

TMC NEWSLETTER

MAY — JUNE 1983 MC (P) 10/1/83

TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH 34 SERANGOON GARDEN WAY (1955)

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

There was a learned man. He received his education in the famous Oxford University. With a degree from Oxford, many would think that he would have easily secured a good job in a respectable firm or institution. But no. This learned man was a devout Christian. He worshipped regularly in church. He grew up in church. He was familiar with all the rites and rituals of the church. He loved the rich traditions of the church. He opted to be a Priest. He followed his father's footsteps.

As a Priest of the Anglican Church, he led his congregation, mainly Christians from well-to-do family background, in traditional and tested forms of worship. They had their minds set on how a service ought to be conducted. They had their own ideas about who the church should serve — people who shared similar aristocratic tastes, middle or upper class status, and sophisticated life-styles. Nevermind if the membership of the church remained stagnant or grew at snail pace. So long as they kept their traditions, sang their favourite hymns, and so long as their Priest obeyed their desire by preaching messages that soothed their ears, they were satisfied.

Besides pastoral assignment, this learned Priest served for a short time as a missionary in a foreign country. He was attracted by the mystery, charm and romance of serving the Lord in a far-away exotic land. He thought he could reach out to pagans and primitive natives and save them from the trap of hell. He was disappointed. His missionary enterprise was a failure. He went to a foreign land hoping to save souls, "but, oh, who shall convert me?" he asked.

It seems preposterous and absurd that this learned man who was a Priest of the church and a missionary should cry out "who shall convert me?" Unthinkable! Almost disgraceful! But cried he did. Education, family background, priesthood and mission-work were no guarantee for peace of mind, victorious Christian living and assurance of salvation.

He underwent a heart-warming experience when he discovered that good work and credentials were insufficient to make a person a Christian. A Christian is a person who accepts Jesus as Lord and Saviour. This should be followed by repentance and a conscious submission to the Lordship of Christ leading to a transformation of life.

After his heart-warming experience, this revived and renewed Priest began to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in churches and in the open-air. He reached out to the rich aristocrats as well as the poor miners. He preached the same message to noblemen and the common folks in the market places.

For a short while, the churches opened their premises to him. He was after all an ordained Priest. But gradually, they began to feel uncomfortable, threatened, suspicious and flabbergasted with him. "Why should he preach about repentance and necessity to accept Jesus as personal Lord and Saviour? Didn't he know that we are regular Church-goers? And what is this talk about caring for the poor and sick; justice and fair wages? Haven't we done our share when we gave to charity? Didn't he know that our forefathers founded this church? Mine, what right has he to invite people wearing sandals, slippers and wornout dresses to church? What right has he to invite people with dirty nails and rough hands! And Omgosh! How dare he make us sing new songs? We have our old favourites. We prefer to worship our way. Hear?"

So the established churches and the established Christians closed their doors to this revitalised and spirit-filled Priest. They loved tradition. They loved the way of life which they had fashioned for themselves. They loved messages which caressed their ego. They closed their doors to keep themselves in and others out.

Meantime, while the established churches and the established Christians stagnated, thousands of people outside found Christ and

Mother's Day will be celebrated on 8th May, 1983. It is on this day that all mothers will be remembered.

The Scriptures speak of a mother as a "capable wife worth far more than jewels!" (Proverbs 31 : 10).

"She is generous to the poor and needy" (Proverbs 31 : 20).

"Her children show their appreciation, and her husband praises her" (Proverbs 31 : 28). We are reminded to "give her credit for all she does. She deserves the respect of everyone." (Proverbs 31: 31).

No one can ever replace the wisdom, guidance and the love of a mother.

A mother is a special friend
whose love is always there,
Who always take an interest
in each hope and dream we share.
A mother is a special friend
whose help is always near,
Who offers understanding care
and comfort year by year.
A mother always knows
how to brighten your day,
With things that she does
in her kind loving way,
She knows how to see things
from your point of view
And be understanding and helpful to you.

What does the word 'MOTHER' mean to us. It may have different meanings to different people. But to me 'MOTHER' means the sentiments expressed in the song entitled 'MOTHER' which was popular in the 50's and early 60's.

M is for million things she taught me.
O means that she's only growing old.
T is for her tender sweet caresses.
H is for heart as pure as gold.
E is everything she gave me.
R is right and right she'll always be.

Put them all together,
They spell MOTHER
A word that means
A world to me.

So, to all the mothers I wish you "A Happy and God-blessed Mothers' Day" and God be with you.

Yours in His service,
Tham Yew Kee.

WAS HE CRACKED, CROOKED, OR CORRECT?

Was Jesus mad?

That is the sanest question I can ask at the moment.

How far can commonsense get me with this question here and now?

I shall need to talk this over with someone.

Perhaps I shall need to read books.

But I must think about it for myself. And think about it now.

Well, it would be common sense to say that anyone who is off his rocker isn't going to be a lasting force in the world.

None of the world's crackpots, so far as I know, have had a lasting effect.

Certainly not a lasting effect for good.

Nobody finds a continuing source of help and guidance from what the maniacs have done and said.

Religious maniacs don't do much good, from what I hear.

Jesus, however, seemed to do a lot of good.

And although the church has made its mistakes this seems to be due to the failure of Christians to follow Christ.

Indeed his teaching has been consulted by enormous numbers of people for two thousand years.

And millions study his words today.

So on that count he doesn't appear to have been insane.

In addition to that, the crackpots don't seem able to cope with the real problems and difficulties of life.

They live in a dream world - presumably because they can't cope.

But Jesus coped all right.

He appears to have coped as no man did before, and as no man has done since!

Jesus was very much concerned to live in the real world, very much concerned to dodge illusions, too.

That is certainly reasonable evidence - it is an fact almost proof - that Jesus was quite sane.

But if he wasn't insane, perhaps he was a deceiver, making a living out of a credulous bunch of people, or trading on their desires only in order to inflate his own ego.

If this were so its hard to see why he should have gone so willingly to the cross. It's pretty obvious that he could have avoided arrest if he wanted to. He could have arrived at some sort of compromise with the Jewish and Roman powers and still have been a sought-after personality.

But there it is. The cross.

A crook wouldn't willingly die such a death, nor would he die it in the way Jesus did: "Father forgive them"

Fancy being able to say that!

Besides, the things he did, the laying down of his life day by day in the service of others, all this isn't the work of a bad man.

I can't honestly think that he was either mad or bad.

And if he was neither of those two things then he must be what he said he was.

God. God the Son.

— Dick - Williams -
(God Thoughts, Falcon Boonk 1969)

PASTOR S' SCHOOL AND VISION TRIP — PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Fantastic! Enriching! Heartwarming! Inspiring! these are some of the words used by a number of pastors to describe their experience in North Sumatra. About 20 ministers from TRAC went to Parapat for this year's Pastors' Retreat at the invitation of Bishop Sitorus, the episcopal head of Gereja Methodist Indonesia. We spent three days at the Wisma Methodist in Parapat. There we were introduced to the diversified ministries of the Methodist Church in Indonesia. We were told of their evangelistic work among the Karo Batak people. We were informed of their plan to build a seminary to train church workers and pastors. We were inspired by their vision to build an orphanage, old folks' home, conference centre, camp site near a new seminar in Bandar Baru. We were shown the details of a special boat project which provides dental and medical services to people staying along the swampy coast of East Sumatra.

The highlight of our trip was a visit to a remote village called Merdingding on April 24, 1983. On that day, we woke up before 5.00 a.m. for a long journey along winding and dusty roads to this village. The purpose of this journey was to witness the baptism of over 1,200 Karo Batak people. I have never seen such an event before in my life. It was no ordinary baptism service. The people saw it as more than a service. It was a celebration where the newly converted mingled with older Christians for worship, praise, prayer, exhortations, dance, singing and baptism. When we reached Merdingding at about 10.00 a.m., the people were already there. They had started their celebration before our arrival. Around noon baptism was administered to children and adults. We were told that more than 1,200 persons were baptised. One family almost missed the baptism. They arrived late. We were informed that they had walked for more than 5 hours across hills and valleys to get baptised!

When we left at 4.00 p.m., the celebration went on.



On the way of Merdingding, we stopped at the home of a man who is more than 100 years old. Bishop Sitorus baptised him. A choir made up of Christian nurses from Medan contributed a few songs.

a) I am impressed by the unity of purpose and vision of the leadership in the Methodist Church in Indonesia. They have two Annual Conferences covering the work of the Church in Sumatra, Java and Kalimantan. But the conferences are not drawn on linguistic or racial lines. The Annual Conferences in Singapore are divided along language lines. This is unfortunate. Sometimes linguistic and sectarian interests can hamper the growth of a church.

b) I am impressed by the Bishop. Rev. Sitorus is a humble man of great vision and courage. He dares to dream dreams for the extension of God's Kingdom. He loves his people and the people respect and love him.

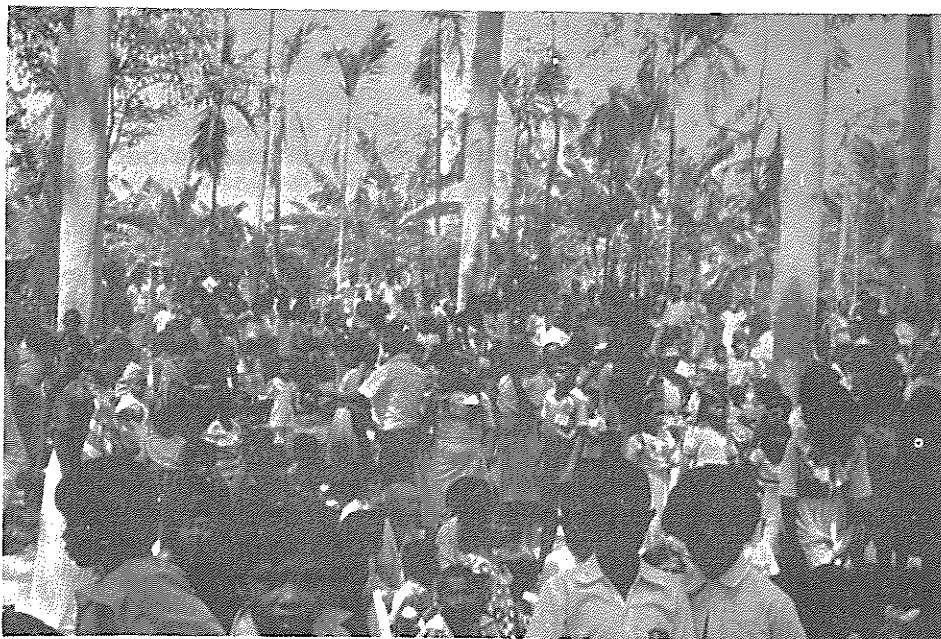
c) I am impressed by their balanced and diversified ministry. They care for the total person. Their ministry seek to meet the physical as well as spiritual needs of the people.

d) I am impressed by the willingness of the Christians to get involved in the ministry of the church. They do not leave the missions of the church to the pastors alone. The church members avail themselves to the ministry of the church by giving their time, money and talent.

e) I am impressed by their rich spiritual life. They may be poor in terms of money and material possessions. But they are richer and more mature in their over-all Christian life.

f) I am impressed by their indigenous approach to evangelism. The people were reached for Christ by concerned Christians who spent time cultivating friendship with the farmers, working with them and helping them before sharing the Gospel. The Church in Singapore seems impatient when it comes to winning people for Christ. We want instant result. We adopt western methods of evangelism without adaptation.

Pastor Daniel Koh



Some of the Karo Batak people who gathered in Merdingding for mass baptism.



Rev. Fred Ingol explaining to us GMI's plan to build a Seminary, Orphanage, Old Folks' Home, Conference Centre, Camp Site on three plots of land in Bandar Baru, situated between Brastagi and Medan.

How much do you know about John Wesley and the birth of the Methodist Church? How "Methodist" are you? Try this simple Quiz.

A) Multiple Choice

- 1) John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church is the _____ child of Rev. & Mrs. Samuel Wesley.
 - a) First
 - b) Fifth
 - c) Tenth
 - d) Fifteenth
- 2) The name of his mother is
 - a) Rachel
 - b) Mary
 - c) Susanna
 - d) Grace
- 3) He worked very closely with _____ in his early days.
 - a) C. Spurgeon
 - b) John Stott
 - c) John Knox
 - d) George Whitefield
- 4) John's famous brother who composed many hymns which we still sing today.
 - a) Charles
 - b) James
 - c) Newton
 - d) Joseph
- 5) John was educated in
 - a) Cambridge
 - b) Bristol
 - c) Oxford
 - d) Leeds

B) True or False

- 1) John Wesley had a disappointing experience as a missionary in Georgia, USA.
- 2) Though he was an ordained priest, he was not sure of his salvation until May 24, 1738 when he felt his heart was "strangely warmed"
- 3) He hated preaching in open-air market places because the common people were dirty, smelly, and noisy.
- 4) John Wesley was concerned about people's spiritual as well as social needs.
- 5) He was appointed the first Bishop of the Methodist Church two years before his death.



Howard Chaykin
"TRUST ME, CAESAR...THIS CHRISTIANITY THING IS JUST A FAD. HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW."

"Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important."

C.S. Lewis

"God never intended his Church to be a refrigerator in which to preserve perishable piety. He intended it to be an incubator in which to hatch converts."

F. Linicome

"God does not love us because we are valuable. We are valuable because God loves us."

Fulton J. Sheen

"We should love God because he is God, and the measure of our love should be to love him without measure."

St. Bernard of Clairvaux

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rejoiced. They formed fellowship groups. They formed small groups. They cared for each other. They attended prayer meetings. Homes were opened for Bible study. Everyone participated in sharing the Good News. God's work spread far and wide, and many accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. The man used by God to start this movement was John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church.

Think. If Wesley were here today, would we close our doors to him and consider him too radical, untraditional, and even unMethodist?

Has "tradition" become so important to us until we have become almost deaf to the prompting of the Spirit and Lordship of Christ?

May 24, is Aldersgate Day. That was the day when Wesley had the heart-warming experience.

May you have your own heart-warming and life-transforming experience as well.

Rejoice! We serve, worship and love the Living Lord.

With you in His Glorious Service

Pastor Daniel Koh Kah Soon

MISSIONS COMMITTEE PROGRAMME

Missions Exposure Trip

The much talked about missions exposure trip to the Karo Highlands of North Sumatra will take place in the coming June or July. Brother Edgar Wong will be leading a team of 10 participants in this trip. TMC members burdened to serve our Lord in the field of missions should join this exposure trip to observe and learn from our Indonesian Brethren engaged in missionary work there.

You are invited to give your names to the Pastor Daniel Koh or any of the Mission Committee members soon. Application will be considered on a first-come-first served basis.

Missions Week Programme

The programme for the Missions Week in July will comprise the following events :

- On one of the evenings, Mr Michael Loh, Director of United Evangelism to the Chinese, will give a talk cum colour slide presentation of his second missionary adventure in China.
- Mr Edmund Chua, whom we know very well as a missionary and a regular guest speaker, will deliver a sermon during the mission week Sunday services (July 10), to help us to renew our commitment to be our Lord's devoted labourers in the field of missions for the fulfilment of the Great Commission.

Submitted by Mr Teh Hong Kia,
Chairman, Missions Committee.

PULPIT CALENDAR

THEME — CONTROVERSIES IN CORINTH

MAY

- ✓1 The Lord's Supper
- ✗8 WSCS SUNDAY
- ✓15 The Way Of Love
- ✓22 ALDERSGATE SUNDAY
- ✓29 Tongues, Prophecy, Love And Edification

JUNE

- ✓5 Futility Of A Faith Without The Risen Christ *1 Cor 15*
- ✓12 EVANGELISM SUNDAY *Motivation for Evangelism - Harold Roberts*

THEME — GEMS FROM GENESIS

- ✓19 In The Beginning
- ✓26 In The Image Of God

JULY

- P.F. ✗3 The Devil Made Me Do It
- ✓10 MISSIONS SUNDAY
- ✓17 Am I My Brother's Keeper?
- 24 MAF SUNDAY
- 31 The Great Flood

W.S.C.S. Calendar

8 May, Sunday

W.S.C.S. Sunday cum Mother's Day celebration. Our ladies will take charge of both services. Speaker: Mrs Tan Beng Leong. Theme : "Teach Me O Lord" Psalm 119 Vs. 33.

At 11.15 a.m. Fathers and children will honour all mothers with a "Surprise". Please stay behind.

28 May, Saturday

Our ladies will be organising a Pot-Luck Dinner cum fellowship with residents of "The Hiding Place".

5 June, Sunday

W.S.C.S. Annual General Meeting.

W.S.C.S. Visit To the Whampoa Methodist Home For The Aged

We praise God that because of His transcending love for us it brought one gentleman and ten ladies to visit the Whampoa Methodist Home for the Aged on Sunday 27th March, 1983. Thanks be to God also for our generous donors.

Mrs Luciene Wei led the opening prayer in Cantonese and also interpreted the Scripture lesson, Luke 19 : 28 - 38, read by Mrs Gloria Lee. A Cantonese song item was rendered by Miss Merry Tay, much to the delight of the senior citizens. They also enjoyed the message and inspiring testimonies shared by sister Luciene. Last but not least their appetite was whetted by the delicious dinner prepared by Mrs Margaret Tan and the lovely cakes baked by Mrs Carol Birkinshaw. Mr Ng Yean Kiat closed with a prayer in Hokkien before we departed. We truly enjoyed this fellowship for Christ's words came alive in our hearts. - "Even as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." GLORY BE TO GOD.

— Adeline Chia —

"I have so much to do that I must spend several hours in prayer before I am able to do it." John Wesley

Answers to the "Methodist Quiz"

A) Multiple Choice

1 - d, 2 - c, 3 - d, 4 - a, 5 - c

B) True or False

1 - T, 2 - T, 3 - F, 4 - T, 5 - F

Score

- 10 correct answers — Excellent, John Wesley is proud of you.
- 8 - 9 correct answers — Good, you know your rich heritage.
- 6 - 7 correct answers — Fair, you need to read up more about Wesley and the Methodist church.
- Below 6 correct answers — Sure you are a Methodist? Register for the Aldersgate Lectures.

LCEC CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I was very moved by the morning service held in our Church recently on Social Concerns Sunday. What a wonderful experience to see for the first time ever, in our Church, patients from Woodbridge Hospital worshipping with us. Not only did they worship with us, but they also gave song items and sang well beyond our expectation. This was indeed a bold experiment and the Social Concerns Committee headed by Mr. Ng Yean Kiat should be complimented for the effort.

I could sense the closeness of God that morning within our midst. The patients were so well behaved and this was indeed a miracle. The same patients I met in the hospital were usually quite unsettled and noisy. Surely, what has been achieved for the mentally ill can be done more effectively for the mentally healthy. A little care, concern and love shown to our fellow men can go a long way. Is it possible that someday, we will be able to realise our hopes of building up a fellowship of believers who care for one another and love one another. Should this not be our social concern, also?

May the Lord bless you and be gracious unto you.

Daniel Gwee
LCEC Chairman

"The child, in the decisive first years of his life, has the experience of his mother, as an all-enveloping, protective, nourishing power. Mother is food; she is love; she is warmth; she is earth. To be loved by her means to be alive, to be rooted, to be at home. Erich Fromm



**HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY
DEAR MOTHERS.
GOD BLESS YOU.**

'No man is poor who has had a godly mother.' Abraham Lincoln

"God could not be everywhere, so He made mothers." Jewish Proverb

"The loveliest masterpiece of the heart of God is the heart of a mother."
St. Therese of Lisieux

(Mothers' Day, May 8, 1983)

REMINDER

Our Church Extension Project (Trinity Educational Centre) needs your prayer and financial support.

Have you sent in your pledge?

A pledge form is enclosed for your use if you have not submitted your form.

We need to raise \$850,000. Pray for our needs.

Participate in this project as our Living Lord leads.

"Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they may be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the Kingdom of God upon earth."

John Wesley

"The Church has nothing to do but to save souls; therefore spend and be spent in this work. It is not your business to speak so many times, but to save souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance."

John Wesley