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## Saltshaker

Trinity Methodist Church

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## Standing on the Word, Following the Cross

*The Topping-Out with the Cross ceremony for the redeveloped church building was held on 31st July 2004. Tan Kiem Kiok shares her reflections on this event.*

It was a damp, drizzly and gloomy morning as we made our way to 34 Serangoon Garden Way. We were directed into the premises by some workers, and tentatively made our way up uneven stairs and wall-less rooms to the 3rd floor. About 30 of us gathered under umbrellas, and under the bemused eyes of the workers and contractors, for the short service to place the cross on to the bell tower.

Rev Dr Isaac Lim reminded us that the Cross is central to the life of the disciple, for the cross is the way into the presence of a holy and righteous God. Therefore, the cross means discipleship – that as Christians we are to be a holy and righteous

people, set apart for God, His purposes and His Kingdom. The empty cross is our hope of a resurrected body and eternal life. The cross is central to the life of the community, because God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. The cross is thus our reason for mission. Bishop Dr Robert Solomon reminded us that in the Old Testament, fire and rain were symbols of the presence of a holy God among

His people; and we chuckled, remembering the day that fire gutted the roof of the sanctuary. That 'disaster' meant that the sanctuary was now being rebuilt at minimum cost to ourselves; perhaps the inconvenience and mess of the rain that morning reminds us that God continues to smile down at us.

The next time most of us will be there, the building will be complete and the furniture and fittings in place. We will probably argue about the use of rooms, we will worship and pray in the sanctuary, the children will run along the new corridors and bang the doors. We will be a living, vibrant community. We must remember the verses written on the foundations of the buildings, and the cross on the bell tower. We are to be a people whose lives are built on the Word of God, and shaped and formed by the Cross.

**'For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God.'**

-1 Cor 1:18

**'but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.'**

-1 Cor 1:23-24



# Celebrating 48 Years of Grace

On 12th September 2004, Trinity Methodist Church (TMC) celebrated her 48th Anniversary. To most in the congregation, this event may appear to be yet another ordinary milestone that has been made since the church embarked on its redevelopment project. In fact, the combined anniversary service would be the last in the cavernous school hall of Paya Lebar Methodist Girls School (Primary); the next one shall be in the redeveloped church premises.

The significant work of the pioneers in TMC's early years and its sequel, the subsequent blossoming of the church will remain the most memorable, to the current generation in TMC. That flowering process is only possible with nourishments of God's abiding grace and His faithfulness. The anniversary is thus, a celebration of God, a tribute to Him and a handsome embrace of one another in the church community. The mood was festive, almost carnival-like.

The service began with a hymn 'Celebrate the Lord' sung by the choir. Following the time of praise, was a prayer of thanksgiving and supplication led by Mr P Sathiasingam. After the tithes and offerings were taken, Pastor Philip Lim welcomed some newcomers and congratulated Mr Jerry Ong, for having successfully passed another round in the Singapore Idol the previous night.

Alice Goh gave a testimony in Chinese which was translated into English by Mr James Loke. She shared with the congregation her problems with arthritis, diabetes, rheumatism and headaches and how God had healed her. She gave thanks to God for making available the TMC Chinese ministry. Mr James Loke translated her

testimony from English to Chinese, Chinese to English and even from Chinese to Chinese! It was hilarious.

Before the pair could leave the congregation perpetually laughing in stitches, they were interrupted by Mr Jacob Cheng who brought on yet another entertaining pair. Mrs Daphne Lim and young Timothy of the children's ministry (CM) made their appeals to the congregation to participate in CM's donation lunch on 3rd October. The CM hoped to raise between \$15,000 and \$25,000 through that. Young Timothy was struggling to convey his understanding of the dollars involved to the congregation. He ended up saying that the people in the Chinese Ministry did not know God! Of course, what he meant was,

the CM could be like the Chinese ministry - an instrument to get more people to know God. To an unsparing professional, that appeal must have been a public relations disaster but kudos to Timothy, for his fine courage and for the mirth he had unwittingly generated. After the 'commercials', the congregation was treated to a song item by the Chinese Ministry. The anniversary service was a first where the English congregation and the Chinese Ministry came together.

The sermon by Pastor Philip Lim was about a lost coin, a lost sheep and a man named Robert. The message for that day was about God's grace. The combined service ended with the hymn 'God of Grace and God of Glory'.

After that, the congregation was treated to a sumptuous 'Kampong' lunch of Laksa, Penang Kway Teow, Kueh Pie Tee, Roast Chicken, Mee Siam and Fried Carrot Cake. Dr Hum Sin Hoon said grace for the church and reminded the congregation to be thankful of God's providence. A lunch auction for paintings took place. Prizes were given for the best dressed gentleman and lady - Batiks shirts and Nonya dresses appeared to be the flavour of the day. Truly, the 48th Anniversary was a day of fun and thanksgiving for the members of TMC.

By Chan Chang Wei



## Ministry Opportunities

If you have a love for God and His people, WE WANT YOU!

### COMMUNION SERVICE HELPERS

- no special skill required, just a humble heart of service
- able to prepare elements from one and a half hours before communion service

### FLOWER ARRANGERS

*'Like a rose that comes alive every spring, you are so faithful, dear Lord, you are faithful'*

If you are blessed with producing wonderful creations from the flowers, buds and leaves that the Creator has blessed us with, you may be the flower arranger that we are looking for. We need volunteers to create 2 floral arrangements every Saturday. Flowers will be provided.

Please call Lee Pak Lin at 62824443, or email: churchoffice@tmc.org.sg

### DISPLAY COORDINATORS

- computer literacy preferred, esp. in MS Word/Powerpoint; training available otherwise
- duties involve typing up materials during the week for projection on Sundays; setting up/ operating computer/ projector
- able to serve at least once a month on Sundays and special occasions

Call Thomas Liao at 90079843, or email: displaycoordinator@yaya-ya.com

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Lydia Leong  
Patsy Ong  
Yip Syn Wun

### CONTRIBUTORS

Sharon Ang  
Chng Seo Yi  
James Lim  
Tan Kiem Kiok  
Tricia Tong

### PHOTOGRAPHERS

Png Kong Jin  
Alex Tan  
Andy Chew

### TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH

34 Serangoon Garden Way  
Singapore 555940  
Tel: 6282 4443 Fax: 6282 0094  
E-mail: churchoffice@tmc.org.sg  
Website: www.tmc.org.sg

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# PASTORS' REPORT FOR CONFERENCE YEAR 03/04

## Introduction

It was indeed apt for us to have chosen the theme: "Transitions – Meeting Challenges" for the past year. The last 12 months had been one of many challenges – for the members, the leaders, the pastors. With a massive project back in 34 Serangoon Garden Way, it was sometimes a struggle to keep focused and not be distracted by the many additional administration and meetings that came along with the redevelopment. But thanks be to God, we survived this difficult year, and by faith shall look forward to another blessed year in service of the Almighty. In the report below, we shall briefly recount the challenges faced this last one year.

## Challenges In Worship

We continued with the monthly Combined Service, where both congregations met together for worship and Holy Communion. Much effort was put in to lead the people in a holistic worship service that included a children sermon, testimony, and a blend of both hymns and modern songs.

It was through these monthly services that the challenges of worship began to surface. It was discovered that not a few of our people had a poor understanding of what it means to worship God. The spirit of individualism manifested in most complaints concerning the services. Nevertheless, the Worship & Music committee responded well by conducting courses on worship, as well as using various means to educate the people on worship. But it has been noted that the issue goes deeper, and that the pastors will have to deal with the overall spirituality of our people – with discipleship being the key.

## Challenges In Fellowship

Coupled with the combined services, the leadership had tried to provide a platform for fellowship through the post-service lunches. This has met with a small but significant success, as more people (between 100-150) began to find it meaningful to remain after service to interact with one another. Another effort is through small groups, where about 20 groups meet regularly to encourage one another in the Lord. Within the various segment ministries (e.g. WSCS, Seniors and Youth), a regular platform for fellowship is provided. The church camp in June left a deep impression in those who attended, with new relationships being built and old ones strengthened.

Nevertheless, the challenge remains. The ideals of Heb. 10:24-25 and Acts 4:32-35 are far from being realized. Many of our relationships remain superficial and members in general do not understand what it means to carry one another's burdens. Even within some of our more mature small groups, there is difficulty in breaking down the barriers that are essential in true, deep and rich fellowship amongst believers.

There is a continuing concern that our young adult (e.g. singles

and young couples) and adult (e.g. new parents) segments are not being provided with suitable environments for mutual edification and support. There may also be a need to start a men's fellowship to address the unique struggles of our men, both singles and fathers. The WSCS will also need to make bold changes in order to remain relevant.

## Challenges In Discipleship

The past year saw the resurgence of teaching courses, this time developed and led by the lay people. This is a cause for encouragement and rejoicing. Two of such courses that were successfully conducted were the Purpose-Driven Life course and the Essential Prayer Life course. The more than expected attendance (about 50) in each of these courses pointed to the fact that our people are hungry, and we must feed them.

This is where our long-awaited Disciple & Nurture Roadmap (named "River of Life") comes in at just the divinely-appointed time. With God's providence of a new LMS (Training), we have finally completed the roadmap which will intentionally guide each member towards maturity in Christ (our motto). Although much remains to be done (e.g. how do we get people to want to be discipled and nurtured?), we are thankful that a small step has been taken in the right direction. Along with the need for intentional discipleship and teaching, the pastors are considering moving away from the lectionary, to preaching a careful selection of sermon series that address the specific concerns and needs of the church.

This year has also seen the rising unease among leaders regarding the commitment level of members. It was noted that there are more than a hundred people who are in our membership roll and who do not even come to church anymore. While some may have been absent for valid reasons, it was discovered that many have left and gone to another church (while keeping the membership for sentimental or practical considerations). This is unacceptable and must be dealt with accordingly. The membership vows of Prayer, Presence, Gifts and Service must be fulfilled.

## Challenges In Ministry

The lack of discipleship, which has affected our fellowship and our worship, naturally affects our ministry involvement as well. TMC continues to be "run" by a minority (less than 20%) of faithful workers who also serve in multiple ministries. This is unhealthy, and we address this through the pulpit as well as small groups.

Nevertheless, small pockets of volunteers continue to be an encouragement in mini-projects, such as those that have been organized to reach out to the Primary 5 girls in PLMGS as well as kids from Chen Su Lan home. The recent involvement of adults in Youth Ministry and the renewed ministry in Pelangi



Village are good signs. Perhaps what our people need are more platforms for service, clearer guidelines, and often a nudge or a word of affirmation.

A new ministry (tentatively named Visitations Ministry) which consists of Membership Committee, Seniors Ministry, Prayer & Intercession, Outreach & Social Concerns, WSCS and Small Groups, seems to be in the making. This ministry seeks to coordinate and integrate the pastoral care and visitation efforts of the church – so that no member is neglected and every member is given an opportunity to care for another less fortunate one.

An encouraging period this year was when many church members, both young and old, surrounded the family of the late Mr Wee Hian Chor with unceasing prayers, love and concern. This showed that our people do care, and it is the task of the leadership to organize our flock for ministry.

### Challenges In Missions

At the local front, the recent Mid-Autumn outreach organized by the Chinese Ministry has shown that our people are generally willing to reach out – provided relevant activities are planned. We were initially concerned with whether we could come close to the 30 tables booked for the event, but the Lord surprised us pleasantly by filling up 44 tables. This is a challenge for us to continue to think of creative ways to bring the Gospel to our neighbours. Community penetration strategies (already effectively employed by many independent churches) is an area we need to seriously consider.

One of the outreach efforts that are bearing some fruits, and which has tremendous potential, is that of the Boys' and Girls' brigades. Although the ground is hard, TMC must continue to work at this difficult ministry, because the future of our church depends on our ability to bring the Gospel to the masses. So press on, those who labour with our heartland boys and girls – may the Lord bring more to work alongside you!!

Our mission work in Cambodia is also in transition, and meeting challenges. While we have been successful lately in getting more of our leaders to be involved in this work (through visits, prayer and discussions), we are currently facing some challenges working with Methodist Missions Society. Nevertheless, it is our commitment to Cambodia and especially Takmau TMC to grow the church and her leaders. Let us pray that the Lord will open the way for us.

### Challenges In Redevelopment

The redevelopment continues to challenge our mind, our hearts, our bodies and our faith. There were inevitably times when leaders became tired, frustrated, and even discouraged over the nitty-gritty of the project. There were times when the leadership was visibly strained by differences in opinion and by very long meetings, but God's grace has carried us through. But the overriding concerns remain the commitment of our congregation to the project. Judging from the financial status,

it seems that there are many who still do not support the rebuilding efforts or have chosen to take a back seat. For this, we can only hope and pray that when we return to the new building, the people will begin to see that we have done what is right.

### Challenges In Leadership

We are encouraged, that despite the difficult year for the church, our leaders have remained steadfast and committed. Most have responsibly discharged their responsibilities and made a difference for the Lord. The coming year will see some new and younger faces, which we pray will continue to facilitate the renewal of our leadership. May the Lord unite us and build strong bonds amongst our leaders.

One area that needs attention is the care and nurture of leaders. Some efforts were made on implementing a mentoring system, but it has not taken off. The small group leaders' cluster meetings have been a time of refreshing for those who attend, but we need to encourage more SGLs to be willing to receive feeding and build mutual accountability. We will continue to refine the efforts, with the hope that each of our leaders will be properly guided and empowered to minister effectively.

### Challenges In Prayer

Finally, we face the challenge to pray. The prayer life of our people and our leaders has much room for improvement. Prayer meetings continue to be poorly attended, while attempts at participative prayer during the worship service have met with much resistance. But there are signs of renewal. The International Prayer Conference has stirred the hearts and minds of all who attended. Our leaders have begun to pray more regularly and earnestly. The recent fast and pray session (5 Sep 04) saw the participation of many new faces. The Prayer & Intercession committee has grown in their role and continues to fan the flame of prayer in many lives. In the coming year, let us all cry out to our Father: "Lord, teach us how to pray!!"

### Conclusion

As Bishop Dr Robert Solomon shared with us on 31 Jul 04, TMC has experienced "Fire and Rain". Both signify the presence of the Spirit in our church. The mighty work of the Spirit is earnestly sought after as we embark on another year of challenges, especially in the area of discipleship. May the Lord renew, refresh and re-dedicate us for ministry in a new era of Trinity Methodist Church.

Finally, the pastors would like to take this opportunity to thank the lay leadership for their loving support, joyful fellowship and gracious partnership as we together serve our great God, for the sake of His glorious Gospel!!

*Rev. Philip Lim & Pastor Lai Kai Ming*



# The Collapse of TTMC Building



The Takmau Trinity Methodist Church (TTMC) building collapsed on 4 August 2004 while undergoing a land-fill project.

The building was built on a pond and previously the pond was used to rear freshwater fish so that they could be harvested to help fund the ministries of the church.

Though this was a good idea, there were also some problems faced especially during the rainy season. The pond would usually overflow and flood the surrounding land, thus affecting the properties of her neighbours. The loose soil surrounding the pond also posed another problem where the walls dividing the church and her neighbours may eventually collapse.

After consulting a Singaporean contractor who is working in Phnom Penh, the Missions Committee was advised to have the pond filled up.

It was during the process of filling up the pond with earth that the pillars holding the building became unstable. Before anything else could be done to solve this problem, the building tilted to one side and eventually collapsed.

Thanks be to God that there were no injuries during the accident!

Though it was sad to see the church building collapse especially for the Pastor-in-charge, Thu Santik, and his members, this can also be seen as a blessing.

Over the years, the surrounding land has been used to build residential buildings and all these structures have blocked TTMC. This has hampered the effectiveness of her ministries in reaching out to the people around the church and within the province.



## HERE ARE SOME PRAYER ITEMS:

- 1) Pray that a new piece of land can be found soon to relocate the church. We hope to find one where there is already a building erected so that we can save cost.
- 2) Pray also that the current piece of land where TTMC is located can be sold at a reasonable price.
- 3) Pray that the Lord will give wisdom and guidance to all the persons involved in this project, especially in the search for a new location and also in building the various facilities for the church.
- 4) Pray for Pastor Thu Santik and the members of TTMC that they will continue to grow in the Lord and in fellowship as they temporarily worship God in the elder's home.
- 5) In November, a team from TMC will be going to Cambodia to conduct a Family Camp for TTMC. Pray that this camp will bring the members closer and may the lessons they learn on "Evangelism As A Lifestyle" allow them to be more effective in reaching out to those who do not know God.



The plan now for TTMC and the Missions Committee, is to look for another piece of land that is more prominent and, hopefully, along one of the main roads. The committee is working with the Methodist Missions Society and the missionary staff at the Methodist Centre in Cambodia on this project. We hope to have the project completed by February 2005.

The church service is currently held in the home of one of the church elders.

"Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain."  
(Psalm 127:1a)

To God be the glory!

By Andy Chew





# Seeds of Love at Mid-Autumn

The celebration of mid-autumn festival symbolizes a time of reunion, of spending time with family and loved ones, a time of great warmth and joy. We experienced great joy as a family of God celebrating the mid-autumn festival together, bringing our unsaved loved ones to the evangelistic dinner on 18 September at the Jumbo Serangoon Seafood Restaurant. It was a time when we, as a church, experienced great warmth in fellowship, a warmth that testified of God's presence in our midst. Indeed, praise God for His work, for His Spirit that was so powerfully with us, such that all who came returned home embraced by the warmth of His love. This warmth was experienced even by our non-Christian guests, with one of them commenting, 'It's really nice being in the midst of everyone who is so warm and friendly.'

The night began with a light-hearted game, with a couplet hidden in two of the mooncakes placed before guests on the table. Guests randomly selected a mooncake to consume, and two lucky winners walked away with a chic-looking radio. This helped break the ice as guests carefully prodded at the mooncakes before them, checking for any straw embedded.

The highlight was, however, undoubtedly the performance by Chen Mei Kwang, a popular local artiste. Chen Mei Kwang was a great hit with the older folks, with many of them being all ears as she sang and shared her testimony. Indeed, to God be the glory for how mightily He used this sister in Christ to plant the seeds of His love as she shared the goodness of God in her life. Let us continue to pray that just as the seeds of love have been planted, the hearts of those that have come will continue to be softened and that these seeds will eventually bear fruit in God's perfect time.

By Eugenia Koh





Lee Poh Lin (one of the founding members):  
 "We celebrated TMC's 48th anniversary on 12th Sept 2004. TMC has brought back many memories for me and my family. I can still remember how TMC started through the faithful past and present members who trusted and obeyed God. Being away from TMC for about 2 years for redevelopment is a long time. Homecoming is always a joyous occasion especially since this is the House that God built for us to enjoy His presence there. Let us then together as one big family enter His house again with thanksgiving and praise and continue to serve Him faithfully."

Jasmine:  
 "Wonderful! Although the physical church should be a secondary concern, it's great to move back and worship together as a church in a building that has been given to us by God. We're blessed as I can't wait to return to Gardens!"

Richard Tay:  
 "I look forward to the church homecoming. Hopefully, there is a room set aside where the seniors can exercise, rest and fellowship with each other."

## Yip Syn Wun and Lai Wei Cheng ask TMC members about **REFLECTIONS** on moving back

Lynn Charn:  
 "It's always heart warming to return home."

Mdm Seow Ki Meng (caretaker's wife):  
 "Very happy to be back, things will be much more convenient."

Mrs Catherine Pang:  
 "Feel very excited, especially with thoughts of the new Mandarin ministry. I recall how years ago I had wished for a Chinese ministry in TMC so I could bring my mother."

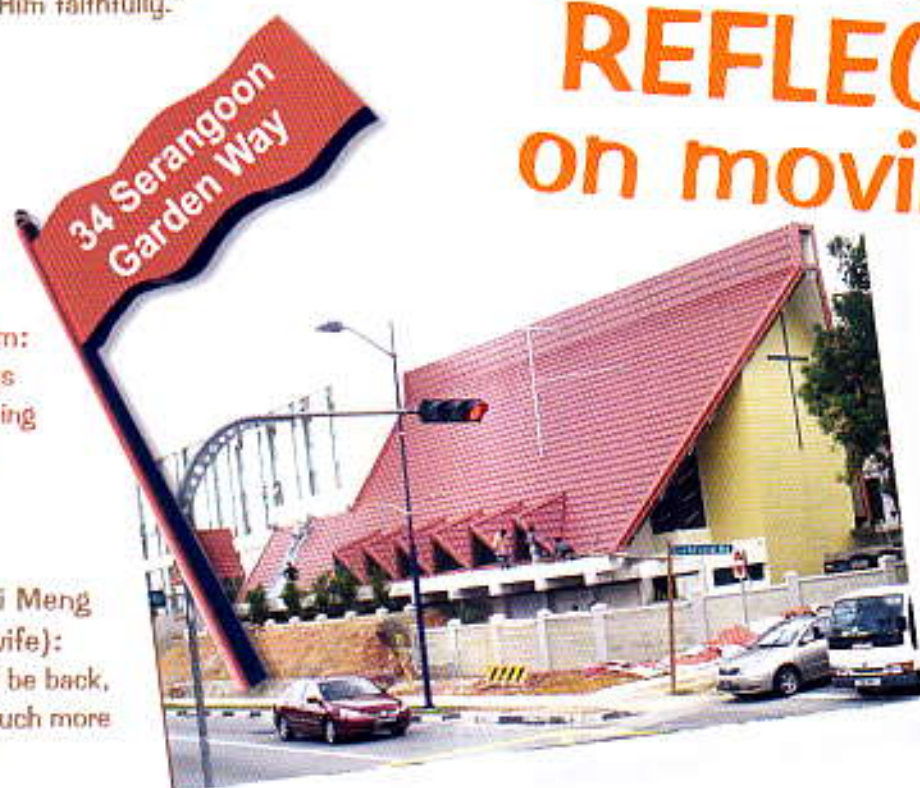
Jestyn:  
 "I feel very happy!"

Mrs Nancy Tay:  
 "Church home coming? It's great, exciting and I'm looking forward to it with expectancy! It means more rooms and hopefully they won't be turned into 'white elephants'. I wish for a room where the needy student can do some quiet study, also one where the emotionally weary can go and spend time alone with God, the WSCS will have a kitchen cabinet where the utensils do not do the 'disappearing act'!"

Terri Koh:  
 "A lot of thanksgiving in my heart! If the congregation can feel relief, how much more relief is felt by the church leaders, redevelopment committee and helpers who have put in so much. It's also a testimony of God providence to TMC, that He has seen us through our difficulties and limitations."

Ian:  
 "A new beginning with unlimited possibilities with God's unlimited power."

Shaun Lai:  
 "Finally, Thank God for a place we can settle down. It is great to go back to a place that we are familiar with and worship God with less distraction."





# My DISCIPLE Journey

By Chng Seo Yi



Back Row (From Left to Right):  
Ms June Foo (Asst Facilitator),  
Dr Chng Seo Yi, Miss Sharon Khoo,  
Mrs Lesley Lai, Ms Mak Wei Yeen,  
Mr Alfred Cheah, Mr Wilson Chen.  
Front Row (From Left to Right):  
Mr Alex Tan (Facilitator), Mr Sean Chio,  
Mr Timothy Yong, Mr Thomas Liao.

## Imagine this:

*Many, many years later, you are walking in heaven. You meet an old man. The man greets you and says, 'Hello. My name is Amos.' You ask, 'Amos? As in famous Amos?' The man replies, 'Yes, I am famous Amos.' You say incredulously, 'Really? As in Famous Amos chocolate chip cookies?' He says, 'No. As in Amos, the author of the book Amos, in the Old Testament. Haven't you read my book?' You whisper in a small voice, 'Actually no. I never found the time?'*

*Wouldn't that be embarrassing?*

DISCIPLE bible study is a 34-week commitment that involves reading 70% of the bible. I estimate that DISCIPLE took up about 30 minutes per day of my time and about another 3 hours on the day of the class. Before I started DISCIPLE, I thought this was a lot of time to dedicate – time that I could spend at work or at home relaxing. I often work overnight from 8pm to 8am; and sometimes nonstop for 30 hours from 8am one day to 2pm the next; and time and sleep are very precious to me. But, in retrospect, DISCIPLE was very manageable and it definitely took up much less of my time than I had feared.

I am thankful to our DISCIPLE facilitators Alex and June for their wisdom and guidance. They were an inspiration to us always.

I cannot claim that DISCIPLE was always smooth sailing. There were many ups but there were also downs.

There was death. Our fellow DISCIPLE class member, Mr Wee, was called home to be with the Lord midway through our course. We shared some of his pain.

But, there was also life. Alex announced to us that his wife was pregnant one day during class. We share his happiness.

There was also re-birth. Alfred was baptized recently and we sang "Welcome to the Family" for him.

Timothy began his university studies; Sean started a new job whilst Thomas quit his job and started full time ministry work with the blessings and support of his wife Wei Yeen;

Pastor Kai Ming's wife Lesley was also a pupil in our class and she shared with us insights about being a pastor's wife.

We discovered our own spiritual gifts and each other's gifts – like how Sharon is so musically gifted; and how Wilson, though the youngest in our group, was filled with so much faith.

## Finally imagine this:

*Again you are walking in heaven. You meet another old man. The man greets you and says, 'Hello. I am Job.' You reply confidently, 'Job? I read and studied your life story from the first word to the last in the bible.'*

*Now, wouldn't that be fantastic?*

By Jeannie Tan

## GIVING TO

Has our society become so desensitised to the call to donate that even church members are reluctant to heed the call to build a new church?

Walk down Orchard Road on a weekend and you will almost definitely be stopped by zealous fund-raisers, each representing a different charity and each appealing to you to part with some of your money. Do you ever get irritated? Do you give freely to all of them or do you question their need for funds?

Back to the issue of the call for funds to build our new church. Many TMCers have given generously and freely; afterall God loves a cheerful giver. Yet, there are also some of us out there who are reluctant to give. 'It's a \$12m ship'. 'It's the LCEC's private project'. These are just some of the comments that have been made about the re-building of the new church.

Admittedly, at times, whenever the call for funds comes from the church redevelopment committee, I do privately question the need for it. Do we really need such a huge building? Why is so much money being spent; can't we do with a more modest church building?

It was with all these questions in mind that I arranged for an interview with Mr Sathiasingam (or Uncle Sathia as he is more fondly known) to find out more about the Church Redevelopment Committee and its work.

Uncle Sathia, as many of you know is one of the pioneers of TMC. Together with a group of likeminded Serangoon Gardenites, he had a burning desire to build a church in Serangoon Gardens in the 1950s. In those days, the cost of the land and of building TMC amounted to only about \$60000. Yet, it wasn't an easy task getting the donations. Uncle Sathia and his team had to organize jogathons and potluck sessions in order to raise funds. Children from the Sunday School were also encouraged to play a part by donating a part of their pocket money. Fellow Christians from other churches also contributed generously to the cause.



# God's Work

Today, TMC is redeveloping its church building. It still needs to raise another \$7 million for the redevelopment fund. Has our desire to contribute to God's work waned over the years?

The skeptics amongst us feel that there is no need to build a new church – the old one was sufficient for our needs. Even if we do really need a new building for practical reasons (ie the cost of repairing the old building does not make economic sense compared to a new building) do we need to spend \$12m on it?

When I gingerly posed these questions to Uncle Sathia, I half expected an outburst as I know he has been working tirelessly on this redevelopment project. However, he very matter-of-factly told me that there was a necessity to build a big church. **TMC has a big piece of land which was being under-utilised. We need more rooms for our ministries. A bigger church will also enable us to draw more people into our community and into God's fold** and that, basically, is the ultimate aim. He cited examples of other churches also having to spend similar amounts on new premises.

Uncle Sathia also made it very clear during my interview with him that when he goes to the pulpit on Sunday mornings to raise funds for the new church, it is never his intention to persuade people to give more than what they can afford. **In fact, all he is asking for is more support from the congregation. It does not matter if you are unable to support the rebuilding project financially; he and his team are happy enough if you pray for the project. He believes it is the attitude of the congregation that counts and he is heartened by the fact that despite some people being skeptical about the rebuilding project, they still trust God enough to give to His work.** At the end of the day, Uncle Sathia believes that people within the congregation know that the rebuilding project is God's project and that is why they are still contributing to it.

For those of you who need some encouragement to give to God's work, Uncle Sathia's message is very simple. **Think of God's many blessings and give whatever you can to help God with His work. Even if you are not able to contribute much financially, your prayers, your support and your attitude towards the whole redevelopment project is what he and his team need.**

**Uncle Sathia himself lives by this and that is one reason why he is actively involved in God's work - because he knows God has blessed him richly.**

Uncle Sathia – the man who wants to do God's work – will be appealing to us soon again for funds. This time round, I will try not to be skeptical. Afterall, TMC is my church too and I want to do my part for God.

## Ministry Opportunities

**If you have a love for God and His people, WE WANT YOU!**

### REHEARSAL PIANIST

- at least Gr. 6 Pianoforte (or equivalent)
- faithful attendance at rehearsals and diligent practice required
- able to serve weekly on Sundays/special occasions, on a bi-monthly roster

### CHORISTERS for TMC choir

- eager to sing the glory of God's name and make His praise glorious!
- all voices (SATB) welcome
- able to sing in tune
- music literacy preferred, but not essential
- faithful attendance at rehearsals and diligent practice required
- able to serve weekly on Sundays



Interested? Call Tricia Tong at 97345239

### MUSICIANS for Contemporary Band

- all instruments considered
- a team player
- faithful attendance at rehearsals and diligent practice required
- music literacy required
- able to attend rehearsals at least twice a month on Friday nights



Please call Adrian Cheong at 93661447

### USHERS

*'doorkeepers at the gates of the Lord's temple' 2 Chr 23:19*

- friendly and cheerful
- enjoy meeting and greeting people
- a heart for those with special needs
- duties incl. ushering, collecting offerings, handing out bulletins/ other literature



Interested, please call Stephen Loh at 96736498

### PA CREW

*'their sound has gone out to all the earth...' (Rom 10:18)*

- able-bodied, energetic
- able to serve on Sundays (set-up 1 hr before 1st service and pack-up after last service)
- responsible and able to work in a team
- duties involve set-up of sound system and attending to special requirements
- no experience needed, training will be provided



Call Gary at 9875-GARY/ 98754279

**Alternatively, email: [trish3309@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:trish3309@yahoo.co.uk) for any of the above listings.**



# Worship & Liturgy Course

By Tricia Tong

The Worship & Music Ministry held a Worship & Liturgy course over two Saturdays in late February this year. We were blessed to have Rev Chiang Ming Shun and Pastor Barnabas Chong<sup>1</sup> conduct the course for us.

The course participants (all 50 of them of all age groups) were challenged to think about:

- what Christian Worship is;
- whether worship should be the offering of our best talents and arts to God – even in forms unfamiliar or incomprehensible to people; and
- whether worship should be in familiar language and styles so that the meaning is grasped by all even though the result is less impressive artistically.

The historical changes in worship services were also traced through the ages in an informative and engaging way.

Rev Chiang explained that a liturgical service is conceived so that all worshipers take an active part in offering their worship together. Worshipers are not a passive audience. Hence, the worship of God is not limited to singing or music, but also to prayer, exhortation, declarations, symbolic acts, signs and symbols.

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), a great theologian, was born in Copenhagen in the early nineteenth century said that, 'in the worship of God, whether it be in Scripture reading, corporate prayer, or music, etc., we tend to think of the worship leaders (choir, etc.) as the actors ... God as the prompter of their lines ... and the congregation as the audience.' But the more accurate understanding of the sacred drama of worship is this:

The people of the congregation are the actors.

The worship leaders are the prompters of the lines for your daily life.

And God alone is the audience of this holy and human theatre.

Pastor Barnabas then expounded on the 'Life of a Worship Leader' and how God calls to be a worship leader someone who is a worshiper and a spiritual leader. The life of a worship leader should be characterized with the following attributes:

1. Holiness and prudence
2. Word and devotion
3. Hearing God
4. Servanthood
5. Confidence in Christ
6. In touch
7. A desire to improve self

<sup>1</sup> Rev Chiang is from Kampong Kapar Methodist Church, and Pastor Barnabas from Faith Methodist Church.

# Learning about

## Why should we worship? By James Lim

Maybe it's just me, but through all my years as a follower of Christ, I've found that nothing draws me closer to my Father more than the worship of our Lord through the songs that we sing as a church and as individuals. It is during those intimate moments when I lift up my hands and allow every word of a song to convey my deepest longing and prayers to Him, that I find such great comfort, joy and belonging. My Christian life did not begin like this. In fact, church was a most boring task to me all through my childhood years. It was only in my teenage years that God began to show me how powerfully He can draw someone to Himself through praise and worship.

### 'The Bible Tells Me So'

So why do we worship through songs and singing? While worship can very obviously draw a believer closer to God, that is actually not the main reason for doing so. The simple reason is that the Lord has commanded it. The Bible says in Psalms 29:2 that we are to 'Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; Worship the Lord in the beauty of His holiness'. How do we do that? By 'psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your heart to the Lord' (Ephesians 5:19).

### Songs as a Powerful Instrument

Fortunately, God has not left us completely bewildered with the intention of this commandment to worship Him. He has graciously given us many clues and indications of the reasons why He demands worship from His people. A most obvious reason for worship, which I have already shared, is the fact that worship is a means by which God draws us into His awesome-ness and majesty. We cannot understand it, but most can agree that God has ordained music and song in a very powerful way to convey messages and emotions. When we sing songs unto God, and sincerely begin to meditate upon the words when singing and praying, God will use the music and the songs as a channel to connect with us.

### Act of Surrender

Worship is also an act of surrender. It demands that we relinquish our own pride and pronounce God as the controller of our lives. We cannot truly worship until we are willing to surrender. While we all will, from time to time (some more often than others), seize back control over our lives, but as long as we are genuinely sincere in wanting God to use our lives any way He chooses, we should all be even more eager to worship because worship is a means for us to

And we offer up to You  
our sacrifices of  
thanksgiving  
and we offer up to You  
our sacrifices of joy





# Worship – Our Journeys

affirm our surrender. Songs like 'I Surrender All' and 'Lord I Offer My Life to You' force us to examine our lives in order to sing them with sincerity. The more we worship, the more we will find it easier to give up our lives to follow Him.

I encourage you to take a minute to ponder over what I have shared and to say a short prayer of commitment to become the true worshiper that God describes in John 4:23, 'Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.'



## First a Worshiper

By Sharon Ang

### What's with the Singing?

As an immature Christian in Junior College who had yet to understand the meaning of worship, I found myself spending most mornings before the school bell, gathered with other Christians 'singing songs about God'.

While 'worship' had been part of my 'Christian activities' since I was a believer, admittedly, there was a stage in my Christian walk when I had not appreciated the deeper meaning and purpose behind the 'singing'. Even at that stage in my walk, I was asked to 'lead in worship'. The way I understood (or did not understand) what these worship sessions meant, had an effect on the way I approached them and prepared myself for them. Thankfully, through God's Word, as well as experientially, He has taught me more about what it means to worship Him. Ultimately, this has affected how I am now able to draw near to God, and attempt to help others draw near to Him through worship.

As a worship leader in TMC, the Spirit continually reminds me of my role – to usher the people into God's presence so that they may intimately worship Him, receive ministry from Him and glorify Him, with minimal distraction.



### Preparing to Worship – Some lessons from God

Leading worship necessitates the discipline of personal preparation through prayer and waiting on God, meditating on the Word and seeking God for the songs to be sung and as well as the exhortation between songs, to draw out the theme and focus of the service. Another important aspect is the unity between the worship team, including the band members and back-up vocalists. The worship and music ministry is a team ministry and each member should have a common understanding on the focus and emphasis for the time of worship, and work together towards that direction.



As a worshiper, similar principles apply. I am now more aware of the link between my personal walk with God and how I experience God in corporate worship. I also pay closer attention to the words of the songs that are being sung and keep an active listening ear to what God may wish to convey to me through the words of songs and exhortation. The idea of the worship team can be extended to the whole church – each worshipper is also a 'leader' through the offering of ourselves to God and our active participation in the service, which is a form of encouragement to others.

### Worship is a Lifestyle

Within the worship and music ministry, we remind each other that we are first a worshiper, then a worship leader / band member etc etc. As a worshiper, we should strive to offer ourselves completely to God in our daily living (Rom 12:1-2), to pursue a life of holiness and godliness (Heb 12:14), to grow in the knowledge of God's Word (Ps 1:2) and have the attitude of servanthood (1 Cor 1:29) as we serve others. In case there is any misunderstanding, these are important to all Christians, since the church is not so much a place of worship, but a people who worship.

My learning journey is still in its early stages. Each time I lead worship and participate in corporate worship as a member of the congregation, I continue to pray that God will teach us (myself included), as a church, what it means to worship in spirit and in truth. For this will not just allow us to reach a greater level of intimacy with Him in our Sunday worship – it will have a lasting, transforming effect on our entire lives.



James Lim and Sharon Ang



# TMC's Worship and Music Ministry

By Tricia Tong



Ushers  
Psalm 100  
Organists  
Bulletin Collaters  
Band  
Worship  
Leaders  
Transport  
Display Helpers  
Coordinators  
Gospel Play

## Mission Statement

- To assist and enable, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all within the congregation to understand the meaning purpose and practice of worship, and hence to worship God in spirit and in truth
- To support the pastoral team in Sunday worship services, and elsewhere in the other ministries of the church as required
- To promote the study of worship by persons serving within the ministry, and other individuals and groups within the congregation
- To plan for the ministry and training of lay persons as worship leaders
- To encourage and support the recognition of musicians and choristers in the local congregation, and discover and develop persons to serve in the ministry of worship
- To encourage wider use and understanding of visual arts, dramatic arts, and architectural design as an expression of faith and means of proclamation of the gospel

The Worship & Music ministry of Trinity Methodist Church comprises of a number of sub-ministries, altogether comprising of more than a hundred people.

The most visible work of the ministry is the support that it gives to each Sunday service. On any given Sunday, there are approximately 60 people from the ministry serving the Lord in various areas (see list on left).

Each sub-ministry has its own specific role to play. Like Baskin Robbins ice cream, the work of the ministry is plentiful in flavour.

With specific roles to fulfill, it can be easy for each sub-ministry unconsciously to become insulated from other sub-ministries, instead of functioning and serving as one cohesive unit. Hence, all in the ministry are encouraged not to harbour an 'us' and 'them' mentality, but to appreciate that they are one complete unit serving the Lord. It also takes constant effort not to become entrapped in concentrating on mere tasks, but to remind ourselves that we are not called to be mere 'Martha's'; our combined task is to reach out to those in the wider church community and beyond. One of the ways the ministry keeps itself on the straight and narrow path is to encourage each sub-ministry to pray for other sub-ministries and for the church community. This year, TMC focused on nurturing the prayer life of each worshipper at TMC. The Worship & Music ministry supports this focus by encouraging the larger sub-ministries to pray together before or after going about their tasks on Sundays. As such, you will find the TMC Choir praying together before rehearsal, and the 9 am worship leaders grouping to pray after the 9 am service, each Sunday.

### 'The reason I live is to worship You'

As a believer's primary task is to worship the Lord, it is so very important to know what 'worship' means. John 4:23 tells us that we are to worship in spirit and in truth.

It is no coincidence that the Worship & Music ministry's mission statement starts with:

'To assist and enable, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all within the congregation to understand the meaning purpose and practice of worship, and hence to worship God in spirit and in truth.'

While a 'music ministry' is a relatively easy concept to grasp, the 'worship' limb of the ministry often gets lumped together with 'music' in the same breath. When people talk about 'worship', often, they just mean ... 'singing'. We hear fellow believers say, 'We'll have worship first, then we'll study God's Word, after which, we'll pray.' There are others whom the word 'worship' only prompts images of the Sunday church service. This reflects an incomplete understanding of the worship of God - 'singing' and 'music' are not synonymous with 'worship'.

The English word worship comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'weorthscipe', which developed into 'worthship' and, finally, 'worship'. As can be seen from the word's derivation, worship is 'the act of giving honour to someone of worth'. Thus, to worship God is to ascribe to Him the supreme worth that He alone is worthy to receive. This can take the form of singing and music, but also includes prayer, the study of His Word, giving in tithes and offerings and just about any act that gives honour to the Almighty God.

Worship is a drama in which both leaders and congregation share the stage, while God consists of the only audience of worship (S. Kierkegaard). Unlike the plays of the human stage, however, there should be no interval in a believer's worship of God. The Worship & Music ministry invites partners to join it in this living and unending drama and in equipping others to be actors and actresses in the same drama. We pray that our humble service to the Lord will resound in an unending encore during the final curtain call when Christ comes again.