

CHRISTMAS ISSUE

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Pastor's Message

The Way to Celebrate Christmas

This season of Christmas is a reminder for us to reflect on God and draw closer to His loving gift – Jesus Christ. It is a time for us to contemplate the true meaning of Jesus' birth. There are so many unusual things about Christmas. It is the time that represents an event more than 2,000 years ago when a virgin gave birth to the Son of God. It is the time that God fulfilled His promise for our sins to be forgiven and our salvation to be assured. It is the time that God sent wise men to look for the Child in the place where the star had stopped. It is the time that the angels and the shepherds sang praises to God. It is the time that Mary rejoiced, for she knew that the prophecy had been fulfilled.

Well, this year's Christmas how will we celebrate?

- Will we take time to spend treasured moments with God alone?
- Will we pause for prayer and reflection?
- Or, are we going to be too busy with work (that includes church work), family gatherings, holidays or last minute shopping?

Someone has written that people use Xmas and it means Xhaustion, Xcuses, Xchanges, Xcesses, Xtravagences, Xasperations, Xhibitions and Xcitement.

How much better it is to make Jesus the very centre of our Christmas observance. And, that's the right way to celebrate every Christmas.

Let us take time to thank God for sending His Son, Jesus Christ into the world to save us from our sins. We are now assured of our salvation because Jesus, the One known as the "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace" (cf. Isaiah 9:6), has come with all authority. We no longer anticipate our salvation; it has come! Praise God!

My family and I wish every one of you a Joyous Christmas and a Blessed New Year. We pray that in this season of Christmas you will experience God's peace and love in your heart.

Shalom,

Rev. Paul Christie

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."

– Luke 2:10-11

Pastor Paul George Ponniah

Remembering a Friend

Anonymous Contributor

On 21st December 2004, Pastor Paul George Ponniah was called to the Lord. Wesley Seremban was in shock. We held vigil for 3 days, with services every evening. On 24th December 2004, this church was filled to the brim and overflowing. It was symbolic of the emotions that were stirred, and tears welling.

The service was conducted by Bishop Hwa Yung with eulogies from his peers and brethren, and family. It was an intense moment precipitated by a deep sense of loss. We

sent him off suddenly, emotionally but also in humility, dignity and grace. Today, we remember him again, as a church.

As a friend, he is most remembered for three qualities he exemplified and symbolized. Qualities he encapsulated in his brief yet most meaningful stay with us, and qualities he embodied and radiated.

- i) **Humanity**, His ordinariness and humility, always aware of human Godliness within human frailty;
- ii) **Mission**, His sense of mission, borne out of a deep commitment to faith – a true missionary living and spreading the Gospel, above and beyond the call of the ordinary;
- iii) **Detachment**, He was detached from the material and temporal, preferring the spiritual and eternal, extolled inner purity and truth against external symbolism.

Providence sometimes has a dramatic way of delivering a **message**. We have seen and witnessed this when someone near or a world renowned figure is suddenly called away. The sudden calling of Pastor Paul George was definitely one such message.

PASTOR PAUL GEORGE PONNIAH

MENTOR, PASTOR, GUIDE, FRIEND AND MAN OF GOD

*He appeared on the scene in Seremban,
From Segamat to Johor
For many, it was getting to know the man.
Would he be dynamic, progressive or just a bore?*

*Soon, his qualities began to emerge.
Commitment to the faith, parish and doctrine
Were evident, yet other qualities lay hidden
Among others, a deep commitment to mission.*

*In many ways, he presented with piety.
Through song and sermon at the mike,
Always wrestling with substantive issues like
How best to present the faith in a multi-ethnic society.*

*In a world beset with 'kiasu' one-upmanship,
He stood out as a beacon.*

*To the simple, yet substantive,
As always upholding the ethic of an egalitarian.*

*A man of depth and of heart,
Who helped us look inward and within,
That piety and service cannot be apart,
Transforming faith into commitment.*

*He took Wesley Seremban afar.
In spiritual depth and geographical space,
To spread the gospel, he took us to Myanmar,
And to Pitas in Sabah.*

*The lofty doctrine of the Holy Trinity,
He translated into earthly reality.
Of person, principle and parish,
Of fellowship, mediated through faith, he created a family.*

*In the classic tradition of the testament,
He dug wells, wherever he went,
That we may quench the inner thirst
Of the meaning of life, existence and piety.*

*And in many, he built their faith,
People who approximated the way of Christ,
But always reminding all of us,
Not mistake the symbol for the reality.*

*He is now in a different time frame.
O, for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame,
So purer light shall mark the road.*

*Pastor Paul George Ponniah,
Yes, he was a Pastor and clergyman.
Striving to bring out the good in man,
But most of all, he was a guide and friend.*

*And, as we remember him on earth,
A table has been prepared in heaven.
Surely, goodness and mercy have followed him,
As he dwells in the House of the Lord.*

Yes, it is well, it is well.

Impressions on the 30th Session of the Trinity Annual Conference

Dr Yee Chow Boi

The 30th TRAC Conference was held in Federal Hotel, Kuala Lumpur during 19 – 22 November 2005. Wesley Methodist Church, Seremban (WMCS) was represented by Thava Ma, Jasinta Silvadorai, Edwin Tan, and Yee Chow Boi. The following brief aims to capture the highlights and issues raised.

Relevance of TRAC Conference to WMCS

At the risk of mentioning the obvious, the TRAC Conference represents an opportunity once a year for multi-lateral communication among the Annual Conference Executive Board and member churches, and for submission and discussion on a range of annual reports from individual churches and the various Boards.

The process of reviewing and planning forward also takes into account of the global happenings, some of which could have significant impacts on the role and future of Christianity. Being aware of those issues help us as a church to act appropriately and strategically.

Teaching Session

The Conference Speaker was Rev. Dr. Isaac Lim, the ex-President of the Trinity Annual Conference in Singapore. He spoke on John 3:11-21 and that 'God's Mission is Our Mission'. In this world population of 6.3 billion people, Christians make up 2 billion of them, the rest have heard God's Word but not received, or have not heard enough, or have not heard at all.

The primary purpose of the church and its members is therefore to evangelize, to express God's love to the world.

There will be obstacles and tests along the way, both external and internal forces, to realize that purpose. It is the transformation of from head to heart and from heart to commitment, and commitment to action, that shall make the difference.

Memorial Service for Rev. Paul George Ponniah

A Memorial Service was held for Rev. Paul George Ponniah. Jesseca Paul and Peter Johan Paul and family members attended the ceremony. Dr Chan Kook Weng gave a moving eulogy that reminded us of the spiritual, humane and courageous aspects which we all knew so well.

Rev. Paul fought a good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith.

Membership – General and Youth

The total membership increased by 14% from 11,547 in the year 2000 to 13,184 in 2004 (Figure1). There are signs that the momentum of growth has slowed down over the last three years. The church attendance percentage however remained relatively constant at the 67-68% level.

At the same period, the number of children and youth declined by 6.6% from 5,260 to 4,914 (Figure 2).

Increasing the number of children and youth will have the twin impacts of reversing the decline in number of children and youth, and increasing the total membership in the future. Accordingly, 2006 is declared the Year of the Youth to enhance the growth of youth ministries. This will run parallel to the continuation of effort to bring in adult members through the Alpha programs, the membership ministry, and cell groups.

Figure 1

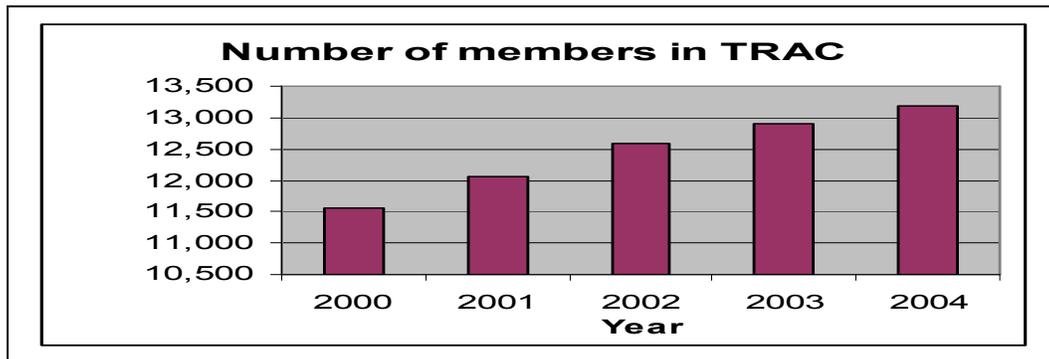
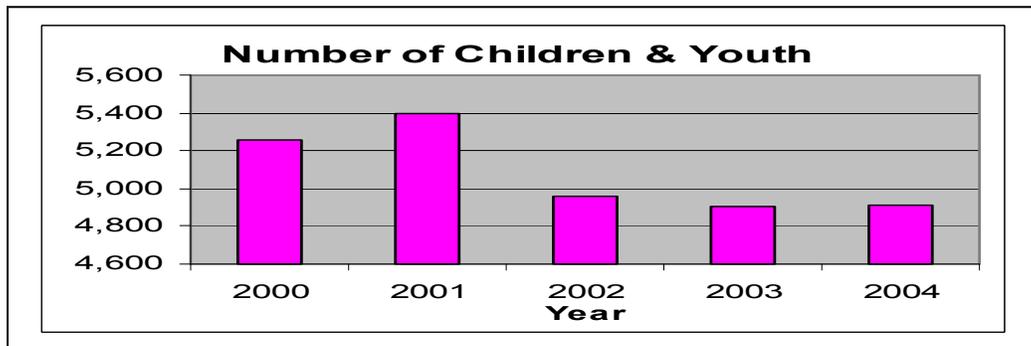


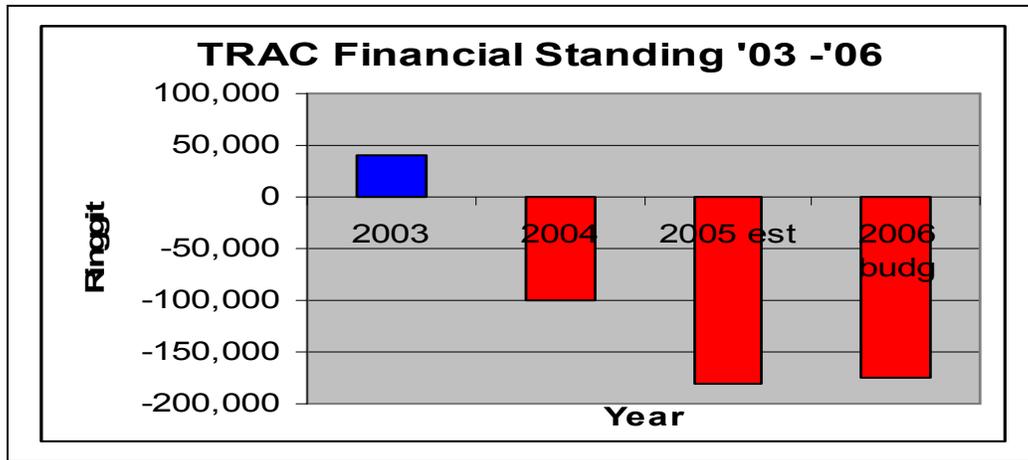
Figure 2



Financial Standing

The 2005 year-end estimate is that there will be a deficit of about RM180,000 in the operating expenditure of TRAC. The 2006 Budget requires that the conference commitment from the member churches be increased from RM31.75 to RM34.93 per head to cope with the rising costs, and it is budgeting for a deficit of RM174,253.

Figure 3



The reality is that TRAC is asset rich but cash poor. Proposals to unlock the value of some of the assets are being looked at.

More Pastors Needed

There are still insufficient pastors, and some pastors have to serve more than one church. A case in point in our door step is Rev. Paul Santosh Christie. It goes without saying that pastors are generally overloaded. While Local Preacher's License (LPL) is a commendable short-gap measure, the long term and sustainable solution is to find out how to attract a new generation of young men and women to join and be in the Ministry.

This is a critical issue and at this stage, numbers do count a lot. Without the optimum number of pastors, quality of work will suffer. Meanwhile, local church committees and congregation members could help out by being more patience and understanding and not over burden our Pastor Paul unnecessarily.

Prayer Workshop

The power of prayer and the need to communicate and form a relationship with God are accepted. While some are gifted in praying, some are not so. To help these hapless souls, there will be a prayer workshop in Melaka 17 – 19 February 2006. I am privately

naming it a 'Prayer 101' course because I hope that it will teach me the A-B-C of prayer that will move mountains.

Ordination Service and Appointment

During the Ordination Service, Pastor Buell Abraham and Pastor Joshua Kong Chee Leong were presented as ordained deacons, Rev. Audrey Yap Yin Har as ordained local elder, and Dorothy Chee Kwei Ying of Taman Ujong Methodist Church (TUMC) recognized as Licensed Local Preacher.

Pastor Paul Christie is reappointed as the Pastor for WMCS and TUMC for 2006.

Final Comments

The organizer of the conference, Federal Territory District, must be commended for a job well done. We were all very well looked after. The food was just right the portion (minimizing wastage) and healthy. The worship teams and the choirs were of high quality and added much to creating a great atmosphere for worship and praising the Lord.

The Calling of This Generation

Nathaniel Kovalan

TRAC and Board of Youth Work (BOYW) have come to a decision to dedicate 2006 as "The Year of the Youth". Many plans are in the process for coming events and it is all focused on youths and youth work. Indeed this will be an exciting moment for the young as well as the old.

I am enthusiastic and eager to see God's hand finally moving and bringing up our youth (us). But I'd be wrong to put it that way! To be more appropriate, God has reserved and preserved this generation to be a generation after God's heart, to seek His calling and expect greater works. Indeed, we are promised of greater miracles to come. Expect it!

With fewer Christians responding to fulltime ministry, be it within the Methodist churches or in other Christian organizations, it is not surprising that we are seeing many of our youths not only not conforming to the biblical teachings but rather drawn away to the world, conforming to its standards into the grey areas in sin. Some have even left the Methodist church for other denominations. By idealistic thinking, this is so only because young people idolize contemporariness than tradition (methodology). I wonder if it truly the reason. Even more have fallen into the trap of false righteousness due to the lack of proper spiritual guidance. Open-mindedness has led to the compromise of our biblical values. Have we lost our youths? Have godly youths become a minority?

I wonder how much are we investing in our youths today? Are they segregating themselves from the adults? Or have they been segregated from and by the adults? Is the age gap really such a barrier that there is no possible way for these two to understand each other? How much funds, time and effort coupled with willingness of individual souls are put into them and understanding them? Are we stubborn in our ways or are they ignorant to our wisdom? Have they been left alone to manage themselves?

For those who are in the Youth ministry, some of their prayers are finally being answered, that today more than ever, the young ones are beginning to stand up for God. God has convicted the hearts of our leaders of the neglect of our youths, and thus "The Year of the Youth" will be launched in a matter of days. Revival is upon us, do we realize it? Can we see beyond now?

This generation will experience God in a way like never before. They will seek His face, honor His will and hear His call. Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones will be realized metaphorically where young people will rise up and receive visions of things to pass; they will stand between the gap and intercede for all. They will be called to live holy lives worthy of His kingdom, and hunger to see His hand move mountains. They will hear His call and they will expect God to do great things in and through them.

So I plead to all who have a burden for our youths. Pray! Pray! Pray like never before. Ask God for reconciliation and forgiveness. Invest your lives into those within your reach. Seek out God's will and impart wisdom in any form to the youths. Do not be quick to defend, accuse, or criticize, but in all things, praise God for the acumen. The Advent season has just passed. Are we ready for the advent youth revival? Praise God for great things for He expects it of us!

God Bless, have a blessed Christmas.

Finding God inside My Head

Peter Chew

Like many Christians, I wear the tag but never live like one. Unlike many, I felt justified this way because my childhood was not typically fun or happy. At an early age, my parents passed away and my sister brought me up in Kuala Lumpur. We were poor and survival was the first priority of the day. My parents worked as cook and housekeeper for an American missionary. My whole family was converted to Christianity by the missionary.

My youth and days as a young man were spent in fighting to stay alive. Because I lived in a neighbourhood infested with gangsters, I was often beaten up whenever I walked between my home and the school. Fed up of this treatment I decided to join one and rose to be one of the leaders. In those days, jobs were scarce and many people resorted to

robbery and kidnapping to earn a living. It was a 'me or them' thing. And I fought to stay alive.

After one incident I escaped to Seremban and found work, and my wife. We raised a family of 2 boys. With income a perennial headache, I decided to start my own business and decided pest control to be something that almost every homeowner would need sooner or later. My wife, Sadie, coined the name 'PEMMS' which is the acronym for Peter, Michael, Melvin, Sadie – our names for the business. That was some 18 years ago.

Sometimes in March 2004 while I was attending to an enquiry in a client's home in Labu, I felt a sharp pain inside my head and I knew that it would be a nasty hazard. Before I lapsed into unconsciousness I asked the client to help send me to Columbia Asia Hospital and then notify my wife. What happened next was a blur and I later found that I was in coma for over 3 weeks. Near death, I floated in and out of consciousness. When I finally came to, my wife narrated to me the amazing story of how I was recalled from certain death by events that can only be credited to God's intervention.

While I was lying on a stretcher awaiting emergency brain surgery at the Sunway Medical Centre to remove a hemorrhage caused by a ruptured aneurysm (which earlier caused my headache and blackout) I was wheeled out of the queue because I did not have enough money to pay for the deposit. My brother-in-law, who was not known to be a generous person, albeit a wealthy one, and was visiting at that time had presented his platinum credit card to pay for my surgery. This impressed the hospital and I was reinstated my priority position. Had I not been operated immediately I would have died on the stretcher. By the grace of God, He intervened in a timely manner and guided the surgeon throughout the surgery. Even after that I was unconscious for 3 week. There were moments when I drifted near to the surface of my consciousness to be able to hear snatches of the bedside conversation between my family members and the doctors and nurses, but I was unable to respond. I wanted to touch my wife's hand but I could not will my hand to move. I was like inside a deep and long tunnel.

When I eventually awoken I suffered sever pain inside my head. Every painkiller medication cost me money because I was accorded preferential treatment as the hospital thought I was a rich man. The platinum card gave them the misleading impression. I could not wait to get out of the hospital because the bill was running into many thousands.

When I was eventually discharged I suffered memory lapses. Throughout my hospitalization, the late pastor Rev. Paul George, and some church members visited me both in the ward and at home. I was very touched by this caring love. I began to feel the meaning of Christian love. I had not been living a Christian life all these years so discovering this experience especially in time of my operation was extra meaningful to me. My wife and sons were not Christians so the role of the church is a testimony of God's redeeming love and care through His children.

During the ensuing 16 months I went back for regular brain scan to ensure everything is alright. But not everything is alright. Another aneurysm has developed that require coiling (a process of stuffing tiny titanium springs into the aneurysm sack to prevent it from rupturing, using a catheter inserted through a vein at my thigh). My radiologist scheduled me for the procedure but warned that if it cannot be carried out I will have to undergo open head surgery. All of a sudden, I became fearful and worried that I may not be so fortunate the second time. When I had my first attack I had no time to reflect and become afraid. This time I have several weeks to consider how my family would be affected if I never wake up. I also reflected how I have not been a good Christian husband and father. Through these weeks of doubts and uncertainty I was truly grateful to my care group members for their concern, love and prayers. They visited me and my family and showed to Sadie that there is another family outside of mine that loves me, the family of God's people. Pastor Paul Christie prayed for me and got other Christians in our church and other churches to pray for my safe operation and recovery. With this assurance I await the coiling procedure without the anxiety that would have accompanied me if not for the prayers and love shown to me. This made me believe that God is really a loving and healing God and I was not afraid.

Indeed the coiling was a success and I did not have to undergo surgery. Although I was under anesthesia for 7 hours I awoke very quickly and within 24 hours asked to be discharged. It is not because of the hospital bill but because I wanted to go home instead of being away from my family.

Today I have regained all my brain functions. I may have a little forgetfulness but this can be attributed to my age. After all, many people, including those younger than me, also have moments of lapses, so my condition may have nothing to do with my head. Today I am a very much more thankful person. I pray daily and I thank God for his blessings. He has blessed me and my business abundantly, beyond my needs and expectations. When once I struggled to get repeat business, now they come to me easily. I give all praise to God and I know that He wants me to share this testimony to encourage you that in God nothing is impossible. In Him we can lay our trust and seek His deliverance when we are in pain, have doubts or need fellowship. I shared with my care group that I lost my tendency to lose my temper after the operation. Maybe during my first operation the 'temper' vein was removed. It is a joke of course but I am glad that I still have my sense of humor and joy of living. Praise God for His wonderful mercy and grace in my life.

The Father Heart of God

Edwin & Priscilla Tan

Mummy: Warm drool running down my face stirred me from my blissful slumber on a rainy Sunday afternoon. I lifted my eyeshades to see a pair of little bright eyes staring back at me. I winked and smiled and my bubbly bundle of joy broke into a gurgling laughter as he bounced up and down on my tummy. I picked him up and whisked him through the air. He squealed in delight. I thought to myself, "I love this baby!"

Daddy: The aroma of grilled satay and lemon chicken wafted thru the air at Monash University's Christmas party. Happy chatter was all around as my colleagues carried Joseph and tried to elicit a smile from him with funny faces. He turned to scan the crowd and as soon as he spotted me, threw his arms open and reached out for me. What a feeling! How I love this baby!

This year, God blessed us with the privilege of being parents to Joseph. After 9 uneventful months of pregnancy, Joseph arrived via a totally unexpected Caesarean. He cried, he nursed, he poo-ed. But more than just dirty diapers, milk bottles and sleepless nights, in this so far short stint of parenthood, Joseph has opened our eyes a little more to the amazing yet incomprehensible depth of God's love for mankind and the Father heart of God.

Allow us share with you 3 things that Joseph has reminded us about the Father heart of God.

Firstly, God loves us just as we are and there is nothing that we can ever do to earn his love or stop Him from loving us. We love Joseph. We loved him even before we met him face to face. And when we held him in our arms the very first time, we knew that we would always love him. Even when he cried his lungs out all through the night and left us bleary-eyed and at our wits end to pacify him, we loved him. As much as we love Joseph for being who he is, without having to prove himself to us, without having to achieve anything, how much more does our Father God accept us and delight in us, *just the way we are*? In the account of Creation, after God created man, He said 'It is *very good*'; not because of what man has achieved or proven himself, but just by the fact that man is God's creation. We do not need to prove ourselves to Him or achieve fantastic things. Just as we love Joseph - poo, pee, vomit and all, God loves us *even more*, sinful, stubborn after the fall. Realizing that we are capable of such love, we are overwhelmed by the reality that God's love for us is so much more immense than this.

Secondly, God does not delight in punishing us. We try to refrain from having to smack Joseph. It is certainly not pleasurable for us to do so. But for his own good, there have been times when we have had to smack him (on the hand, of course) or he would have by now eaten a few magazines, newspapers, keys and just about everything he lays his hands on. In the Bible, when God gave the ten commandments in Exodus 20, He declared that he would punish up to the fourth generation (those who hate Him) but will show love to a thousand generations (those who love Him). That shows God's desire to bless than to punish.

Thirdly, there will be experiences that we do not understand this side of eternity. Yet we can be assured that God knows and understands. Because we want the best for Joseph, there are boundaries for him that he has yet to understand. When he tries to poke his finger into the electrical point, we have to stop him. When he tries to grab a hot drink, we have to stop him. If he crawls to the edge of the bed, we have to hold on to him.

Experience is a teacher one does not easily forget. Yet we will not want him to learn about electricity, heat and gravity by being electrocuted, getting scalded or tumbling on to the floor. In the same way, God sets boundaries for us for our own good even though we sometimes do not understand His ways. God is no killjoy. He wants us to enjoy life within the boundaries He has set for us.



During this time of Christmas, let us remember our Father God who loves us so much, even before we were born, even before we could offer anything to Him, prove ourselves or achieve anything. Let us remember that it is because of His immense love for us, that we have Christmas to celebrate. Let us remember the reason for the season.....God's gift of love - Jesus Christ!

Overnight Tour to Tangkak, Kukup, Pagoh

Thava Ma

The tour was planned months ahead for 2-3 December 2005. Almost all the 44 who signed up for this trip were seated in the bus well before the scheduled departure time of 8am. The last to arrive came on the dot, but felt guilty anyway, for not being early!

This spirit prevailed throughout the 2 days; everything went like clockwork. First stop was at a Birds' Nest factory. The chilled bird nest drink served was most welcome, after which many were quite happy to open their wallets for tonics and various health guaranteed products.

Then to Tangkak we headed, to a waterfall. That was a disappointment, especially since we had to trek a 'million steps' up, up, to reach the top most point but one. The waterfall wasn't impressive enough! But the lunch back at Tangkak more than compensated for that. Recharged, we invaded the textile market but found the materials were mainly for baju kurung. Instead a fruit seller's stall became our target - we depleted his day's supply within minutes!

Our next destination was Kukup. We had a lovely dinner at a restaurant by the sea at about 5.30pm. Then it was hunting time for goodies such as dried anchovies, prawns, kropok, etc. The chalet where we checked in, finally, wasn't even 2-star, I think, but we survived and how!

There was BBQ at 9pm which ended only because a hurricane-like wind blew in suddenly from the sea, at about 10pm. It set food, plates & empty stools flying! Even as we sat huddled together, hot porridge was served! Then it was karaoke time and, of course, social/line dancing till early dawn!

That was day one. After breakfast at 7.30 the next morning, we took a boat ride to an island & its nature reserve park - mangrove swamp and wild life. It was a challenging experience. A visit to a floating fish farm was next which resulted in more buying of sea products! Lunch back at Kukup was another delight.

Back in the bus, we decided to visit Tanjung Piai en route, an unscheduled stop. Little did we realize that it was going to be the highlight of our excursion! Those of us who managed to walk the lengthy platform built through mangrove swamps, found ourselves at the southern most tip of mainland Asia! It was an amazing site - with a huge globe as a marker, open sea & Singapore beyond.

After a quick pineapple buying spree in Pontian, the bus took us to Pagoh to visit Rock Mountain (smaller version of Guilin in China). It was yet another climb but worth the effort this time. We had a magnificent view of our land of 'milk and honey' from the top. Such sights serve to remind us, Malaysians, how blessed we are.

Pleasantly surprised, we headed back to the bus. It was late evening. Our dinner was in Melaka. The food served was the best yet of all the meals we had had - a fitting end to our trip.

We arrived in Seremban well before 9.30pm. We praise God for a safe journey, for sweet fellowship, for unexpected surprises and for the indomitable spirit of our senior members who immediately inquired about the next trip!

Local Mission – the ACS Chapel

Peter Yew

The word 'chapel' brought home a nostalgic feeling to me. I was bred in the Anglo-Chinese tradition of the 60's when chapel service was held weekly in the church opposite my alma mater, the ACS Sitiawan in Perak. Now, over 40 years later, I re-visited another chapel service in another ACS and found changes upon changes but the same Lord who is glorified.



After hearing the stirring appeal of the LCEC chairman, Mr. Tan Foong Luen, who is also the chairman of the Board of Governors, ACS Seremban on 6th March, I decided to drop in on Friday 11th March to 'come and see'. It was an opportunity I ought not to miss, because this would be the last chapel service before the school, and the students take a week's term break.

So, armed with my trusted camera, I found myself in the school and the church building at past noon to see for myself what Mr. Tan has shared less than a week ago. The musicians led by worship leader Hwa Yi Zheng (youngest son of the late Rev. Hwa Chien) were busily setting up the equipment as students started to stream into the church. They were not distracted by the fact that many of their friends were leaving the school for their term break. They decided that worship is not to be missed and I felt proud to see their commitments.

When the service started at 12.30pm there were about 80 students and 7 adults. This number increased to nearly 100 within the next 20 minutes as worship got underway. The music was loud but the students were participating. It was not a style that we are familiar or find acceptable in a formal worship situation like on Sundays. But to the youths this is OK and I believe God finds acceptance not in outward style but inward faith. I believe the way to reach the students lie not in imposing our style and tradition but in opening doors of opportunity to allow Christian students and their non-Christian friends to gather to worship and know about the God who saves and offer peace and joy in this disturbing and joyless world.

The headmaster, Mr. Thong Kok Chaw, who revived the chapel ministry, and Pastor Paul Christie, were on hand to render support. Pastor Paul also delivered the message and established a close rapport with the students present.

It is interesting to note that more than half of the students were girls and that most of those present are Chinese. The chapel service is well supported by the school with the Christian teachers. As the local English-speaking congregation directly connected with the chapel service, it is most desirable for us to extend our hands into this local mission field to help them grow up in the knowledge of God.

Now that 2006 has been declared as the Year of the Youth, it is appropriate that we – the church and adult worshippers, ought to give some thought as to how we can help this crucial ministry, a local mission right at our doorstep.

JOURNEY - The Torch Passes On

Peter Yew

This newsletter was initiated on Anniversary Sunday, 2001. The late Rev. Paul George, asked me to re-start the church newsletter and the name 'JOURNEY' was chosen. In the inaugural issue, the following was written:

We chose to have this inaugural issue of the new church newsletter distributed on this special day to remind ourselves that, as we step on a new milestone of our founding history, we are also instrumental for change, change that will bring about growth and life within our church. 86 years of existence cannot count for anything if the church has little to show to ourselves, our community, and most importantly, to God. Jesus Christ took many journeys in His 3 years' ministry to preach the Good News of salvation. It is an example for us to follow too.

This newsletter was conceived as a necessary and vital means to bring the visions and programs of the local church leadership to you, our very important members, friends and visitors, and urge you to share this journey with us.

Over the past 4 years, this newsletter has been a solo effort of one person, seeking out potential contributors, reminding them of impending deadlines, editing, arranging and making sure that it comes out on time. It is often lonely and at times frustrating but the joy of seeing you hold this newsletter in your hands on Easter, Anniversary and Christmas is reward enough.

From next year, this task will pass on to a committee. I hope that you will continue to do what you can to ensure that the JOURNEY will not take a pre-mature end.

Have yourself a thankful, joyful and loving Christmas today with family and friends.