

DIOCESAN

Digest

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Easter lilies are described sometimes as 'white-robed apostles of hope'

People of the Resurrection

It is not easy to live in the world and to live the life of the kingdom of God

At Easter time, we celebrate the truth that the kingdom of God has been ushered in through the death and resurrection of our Lord Christ Jesus. By His grace, we become partakers of God's kingdom through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. But this life in God's kingdom has to be lived in the midst of a fallen and seductive world.

As I write, my heart like yours is distressed by the recent tragedies of the missing flight MH370 and the sinking of the Sewol ferry. There is escalating conflict and polarisation in so many parts of the world, including Ukraine, Syria, Sudan and East Asia, to name a few. There is untold suffering in the world. On the other hand, there is the intoxicating wine of self-pleasure and self-interest that make the fear of God

irrelevant to large tracts of society and numb the painful questions about the meaning and end of life.

Enter Jesus' bodily resurrection! What significance does it have for the pilgrim life of Christians? *What does it mean that Christians are people of the Resurrection?* Let me briefly draw out three implications, inspired by the Resurrection events in John 20:1-23.

I. We Stand with Those Who Weep

“Women’, Jesus said, ‘why are you weeping? Who is it you are looking for?’”

(John 20:15a)

Mary Magdalene, already distressed by all she witnessed at the foot of the Cross, now experiences another twist of

the knife that had pierced her heart: no physical body of her Lord to grieve over. But unknown to her, the Lord is right next to her. She mistakes Him for the gardener until she hears Him call her by name – at that moment, not only does she recognise Him but she experiences being known, recognised and not abandoned. Her mourning is turned to joy. She is experiencing the truthfulness of the Psalmist's testimony, “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:5b).

Jesus knows human suffering first hand. He suffered in body and soul to a depth that none of us will ever know. Human pain can be very deep but the love of Christ is deeper still. Just as Jesus drew near to the weeping Mary, He longs to stand with, those who are broken by cir-

BISHOP'S MESSAGE

cumstances in life. No longer does He come in His resurrected, physical body but He comes by His Spirit and so often through the caring presence of His people.



Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was the Guest of Honour at the Centenary Gala Dinner of SACS and SAMH. Special guest was Dr Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Manpower (standing left to Prime Minister)

I am so thrilled every time I hear about how our churches are reaching out to the needy in the social community they are part of. And I thank God that our Diocese has developed, in His grace, excellent medical and community service arms through Singapore Anglican Community Services (SACS) and St Andrew's Mission Hospital (SAMH). In December 2013, SACS and SAMH celebrated a "Centenary of providing Anglican Medical and Community Services", with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong as Guest-of-Honour. It is significant for us that before this milestone celebration, we dedicated St Andrew's Community Hospital and launched St Andrew's Nursing Home two months earlier. We are operating at grassroots' level for people's needs.

The Lord is opening doors for His people to get next to those who weep because they have great needs and no one to help them. Let us, both collectively as a church and individually as Christians, discern which doors He has for us and let us enter with the love of the risen Christ.

II. We Connect People to the Living God

"...go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

(John 20:17)

The death and resurrection of Jesus opens a new way for people to know God, not as a distant reality or a moral policeman, but intimately as a loving and perfect Father. Not all will respond, but for those who do, this is amazing grace which transforms all of life. The death and resurrection of Jesus, often called the finished work of Christ on the cross, washes away all our guilty stains, puts us in right standing (justified) with God and led to our adoption as "sons and daughters of God Most High".

Hence, Jesus says He is ascending to 'my Father and your Father'. The resurrection of Jesus seals and signifies His victory over sin and death, Jesus extends to us who trust Him a new relationship with the living God in which we know God; in a similar though not exact manner as Jesus the unique Son of God knows Him. This is a sheer gift and we are to grow in its reality. I find God reminding me constantly that when He assigned the role of Diocesan Bishop to me, it was concomitantly an invitation to experience 'sonship' at a deeper level. So pray for me that I may know Him more and more as my Father who loves me, in the manner of His love for Jesus His only-begotten. Whoever comes to God through Christ, is loved in Christ the Beloved. He or she becomes the beloved of God. What a rock to stand on as we journey through life till we are embraced in glory!

And what an invitation to the whole world! No wonder the risen Christ says to His disciples "As

Our Diocesan Goals

- 1. BUILD STRONG PARISHES** that are Christ-centred, Spirit-filled communities which glorify God, reach the lost and disciple the members.
- 2. HARNESS OUR EDUCATIONAL, MEDICAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES** to our total mission in Christ Jesus.
- 3. MAINSTREAM OUR DEANERIES** in pursuit of Kingdom advance, planting new dioceses as our first priority in world evangelisation.

the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you" (John 20:21); we who believe to 'enflesh' the message and take it lovingly to the world that gropes in darkness. People of the Resurrection are embarked on a worldwide mission to connect people to the living God... that they might know Him personally as a loving Father through faith in Jesus Christ.

That is why I was overwhelmed with joy when conducting the Confirmation Service for almost 150 people from outlying small towns and mountainous villages in Nepal. They had heard the good news of Jesus Christ, come to faith, been baptised and were now committing them-



Helping the elderly at PEACE-Connect



150 gathered for the Confirmation Service in Kathmandu using our Anglican Service Book

selves to grow in Christ by becoming full members of the Anglican congregations planted there. They now form part of approximately 7,500 Anglicans in Nepal under the care of our Diocese. Truly, this Gospel is for all the world. All God's promises for a world gone wrong are fulfilled in Christ. We must proclaim the risen Jesus as Lord of all, and help others to come to Him so that they might know God as Father.

III. We grow as God's New Creation

"...he (Jesus) breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit...'"

(John 20:22)

The gospel of Jesus is cast in terms of the New Creation that Jesus inaugurates. The first words in John's Gospel are "In the beginning..." (John 1:1; paralleling Genesis 1:1). And now in his closing chapters, John draws our attention to Jesus' words on the cross: "It is finished" (John 19:30; paralleling Genesis 2:2, when God finished the work of creating), as well as to the post-Resurrection event when Jesus breathed on the disciples and imparted to them the Holy Spirit (paralleling the account in Genesis 2:7, of God breathing into Adam so that he became a living creature).

The Resurrection of Jesus therefore marks the start of God's new creation. Jesus is the first-fruit of the new creation – His resurrected physical body which is no longer subject to decay or death marks the movement into a new realm. This new realm intersects with the present realm where sin is dominant, and the new realm will be fully established at the

return of the risen King.

Within this framework, Christians then are to live in this world as God's new creation (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17). As people of the Resurrection, we have entered the new realm of God's loving reign and we have received God's Spirit. By His Spirit, we are

to grow as God's new creation and to be 'sent ones' who carry His transforming love to the world. Filled with the Spirit, we are to renew the face of the earth with the new life of the kingdom. We are workers of peace, justice, compassion and righteousness in the world. This is to be true not only of Christians indi-



Dawn in Kathmandu

vidually but in the vision of God, to be true of Christians gathered as communities of believers, most commonly expressed as local churches.

As God's new creation, we are to grow in holiness both personally and communally. The church is to express what life under the embraced rule of God is like. Hence, Jesus calls us to "love one another, as He has loved us." (John 13:34) This love springs from our com-

mon love for God and His appointed King. It is a love that binds us together and overcomes the human boundaries of ethnicity, social status or age band. The new creation is to be seen in the 'shalom' [wholeness, love, joy, peace; prosperity, justice, care and loving-kindness] of God's people. We are 'sent ones' together. A church which is Spirit-filled is a powerful sign of hope to a broken-down, pain-riddled world order.

May we as a Diocese be such a Church for the Lord in these times. We are praying for outpourings of the Holy Spirit from the throne of God. We are preparing for revival in the grace and purposes of God. This May, we will begin a new session (three-year term) for Synod. We gather with a focus on Church Growth. In November, Synod will gather as a residential retreat to seek the Lord's face and discern His way for us.

People of the Resurrection are not escapists from the present world order. They know how extensive evil is in the world and how deeply the malignancy has set in. But they also know the power of the cross to overcome evil and the new life that springs forth from the Resurrection. Resurrection life is limitless in its power, its depth and its dimensions. And so I invite you, as individuals, families and churches, to experience Resurrection power in a way you have not experienced before. The Risen Lord is in our midst to lead us forward. To Him be all the glory. Amen.



The Singapore team with the local pastors. Some of them walked for two days from their village to meet with Bishop Rennis. Soon after the photo was taken, they started their two-day journey back to their villages

Unspectacular orthodoxy, undogmatic Protestantism

The writer, Revd Canon Terry Wong is on Sabbatical for the first half of 2014, taking some courses in Wycliffe College, Toronto. Having participated in a course on Anglican Theology by Professor Ephraim Radner, he shares some of his reflections here.

It is a known fact that the Anglican Church is never strong in her dogmatics or systematic theology. It has been a source of frustration for many seeking for clarity of beliefs or a grid-system to work with. Our internal divisions are many. Tolerated for centuries, these embarrassing divisions are now open before the public more than ever.

In this brief article, I would like to make a few points which can both inform and guide us to be more self-aware as we continue to navigate as convicted Anglicans.

Thomas Cranmer¹ is a good place to start with to understand the ideas that have been embedded in Anglican attitudes from the beginning.

He had a theological vision. It was simple enough.

If Anglicans are characterised as “a church united around the Prayer Book”, it is because of the great work put in by Cranmer in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP).

He set out to purify, cleanse and simplify the life of the Church based on the ideals of the original apostolic community, with its best representation in the early Church (the first few centuries). At the heart of it is Scripture and communal worship as the vehicle for spiritual formation.

He explained this in both the *Preface* to the BCP and his introductory essay, for it “Of Ceremonies.” Here he points to Scripture as central to his prayer book project, with a commitment to wholeness, integrity, accessibility and restoration. These are to be a “common edification,” as we maintain and sustain a worshipping life of unity and conformance.

Through the BCP, the Scriptures need to be read and heard as is, without too much human explication (doctrine). While leaving phrases like “eat my flesh,

drink my blood” and in the same breathe, “eat this in remembrance of Christ” in the communion liturgy may seem like an accommodation to both “high” and “low”, it was simply his desire to let the Scriptures speak (John 6:53-59 and Luke 22:19) and the worshippers to explicate themselves.



Thomas Cranmer, first Archbishop of Canterbury [Picture from Wikipedia]

He turned to the monastic world for their discipline of Scripture formation. He simplified the Monastic Breviary (Benedictine), reduced the daily readings from seven to two, simplified the feast days and simplified the schemes and reduced the number of books used so that the integrity of Scriptural reading and hearing is kept. This was the “olde” way of reading for the people, priests and monks. The “laicising”² of monastic disciplines for all was one way of ordering the en-Scripturation of the Church, now made possible by the availability of the English Bible³, that all may be “edified”.

There is a brief catechism in BCP, with the Creed given first as presenting the “articles of belief” for the confirmand. But the articles themselves were not ex-

plicated; rather they *are* the explication of “God’s call to salvation through Jesus Christ.” The Creed itself *explains*, in the first instance; it itself required no explanation. It is not the propositional content, since this content will follow in *ad hoc* discussions, not primary confession.

To be sure, Cranmer had clear Protestant-Reformed doctrinal commitments and they were real and substantive. Yet more deeply, his commitment is to the patristic notion of *regula fidei*⁴ as the primary theological shape. There is a “shape” and “order” to the reading of Scripture. And this “shaped reading of Scripture” both orders and comprehends the character of the Church.

For Cranmer, *everything* flows from this.

Recent studies of the situation in England indicate that vast numbers of catechisms were published, beyond the official church versions. Over 800 different catechisms have been identified in the 16th and 17th centuries. Millions of copies were published and distributed during this time, all witnessing to England’s “unspectacular orthodoxy” and “undogmatic Protestantism”, as one scholar has put it.⁵ This also goes to show that the BCP’s Catechism was inadequate all on its own and always in need of further explication but at the same time, these new explications were energies released from Cranmer’s initial work.

The result in England, as elsewhere, was the establishing of a kind of popular and civil discourse and understanding of the Christian faith that was widespread across all classes of society. Even as plural choices were being offered, there was a common thread of Christian vision inculcated. There has probably been no period or place where the Christian vision was so thoroughly disseminated with such a degree of detail, albeit general, within a given population.

While some may deride it as ‘BCP religion’, it is a mark of Cranmer’s greatness,

not that he was a great dogmatic theologian, but that he organised, led and influenced the practical life of the Church.

As we have seen, with the rise of religious pluralism (denominations), scientific confidence and correspondingly, the rise of Protestantism's "Promethean"⁶ progressive liberal theologies in the 19th Century, these *regula fidei* ideals, without further constructive work to present the claims of the Church to inquiring minds in a pluralistic society, were found wanting. Rightly so, as Stephen Sykes



has pointed out, Anglicans today need to take dogmatics and systematics more seriously.⁷

What has this to do with the life of the Anglican Church here in Singapore?

For one, we need to think more deeply about what Cranmer was trying to achieve. We need to break out of the fixation of "free versus liturgical worship" and understand better the *theological vision which gave birth to the Anglican Church*, if I can call it as such. Through the work of Cranmer—as he laid ancient Scripture, Creeds and Catechisms before us—we continue to repristiniate the Christian life, keeping in our hearts the "first love" (Revelation 2:4) asked of us. While the forms we use today may be different, the heritage of Scripture (canonised by the 4th Century), creeds ("symbols" and parameters of our beliefs) and catechisms (on-going explications) can all guide us as we seek to pass on the faith to others. These surely need to be the starting point—and a foundation we should never depart from—even as we seek to engage modern inquiries.

I think about the direction, which Bishop Rennis is constantly urging upon the Diocese: to be immersed in the Word and pray for revival. We need to reflect on how we are worshipping as a community, even as we give thanks for de-

velopments like Anglicans gathering in homes to worship and read Scriptures during the week. Perhaps, we can say that these widespread examples of the *regula fidei* lived out is entrenched in the way Anglicans think and, along with the wider Body of Christ, live out their faith in homes, schools and workplaces, impacting and changing the society in Singapore in more ways than we can imagine. This is precious.

While we can be thankful for the renewal of Word and Spirit which have kept us anchored in the Christian life, in some areas we are obviously not doing well and often in danger of caving in to the changing demands of the world. We can end up being as "liberal" as those we are often happy to label as such. I think of the quiet and often unquestioned embrace of materialism, a hedonistic lifestyle or a certain view of hypergrace to fit our faith into the phenomena, pressures and pleasures (often addictive) of modern city lifestyles. The idea of suffering and self-giving discipleship do not sit well in this thriving financial and resource-filled city. Ends seems to justify almost any means and we manipulate people to church rather than convert them to Christ. Stripped of our faith tradition, we rely entirely on existential or temporal spiritual experiences which in themselves, do not sustain us in the long term. Without using and referencing to the anchors we inherited, we can be in danger of loosing our moorings.

However, equally important, we need to invest in our theological resources and systemise some of our beliefs and practices. Even if we allow for diversity, that itself has to be reasoned. Even if "post-modern", the world today is based on a comprehensive and systematic approach to knowledge which does not put God at the centre. The Church needs to find a confident voice to speak to inquiring minds, both within and without, and to provide teaching guidance. Her *regula fidei* as basis should not change but provide the parameters to help the church (and thus, society) to navigate through these contemporary issues.

This is by no means a comprehensive article and I think I have raised more questions than answers. If it stirs us to *begin* to think deeper of why we are Anglicans and what it means for the wider Church and our society, it will achieve its aims.

I do not write this with a sense that Anglicans are the best expression of His Church. We are not self-sufficient, let alone the leaders of the pack. Sometimes, we can be an embarrassment to the cause of Christ. In humility and brokenness, we seek to serve the Church and society by being true to our calling. I end here with some words of Archbishop Michael Ramsey (1904-1988):

"While the Anglican Church is vindicated by its place in history, with a strikingly balanced witness to the gospel, to the Church and to sound learning, its greater vindication lies in pointing through its own history to something of which it is a fragment. Its credentials are its incompleteness, with the tension and travail in its soul. It is clumsy and untidy; it baffles neatness and logic. For it is sent not to commend itself as the "best type of Christianity", but by its very brokenness to point to the universal Church wherein all have died."⁸

1 Thomas Cranmer (2 July 1489 - 21 March 1556) was a leader of the English Reformation and Archbishop of Canterbury during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI and, for a short time, Mary I. During Cranmer's tenure as Archbishop of Canterbury, he was responsible for establishing the first doctrinal and liturgical structures of the reformed Church of England. He wrote and compiled the first two editions of the Book of Common Prayer, a complete liturgy for the English Church.

2 Adapting what was designed for priests and monks to the laity.

3 Cranmer built on the earlier bible vernacularising work of William Tyndale. In this way, Tyndale's work was tethered to the Anglican Church.

4 "Rule of faith" – Irenaeus (early 2nd Century - c. AD 202) writing in Lyons in modern-day France, states that the Rule of Faith was developed to preserve the ancient tradition without paper and ink for those without Scriptures.

5 Ian Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

6 In Greek mythology, Prometheus is known for his intelligence and champion of mankind. In the Western classical tradition, Prometheus became a figure who represented human striving, particularly the quest for scientific knowledge with its overreaching risks.

7 Stephen Sykes argued that Anglicans need to pay attention to systematic theology and the doctrine of the church, because the weaknesses of her approach, that has minimised this study, has been exposed through the controversies and divisions in the Anglican Church. See his book, *The Integrity of Anglicanism* (London and Oxford, 1978).

8 'The Gospel and the Catholic Church', London, 1936, p.220.

Anglican Indian Churches Fellowship Leaders' Retreat

Charles Tewer, Parish Worker, Chapel of the Holy Spirit

Seventy-two people from nine congregations in the AICF gathered from 26 to 28 September 2013 for a Leaders' Retreat in M Suites Hotel, Johore Bahru, Malaysia. The theme for the retreat was "Reaching New Heights for God". Those present include Bishop Rennis Ponniah who was the retreat speaker, the pastors, and ministry leaders of the various Tamil congregations. The purpose of this retreat was to review the previous *5-year Goals* of the AICF and to give further input on the tentative goals that were set for the next five years.

During the retreat, Bishop Rennis in-



Bishop Rennis in one of the prayer sessions

spired many who were present through the Word of God. Many were ministered to by the Word of God and responded by offering themselves to serve God more fervently. Many leaders were ministered to by God in a deep way. When the previous *5-year Goals* were reviewed, the leaders were encouraged to hear of how God fulfilled those goals. Statistics contributed to the review of various goals. It was also heartening to witness open-minded accept-

ance from the leaders as pastors explained why some goals were not achieved. The review helped everyone understand the complexities involved in trying to achieve each goal.

After reviewing the previous year's, the next *5-year Goals* were presented to the leaders by the pastors. When the pastors had presented the goals, the leaders were assigned groups to give further input on each of the presented goals and to give suggestions on how they could carry out those goals. It was encouraging to see the enthusiasm of the leaders as they participated in the discussions when they gathered into smaller groups. Many gave valuable inputs on how the goals can be carried out. When the various groups had discussed on the goals, they were presented so that all could benefit from the discussions. There was an oneness of hearts among the leaders regarding the goals. God was confirming what the pastors had prayed and delib-



Reviewing the 5-year Goals

erated upon, concerning the next *5-year Goals* through the whole process of coming together to seek God in establishing the *5-year Goals*. God forged friendships between church leaders. One could sense that God was bringing his people together in building his kingdom among Tamil-speaking Anglican churches in Singapore. He had started a new work and that new work began with those gathered in the retreat.

The retreat ended fittingly with Holy Communion where the body of Christ came together to remember the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour. Many who came to the retreat as strangers left as friends, excited about what God was going to do in and through the AICF.



Happy retreaters who had an excellent time of bonding and interceding

ANGLICAN INDIAN CHURCHES' FELLOWSHIP

AICF Youth Camp 2013

The AICF Youth Camp took place from 2 to 5 December 2013 with the theme "Called To Be Different". It was wonderful to see youth from all nine Anglican Indian Churches represented. Upon arrival at the camp site, it was obvious that youth were seated among their own friends from the same churches. However, towards the end of the camp it was a delightful sight to see youth from various churches mingling together in the sessions, games and meal times. This is an indicator that friendships have been fostered.

Worship

Brother Isaac Joe led the worship sessions which inspired the youth to sing and dance with him. His messages were practical and related to the everyday life of the youths. Issues such as relating with parents, handling of peer pressures as well as his own experiences as a youth ministered to many.

Teaching

The two video sessions were thought provoking and insightful. There was much to learn about the core ideals of worship and the greatness of our God. Videos are excellent tools to reach out to the youth because images often leave

lasting impressions. Hence, it is an effective tool for education. Many youth who watched the videos were very touched and gave positive feedback. The sessions included posing questions to youth, stimulating them well to write about personal reflections.



Fun

The youth were split into groups and this helped them to mix with other churches' youth. The games committee put a lot of thought into groupings, to ensure interactions with one another. The youth thoroughly enjoyed the outdoor games because of fun-filled activities such as flag painting and cheering competitions. *Oscar Night*



was held on the last evening of the camp where different presentations by groups displayed a great deal of team work and creativity going into preparations. The evening ended with a sumptuous barbeque.

We thank God for bringing our youth together through this camp which has helped them to identify as the family of God within Anglican Indian Churches. As new friendships formed during this camp, we can look forward with confidence in the growth of the Indian work within the Diocese. We believe this camp has indeed rekindled our youth with a new fire and passion for the expansion and glory of God's Kingdom.

AICF Gospel Rally

7 - 8 December 2013, St Andrew's Cathedral



Our pastors with guest speaker, Brother Isaac Joe (centre)

The AICF Indian Churches' thrust is to bring the Gospel to Indian nationals living in Singapore – foreign workers and expatriates living at our door step.

Therefore, the committee organised Gospel Rally as a platform to reach out to our friends.

The Gospel Rally dates were confirmed a year ago and rationale for the dates is crucial for our Indian Churches' follow-up, in line with Christmas outreach.

The speaker Mr Isaac Joe from South India was chosen by the AICF Chairman who is well acquainted with him and his

ministry. He is known to be a powerful evangelist with the youth and adults.

The two-day meeting was well attended. Around 50 responded to the message and received follow-up by respective churches. All of AICF Churches helped spread the word in the form of banners and flyer-distribution, near MRT, bus stations, Housing Development Board residential estates, as well as in Little India. We thank God for the unity of the Indian Anglican Churches and their members' efforts for this Gospel Rally.

Ushering in the New Year



the New Year with Xin Yao Folk Songs. It was attended by more than 70 churches and the auditorium was filled to the rafters with the 13,000 strong audience. Revd Koh Nam Seng, who is nicknamed the ‘tall one of the Bulrushes,’ was the special guest speaker.

The Chinese Churches of the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran denominations of Singapore and ORTV came together to celebrate the Chinese New Year at the Star Performing Arts Centre on the 7 and 8 February this year. This is a bi-annual event which started 20 years ago and this is the 11th collaboration. The theme for this year is *Ushering*

Xin Yao is a form of music created and coined by Singaporean youth, familiar with many Singaporeans. The songs are deeply rooted in their childhood experiences. Xu Nan Sheng, Qiu Hai Zheng, Huang Yun Ling, Chen Zhi Qun, Dawn Gan, the Heavenly Melodies and friends presented sterling performances. The

Ms Ng Siew Leng and Mr Moses Lim

emcees for the event were Mr Moses Lim and newscaster Ms Ng Siew Leng. The special guest performer was famed singer Yu Ya. All the performers brought the audience down memory lane with evergreens and shared their personal testimonies. The audience not only enjoyed excellent musical presentations but also had the opportunity to hear good news; seeds of the Gospel which will hopefully take root in the hearts of all present.

The concert held during the Chinese New Year period helped to locate the good news of Jesus Christ within Chinese culture as this is a time for thanksgiving and celebration, reflecting our collective joy. It is hoped that the bridge built will become an important link.

MISSIONS BOARD

Give Him a hundred!

Chew Boon Ann, Missions Secretary

We want to say a big ‘THANK YOU!’ to all who gave generously to last year’s Diocese Missions Sunday *Give Him A Hundred* collection. The total collection as at the end of February stood to be S\$490,252.75.

This is the biggest Missions Sunday collection so far!

Besides our target to raise S\$2 million for the ministry of our six Deaneries, *Give Him A Hundred* was a call and a challenge for all of us within the Dio-

cese to bring to God a gift with the intention to give towards the fulfilment of the Great Commission.

We praise God that many gave over and above S\$100 as an act of worship to the Lord!

For 2014, we will be making the same call and challenge for you to *Give Him A Hundred* and we want to encourage you to give generously again.



St John's Chapel : ekklesia (ἐκκλησία) to the nations Celebrating 130 years of God's faithfulness

There is a banner in St John's Chapel (SJCp) called the AGAPE banner which serves to remind her parishioners that the purpose and mission of SJCp is to be the 'Ekklesia to the Nations.' This is based in Matthew 24:14, "And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come."

This was the ethos that guided the first Vicar of St John's Chapel, then Canon Kuan Kim Seng who is now Dean of St Andrew's Cathedral. He elaborates, "[It is] because the love that comes from God, *agape*-love, must be expressed in the John 3:16 model – 'For God so loved the world...' This good news has been shared by St John's, Jurong and now Chapel for the past 130 years.

This second oldest Anglican church began as St John's Church, Jurong (SJJ) in 1884 to reach many Hokkien, Teochew and Hakka speaking farmers living around Track 20 in Hong Kah area. In 1872, outreach work was initiated by Revd William Gomes and Mr Cheok Lai Fatt in Jurong. Two years later, the first fruits of their labour saw four farmers baptised and one of this quartet donated approximately three acres of land to build a church so that he, his family and his workers could attend church regularly. Bishop George Frederick Hose conducted the *Blessing and Dedication Ceremony* when the building was completed.

SJJ has been the 'daughter' church of Holy Trinity Parish and St John's-St Margaret's Church. In 1993, it was granted parish status and renamed St John's Chapel. By then, it had moved to Farrer Road when Ms Tan Li Li, Principal of St Margaret's School, had given the old school hall to SJJ to hold services. This close relationship has been kept ever since. Five full-time staff members are devoted to chaplaincy work with the aim of sharing God's love and right values with the students of the oldest girls' school in Singapore.

The first Vicar of SJCp, then Canon Kuan Kim Seng has said, "What we have

received, we must faithfully transmit to future generations, as the Apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 11:23 "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you."



St John's Bell

An example is the St John's Bell which was cast from Straits Settlement's one-cent coins, donated by church members in 1904. Back in those days when a meal could be bought for a quarter or half cents, the giving was considered sacrificial. This bell has been gifted to the St Margaret's and is now automated.

This spirit of 'gotong royong' has also seen early converts donate a piano and furniture to the church. The current Vicar, Revd Barry Leong attests that this spirit is still prevalent. The Vicar's office and the staff room are furnished with donations. Items for the church camps are either homemade or recycled. This frugality arises from the desire of the church to be the 'ekklésia' to the nations. Every cent saved can be spent for the Kingdom of God.

Reverse Tithing

In an interview with Diocesan Digest, Revd Leong reveals that 80 percent of the church's income is given away with ten percent given to the Diocese and ten percent retained to run the church. In addition, members are encouraged to give their talent and time. Revd Leong attributes this to Canon Kuan Kim Seng who set the tone and direction as he was mission focused. Now Canon Kuan has gone on to be the Vicar of St Andrew's Cathedral and the Director of the Missions Board of the Diocese of Singapore.

Revd Bertram Cheong is a local son having grown up in St John's Chapel. As Revd Barry Leong is concurrently the Vicar of St John's Chapel and Marine Parade Christian Centre, Revd Cheong who was recently ordained has been gaining valuable experience handling the day to day running of the church. Diocesan Digest posed him some questions on his journey thus far.

How did you come to worship at St John's?

I came to St John's Chapel when I was 10 years old. A friend brought us here and the rest is history. This was in 1989, when St John's was not yet a parish but a rural congregation in Old Jurong Road, Track 20.

How has SERVE & Tribute shaped your perspective on ministry?

I came onto SERVE as an 'A' level graduate. At that time, I did not have any ambitions beyond wanting to have a meaningful time to serve in the church before going off for National Service. I do recall that even at staff devotions, people took our views seriously. There was none of the 'You're a junior so keep quiet' attitude. If we spoke up, people listened, even the Vicar.

When I went into Tribute, I had already decided that full-time pastoral ministry was for me. I was shown great trust and I was now expected to shape events on my own.

I was particularly impressed by the fact that however busy my supervisors were, they made time to meet Tributeters once a fortnight. To this day, I am amazed at how they managed to do that without fail.

I had an additional element to my Tribute year. Revd Leong, even before he was ordained, took care to bring me everywhere he went. So I

continued from page 9 ►

Revd Leong reckons that the breakthrough in how the church began to embrace this fiscal policy of faith and trust in the Lord to provide, was the year the church gave even in spite of a significant budget deficit. About half the income of the church at that time was given to install an air-conditioning system for the school so that the girls could have a conducive environment to take their exams. At the year end, there was no deficit but in fact, income multiplied three times.

The selfless giving was reflected by the members of staff, who to their credit, persevered through low salaries and deferred bonuses; they even paid for their own retreats because the focus is on the Kingdom.

Investing in the people of God

Another aspect of the SJCP's ethos is the desire to develop people for the Kingdom of God. Funding has been given for the training of missionaries and pastoral staff. Recently, SJCP inaugurated the bond-free Maria Dyer scholarship at Trinity Theological College to prepare women to serve in missions.

The two key youth discipleship programmes of the Diocese—SERVE and Tribute—began under Canon Kuan's watch. Today, SJCP will support all who want to go on these two programmes, including youth from other churches.

Missions

The missions ethos is the life blood of SJCP. Revd Leong recalls that there was an Omega Project in Indonesia before there was a deanery. SJCP had gone to Indonesia to build a seminary. Now he is challenging the parish to give \$1 million to the education mission in Batam, Indonesia. This challenge started about five years ago and they are right on track. SJCP has also sent two staff members there to start the pre-school. Similarly, staff has been sent to Chiangmai (Thailand) on an education mission.

The youth of SJCP have been challenged to give to missions as well. Although many are not from well-to-do backgrounds, they managed to raise \$18,000 for a micro-enterprise centre in Takeo, Cambodia.



Revd Barry Leong, Vicar of St John's Chapel and then-Diocesan Bishop, the Rt Revd Dr John Chew

The Family of God

Services at St John's Chapel are conducted in English, Cantonese, Hokkien and Mandarin. Currently there are about 600 members.

It is a church where the family is important. Everyone is family. First, it is the family in SJCP, followed by the Diocese, and the wider body. That is why events like Christmas Celebrations in Singapore and Go Forth Missions Conferences are greatly supported.

The culture is concerned about developing the next generation. As Vicar, Revd Leong has an intentional succession plan with two Vicar's Wardens and two Peoples' Wardens. One warden would be significantly younger and will be under-studying the more senior and experienced warden. In time, they will step up. This philosophy permeates every ministry so that they will not be centred around solely one personality.

For Revd Leong, the people at St John's Chapel have encouraged him to have faith. He has learnt much from lay people, "I thank God for them just as Paul thanked the Lord for the Philippians. I see their faith in God and that helps me do what I need to do."

had the benefit of going for hospital visitations, being exposed to different ministries and learning how to organise major events and how to handle myself in front of VIPs. I even went with him to the Diocese for his ordination interview. I thought it was merely because he regarded me as a friend (which was true). Now that I am a clergy myself, I saw that he was planning for my future.

To add to this, both Canon Kuan and he never passed up the opportunity to let me know they had full trust in me. I was not cheap labour but in essence, the ministry-equivalent of an officer-in-training. From there, I understood that ministry was less about running events or running of the church, but about making time to develop people.

As a newly ordained priest, what have been some highlights of your journey?

What immediately comes to mind is being thrust into leadership almost from the get-go. There was none of the 'He's not ready; he's too young.' My ordination to the priesthood coincided with Revd Leong being given additional duties as Vicar of both SJCP and MPCC. As the one 'holding the fort', so to speak, I found myself having to take care of five services. I now had to conduct Communion, wake services, baptisms, wedding services without the benefit of having Revd Leong in the immediate vicinity. I also had to chair the Parochial Church Council meetings with minimal input from him.

So I believe that one of the main highlights of my priesting was being thrown into the deep end. I had to get used to making decisions that affected the entire parish. Revd Leong was just a phone call away, but I had to learn to bear the entire weight of my decisions; I could no longer push all decisions to him.

Another defining moments for me was when I was ordained as a priest, practically the whole SJCP showed up at the Service to encourage me. I didn't face a pronounced manifestation of the 'hometown prophet' syndrome.

St Andrew's Community Hospital: providing care for patients with dementia

St Andrew's Community Hospital (SACH) provides rehabilitative and sub-acute care to adult and paediatric persons who have been transferred from acute care hospitals. As many patients are older persons, a significant number have dementia.

Most of the wards in hospitals are not adequately equipped to manage these patients, as care is mainly focused on treating and improving the person's physical disease and disability, with less attention paid to the accompanying dementia. As a result, they tend not to be rehabilitated to their maximum potential, and may be discharged back to the community with care issues not addressed, and caregivers not sufficiently trained.

To address these issues, SACH started a new Dementia Care Programme. The 22-bedded ward commenced operations in October 2013. It is designed to provide a calming, home-like, dementia-friendly



The spacious ward provides for more patient therapy activities



The communal dining area promotes increased social interaction amongst patients during mealtimes in the ward

environment for the rehabilitation of persons with stroke or fractures who have moderate to severe dementia. These persons usually require a prolonged period of continuing medical care following an acute illness.

Our philosophy of care honours the uniqueness and personhood of every individual with dementia, and our care model is anchored in the concept of person-centred care supported by a dementia-friendly physical and social environment. Rehabilitation (physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy) and social programmes are

specially designed to offer caring and compassionate engagement that takes into account the individual needs of these persons.

We engaged Dr Emi Kiyota, an internationally renowned expert in elder care design, to advise us on a patient-centric, dementia care-appropriate ward. Dementia-friendly features in this ward include:

- Two five and six-bed cubicles. Total capacity: 22 beds instead of the usual 32 beds – to provide more privacy and personal space.
- Increased space for individual therapy and group activities (e.g. music therapy). Caregivers are encouraged to be involved in the therapy activities. While being trained to care for the patient, caregivers are also able to spend more time with patients in the ward.
- Communal dining areas with a pantry, a TV lounge in each cubicle to provide for group activity, promote a sense of belonging, personal enjoyment and family interactions.
- A single room for isolation purposes (infection control) which can double up as a calming room, where necessary.
- A multi-sensory room and reminiscence corners for therapy purposes.
- Each cubicle opens to the outdoor therapy garden with a wandering path.
- Ward and garden are equipped with security features and camouflaged doors to prevent unauthorised access.

The setting up of the dementia care programme is funded by a generous donation from the NR Mistri Fund, grants from the Ministry of Health, and Community Silver Trust Fund. We would need to rely on continued support from the parishes and community to sustain this programme.



Patients are engaged in a series of occupational therapy activities to boost their cognitive, perceptual, and motor skills

Ms Janet Lim, Singapore's first Asian matron, visits St Andrew's Mission Hospital

On 15 March 2013, St Andrew's Community Hospital (SACH) had the privilege of hosting Ms Janet Lim and her family.

Ms Lim made history when she was appointed Matron at St Andrew's Mission Hospital (SAMH) in 1954. She became the first Asian matron at a time when the highest positions of responsibility were filled by foreign nurses.

Ms Lim joined SAMH as a nurse in training in 1938. Her training was interrupted when World War II broke out, but she resumed her training after the war, and re-joined SAMH in 1948 as a staff nurse. In 1951, SAMH sent Ms Lim to England for training on a British Council scholarship. She specialised in children's nursing, and spent nine months training at hospitals that were renowned for their paediatric care: the Royal Liverpool Children's Hospital, the Hospital for Sick Children, and the Great Ormond Street Hospital, etc.

When she returned to Singapore in 1952, she received her State Registered Nurse qualification, and served as Matron in SAMH from 1954 to 1959.

Dr Loh Yik Hin, CEO of SACH, and Ms Alison Sim, the current Director of Nursing, gladly played hosts to Ms Lim and her family, sharing about the growth and development of SAMH and its services from 1913 up until now. It was a meaningful session of reminiscence and renewal, a reminder that the foundation of SAMH was built on leaders like Ms Lim, pillars of faith and strength who have an unwavering heart to serve and care for the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

"Meeting Ms Janet Lim was an honour," Ms Sim shared. "I feel that the ethos, and the essence of Christian service is

alma mater, the present day St Margaret's Primary School where she received a tremendously warm ovation from the students and staff.



Staff of 1957. Matron Janet Lim sits on the right of Dr Gordon Keys Smith in the first row

Ms Lim's memories remain vivid about her time as a boarder from 1934-1939. She recalls that in her time the students had to work hard; they had to wash and clean their beds daily and walk some distance to fetch get water for their daily needs. It is perhaps through these Spartan circumstances and her faith in God that Janet Lim was able to be steadfast in the face of overwhelming adversity.

very real and powerful in all that she has achieved. The challenge now is to share this with everyone in the organisation, so that we may all be spurred on to be more like her, to live up more fully to SACH's vision and mission."

Ms Lim's inspiring, powerful story is documented in her book *Sold for Silver* where she describes how she was sold from China into child slavery in Singapore, her rescue by missionaries, her early nursing years in SAMH, and how the evacuation ship she was on was bombed and her story of survival in Japanese-occupied Sumatra.

Ms Lim was inducted into the Singapore Chinese Women's Association's Hall of Fame on 14 March. Earlier in the week, Ms Lim and her family paid a visit to her



Ms Janet Lim together with Dr Loh Yik Hin, CEO of SACH and Ms Alison Sim, current Director of Nursing

SAAC cafeteria serves hope



Clear signs help ease the process



The cafeteria offers hope of employment to our adult clients



Clearing and washing food trays are some of the roles adult clients learn at the cafeteria

Most cafeterias tend to be busy and noisy, especially during meal times. And while many strive to provide quality food or good value to their customers, cafeterias are all profit driven entities.

The St Andrew's Autism Centre (SAAC) Cafeteria, however, operates with a different purpose – to enable adults with autism to develop vocational skills.

What began in 2012 as a pushcart service selling tidbits grew into a vocational skills training programme for adult clients of the Day Activity Centre (DAC)

who have been identified with the potential to learn to handle simple customer service, cashiering duties and house-keeping chores. After renovations, the programme began running the SAAC Cafeteria from 25 April 2013.

Officially opened by Bishop Rennis Ponniah, President of St Andrew's Mission Hospital and Singapore Anglican Community Services, on 3 October 2013, the Cafeteria benefits not only the adult clients who participate in the programme by taking on work roles, it also helps adult clients and school students with autism as customers.

The process of ordering a meal and making payment may be a simple daily activity but it is anything but easy for most persons with moderate to severe autism, as they do not deal well with change and choices. They tend to prefer rigid routines. However, in an autism-friendly environment, with visual aids and a structured purchase process, they are given a chance to make the choice between Set A or Set B. They are helped in the process by the fact that the cashier is either an adult client of the DAC programme, who has autism himself, or a coach, who works with clients with autism. In addi-

tion, their coaches or teachers are with them to guide them when necessary.

Adult clients in the Cafeteria Programme take on various roles; sweeping and mopping the floors, washing and wiping food trays and cutlery, cleaning tables, folding napkins and cashiering. There is hope that some of those in the programme can find part-time employment. In fact, two DAC clients currently work part-time at a fast food outlet.

By enabling the development of vocational and daily living skills, the DAC Cafeteria Programme helps bring encouragement to parents. They can hope that with greater independence and adaptability, their adult children with autism will be more able to navigate safely in the community and enjoy a better quality of life.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

A partnership of hearts, minds and spirits CITY Community Services partners All Saints' Chapel to start *Befrienders Alumni@Anglican High School*



CITY Community Services (CITY) has a new Befrienders Alumni (BFA) club house on the premises of Anglican High School (AHS). All Saints' Chapel, the onsite church partners CITY in mentoring these youth.

BFA is a social network for our graduated Befriender students. Its main purpose is to provide a sense of continuity in building relationships and strengthening rapport between the graduates and CITY staff.

BFA provides a meaningful environment for the holistic development of individuals, focusing on those who are otherwise unreachable. So the aim is to have various CITY staff personally mentor the BFAs and build up their character through sports, personal sharing of values and talks on cultivation of life skills with the long-term view of empowering them to be leaders of the next genera-

tion. Eventually, CITY hopes that they will return to volunteer in their own alma mater.

With a clubhouse, the BFA now has a structured weekly programme at AHS. Sports are used as a platform to teach the BFA to work as a team. Various CITY staff also share on life topics.



Mr Jamie Choo, Head of the BFA, said: "We are sharing our lives with them and hope to be able to guide them through part of their teenage years by making ourselves available to listen and be with them."

How the Partnership came about

In 2013 while at an awards ceremony, Mr Phillip Quek of CITY and Pastor Moses Ng, chaplain to AHS' Girls'

Brigade Company exchanged what they were doing in their respective companies and ministries. A quick look around the premises showed that AHS was perfect for a BFA club house because of its spacious indoor sports halls and other sports facilities.

Events moved quickly and smoothly as all parties were in one accord as CITY, church and school were excited by this partnership.

A former conference room was identified and permission was granted, and soon the BFA Clubhouse was up and running.

To CITY, it is a meeting of hearts, minds and spirits. God had brought all the parties together for a perfect fit! BFA held its first session Saturday, 26 October 2013.



Meet some of our graduates from our various Befrienders Clubs and now regulars at BFA club house.

Niham Mohd, 14 years old, a Secondary 2 student in Bendeemer Secondary School. Niham, an Indian national, graduated from MacPherson Primary School.

Q: What do you enjoy most about BFA? Will you continue?

I enjoy the game floorball and being with the teachers.

The teachers are very kind and friendly, and they are like our friends. We can



share personal problems with them.

Obviously yes because BFA is not only a club. Here I learn more about teamwork and values that I can apply in the community.

Mukunda Pokhrel, 14 years old, a secondary 2 student in Whitley Secondary School. Mukunda, a Nepalese, graduated from MacPherson Primary School.

Q: What do you enjoy most about the BFA? Why?

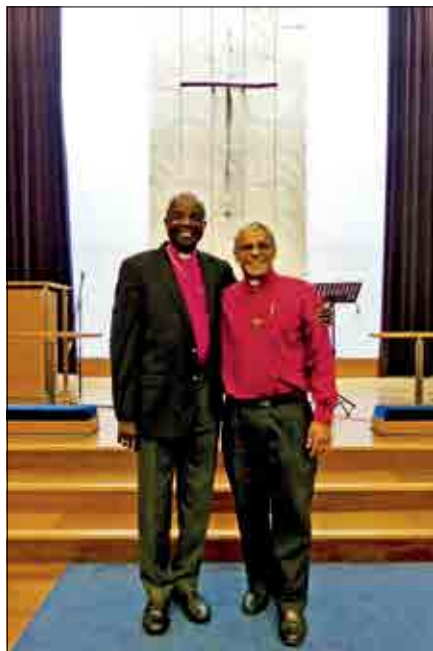
I enjoy talking to teachers Kenneth and Terence about anything!

Ong Jing Wen, 13 years old, a secondary one student in Yuying Secondary School. She graduated from North Vista Primary School.

Q: Will you ask your other Befriender friends to join you at BFA? I already did! I made contact with my good friends like Ziyi and Adonicelle to join me at BFA.



Diocesan Leaders Prayer Gathering: Praying for revival



Bishop Henry Orombi and Bishop Rennis Ponniah

*Let it rain!
Let the fire come!
People are waiting,
Longing,
Desiring,*

*Calling on the God of Abraham, Isaac
and Moses!*

These are the impassioned call by Bishop Henry Orombi, guest preacher, at the Diocesan Leaders Prayer Gathering on 21 March at the St Andrew's Cathedral's New Sanctuary. To be renewed in the Holy Spirit for a time of amazing Kingdom advancement that is the theme for the Diocese of Singapore. Bishop Rennis Ponniah called for this special prayer gathering so that the leaders can come together to seek the Lord in prayer. Bishop Orombi, the former Archbishop of Kenya, challenged all present to be obedient to God, to believe in God and to call on God for renewal and revival. He noted that Singapore



had been experiencing a dry spell; the earth was brown and cracked with nary a green blade of grass to be seen. Then on that Saturday, the skies opened and the rains came. He asked those present, 'Do you yearn for that rain or that consuming fire of the Holy Spirit?'

Bishop Orombi gave a stirring sermon to the clergy, leaders from the churches, community services and the schools. Bishop Orombi used Elijah as an example (1 Kings 18: 15-40) of the impact of one faithful person. There were 850 prophets of Ba'al and only one prophet of the Lord. He noted that sometimes we do feel as lonely as Elijah, fighting

before the Lord answered their prayers. Zeal and commitment are necessary for revival.

Bishop Orombi gave a challenge to our leaders because as leaders they are to call the people to come and seek the Lord. He told those present that the Word of God must be preached to prepare the hearts for revival and then there must be repentance. It is only when we are cleansed that we can stand confidently before God. Bishop Orombi kept the focus on the Lord; revival is about His glory, His name, His people returning to Him.

Bishop Orombi concluded by asking all present to pray for the rain of God to fall on the Church. Whether it is the much needed rain after a dry spell or God's fire coming to consume the water logged offerings on the altar, we need His presence and we need to present our bodies as living sacrifices to Him.



against the mainstream but if like Elijah we have the zeal to see God exalted and for His people to turn back to Him then we can be victorious against overwhelming odds. Bishop Orombi believes that revival begins when the people have this burning zeal to see God's glory. He shared how his wife, Mama Phoebe, and he, together with two clergy and one lay leader, met every Friday night and prayed till morning for six months



Diocesan Clergy and family retreat 2014

Revd Darren Choo, Church of Our Saviour

The 2014 Diocesan Clergy and family retreat took place at the Renaissance Hotel in Johor Bahru from 17 to 20 March. We were privileged to have as our guest speaker, the retired Bishop of Uganda, Henry Orombi together with his wife, Mama Phoebe.



Clergymen and families

Bishop Orombi spoke on the theme, “The Spirit’s Strength for The Family”. In his sessions, he reminded all of us about the importance of:

1. Our relationship with God
2. Our relationship with our spouse
3. The need to build a family altar
4. The needs the family face can be met by God
5. Christ as head of the house
6. Husband and wife as prayer partners

In addition, there was also a separate session for both men and women, where further issues regarding the family were addressed. During the last night of ministry, God’s Spirit moved mightily where Clergymen and spouse prayed for one another in a time of repentance and renewal.

As for the youth in our midst, they were ministered greatly by Mr Joseph Chean, the current Director of *Youth with A Mission*, who is a familiar face in our Anglican Diocese, being once a full-time staff

at The Chapel of The Holy Spirit. The children too were engaged by another familiar figure in the form of Mr David Leong and his wife Cynthia. Mr Leong has served for many years with Scripture Union.

Perhaps the highlight of the retreat for many of the families present was the trip to Legoland. Though it did rain, nevertheless, both families and individuals had fun bonding and enjoying each other’s company.

Overall the 197 participants had a blessed time of learning and fellowshiping together.

“Be renewed in the Holy Spirit for a time of Kingdom advance!” Diocesan Day of Prayer and Fast

It was a cloudy Saturday, 2 November 2013 when Anglicans gathered at St Andrew’s Cathedral for the annual Diocesan Day of Prayer and Fast. At 10.30 a.m. people started streaming in, heading toward various Prayer Halls where three sections set up. Each section had specific prayer pointers for a local parish, deaneries focusing on Indonesia, and the ministry of the Education Board through the ACTS Leadership Centre and Programme. Texts were flashed in English, Mandarin and Tamil to allow for multilingual prayers.

At noon, everyone congregated at Cathedral New Sanctuary. The service began with worship followed by sharing of the Word by Bishop Rennis Ponniah.



One of the worship sessions

To date, this had been the biggest turnout for Diocesan Day of Prayer and Fast with about 800 present. Bishop’s message was entitled “Pray for Revival Rain”, based on 1 Kings 18:41-46. He urged the audience to open their hearts and spirit to listen for the “coming rain” (v. 41); to press on in continual prayer for

“actual rain” (v. 43-45); and to have faith in believing that God will use them, like how God used Elijah (James 5:16b-18).

After Bishop Rennis’ sharing, prayers continued with the English-speaking in the Cathedral New Sanctuary, the Mandarin-speaking at the Nave and the Tamil-speaking at Prayer Hall C.

The atmosphere was of a united body, with parishioners allocating time on a public holiday to earnestly implore the Lord for His movement and guidance. Thanks be to God for such a powerful event, where by faith, the Kingdom of God shall advance!

My spiritual journey

Revd George Tay

Revd George Tay was the Vicar of St Andrew's City Church and Dean of Indonesia. Recently retired, Revd Tay shares with us some of the milestones in his years of ministry.

I have always been fascinated by the way Moses comes to the end of his timeline, when he climbs the mountain at the age of 120 to see the Promised Land, before "going home". Of course, length of years is not as important as having lived a *worthwhile life* in Christ, as against a *wasted life*. I am also intrigued by the calling of Abram at the age of 75 and being a father of the "promised son" at the age of 100.

Born into a non-Christian family, I had the privilege of being educated at St Andrew's School (SAS) where I had my first exposure to the Christian faith and subsequently became a Christian whilst in school. Several teachers impacted me in my spiritual journey, notably the late Mr Francis Thomas, former teacher and principal at SAS. One day during school recess, he invited me to assist him at a Christian lunch meeting, to draw on an easel three crosses on a hill whilst he was sharing the Gospel message. What a powerful visual aid during a time when there were no power points or LCD projectors.

Three vivid dreams from the Lord have made an indelible mark on me and remain fresh in my mind. In the first dream, I saw myself in a classroom purportedly teaching English; however, everything that came out of my mouth was the Gospel message. In the second dream, I was standing on a hill under a dark sky heavy with black clouds; whenever I raised my hands in prayer, those ominous clouds over my fingers, would part to reveal clear blue skies.

In the third dream, I was standing at the edge of a forest looking out at a huge expanse of grassland with mountain ranges in the far distance. There was a poignant silence in the air and every living creature were absolutely still in anticipation of an important event soon to take place. Suddenly, I saw an angel running down

an invisible stairway, blowing a trumpet, to proclaim the Second Advent of Christ.



Revd Tay and his wife, Eunice

When we returned to Singapore in 1972 after our studies in London, under my "fantastic" leadership, Eunice and I backslided from the LORD. However, God did not give up on us; for six years, He sent His faithful servant, the late Revd Willie Devapragasam to visit us periodically, but we would always ignore his persistent knocking at our door, and pretended that we were not in. True to God's Word that it would not return void, we subsequently rededicated ourselves to Him in 1977-78 and the first person we contacted was of course, Revd Willie, who cried on the phone upon hearing the good news.

To help us in our spiritual rehabilitation, Revd Willie placed us under the pastoral care of Ali and Mary Cassim who warmly welcomed us into their cell group. Others who made significant spiritual inputs into our lives during those developing years were Revd Canon Emeritus James Wong, Revd Ng Seng Chuan and

Revd Soon Soo Kee. We were also greatly encouraged by the ministry of the *Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International* (Singapore).

Shortly after my re-dedication in 1978, I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the middle of the night; we found ourselves protected by the Holy Spirit's fire surrounding Eunice and I during a confrontation with an evil presence. To my amazement I began praying in tongues until the evil presence fled and then I lay down and had the best sleep in my life. Before that amazing spiritual encounter, I was like a 747 Jumbo jet take could speed down the runway but could never take off and often "ended in the ditch". Following that watershed experience, I am like a 747 Jumbo jet that finally took off, and I have "not landed since".

The darkest moment of my life was during the 1987-88 period, when powerful demonic forces were hurled against Eunice and I like a ton of bricks. On hindsight, I now know why it happened, as it was on 25 September 1988 that we started the Orchard Christian Centre (OCC) at the invitation of Revd Canon Emeritus James Wong.

By God's amazing grace, I was ordained into the Diaconate in 1996 at age 50 and priested in 1998. Meanwhile, OCC continued to grow, slowly but steadily through spiritual "hand-to-hand combat" and was subsequently inaugurated as St Andrew's City Church (SACtC) on 25 September 2010, the 27th parish in the Diocese of Singapore.

Appointed as Associate Dean in 2002 and subsequently as Dean in 2005, for the Deanery of Indonesia, I found myself spending half the time travelling somewhere in Indonesia, which thereby propelled the lay leadership in the church to rise up and stand in the gap on my behalf. It was during this period that the church members responded unstintingly to the clarion call to give beyond their tithes, even as the church increasingly released much needed funds for the exciting ministry in the Deanery

18th Vicar of St Hilda's Church

Colin and Linda Chee, St Hilda's Church

"As we induct and install your vicar for the role ahead it is not just the vicar. It is the people of St Hilda's. Today you are called and you are promised His presence to be a people who bring God's peace and healing in Christ Jesus to others and their communities... We thank you Lord that today, in a very special way, you bind a leader... to a people who are ready and eager to be empowered for ministry. Because of today may Your Kingdom go forth with new impetus to Your glory and praise. Amen."

This is the opening prayer by Bishop Rennis Ponniah, as he presided over the institution and induction of St Hilda's 18th Vicar.

It seemed to confirm Archdeacon Tak Meng's testimony and prayer for St Hilda's "to join hands in our 80th year to grow our church, with the witness of our forefathers now in glory, and the support of our sister churches and partner organisations."



The Induction of Venerable Wong Tak Meng as Vicar

The ceremony on 15 February was attended by over 200 guests from the Diocese, sister churches, partner organisations, lay leaders and members seated in the sanctuary, which was built in 1949. Simultaneously in Bethel Hall English and Chinese congregations came together to prayerfully follow the proceedings in the sanctuary.

After the induction, Bishop Rennis and

the newly inducted Vicar, accompanied by guests and lay leaders, proceeded to plant two olive trees close to the main gate of the church, as a testimony of God's faithfulness and enabling presence. Helping them to plant the trees were nine church members who represented a cross section of St Hilda's; from the young to the elderly.



Prayers for Venerable Wong and his wife, Leng Leng led by Bishop Moses Tay

continued from page 17 ►

of Indonesia.

Another turning point in my life took place when Eunice and I attended the *Called to Awaken the Laity* (CAL) Seminar conducted by SaRang Community Church, Seoul in March 2008. Their strong emphasis on the mandate given by our Lord Jesus to "go and make disciples" thrilled and enthused us to initiate the Discipleship Training & Leadership Training at SACtC that led to positive outcomes.

Called upon by the Bishop to extend my term of ordained ministry by about 18 months beyond the age of retirement, I finally retired from the Diocese of Singapore in April 2013.

Eunice and I will be spending the next eight years of our "retirement season" in the Diocese of Kuching, where we will be enjoying the mouth-watering Sarawak laksa and the indigenous delicious *Medin* (a jungle fern). In between meals, we look forward to the exciting opportunities to be involved in the teaching,



Francis Thomas

training and equipping ministry, with the approval and blessing from the Most Revd Bolly Lapok, Archbishop of South East Asia Province and Bishop of the Diocese of Kuching.

Referring to Moses, it is humbling and encouraging to know that the Lord can use the most unlikely servants, broken

for His purposes so that no one can boast, except in Christ Jesus. There is no place for "larger than life" personalities, for only Christ must increase, as we must decrease. Our spiritual journey with the Lord will be exciting and challenging; fraught with heartaches, yet filled with unspeakable joy.

The Holy One who calls us will provide for us and empower us to bear the weight of the responsibilities that come with the ministry, even as we place our hands on the plow and "never look back". I have observed that every assignment from the Lord had been more trying than the previous ones, and collectively prepared us for the next assignment from Him, till we reach the end of our "timeline". We believe that our assignment after Kuching, when I become 75, will be to start a new ministry to those who are 60 and above, who are lonely and in need of God's love. Eunice and I are excited to look forward to that impending assignment. Meanwhile, Kuching is calling....

Glory to God in the Highest! Amen.

EDITORIAL

The Dawn of Spring

Revd Canon Terry Wong is on a six month Sabbatical in Toronto, Canada.

“For behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.”
Song of Solomon 2:11-12 (ESV)

I am writing this in early spring. Toronto has just come out of one of the harshest winters ever.

I can recall the dreary months when one had to trudge through the snow-whitened roads and parks. Decked in layers of clothing, no bare skin left exposed. Even the head had to be hooded, as I scurried through the cold, slowed at times by black slippery ice. The sun always seemed to be rushing to retire for the day.

The idea of “wind-chill” can only be understood, experienced and *feared* if you are a winter citizen. The winds can very quickly bring the temperature down by 10°C or more. I was not able to walk on the streets and had to turn my face, walking sideways like a crab, to avoid the winds.

Then a week ago, we experienced the dawn of spring. I witnessed a *dramatic transformation* unfolding. The sun comes out

early and lingers through the day. Grass, though brown, is seen again on fields, changing the landscape.

Families come out to walk, jog and play. Students sit on benches, basking in the sun, reading and listening to music. Crowds throng the streets and *al fresco* dining is in vogue again. Folks are laughing more and their conversations, louder.

The dawn of spring has of course inspired many poets and songwriters through the ages. It will be difficult for Singaporeans to understand this unless you experience this transition yourself. This is a first for me. And the amazing thing is how the sense of change is heightened when there has been a difficult winter.

In many ways, this experience also speaks to us about life and our walk with God. There are dark and long wintery seasons. There are moments when depression hits us and we feel that we can hardly go through another day. The fact is spring will appear. And even the darkest nights will be over as the sun will rise.

Such is the rhythm of life.

We will never appreciate the simple

joys of life unless we have seasons of wintery deprivation. Some are fixed on their wintery moments and never able to enjoy spring. Conversely, I also know of Christians who ignore their wintery moments. There is a depth of faith and life which one can never plow into unless he accepts creation as God has created, the full reality of it all, even the parts affected by the Fall.

We need to see life as a whole, not one which is “mono-seasoned”.

We know for a fact that our Lord embraced his winter moments. We just went through another Holy Week. We heard our Lord crying, “*Lama, lama sabachthani?*” He walked through the winter of life in order that we may know His presence in ours. And spring will come on the third day, of that we too can be assured at the dawn of our new creation.

Through Him, we can now confidently say like St Paul, if I may paraphrase, that we want to know Him and the power of His “spring” and the fellowship of His “winter”... (Philippians 3:10). And we all await the final day when eternal spring arrives (Rev 21:4).

Gazette

1. Revd Christopher Tan – Hon. Priest to Church of Ascension w.e.f. 1 Nov 2013
 2. Revd Ng Koon Sheng – Vicar of St Paul’s Church w.e.f. 1 Jan 2014
 3. Revd William Mok – Priest to St George’s Church w.e.f. 1 Jan 2014
 4. Revd Huang Ao-you – Vicar of Church of the Good Shepherd w.e.f. 1 Feb 2014
 5. Revd Tan Choon Kwan – Priest to St Andrew’s Cathedral (M), w.e.f. 1 Feb 2014
 6. Revd William Tham – Priest to Light of Christ Church Woodlands w.e.f. 1 Feb 2014
 7. Revd Joseph You – Priest to Chapel of the Holy Spirit w.e.f. 1 Feb 2014
 8. Revd Darren Choo – Priest to Church of Our Saviour w.e.f. 1 Feb 2014
 9. Revd Edwin Tan – Priest to Church of Our Ascension w.e.f. 1 Feb 2014
 10. Revd Luke Ting – Deacon to St James’ Church (M), w.e.f. 1 Feb 2014
 11. Revd Chua Siang Guan – Acting Vicar of St James Church w.e.f. 1 Jan-30 Jun 2014 [Revd Canon Terry Wong on Sabbatical]
 12. Revd William Chee – Vicar of Yishun Christian Church w.e.f. 1 Apr 2014
 13. Revd Titus Lum retired on 13 Jan 2014
 14. Revd Madavan Nambiar retired on 17 Jan 2014
- Parish Assistant (PA)/Parish Worker (PW) licence has been issued, w.e.f.:
- 20 Sep 2013**
1. Mr Andrew Wong (Church of the Good Shepherd {E}) as PA
- 2 Dec 2013**
2. Ms Zhu Xiao Yun (All Saints’ Church) as PA
 3. Ms Qiu A Xue (Church of the True Light) as PA
 4. Ms Aruldevi d/o J. Jayamani (Marine Parade Christian Centre) as PW
 5. Ms Katherine Ho (Marine Parade Christian Centre) as PW
 6. Mr Joshua Raj Sundraraj (My Saviour’s Church) as PW
 7. Ms Sharon Ho (St Andrew’s Cathedral {M}) as PW
 8. Ms Leong Pei Yu (St Andrew’s Community Chapel) as PW
 9. Ms Agnes Lim (St Andrew’s City Church) as PW
 10. Ms Amy Lee (St Hilda’s Church) as PW
 11. Mr Yong Siang Kee (St John’s Chapel) as PA
 12. Ms Quek Li Huan (St John’s-St Margaret’s Church) as PW
- 2 Jan 2014**
13. Ms Christina Chng (St John’s-St Margaret’s Church) as PA
 14. Mr Paul Mohan Xavier (St Paul’s Church) as PW



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Wednesday, 16 July 2014

8pm – 10pm

Ephesians 1: The Mystery of God Revealed

Thursday, 17 July 2014

9am – 5pm

Preaching Ephesians 2 and 3
Human Sexuality:
Distortion and Redemption

8pm – 10pm

Ephesians 4:
The Church of God Equipped

Friday, 18 July 2014

9am – 5pm

Preaching Ephesians 5
Human Relationships:
Being Christ-centred
Discussion Forum

8pm – 10pm

Preaching Ephesians 6:
The Servant of God Empowered

*8pm – 10pm sessions are open
to public. Free admission!
No registration required.*

Venue: St James' Church, 1 Leedon Road, S267828 (Nearest MRT: Holland Village)

Cost: \$35 (inclusive of lunch and tea refreshments)

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Register Online

www.bible.org.sg/livingword

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