio stations. Embracing the current technology particularly the social media is an effective gospel

outreach tool to reach out to groups, who otherwise might be difficult to engage in a physical social set up. It is a great forum to engage in healthy discussions and debates. I have The Bible in my Ipad and it is with me wherever I go. The question to ask is, do I read Bible every day and meditate on God's word and not, if I have my Bible with me. We should rather know that we are "the Bible" many people will be reading. Whether technology helps with Christian living and faith will depend on how we use the devices and how we engage in the social tools.

While adapting to changing technology will allow us to be more effective and current whilst sharing our faith, we do need to be cautious when we use technology while practicing our faith. One of the common sights in a Church these days is more and more people using digital Bible. We do need to accept that this 'one device' where I have my Bible, also stores messaging service, phone call (no one really calls these days though!) and social tools (Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat etc.) All of them are connected at the same time. At the time of worship, we need to take that extra effort to be totally present in HIS presence. Not be distracted by the ping and buzz of the flood of messages, likes and alerts! If it happens, it not only distracts the person but also the people around. And above all, we are there to honour the one who gave Himself for us. This is not just limited to Sunday worship. Even during our everyday devotion, we need to be mindful about this and decide which works for us best.

Technology will continue to evolve. God has given man wisdom and understanding. With every technological advancement, we will see changes in the way people behave and engage. There will be positive outcomes of these advancements while we will also face challenges. It will be for us to embrace these changes positively by acknowledging them. Focusing on how we can leverage technology to advance the Gospel message whilst not forgetting the basic belief and tenants of Christian faith.

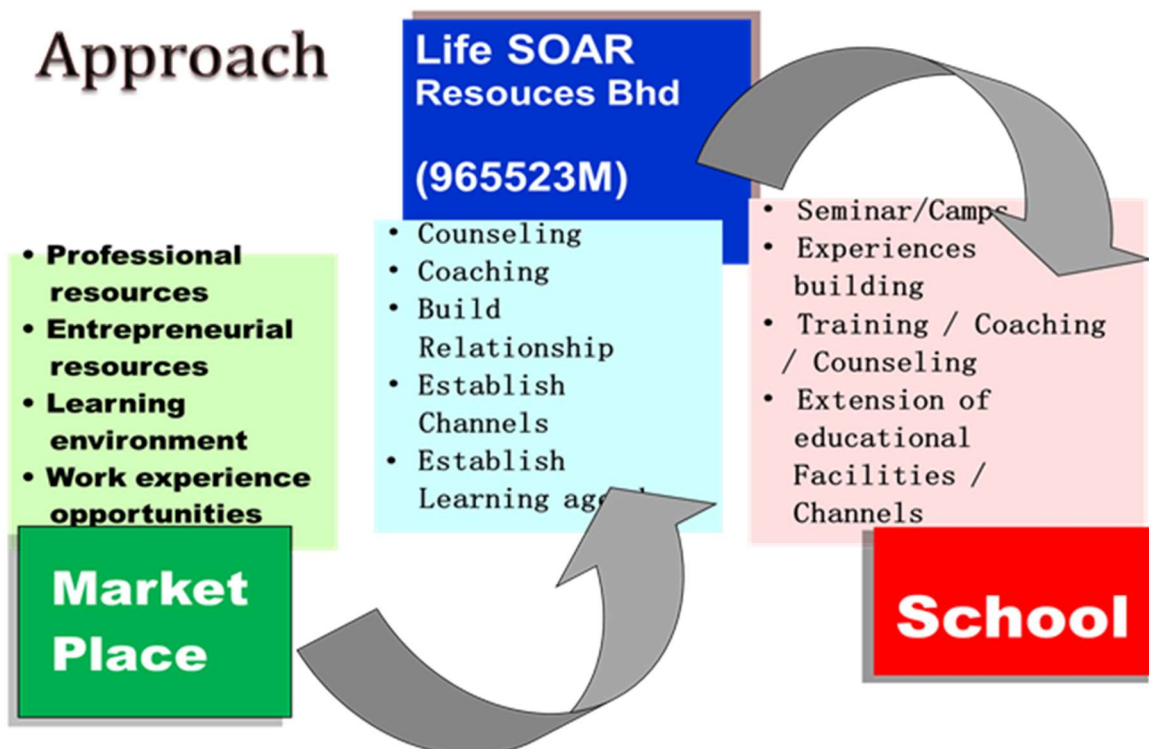
# MISSIONS

Life SOAR Resources Bhd. An Outreach Ministry via Education

*Jimmy Chok*

## INTRODUCTION

Life SOAR Resources Bhd ("Life SOAR" in short) is a non-profit organization with a vision to provide holistic educational care. Since its establishment in 2011 with core team from Gospel Hall Kuala Lumpur, Life SOAR has initiated, managed and facilitated many educational activities for secondary school students.





## EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Life SOAR actions through several series of educational activities that allow participating students to receive much and varied developmental benefits:

**Seminar & In-Door Camps Series:** covering life's skills development in areas such as Life's Goal, Self Esteem, EQ Management, Inter-Personal Skills, Motivation, etc.



**Out-Door Camp Series:** In direct liaison with schools, Life SOAR organizes and runs Adventure Camps. Typically, in the course of 2 to 3 days, students experience in-depth searching and rationalizing personal potential and make resolutions to change for the better!



**Small Group Coaching/Counseling:** Especially for weaker students, provide lessons coaching and counseling, helping them to improve academically. Also, provide appropriate workshops and activities programs to give guidance for those with disciplinary issues, to achieve self-breakthrough.



**Social Services:** To provide an organized platform for students to undertake repeated voluntary social work at various handicapped centers, 'half-way houses', home for the aged, etc. By the examples set by group leaders, create opportunities for students to cultivate an attitude of a responsible family member in a practical hands-on manner, towards the mindset of a caring society.



**Civil & Community Culture Education:** By conducting Local Community Guided Tours, Photography & Art Exhibition, including emphasis on historical heritage values, the poor and marginalized, students are nurtured in the consciousness of civil responsibilities and community concerns.



Civic Rights & Responsibilities



At Eastern Press



Get to know Sg Buloh Gospel Hall at Leprosy Settlement



Petaling St. Heritage Photography Exhibition

**Sports Outreach via "Gospel Cup":** Building students' discipline and team spirit through ball games. Commencing from 2015, learning from COPA-IBA, an annual league is held to invite participation of youths via various Assemblies from Kelang Valley and beyond. In the 1<sup>st</sup> year, the number of participant (players and workers) was about 500.

In the subsequent two years, the numbers have reached 800+. Some Youth Fellowship in local Assemblies have been revived due to this sports outreach. Notably, in Termeloh area, local tournaments involved about 10 teams have been held and became successful outreach channel for the local and nearby Assemblies and churches. Annual road shows are ongoing throughout the country to share the vision of this sports ministry.





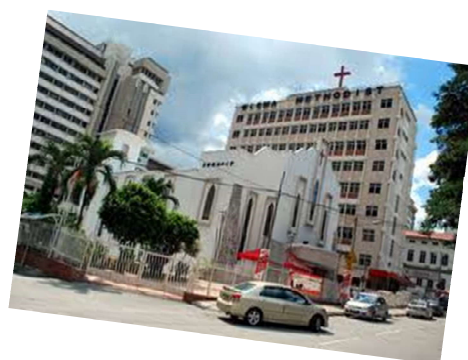
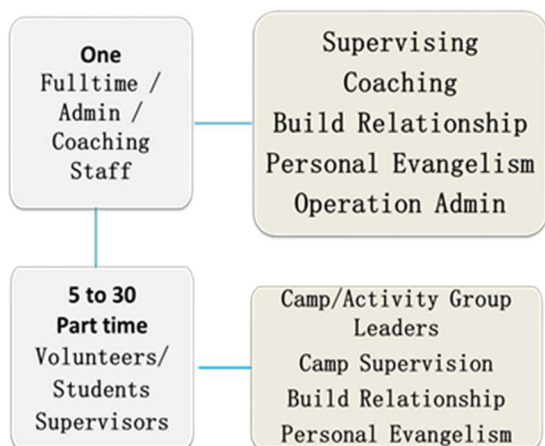
## OUTREACH PLATFORM



Life SOAR is a platform with a mission to channel various market place resources into schools. It grown into one of the outreach ministry platforms for Assembly youths who received nurturing and training at Yi-Sheng Resources Bhd (formally Emmaus Bible School). Anyone with the passion to lend a hand in the learning process of our students in schools, are welcome to join us! In the process, its vision and mission is to build relationships leading to personal evangelism. Progressively, young people are being blessed and added to local Assemblies.

Life SOAR values "Lives Impacting Lives" as real life examples are powerful factors of education and evangelistic outreach. So, Life SOAR strives to cooperate and supplement the academic curriculum of schools by facilitating the channeling of various resources into schools.

# H R



**Life SOAR  
Youth Centre**  
Since  
Mar 2012  
  
**3rd Floor,  
Wisma  
Methodist  
Lorong Hang  
Jebat, KL**

For the past 6 years or so, by God's Grace, many opportunities to serve students have been forthcoming from Chinese Private Secondary Schools in the vicinity of Gospel Hall Kuala Lumpur.

In order to maintain contact with and follow up the students, a Centre has been established in a rented property.

The annual budget is briefly as follows:

Rental of Centre: RM50,000  
Fulltime Staff : RM35,000  
Ministries subsidy: RM50,000  
TOTAL: RM135,000

Other than the schools in the vicinity of Gospel Hall Kuala Lumpur, Life SOAR has also served many outskirt schools, although to a lesser extend due to distance and resources constrains. Some of these schools are:



Batu Arang SMK



Kuala Kangsar, Chung Hua  
江沙,崇华独中



Rawang, SMK Batu 16



Teluk Intan, San Min  
安顺, 三民独中



Kampar, SMK Sentosa



Penang Han Jiang  
檳城, 韩江中学

Come and be a resource for The Lord,

- i. As a Guest Speaker bringing personal experiences to supplement the lessons in schools. For example, for economics students, entrepreneurs can share their live experiences in overcoming various challenges in the development of their business;
- ii. As Corporate Resources that allow students to undertake practical learning projects, e.g. visit to factory, short term work experience, exposure to apprenticeship program, etc;
- iii. As a Supporter in contributing financially to the running of the Life SOAR Youth Center, located on 3rd Floor, Wisma Methodist, Lorong Hang Jebat, KL and its many in-house and outdoor/offsite programs;
- iv. As a Volunteer to fill the role of tutor, coach, mentor or simply a companion to students who come to the Life SOAR Youth Center or during off-site activities or at camps.

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He is also the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Life SOAR Resources Bhd.*

## A Fulfilling Experience in Working with the Orang Asli

*Chris Tay*

As I look back to the years in my involvement with **Pan Malaysia OA Mission (PMOAM)**, I am so grateful to God for the way He has touched the lives of **the Orang Asli (OA)**. I am tremendously excited to share with you on the awesome works He is doing among the OA both in Perak & Pahang. I would also like to thank you all for your prayers & support in winning the minds and souls of the OA for the Lord as *“we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* (Eph:6:12 NKJV).

I will share about my personal journey in my involvement with the OA for the last 8 years. One thing that stands out is my feeling of inadequacy as I serve the Lord. I have much to learn. I have stumbled, made mistakes and along the way, I became wiser. The Lord lifted me up and I moved forward. This is not unlike any ministry we are involved in. Whether we are involved in Sunday School, Youth work, Care groups, Seniors Group, Hospital or house visitation, we need to persevere and trust God who is with us the whole way. There is always time for us to believe and say, “I trust God completely. I will not give in to fear or anxiety.” I hope by sharing this, you can identify with me and remain steadfast in whatever ministry the Lord has put in your heart.

My experience with the OA is very fulfilling. No doubt there are challenges and tough work ahead but at the end of the day, it is worth it. I consider myself blessed to have met and made many friends among the OA, the experience of staying with them, of caring for one another. Meeting new people and involving in a new ministry can be a wonderful and enlightening experience.

### What’s my motivation in serving with the OA?

Having this motivation sustains me in tough times and is one of the reasons I still love being involved in this ministry.

1. I desire for many OA to see & savour the glory of the Lord.





When we see something as beautiful as our Lord, we cannot remain indifferent but we savour, treasure, cherish, admire and prize Him. It's my desire that the OA in admiring the beauty and glory of the Lord, would prize Him above all things and apprehend His true worth. When they see and savour the glory of Christ, they would want to show His glory, which is none other than the glory of God.

*"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (Jn. 1:14)*

The Lord prayed, *"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."* (Jn. 17:24)



What happens when the OA see Him and savour Him? 2 Cor. 3:18 says, *"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord"*. We can have many programs and activities to help the OA but true change and transformation of the OA and the communities can only come from them gazing at the glory of Jesus and experiencing His wonders. The implication is that we should hold up our Lord Jesus Christ for the OA to gaze at. Together with the OA brethren, we will rise and shine in the dark forest in order for OA communities to see, savour and shine the Lord.

2. I desire to leave a legacy that will outlast my life.

Within 2 weeks from end of March to early April 2017, the elders & deacons of BPGC have to conduct 2 funerals. One is expected as she had been suffering for many years, the other one is unexpected and sudden. In fact, the week before the second sister went to be with the Lord, she went up to me after I shared a message on generosity. I said that our God is a generous God and as we are his children, we should be generous – generous not only with our money but also with our time, our talents and generous in forgiving others. I believe God blesses us so that we can be a blessing. She wholeheartedly agreed. We spoke for a few minutes and that was the last we met.

This incidence has a strange way of impacting me. One Sunday, I shook hand with a brother from BPGC, Lin Kai, someone whom I enjoyed disturbing. I held his hands tightly and we just laughed. I appreciated his friendship and as we held each other's hands, I whispered to his wife, "We want to treasure this moment as we might not be able to do it next Sunday". She said, "Aiya don't talk like that". Then I added, "It does not mean he will not be around, it could mean I may not be around".

When I was a young Christian, I received a book as a farewell gift from my Christian Fellowship teacher and on the front page were the words:

Only one life, 'Twill soon be past;  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

As a teenager with a lot of pimples, longings and anxieties, I wondered what it would be like 10 years, 20 years later. Of course, the biggest anxiety was my preparation for the HSC/STPM examination. I had received my trial exam results and it didn't look good. The next question was where I could further my education since my results were going to be bad and my family could not afford to finance my tertiary education. And I also wanted to date a girl from the youth group but did not have the courage to approach her. But when I received the book, there was this message. You get one pass at life. That's all. Only one. And the lasting measure of life is Jesus Christ. Life is a journey. It has a beginning, a middle and an end. I only have one life, so don't waste.

I don't have to know a lot of things in order to make a lasting difference in the world. But I need to know the few great things that matter, and then be willing to live for them and passionate for them. The people that make a durable difference in the world are not the people who have mastered many things, but who have mastered a few great things.

If you want your life to count, if you want the ripple effect of the pebbles you drop to become waves that reach the ends of the earth and roll on for centuries and into eternity, you don't have to have a high IQ or a high EQ. You don't have to have good looks or riches. You don't have to come from a fine family or a fine school. You just have to know a few obvious, simple, glorious things, and be set on fire by them.



God created us to live with a single, all-embracing, all-transforming passion—namely, a passion to glorify God by enjoying and displaying his excellence in all the spheres of life. I have learned from an early age that I must serve the Lord joyfully and I must display the glory of the Lord in my lives

What I offer to God is an expression of who I am and what I value most in life. I thank the Lord for the opportunity to do something that may be more significant than anything else, that is to come before God and pour out my time, talents, treasure and trust, for Him, for the sake of His kingdom and His church!

When I am involved in the OA ministry, I hope to leave a footprint behind. I want the OA to be proud of their identity and place in the country. I want the OA to know of their rights in this land and stand up for these rights. I want the OA to be proud of their spiritual heritage and blessings in the Lord. I want the OA to be committed and able to safeguard their faith. I want the OA to be confident and bold to reach out to their communities and to other tribes. I would like to see the OA brethren serving the Lord joyfully and passionately. I would like to see the OA church rise up and take their place among the established churches in Malaysia. That's the legacy I want to leave behind.

*"This will be written for the generation to come, that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord." Ps. 102:18*

### **What have I learnt?**

There are a lot of learning opportunities and I speak from experience when I say that you are able to gain valuable life lessons when you are an active participant. I have learned many things but I would just mention 5 of them.

1. I must be both available and usable.

Every time I make a trip to visit the OA, I try to invite children, young people and even the seniors to join me. Many want to know how to help. They are looking for formulas or for some ABC method. I always encourage them not only to be usable but also to be available. I try to remind them not to dwell too much on their inadequacies – some are too young, some are too old, some cannot converse in Bahasa Melayu, some lack confidence in sharing the word or mixing with the OA. I try to remind them that God is looking for those He can use – not just for talents and abilities alone, but for their yielding and willing hearts.

One day I was hanging a picture on the wall. When I marked the spot where I wanted to drive a nail, I realized the hammer was in the toolbox outside. Rather than climb off the ladder, I simply reach down, took off my shoe and used it to bang the nail into the wall. The hammer was able but the shoe was available.

So many of us have talents and gifts but we'd rather be used only on special occasions. Such big, special occasions are few and far in between. God is looking for those willing to be used every day, in all kind of situations, ready to do the job for His glory and the uplifting of His Kingdom. That's the way I want to be used.

God's people come in all shapes, sizes, colours and ages. He values and uses every person in whatever stage he or she is in life. Never underestimate how God may use each of us.

## 2. I need to love what I am doing

The only way to do great work is to love what you do. I love to read the biography of Steve Jobs of Apple. There was this story that goes like this – the founder of Microsoft, Bill Gates visited him at his modest house and commented that he could afford to get a bigger one. Steve Jobs said to him, "Being the richest man in the cemetery doesn't matter to me. Going to bed at night saying we've done something wonderful, that's what matter to me". If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?

PMOAM's mission is to share Christ and to love the OA communities in every way we can. God calls us to love the lost, the hurting, the marginalized and the disadvantaged. God gives us opportunities to impact others in significant and loving ways. It is His message and His love that motivates us in reaching and enriching the OA communities with the good news of the Gospel and its life-changing message. And this is what we love to do!

## 3. I need to take risk

Such opportunities are faith-building exercises. Even if things don't go as planned, risks strengthen our faith. There's going to be good decisions and bad decisions but if we are truly passionate about what we are doing, we will get through it. Stay focus and go ahead.

When dealing with the OA, we have such ideals for ourselves that this often closes us off to the truth about their needs. If we were to ask God to give us the mind of Christ, and then enter their world seeing through God's eyes, perhaps it will inspire us to view this work differently and take risk in helping them.

If we are committed to serving OA communities and helping its people, we should entrust the ministry to the OA leaders, empowering and equipping them. And this is a risk worth taking!

## 4. I have to learn to embrace failure

Occasionally something completely outside our control will cause us to fail. If we study the stories of successful companies and striving mission enterprises, we would probably hear of their challenges and failures. Most of them have failed a lot more often than we have. That's why they are successful now. During the last 2 years, I have ventured to help them in developing an agriculture farm. It did not turn up well. I have learned to embrace every failure. Own it, learn from it and take full responsibility for making sure that next time, things will turn out differently.

## 5. I need to hope

Certain time we are going to receive negative feedbacks and news can spread pretty quickly. It's easy to get caught up in the negativity but we can't. Stay focus on the finish line. Even when circumstances don't look good, miracles happen. Sometimes He allows us to do all we can and then He steps forward and brings about perfect plan for our lives and ministries. Never give up hope! Learn to persevere and be patient. Learn to see God's power and blessings in unexpected situations.

God is stirring us and the OA believers to do a new thing in this generation.

*"Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded.*

*For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told."* Hab. 1:5

And this is my hope that in the years ahead, the Lord is bringing more OA into His family that they might know the joy, the love, the hope, the wonder, the grace, the mercy, the grandeur and the glory of our Lord.

## **Why the need to have a new vision – Reaching & Enriching OA?**

**Pan Malaysia OA Mission (PMOAM)** is inspired by a belief that we can make a difference to the OA. That's why we do what we do even if it takes many generations to realize it. We make a real difference to OA across the country, helping them transform their lives. We reach out to the OA, touching their world, living in their world. We are juggling our limited resources to make the greatest possible impact.

When facing many challenges, we can moan, groan and complain. We complain when we see more of them convert to another religion and we claim they use unfair means or the OA are naïve. We see the OA losing their native lands and we say why are they so gullible. We see young children die young and we blame their parents. We see their children stop going to school because they could not understand what the teachers are doing. We see their distrust of those who take advantage of them. And we see all this around us and say that nothing can be done. Or can we do something?

We at PMOAM believe we can't help the OA only by ourselves. The OA must help themselves despite their limitations. That is why we work together with SIOA in effecting change. We must be a catalyst for change, working with others and through others.

Our vision focuses on ways to make the biggest difference, and prioritizes what need to be done. It also places even more emphasis on passing on what we learn to others to create much bigger spiritual & social change. We believe that we can work together making the most and greatest change possible with limited resources.

For PMOAM, "Enriching Lives" means helping them to know what they could do, how they could live, how their communities and future generations could be impacted with the Lord at the centre of their lives. For us in PMOAM, it's a privilege that the Lord has entrusted this responsibility and it's really a good feeling that the Lord could use us to enrich lives and teach them, to connect with the OA and to make a difference in lives of OA.

## **Facing the challenges together**

Is there anything impossible with God? Is the light getting brighter or dimmer? Thank God, in many parts of the forest, the light is getting brighter.

We are one and we believe through brothers and sisters combining their gifts, skills, experience and through collaborating in every area of our work, we can create a positive change for OA.

Without our amazing supporters, many of our activities wouldn't be possible. Many assemblies partner with SIOA in assisting the work. Many individuals tirelessly on their own teach English lessons, provide medical care to the mothers, to the old and young children and visited them regularly.

Others make a difference through tirelessly raising funds and giving sacrificially. We are indebted to everyone who supports PMOAM financially, no matter how big or small, because they make our work possible. PMOAM funds are made up of:

1. General Fund which is for operational expenses. This amounts to RM440,000 per annum. This covers workers allowances (for full-time & part-time workers in Tapah & Temerloh), relief, vehicle, training and other operational expenses.
2. Development Fund totaling RM220,000 per annum which are used for construction of new buildings, repairing of old buildings and purchase of vehicles.

If you would like to support this mission, you are welcome to make a contribution to:

Pan Malaysia OA Mission  
Public Bank Bhd Acct no. 3192916101

Please email us or WhatsApp the photo of advice to hand phone no: +6014-3386141.

And they sang a new song, saying:

*"You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals;  
For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood  
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,  
And have made us kings and priests to our God;  
And we shall reign on the earth."* Rev. 5:9-10 NKJV

If you would like to know more about this ministry, please do not hesitate to contact us at [pmoam1@gmail.com](mailto:pmoam1@gmail.com).



## Diaspora Missions

*Jimmy Chok*

In this Internet Age with lots of information on the Web (like the following), we shall try not to reproduce them in print.

**Diaspora Missions: People on the Move in the Borderless World** As of the end of 2015, 65.3 million people were displaced. SADRIL JOY TIRA  
([HTTP://WWW.CHRISTIANITYTODAY.COM/EDSTETZER/2016/OCTOBER/DIASPORA-MISSIONS-PEOPLE-ON-MOVE-IN-BORDERLESS-WORLD.HTML](http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2016/october/diaspora-missions-people-on-move-in-borderless-world.html))

**Diaspora Missions: Diaspora Churches as Equal Partners in Mission** Hispanic, Korean, Chinese, and Nigerian churches embody the vitality and vibrancy of Global Christianity. (NOV 10, 2016) STANLEY JOHN  
([HTTP://WWW.CHRISTIANITYTODAY.COM/EDSTETZER/2016/OCTOBER/DIASPORA-MISSIONS-DIASPORA-CHURCHES-AS-EQUAL-PARTNERS-IN-MI.HTML](http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2016/october/diaspora-missions-diaspora-churches-as-equal-partners-in-mi.html))



THE THIRD LAUSANNE CONGRESS ON WORLD EVANGELIZATION (CAPE TOWN 2010) RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF DIASPORA MISSIONS AND MISSIOLOGY. CONSEQUENTLY, MANY DENOMINATIONS AND MISSION ORGANIZATIONS ARE ADJUSTING THEIR STRUCTURES, RE-CALIBRATING THEIR STRATEGIES, AND REALIGNING THEIR RESOURCES (PERSONNEL AND FUNDS) FOR EFFECTIVE DELIVERY TO HELP FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION.  
(<https://www.lausanne.org/networks/issues/diasporas>)

## WHAT DOES DIASPORA MEAN?

However, we have to explore this subject matter for ourselves, lest we are found lacking or missing the point.

*"And while they went to get oil, the master came; and those who were ready went in with him to the feast: and the door was shut".* Matt 25:10

An extract from:

<http://e3partners.org/blog/what-is-diaspora-missions/#sthash.U4SH4oM2.dpuf>



*“Diaspora is a term originally used to describe the exiled Jews of the Old Testament. After generations of unrepentant sinful behavior, The Kingdoms of Judah and Israel were conquered by the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, forcing the Israelites out of the Promised Land.*

*As they were scattered across the known world, they were forced to acclimate to the cultures around them while relearning how to maintain their relationship with God. They dealt with guilt and shame for their sin. They mourned the loss of the Temple and they lived as refugees in faraway cities.*

*In this season, synagogues came into play and God used the Israelites to make his name known among the most pagan cultures. While it was a time of darkness and tragedy, it also made God’s presence known throughout the world.*

*Today, a similar concept is playing out among the millions of refugees flooding from the Middle East and Northern Africa. These people, largely Muslim, come from unreached people groups. Among one group in particular, the last known believer before the refugee crisis was baptized over 100 years ago.*

*As they move into these neutral zones, they experience freedom to explore the Christian faith and ask honest questions about Jesus. As a result, people are coming to faith in him and missionaries are able to reach them for the first time”.*

## **NATIONAL DIASPORA SYMPOSIUM**



Initiated by Migrant Ministry Klang (MMK), ([www.ndsmy.org](http://www.ndsmy.org)) embarked upon an effort to:

- a) Aspire churches to fulfil God’s purpose for the nations in our midst;
- b) Assist and encourage churches to include the diaspora in their ministries;
- c) Assemble information, expertise and challenges so as to build networks; and
- d) Assimilate and share success stories, expertise, and resources so as to encourage teamwork.

It may be fair to say that participation does not seem to be as widespread as the “people of other nations in our midst”. (Please see below for a summary of the Symposium by Elder Terrence Chong of Seremban Gospel Hall.)

There again, there are local churches which are no longer, e.g. only English-speaking Chinese churches, or, only Chinese-speaking Chinese churches, etc. Over the recent decade, they have become multi lingual multi Nationals churches, yet being managed by a combined leadership with consolidated infrastructure and financial resources.

They are, indeed, very much like the early Church in Jerusalem!

*“And all those who were of the faith kept together, and had all things in common;...” Acts 2:44*

*“Giving praise to God, and having the approval of all the people; and every day the number of those who had salvation was increased by the Lord.” Acts 2:47*

For these people of the faith around us, be they local, immigrants or refugees, the fusion transpired “quite naturally” and, we do see, the blessings of the Lord upon the works of their hands.

## **LOCAL MISSIONS WITH GLOBAL IMPACT**

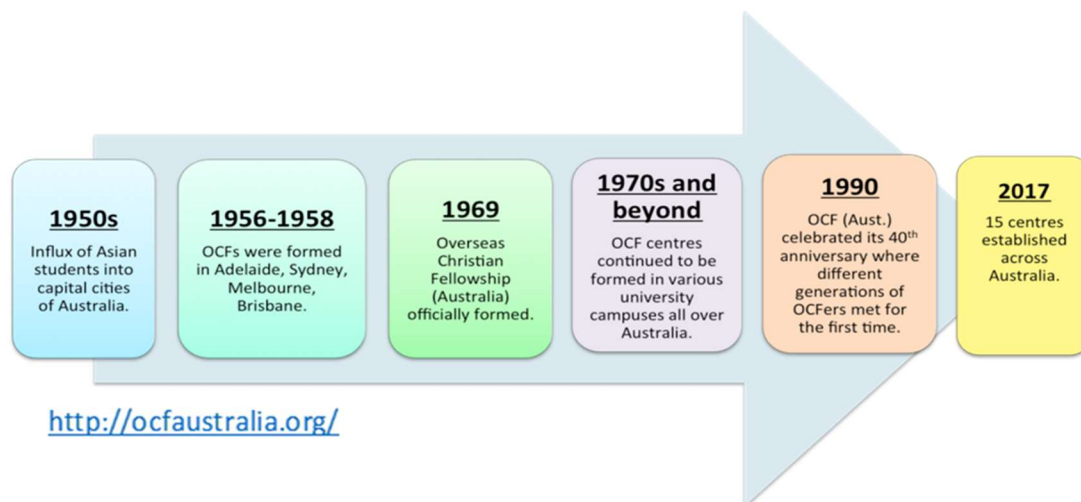
This is one focal emphasis of the Diaspora Mission. Four or five decades ago, the term “global” very much did not exist. Or, could we have been too preoccupied? If it’s all about “people on the move”, most probably few other nationals have the same experience as the Chinese. Without wondering too far and wide, most, if not all, of our parents or grandparents actually wondered into the “South Sea” (Nanyang/南洋) from the port in Xiamen (or was it a river jetty in Guangzhou) round about 100 years ago. They came and linked into clan associations, temples and even churches. In the right affiliation and, of course, through sheer hard work, subsequent generations are blessed. Unknowingly, we are the fruits of diaspora mission!

For Asians, the diaspora mission had involved the movement of people who migrated for the sake of The Gospel, i.e. the Western Missionaries. They gave their lives to The Lord Jesus and came into unknown territories with the sole purpose of sowing The Good Seed. They toiled and cultivated hard soil into “good earth” where the seeds bore fruits multiple times (Matt 13).

Another typical case of diaspora mission, especially during the years following 1970s, is the Overseas Christian Fellowship (OCF) in Australia.

Many of those who wondered Down Under in search of knowledge have, by the diaspora mission of OCF, met their Saviour Lord Jesus Christ! It was the Christian love and care that met the needs of the overseas students in their hour of challenge, on and off campus!

Maybe, we do not see all these scenarios are part of God's Hand at work through the time of this fallen world. As a result, we keep to ourselves and, as life gets comfortable, Salvation becomes a "private possession"!



## WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

Living as God's people in an increasingly global society, we are being challenged by God's Heart and Plan all the time. Yet, answers to many questions appears unclear, even in the Assemblies:

- Do local churches generally remain traditionally ethnic based?
- Is outreach mission, including diaspora mission, prime objective of local churches?
- Does the presence of people of different culture makes local congregation feel uncomfortable?
- Do churches see immigrants in the light of diaspora mission?
- Are refugees frowned upon as undesirables, even by local churches?

*"While it is day we have to do the works of him who sent me: the night comes when no work may be done". John 9:4*



**Second National Diaspora Symposium**  
7-9 Sept. 2017 at Eastin Hotel Petaling Jaya.

A summary as provided by Elder Terrence Chong who attended the Symposium.

- 1) The National Diaspora Symposium was very well attended with a wonderful mix of speakers who approached the subject matter from a variety of angles thereby providing conference attendees with a holistic understanding of the humanitarian need as well as God's work in this area.
- 2) From the symposium, we learnt that the current situation in Malaysia is as follows:
  - (i) There are close to 150,000 registered refugees in Malaysia and UNHCR collaborates closely with multiple partners, including faith based organization in providing protection space for refugees. The need is overwhelming and UNHCR & partners are under resourced in all areas.
  - (ii) There are at least 4 Million migrant workers in Malaysia of which only half are registered and thereby protected by Malaysian laws. Unregistered migrant workers are susceptible to exploitation by their employers.
- 3) With that backdrop, the Church is challenged to:
  - (i) Be welcoming to the foreigners living in Malaysia and to be like the Antioch Church mentioned in Acts 13:1 which was multi-ethnic in composition as well as in leadership and serves as a model for the Diaspora Church.
  - (ii) Love the neighbors in our midst which includes migrants & refugees living among us and to share the gospel with them.
  - (iii) Stand up for migrants & refugees when they encounter injustice in Malaysia.



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