

TMC NEWSLETTER

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TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH 34 SERANGOON GARDEN WAY (1955)

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Experts of different disciplines have their own sacred vocabulary which they guard jealously. Medical doctors have their high-sounding words to describe our common illnesses. Computer scientists speak language which apple-lovers may even find foreign. Botanists seem to be the only people around who still venerate Latin. Psychologists tell us that our problems often arise from the struggle between our Id, Ego and Super-ego. Philosophers use "being" seldom as a verb but often as an abstract noun which may mean the ground of our faith, the first cause, the reason and what have you.

Poor lay people! When we are bombarded with jargons and technical verbiage which sometimes the experts themselves can't agree, we are lost. We feel frustrated. Some of us may lose interest in the subject which we would otherwise have loved to understand and study. Our interest in a given subject is often hindered by jargons and terms which seem to be perpetrated by the experts to keep us out of their exclusive clubs

and disciplines. Only the selected few who persevere may gain entry to those exclusive clubs. The ordinary lay people would have nothing to do with the worlds which the experts have fashioned for themselves.

But before we vent our frustration at the experts and accuse them of being too exclusive, we may want to search ourselves and see if we as Christians have not been guilty of perpetrating our own religious jargons. Jargons which we may not even understand.

"What is 'justification'?" What is "bondage to sin?" What is the "grace of God?" What do we have in mind when we say we believe that Jesus is the "incarnate Son of God"? If Christians are not careful in the way these words are used, we may put people off from the church and from Christ. The church is not an exclusive club for people who know how to throw religious and theological jargons. It is open to all who would accept Jesus as their friend, Saviour and Lord. It is our responsibility to be effective communicators of God's message, and not to muddle it up.

PASTOR DANIEL KOH KAH SOON

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As we are approaching Christmas, perhaps we would take a look at the meaning of the loaded word "Incarnation".

- a) Incarnation is God becoming man. Jesus took the form of a man to show us who God is, and to reveal to us the extent of God's love. By way of example, when God became man, it is like one of us deciding to become a bird so that person can associate herself with birds; speaking their language, living their life and helping them know that all mankind love them, and that there is a way for birds to live a life of abundance and happiness forever. God is not man, but he became man so that he could identify with our problems, struggles, and aspirations. He became man to show us that our Creator still loves us in spite of the mess which mankind has created for himself.
- b) Incarnation is a model which God has left with us to help us to live a less self-centred life. You see, Jesus was rich, yet he chose to be born in a smelly manger. He was powerful, yet

he became powerless. He was God, yet he became man. In short, Jesus is selfless and sacrificial in his approach to mankind. He was not arrogant, nor was he self-centred. If we believe in God's love, we should model our relationship with our spouse, children, parents, and friends along the line which Jesus has shown us.

- c) Incarnation is no guarantee for "success". Not everyone who knew Jesus Christ; not everyone who listened to his teachings; not everyone who saw his goodworks believed in him. He was rejected by his own people. Take courage. We don't have to be too disappointed if not everyone whom we love selflessly accept our love or follow our faith. Fear of rejection should not stop us from loving people or sharing with them God's Good News.

I leave with you a passage which I love very much, Philippians 2 : 5 - 11. I pray that your life will be transformed by this passage too.

With you ... in His Service.

Pastor Daniel Koh.

The love of God is most fully expressed through the Presence of Christ in the world which God loves, through the Proclamation of Christ to the world which God loves, through the Persistent Service of Christ to the world which God loves. Presence requires identification, Proclamation requires Communication. Persistent Service requires Sacrifice. All three have to be brought together. Evangelism is part of Mission but has never been the whole of Mission.

Dr H Parkin

ARTICLE

Sometime in mid-November, our church held a Leaders' Retreat where friends and leaders of the church met for sharing, planning and prayer. The retreat centred on the topic **THE CHURCH AND MISSION** which we have adopted as the theme for our church in the new year. We have the Rev. (Dr.) Harry Parkin as our guest speaker, and we are happy to print below an article which he prepared for the participants. Dr. Parkin is a Methodist missionary from England. He has spent almost 30 years as a servant of the church in Asia. At present he is the director of the Institute for the Study of Religion and Society.

HISTORY. The idea that the Church and Mission belong together is a very modern concept. The Protestant Missionary Endeavour came into existence and was pursued by para-church organizations, called missionary societies. They did not always receive support from the Church. This has produced unbalanced ideas of both Church and Mission.

WHICH COMES FIRST? Often people define the Church and then define Mission. This means that the understanding of Mission depends upon that of the Church. In truth the Church arose as the Result of God's Mission to the World and as one means of continuing that Mission. Therefore, we should start with Mission.

WHAT IS MISSION? The first thing to note is that Mission is world-orientated: "God so loved the world that he sent his son As my Father sent me even so I send you".

Mission is an expression of Divine Love, not an expression of Divine condemnation.

Mission is directed towards the world, that is to the whole human community as a society and not just to individuals in isolation.

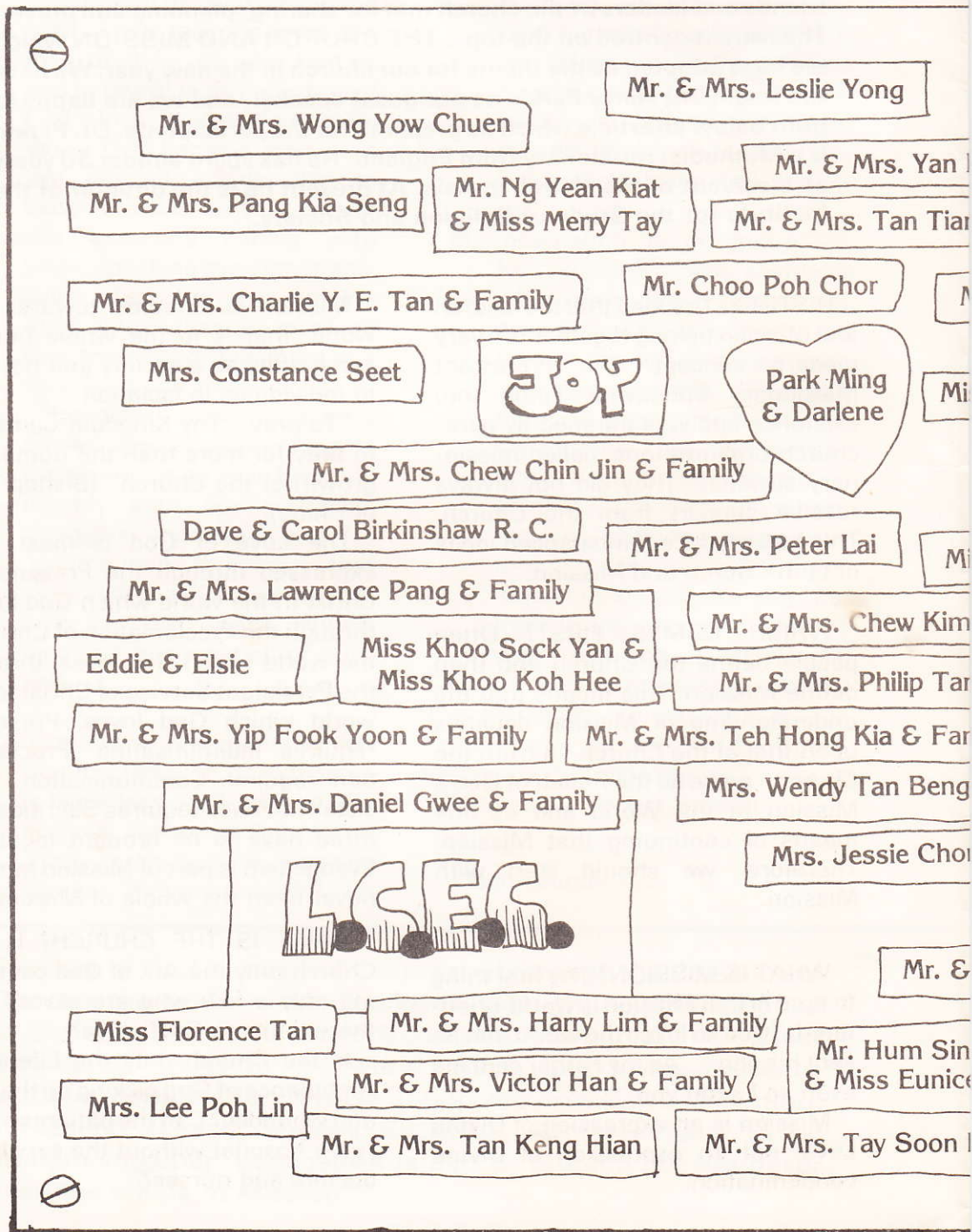
"To pray, 'Thy Kingdom Come' is to pray for more than the numerical growth of the Church" (Bishop Ting of China).

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WHAT IS THE CHURCH? Is the Church only the Ark of God containing only a few who are saved? Are there limits to God's love?

Is the Church only the Lifeboat/Ambulance of God picking up the sick and wounded? Can the patients alone run a hospital without the service of doctors and nurses?

CHRISTMAS



GREETINGS

	Mrs. Elsie Hardy & Mrs. & Mrs. Robert Yeo	⊙
Fook Sum & Family		Mr. & Mrs. P. Sathiasingam & Family
n Guan & Family	Mr. & Mrs. Koh Chin Peng & Janet	
Mr. Viva Doraisingham	Mr. & Mrs. Chia Kim Teng & Family	
	Mr. & Mrs. Peter B. T. Lee	
ss Lucy Lau		Mr. E. K. Liew
	LOVE	Doreen & Victor ✓
ss Helen Tio	Sharon, Esther, & Tham Yew Kee	Mr. & Mrs. Chia Nam Meng & Family
Min & Family	Dr. Mathy Doraisingham	
& Family	Mr. & Mrs. E. K. Khoo	
nily	Dr. & Mrs. Winston Ee & Family	Mr. & Mrs. Goh Peng Hian
Guan & Family	Mr. Albert Lim	Mr. & Mrs. Choo Kum Seng
ng	Miss Lim Swee Khoo	Mr. & Mrs. Ong Kim Siong & Family
Mrs. Wee Eng Hock	Joh, Nancy, Yulin	
Hoon Chew	Mr. & Mrs. Yip Kam Choong & Family	Dianna & Daniel Koh
Hock & Family	Dr. & Mrs. Khor Tong Hong	⊙

Is the Church only a Gospel Battleship invading and bombarding the country of the enemy?

As with Mission we have to go back to Christ in order to discover the truth about the Church because in the days of Jesus he, and he alone was the Church.

The Church is the Community of Christ who LISTENS,
MINISTERS TO,
SERVES,
SUFFERS, and above all
LOVES NEIGHBOUR AND ENEMY

Is this a picture of your/my church?

THE WORLD. The latest figures show that the only major religion which is growing as fast as the birth-rate is islam,

Christianity is growing rapidly in Africa south of the Sahara but in other continents shows little real growth.

The largest element growing in the world Christian community is that of the 'new' churches. The old main-line churches seem to be either stagnant or in decline.

Ritualistic religion appears to have the strongest attraction.

Is God grafting 'new shoots' on to the Vine? Is He rejecting the old shoots as he rejected Israel? (See Romans 11)

Leaven/yeast needs dough in order to be productive, when leaven is put into dough it does not just produce more heaven but bread.

The Christian at Mission in the world produces what?

SINGAPORE. The 1980 census figures give us a nationwide view of the whole religious scene.

It tells us where the Church is from Monday to Saturday.

It lives in the private flat or house away from the multitude.

It speaks mainly English to a mainly non-English-speaking community.

It works in the Manager's office ... it may work very, very hard but at some considerable distance from the majority of the workforce.

Despite its small size it occupies more than one third of the desks at the University.

Perhaps when all is said and done it lives in a world all by itself.

BEING WITH CHRIST. The Church can only engage in Mission when it is WITH Christ In the World. Being with Christ OUTSIDE the World is not Mission. Being in the world WITHOUT Christ is not Mission. Christ is where he has always been, that is he is with the outcast, the homeless, the prostitute, the less respectable people, the non-conformists and those in rebellion against the power holders and power-structures of the world. Of course, he ended up on a cross, which is where you might end up if you really want to be with him.

If you need prayer support or pastoral care, please let Pastor know. You may give him a call or send him a note.

EDITORIAL

Christmas Day!

What an exciting time for festive celebrations by every one, both Christians and non-Christians. Everywhere shops and departmental stores are gaily decorated with lights. Christmas nowadays is so commercialised that many of us Christians have lost sight of the significance of Christmas.

Let us be reminded that Christmas Day is a holy day - the day in which our Lord and Saviour was born. "For God so loved the world that he sent his only Son." It is this love which sets us apart from others. Christians are unique and the uniqueness of Christianity is the conviction that God is love revealed in Jesus Christ.

And just as the brightly decorated lights illuminate all over the world during Christmas, Jesus Christ was light who came to illuminate this dark world some two thousand years ago.

God loves each one of us. His love is beyond measure and he loves us whether we know it or not. Whether we let it affect our lives or not depends on us; for God has taken the first step.

On this special day let us renew our commitment to God who gave His Son and to our Lord and Saviour who gave His all!

I wish each and everyone of you a happy and meaningful Christmas and a Happy New Year !

May God Bless You.

Tham Yew Kee

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May I challenge you to run the race that is set before us by "fixing your eyes on Jesus" (Hebrews 12 : 2)

(C) Prayer Request

At this time, I would appreciate your prayers in the following areas: that I may

- (i) Spend time with God and in His Word and prayer*
- (i) Participate as much as possible with the Team - i.e. getting to know the team members well.*
- (iii) Have alertness of mind and be diligent in my work.*
- (iv) Discipline myself to follow through the study-programme.*

Just like to thank you for all your prayers that carried me through. They do have significance!

God Bless and hope to hear from you !

In His Care,

Pauw Tong,

LETTER

Seah Siow Tong
c/o Operation Mobilisation
Fabriekstraat 63
B-1930 Laventem, Belgium

November, 1st 1982.

Dearly beloved-in-Christ,

Greetings from Laventem - Belgium! The Lord has truly been great to me and I want to praise Him for placing me in O. M. The Conferences are now over and I am adjusting myself to the Laventem Team.

(A) Laventem Team

Office Work (accounting) has already begun, and our study-programme will commence tomorrow! Evangelism work, however is mainly done in the weekends. Since joining the team (about 55 of us altogether) the Lord has given me many new brothers and sisters-in-Christ. They are team members who are accountants, office administrators secretaries, auto-mechanics, house-keepers, and also children! We come from many nations e.g. America, England, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, Holland, Switzerland, Germany Sweden, South Africa, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (Robert and myself) Within the team, there are at the moment 11 couples/families, 11 guys and 7 girls. Quite a bunch, isn't it? Well, God sure put us together to learn from each other for a renewal of the new self - "a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all." - Colossians 3:11. We are thus in the family of God learning compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, etc. through LOVE. That Agape' love through which Christ taught us to have in John 13 : 34,35. We are thus in God's factory. (By the way, 'Fabriekstraat' in Dutch means Factory Street - that is where we live!)

(B) Recent Lesson

One major lesson I have learnt recently is that God requires our heart to be set right with Himself. Hosea 6 : 6 says "I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in knowledge of God rather than burnt offering." God is more concerned with our inner-self that we continuously desire to know Him more! Sometimes it is so easy for us (especially those of us who are long-timers) to be 'conditioned' that we are already 'saved' we just keep on attending church worship, Bible studies, evangelism programme, and take part in various Christian activities, (including O M!) and forgetting that we are to walk in Him. Colossians 2 : 6 That is to live a life of close communion with Him and seeing God working in our lives, rather than our involvement in Christian activities. We should thus meditate on the goodness of God and praise Him evermore!