

# berita **NECF**

## EDITORIAL

# God's heart for our nation



**W**HAT is your dream for Malaysia? Pastors' Fellowships all over the nation are organising combined prayer meetings among churches as well as 24/7 prayer chains in their communities to seek God's favour upon Malaysia. After all, we are moving into Malaysia's Year of Jubilee on 16 September 2012. On this date, which is Malaysia Day, the country marks 49 years and also enters into her 50th year. Christians are urged to seek God's blessings upon the land as recorded in Leviticus 25.

What do we expect God to do in response to our prayers? As I pondered this question, I was reminded of two incidents in the Bible involving the Israelites. In the Old Testament, they cried out to God for release from the Egyptians. They left Egypt in the Exodus led by Moses. But two weeks after crossing the Red Sea, they complained and said they would rather die in Egypt than in the wilderness.

In the second incident, the Israelites in the New Testament sought God to free them from the Romans. But when the Messiah came, they rejected Him. They were looking for an earthly king when God had sent a Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Isaiah reminds us that our ways are not God's ways and that His ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55: 8-9). As we prepare for Jubilee, let us understand His heart for our nation so that we can move accordingly and be responsive to His prompting.

Perhaps many Christians perceive Jubilee to be a time of establishing justice for the people and the nation.

Justice is seen as "standing for what is right and being an advocate for the downtrodden", says Mel Lawrenz in his book Jubilee: A Season of Spiritual Renewal. Justice is God's great movement to put in order what has become disordered in a chaotic world, he further adds. Is this what Malaysian Christians desire to see as one of the Jubilee breakthroughs? Or is this the focus of politicians and social activists? Are Christians supposed to engage the public sphere in addition to the usual focus on evangelism, discipleship, leadership development and mission activities?

For some of us, this calls for a shift in thinking in the way we perceive ministry and missions. While we continue to grow the church through missions

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and evangelism, we are also to mobilise Christians to bless society through the marketplace and government systems.

In the grooming of leaders, aside from training them to serve faithfully in the church, we must guide them to serve with integrity in the area of government and politics, too. The call for the Christian is not to rebel but to exercise a Godly influence in the public sphere.

The church must rise up in this kairos moment with boldness and courage (Joshua 1:7) to impact the nation and community. Leaders of the Christian community must seek to understand God's heart for our nation, lest we fail to respond to His prompting. The work of our hands and our activism in transforming the nation for good governance, people-orientated policies, economic and social well-being of communities and for a corruption-free society, are our prayers to God.

We need to seek God's wisdom to be strategic and effective in our approach. The unity of churches is critical and instrumental in enhancing our impact upon the nation and the local community. God is great and He never fails (Zephaniah 3: 5). Let's not be hasty, yet faithfully follow the steps of our Master as He guides us step by step in honouring our role through the phases of national development. He has raised up men and women in strategic positions for a time like this.

Let's lift up our heads to our Almighty God (Psalm 24:7) and rejoice. As we continually seek Him and faithfully honour Him, God will bring to pass His purpose and plan for our nation. We will be blessed as He blesses the nation through us.

## NECF Malaysia welcomes new members:

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2. Ipoh Baptist Church, Ipoh (Ps Loh Yoke Ming)
3. Vineyard Assembly, Petaling Jaya (Ps Prakash Singh)
4. SIB Kluang, Kluang, Johor (Ps Ahubat Libau)
5. Jesus Loves Fellowship Puchong, Puchong (Ps Johnson Sinnappan)
6. Calvary Assembly, Butterworth (Rev Roland KS Ooi)
7. Immanuel Revival Church, Kuala Lumpur (Ps Alfred Varaperakasom)
8. PJ Grace of God Church, Petaling Jaya (Rev David Paul Raj)
9. Trinity Community Centre, Petaling Jaya (Rev Collin Gordon)
10. Gereja Kristian Serdang Baru, Seri Kembangan, (Chairman Ong Hwee Keng)

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By Rev. Eu Hong Seng

# New word, old enemy

*There is a new battlefield and it is called ineptocracy.*

**P**LOUGH through the Macmillian, Oxford and the Webster's dictionaries and you will not find this word – "ineptocracy". It is believed to have emerged in October 2011, although some claim it was coined as early as 2007.

Ineptocracy is essentially a system of government where the least capable to lead are elected by the least capable of producing; and where the members of society least likely to sustain themselves or succeed are rewarded with goods and services paid for by the confiscated wealth of a diminishing number of producers.<sup>1</sup>

Some call this "social terminal-ism."

It has been claimed that unless some presidents and prime ministers are removed, many countries will be headed for ineptocracy. Against the backdrop of economic catastrophes and political upheaval, whether in Europe or the Middle East, inept leadership that panders to populism clearly plays a hand in rendering many nations catatonic today.

Unfortunately, this disease is not confined to countries. Churches can be dupes of ineptocracy as well.

Sadly, this phenomenon is not new. In Scripture, as early as Exodus 32, when the crowd danced and demanded a golden calf, Aaron succumbed to the power of numbers. With Moses absent, Aaron fell victim to overpowering persuasion of the crowd. Being "the voice" or the designated leader does not necessarily mean one is not inept. No doubt seasoned as a priest and mentored by the best, this anointed leader failed.

How a people and their leader, with such rich history and encounters with the Almighty, could sink into the abyss of ineptocracy holds both rich lessons and warnings for the modern-day Church.

In His wisdom, God may cause the Mosaic leadership of a church to step aside so that we can see the rise of the next generation of leaders. Tragically, what is seen may not always be a pretty sight.

What we call "transitioning" in many of our churches is more often than not a mere bungling, listless handover. The baton is passed, but the mantle is not.

While much is taught about the prodigal son, I believe there needs to be equal concern over prodigal fathers and leaders who have failed and are ill-equipped to handle

the emerging challenges and moral onslaughts in this new era. The lack of good old-fashion emphasis on godliness and the centrality of the cross in our preaching are all too obvious.

Having congregations who "love to have it so" (Jeremiah 5:31) does not help. This malady is often compounded by a leadership that does its own thing, no longer showing the "same diligence" and which has "become sluggish" (Hebrews 6: 11-12, NKJV) in its last lap of ministry.

Ineptocracy is not solely a top-down disorder; it has its roots in the people's waywardness. Nehemiah 9:17 recounts the intention of the people under Aaron - they wanted a leader to lead them back to bondage.

*"They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of Your wonders that You did among them. But they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage."  
Nehemiah 9:17*

Similarly, today's congregations clamour for simplistic and instant solutions to living their faith. An iPad generation has emerged, believing things can be solved with a touch or a swipe. Left, then right, if not, just re-set. This attitude coupled with ineptitude leads to a myriad of social injuries. Indeed, it is rightly defined as social terminal-ism.

As the Church grows, the need for godly, principled and uncompromising leadership has never been greater. Unfortunately, we hear of churches being led by inept leaders, armchair committees, theorists and spiritual consultants with suspect track records, and even by simpletons. If left unchecked, the Church is doomed to implode.

Without godly wisdom, competency and prophetic foresight, the evolving drama playing out on the secular stage with its basket case economies and political turmoil may be an unfortunate mirror of what can happen to our worship centers.

May God grant us discernment, objectivity and wisdom to deal with what confronts us.

<sup>1</sup> As defined in [www.urbandictionary.com](http://www.urbandictionary.com)



40-Day Fast & Prayer launch at the Rumah Doa church in Tawau.

## “This is God’s doing”

**T**HERE seems to have been a convergence in prayer in the last few months! NECF, which stays in touch with prayer networks around the country, began to notice an aligning of prayer initiatives and campaigns, all focusing on the same plea – for God to revive His Church and transform Malaysia!

It has been exciting to see the prayer groups of various denominations all picking up on the same theme of national transformation. The spiritual focus is clear – there is the 13th General Election on the horizon and the 49th anniversary of Malaysia Day on 16 September, when Malaysia will also enter her Jubilee (50th) year. The election will be a definitive moment in Malaysia’s history, and her Jubilee a time for Christians to be God’s vessels of renewal, restoration and release in all spheres of society.

NECF announced Hope of Jubilee as the 2012 theme of the 40-Day Fast & Prayer campaign earlier this year. On 1 August, we launched the campaign at the Sungei Way Methodist Church (SSMC) to a full-capacity crowd. Prayers that night focused on revival of the church, national transformation and a clean, fair and peaceful general election. The campaign was also launched in different churches in other states across Malaysia. Fasting and prayer began on 7 August and will end on 15 September. It will climax with the Hope of Jubilee Celebration on the following day, Malaysia Day, at Full Gospel Tabernacle (FGT) Subang Jaya.

Prior to the launch, the leaders of a few Klang Valley churches (SSMC, FGT, SIB KL, FGA KL and DUMC) felt led to unite in prayer. They took turns to host combined prayer meetings over five weeks from June. These mass gatherings drew believers from different churches together in corporate prayer for the nation.

And in a historic moment for Protestant churches here, representatives from 19 churches and prayer networks across the country gathered on 5 July to form ‘Prayer United’, the first inter-denominational prayer movement dedicated to praying for national transformation. The chairman of Prayer United is Bishop of the Methodist Church Malaysia, Rev Dr Hwa Yung and the joint secretariat is coordinated by NECF and the Council of Churches Malaysia (CCM). Prayer United aims to coordinate prayer and enhance unity among Christians, and to challenge the whole church to pray together for the elections and Malaysia’s Jubilee. It even made news headlines!<sup>1</sup>

“This is God’s doing. Many have tried for the longest time to form a nationwide prayer network but it hasn’t happened until now,” said Rev Andy Chi, the NECF Executive Secretary for Prayer at the Hope of Jubilee launch.

What do these developments tell us? “God can, God wants to and God will restore truth, righteousness and justice to this land, because that is His nature,” said Pastor Dr Ng Swee Ming of SSMC. “But there are conditions,” Ng added. “The church must return to unity, holiness and prayer.”

The church is beginning to set aside differences and to stand in unity. May we not falter in this! Next, we need to repent of our selfishness and indifference to the problems in Malaysia. Then the church must pray like never before and take action through transformative works. This exhortation has been made before. Will we act this time?

.....  
<sup>1</sup> *Unprecedented nationwide prayer for M’sia Day and GE, Malaysiakini, 1 Aug 2012*

# Vote wisely, vote for a better Malaysia

The following is an edited version the Christian Federation of Malaysia's (CFM) letter to churches and Christians on the coming 13th General Election. It was first published on the NECF website on 18 July 2012.

In Genesis 1 and 2, we read of two separate accounts of God giving Adam rule and authority over the earth and all that live in it. In Matthew 5: 13-15, Christians are told that they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

These passages and the collective message of our Holy Scripture point to the conclusion that Christians have a duty to protect and safeguard the earth and all that live in it. Christians have rights of leadership and also the responsibility of stewardship.

In the context of the nation state, Christians, like other citizens, have the right to participate in the democratic process of a country. This right to participate must be balanced with the responsibility of exercising that right, and to do so wisely.

CFM therefore encourages all Christians to be conscious of their political rights - to vote, and to use the power of the vote to elect a government that will ensure justice with equity for the well-being of our nation. The CFM is not politically motivated nor does it endorse any one political party.

It is of fundamental importance in a democracy, that citizens actually exercise their right to vote. Having the right to vote without utilising it is of little use. Voting ensures that every Malaysian participates in bringing about a more just and equitable Malaysia for succeeding generations to come.

**In our vision for a better Malaysia, CFM encourages Malaysian Christians to think about the following priorities:**

- *A nation guided by the ethics of respect for human dignity.* This means a nation where citizens are engaged fairly as equals, and their rights respected in accordance with the provisions as guaranteed under the Federal Constitution. Such a nation treats its citizens with understanding, honesty and mutual respect.
- *A nation where extremism of all kinds is rejected and quickly curtailed.* Racial and religious bigotry, manipulation and lies that have come to define the social sphere, the print media and political posturing must end immediately.
- *A nation free of corruption, putting in place strengthened*

*state and public institutions* whose members conduct themselves with integrity, transparency and accountability.

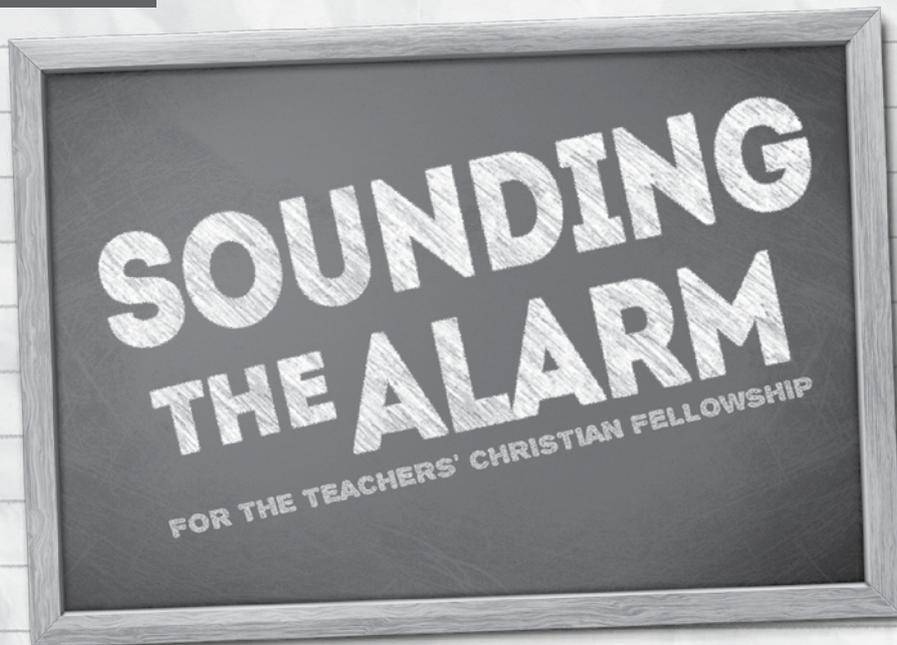
- *A nation that works towards the fair and equitable distribution of wealth and ensures well-being for all, regardless of citizenship status, ethnicity or creed.* Every citizen and every community should be empowered and enabled to pursue economic activity and achieve advancement duly and fairly, supported by the government where needed and necessary, without favour or discrimination and without being overly or unfairly supported by the state.
- *A nation where care for the environment* is privileged over self-seeking capitalism and where its political leaders weigh all decisions with ecological interest and sustainability as an essential aspect of development.
- *A nation where language and education are de-linked from political expedience.*
- *A nation where elitism and inequality is not rampant* and people are recognised and respected as human beings and not discriminated against due to social position, educational attainment, political beliefs, gender, race or religion.
- *A nation where the religious freedom to profess, practice and propagate one's religion is allowed* to flourish without undue curtailment from the law, restrictions or even prohibition.

Pray for good leaders to emerge from the elections who will not only fulfil the above criteria, but who have the interest of our beloved nation and its people as their first and only priority.

Churches have a responsibility to help guide their congregations to use their wisdom in the exercise of their right to vote in order to bring about a nation where all Malaysians, and those who choose to make their living in this country, can live in harmony and prosperity, peace and justice.

May the grace and the peace of God be with you.

*Bishop Datuk Ng Moon Hing  
Chairman and the Executive Committee  
Christian Federation of Malaysia*



**T**HE Teachers' Christian Fellowship (TCF) of Malaysia had its 50th anniversary last year. As we enter a new decade of ministry, the stark reality of our status quo is alarming. Our membership nationwide is only 980 members! And more than 55% of them are above age 55 and only 5% are below age 30! TCF is in dire straits and the implications are serious for all concerned with children/youth work, education, nation-building and Kingdom-building.

TCF staff comprising its General-Secretary, Indyrany Kannaiya, Kua Kun Han and Nga Johnson have been networking with the Pastors' Fellowships of Subang Jaya, Rawang and Kelang.

On 23 Feb 2012, they met with the Love Subang Pastors' Fellowship at the EFC Gospel Centre in USJ One. A total of 20 people were present representing 13 churches in Subang Jaya. On 29 March 2012, TCF staff also met with the Rawang Pastors' Fellowship at Mecathind Glorious Tabernacle and the Klang Pastors' Fellowship at Wesley Methodist School on 19 April 2012.

We shared about the ministry of TCF and challenged pastors to see teaching as a ministry. We urged them to bring the same challenge to their congregations. We also updated them about the current window of opportunity to start Christian Fellowships (CFs) and SPM Bible Knowledge (BK) classes in government schools. This kairos moment is made possible because of two circulars from the Ministry of Education in 2011 allowing these to take place. However, not enough churches, Christian parents and students are stepping up to the challenge.

TCF urges pastors and churches to play their role, firstly, by appreciating the following:

1. *The urgent need for the pastors to rethink missions, evangelism and discipleship.*
2. *The reasons why schools must not be neglected as mission fields.*
3. *The serious implications for the Malaysian*

*church at large with the decline of Christian teachers.*

We have found that many pastors are not exposed to the work of TCF. We hope they can see that the future of TCF is linked to the future of the churches. The crisis points on our interlinked future are:

1. *What happens to TCF if there is a decline in the number of Christian teachers?*
2. *How will this decline affect churches in terms of church leadership (especially in rural churches)?*
3. *This decline will also decrease the number of Kingdom and nation builders. The impact will be felt on Malaysian churches and in the marketplace.*

TCF provides resource materials to teachers via the IN STEP magazine, CF handbooks, CDs and DVDs on TCF seminars, materials and latest circulars on the teaching of BK in schools and publications to encourage teachers in the country. TCF is grateful for our invaluable partnerships with Scripture Union, the Fellowship of Evangelical Students, Malayan Christian Schools Council, Asian Beacon and NECF in the building of God's kingdom in Malaysia. Now, we look forward to a new partnership with the various pastors' networks and fellowships around the country. Pastors, if you would like to invite our team over, do contact Kua Kun Han at 016-3909495 or email her at [kuamickey@gmail.com](mailto:kuamickey@gmail.com).

*The above report was contributed by TCF. NECF recently issued a pastoral letter to churches urging them to collaborate with TCF and Scripture Union to set up CFs and BK classes in schools. More details on how to do so are also available at [www.necf.org.my](http://www.necf.org.my) under the article "Window of opportunity for school CFs and SPM Bible Knowledge classes". TCF is contactable at tel/fax: 03-56375623 and email: [tcfmy@pd.jaring.my](mailto:tcfmy@pd.jaring.my). Visit their website at [www.tcf.org](http://www.tcf.org) and Facebook under "TCF Malaysia".*

# GDOP 2012: Call to unity for the Malaysian church

**T**HE Global Day of Prayer (GDOP) on 27 May 2012 coincided with Pentecost Sunday. Malaysian Christians were called to transformation – and for this change to begin with themselves first and in their churches.

“Judgement begins in the house of the God. Before God judges nations, He will judge the Church first. How can a righteous God judge the nations if he does not judge his people first?” said Rev Andy Chi, Executive Secretary of the NECF Prayer Commission, when delivering the message at the main GDOP event in SIB KL in Petaling Jaya.

Pastors and members of different churches present were asked to repent of the sins that kept churches in disunity: quarrelling, self-righteousness, pride, gossip. Many pastors came forward in an impromptu altar call and knelt in tearful prayer as people in the congregation prayed for repentance and forgiveness. Leaders and members alike were urged to make peace with those whom they had hurt or whom they were hurt by.

Unity among churches and Christians is crucial if the Malaysian Church is to have spiritual authority in praying for and leading the nation’s healing and transformation. “We want the Lord to heal our land of all its wickedness and dysfunctions, but we ourselves are not broken enough. As a Malaysian Church we are not united enough in prayer,” said Pastor Dr Lew Lee Choo, SIB KL’s Deputy Senior Pastor.

The focus of GDOP 2012 was on praying for change in accordance with God’s character as our Restorer, Redeemer, Rebuilder and Rewarder. Numerous GDOP gatherings were held in various churches across Malaysia for the week of 21–27 May.



*NECF Secretary-General Rev Chan Theam Lai opening the GDOP event.*



*Pastors answering the altar call.*



# Understanding true Jubilee

By Eugene Yapp

**O**NE question we encountered when promoting the Hope of Jubilee theme in praying for Malaysia is whether we are taking the correct biblical approach on Jubilee. Some have asked if Jubilee as outlined in Leviticus 25 is still applicable since Jesus Christ has already fulfilled it (Luke 4).

So what does the Old Testament (OT) law of the Jubilee mean to ordinary Christians like you and me in the context of modern Malaysia? The key rests in understanding what God intended the law of the Jubilee to be.

According to Leviticus 25, the Jubilee year is a year of consecration. During that year, no harvest or crops are to be cultivated and no work is to be done. The people were to keep holy and all property forfeited due to debts were to be returned to the original owners. All debts were to be cancelled and all slaves were to be freed. This mechanism was provided to even out inequalities and to prevent the people of God from descending into excessive poverty.

For Malaysia, the nation is about to enter into her 50th year of existence as a nation-state. If Christians in Malaysia are to grasp the appropriate significance of Jubilee, we need to bear in mind that it is not a form of prosperity gospel. It is not about God unlocking His blessings and pouring them out on the church or the nation so that we may have material abundance. Nor do we expect an overnight miracle with all social ills and societal problems disappearing immediately. To expect this is premature and would imply we have seriously misunderstood what the OT law of the Jubilee really means and how it relates to us as Christians in Malaysia.

Rather, we should see in the Jubilee, God's blue-print, His vision and design of what a harmonious society should

be and how it is to function. It is not so much about God pouring out His blessings directly on the church as it is a model of what the church ought to do and how Christians ought to live and witness. In doing and living out God's design and vision as encapsulated in the law of the Jubilee, we inevitably become a channel of God's blessings upon Malaysia's people, all communities, society at large and the nation. And as the nation is blessed, Christians as citizens of the nation will in turn be blessed.

Allow me to share three aspects of God's design for the nation as found in the OT law of the Jubilee.

Firstly, Jubilee speaks of redemption for both the individual and society. In speaking about redemption, what needs to be borne in mind is that salvation is multi-faceted. Redemption is not only the salvation of the soul or the individual but encompasses all of creation (Ephesians 1:10). Hence, we see the Jubilee provision for bond slaves who are serving their masters to be set free unconditionally without the need for compensation or restitution.

In line with this very theme, the church and Christians must therefore pray for liberty and freedom from discrimination and oppression in this nation. It is for this reason that the NECF 40-Day Fast and Prayer booklet highlights the plight of those who have been treated unjustly, often under circumstances of discrimination and oppression. It has been observed that "conditions of physical infrastructure and basic public facilities in Sabah and Sarawak were also far worse off than in peninsular Malaysia. Natives in East Malaysia, especially those without any education qualifications, also encounter multifaceted challenges in adjusting to modernity and are disempowered in dealing with the encroachment of their customary land by operators of state-government sanctioned development projects and

logging activities”<sup>1</sup>.

Confronted with such harsh realities, the OT Jubilee therefore challenges each of us to work and contribute in whatever ways possible towards bringing redemption in terms of alleviating such circumstances for these people.

Secondly, the law of the Jubilee speaks of reconciliation. In the social structure of OT Israel, we find that those who lose their property due to debt are forced into a life of servitude. This state of affairs is reversed during the year of the Jubilee. This reversal of relationship exhibits a form of reconciliation. Where one was at first a slave, he or she becomes fellow citizen of equal standing after the Jubilee. It signals a new beginning for the slave now turned into a free person.

Likewise, the OT Jubilee informs Christians in Malaysia to take up the ministry of reconciliation in addressing issues of polarisation and division. Some of these problems have arisen from the mishandling of social-economic policies resulting in unequal and unjust distribution of resources and wealth. As a practical example, some researchers opine that our national policies have been effective in eradicating poverty and nurturing the growth of a new Malay middle class but have not been so effective in doing the same for other Bumiputera communities. The statistics reveal the following:

*In 2008, the Bumiputera constitute about 52% of professional and managerial category of employment, and 65% of skilled as well as semi-skilled workers. The positive impact of NEP on non-Malay Bumiputera, unfortunately, was not of comparable scale. According to the 1999 Household Income Survey, poverty rate among Kadazandusun, Bajau and Murut in Sabah and Bidayuh (as well as among other Orang Ulu) in Sarawak remains high. In 2009, the incidence of poverty among Orang Asli communities was 50%. According to the 9th Malaysia Plan Mid-term Review, the incidences of hardcore poverty in 2007 were 3.7% and 0.7% respectively in Sabah and Sarawak while it was 0.3 in Peninsular Malaysia. Sabah and Sarawak also have higher incidences of overall poverty (16% and 4.2% respectively in 2007) than peninsular Malaysia (2.3%)<sup>2</sup>.*

Inevitably, disparities in economic and social standing creates gaps in social relations. We become divided into “the haves and have-nots”.

But the Jubilee inspires hope; the hope where the church and Christians are moved to bring the message and actions of reconciliation by bridging the divide through works of love, compassion and mercy to those in need.

Thirdly, the Jubilee speaks of restoration. The OT law of Jubilee makes provisions for those who have lost property

or assets, and even their social standing, to be restored to their original position come the 50th year. Thus, those who have lost their land during the years before the Jubilee are entitled to have their land returned to their family for posterity during Jubilee.

Such an act of restoration would definitely remind Christians of the hope of glory that we will see in the afterlife (Ephesians 1: 11-12; 18). All that we have lost due to sin will be restored and made anew in the new heaven and the new earth. But Paul reminds Christians that salvation not only has a goal, the time when all things are completed in Christ, but that it is also a process - the “eschatological remainder” where God is unfolding and bringing to pass that which He has purposed in Himself for the world.

Today, in this period of the Malaysian church’s journey, we are witnessing how God is beginning to shake the authorities for the good and betterment of national life. In early August, the High Court ruled in favour of 49 Orang Asli who are Christians in a case involving the lands of the Orang Laut in Stulang Laut and Kuala Masai where their chapel had been demolished by the authorities.

To many a cynic, this judgement was somewhat unexpected. But the fact that the court did so augurs well for justice. As expected, the State Director of the Land and Mines Department was unsatisfied with the decision and has filed an appeal. The appeal was to be heard on 7 August but as it happened, the State Director withdrew the appeal with costs ordered against him. The State Legal Advisor of Johor had also approached the Orang Asli to settle the payment of compensation without further court proceedings which will include full compensation for the demolished chapel.

We rejoice with our Christian Orang Asli brothers and sisters as such an event represents a comprehensive victory for them. But beyond this and more importantly, this is a sign of the kingdom at hand! It brings inspiration and the hope of actualisation in the very prayer the Lord taught his disciples, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”. It is God bringing to bear His own order of the day and His ways in the affairs of the nation in this the “eschatological remainder”. And the church and Christians have the privilege and honour of participating together in this great re-ordering!

And so, Christians today have the Hope of Jubilee; a blessing premised upon an OT occasion that serves as a model for the church in prayer and in action as effective agents of redemption, of reconciliation and of restoration to every human need, for the furtherance of His kingdom and the glory of His Great name!

God bless the church and Malaysia come Jubilee!

<sup>1</sup> Dr Helen Ting, “Nation Building in Malaysia: Current Issues and Concerns”, paper presented on the occasion of 1st National BoC Consultation, Reconciliation and National Building, 23rd July 2012, 5

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5

# Ordinary Women With Extraordinary Stories

**W**HAT do two missionaries, a politician, a mother to a Down's Syndrome child, a rheumatoid arthritis patient, and a corporate trainer have in common?

All six are Malaysian women who consider themselves ordinary in most ways. But all experienced life-changing journeys which testify of God's power in their lives.

Their stories are compiled in *Ordinary Women With Extraordinary Stories*, a new book published by the NECF Women's Commission. The book was launched on 30 June 2012 in a simple ceremony.

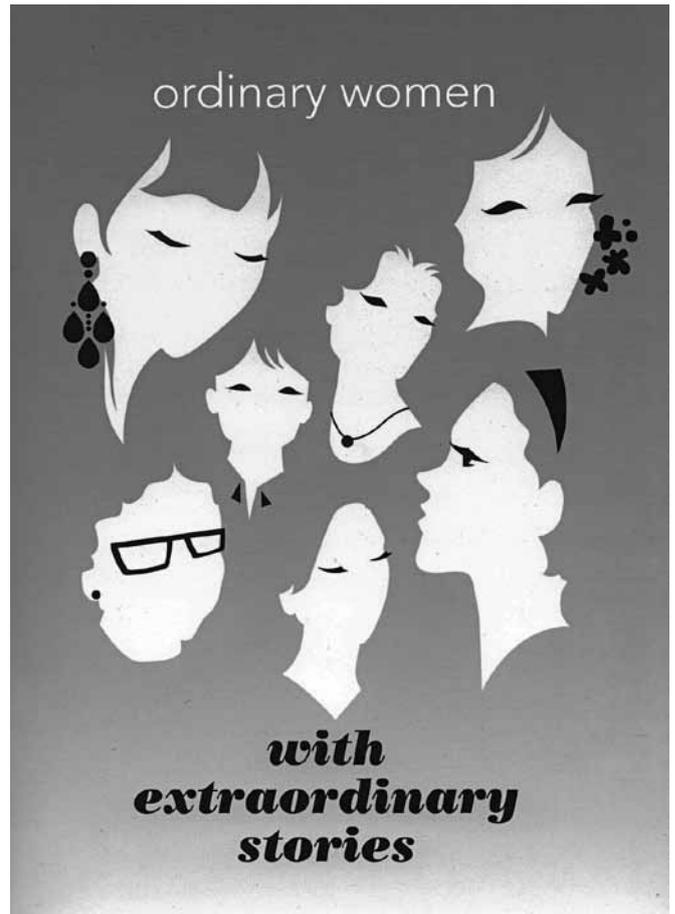
NECF Secretary-General Rev Chan Theam Lai, who opened the ceremony, said women had an undeniable impact on society and the family. "For all they are and what they have done, women are still not fully recognised and appreciated," he said.

Women's Commission chairperson Grace Hee said the commission had wanted to compile stories of women's journeys to encourage all Christian women to see themselves as "daughters of destiny".

The idea for the book first came about in 2009 as a way to encourage personal development for women. As ordinary women allow themselves to be used by God, they become extraordinary and bring blessing to those around them. "In this way, personal development connects to the larger picture of nation-building, which is the NECF overall agenda," said Hee.

Hee also authored one of the stories. Other writers are Ruth Cheah, Rosaline Yong, Hannah Yeoh, Teresa Chai and Susan Chan. Their stories show different facets of issues women face by virtue of being mothers, wives, or even as singles. Their diverse backgrounds and fields of work also show how they handle societal or church expectations of women.

*Ordinary Women With Extraordinary Stories* costs RM3 per copy. Download the order form from [www.necf.org.my](http://www.necf.org.my) or email [enquiries@necf.org.my](mailto:enquiries@necf.org.my) to place orders.



The writers with Rev Chan (right) and Samuel Ang



Rev Chan with Women's Commission chair Grace Hee



# Changing Lives Through Sports

By Tan Kian Aun, IpohBUG Secretary

*Photos courtesy of IpohBug*

**F**OR the last four years, youths have been coming in droves to the Army Rangers' Camp along Tambun Road in Ipoh every Sunday evening. It's football time, even during the month of Ramadan. At every gathering, at least 50 youths from various ethnic backgrounds turn up to play.

Welcome to the IpohBUG, acronym for Ipoh Big Ultimate Games. It began with a group of youth workers who had a burden for impacting youths in Ipoh. It grew, first as an inter-church youth group event, and then as an inter-denominational church telematch. As it became popular, those behind it decided to target youths beyond the reach of youth fellowships and church groups. Football and ultimate frisbee were popular with youths and provided a common platform for outreach.



IpohBUG comprises people from various denominations and is funded by those who volunteer in the ministry. Initially, the games were held at the YMCA Ipoh field. As more people came to know about it, new activities were added and games were held at various locations around Ipoh. Today, it is recognised by the NECF Youth Commission or YouthNet as an outreach and discipleship tool.

There is no preaching, but on the field, kicking a football around or tossing a frisbee, ministry workers and coaches are able to connect with the youths. Lifestyle coaching is also incorporated to teach the youths Kingdom values. These include good sportsmanship, respect for rules and personal integrity, not taught in theory but lived out through sports.

As an inter-denominational ministry, IpohBUG is not anchored by any particular church. The Ipoh churches, however, network closely with one another to follow up with new believers according to locality. IpohBUG is not set up to do follow ups or bible studies and worship, and thus requires the participation of youth fellowships and churches in the area. IpohBUG is also not promoted as a Christian activity, although the fact that it is run by Christians with biblical values is not hidden from parents.

Currently, IpohBUG runs weekly training that includes football, badminton and tennis. It has participated in the local football league and also conducts numerous friendly matches with local teams. Two private schools have even approached IpohBUG to take over their sports training!

With its growing popularity, more funds and workers are needed. There are opportunities to grow the work but due to the lack of workers and funds, things are moving slowly. IpohBUG continues to believe that in God and through God, all things are possible. It is our desire that lives be changed, both physically and spiritually, through sports.

# Child Theology: A new approach to doing church

By Melissa Chan

THERE was a time when Christian missions was abuzz with the phrase, “the 10-40 window”. Today, the ‘buzz’ is now “4-14”. If seminaries once sought to promote Systemic Theology, today, the idea of Child Theology is catching on. But 4-14 is not a geographical window on the world map. And Child Theology is not the theology of children. So, what is it?

Research has shown that people between ages four and 14 are most tender and open to the Gospel, making them the most fertile ground to sow. However, many decisions in policies and endeavours are made without children in the picture. Services and sermons are catered to the needs of adults. Missions, too.

This is where Child Theology invites Christians to rethink how we do missions, how we do church and how we do ministry. It is not about promoting or championing children and youth ministry per se. It is about always being conscious of having children in the midst of us and that they, too, have a role in the Kingdom of God, not merely as receivers, but as active ministers.

NECF’s initiative in inviting Dr Keith White<sup>1</sup> and key thinkers in the area of Child Theology as well as initiators of the 4-14 movement for a consultation is admirable. The one-and-a-half day consultation seminar, held in June 2012, was helpful in creating awareness and an avenue for discussion.

As the discussion unfolded, it was evident that the participants were not yet all on the same page. Some were just beginning to grasp what child theology is. Some seemed to think the concern was to promote the importance of children’s ministry. Some (maybe it’s just me!) were trying to recall who was who and where they were from, in order to understand how different components and ministry leaders should synergise under child theology! The sessions were informative if not rather conceptual and abstract and the question of how to implement or apply all that was discussed, was left unanswered. The small group discussions, though animated, lacked general direction and conclusion.

Nonetheless, one key issue raised and driven home was that the Christian community has for too long diminished the role and importance of children in the body of Christ. However, to come away from this consultation with only the conclusion that Children and Youth Ministries are important and should be given due priority is too simplistic and misses the point. We must instead, realise that our church and mission policies are skewed. Our services, ministries prayer



Dr. Keith White

meetings are planned without considering the presence and participation of children. The labourers are fewer in number because we have neglected children as partners or as “co-workers”.

Child Theology reminds us to consider the child put in our midst by Jesus<sup>2</sup>. Not so that they become the key focus of all ministries but simply to highlight that the church has pushed children to a corner when they are actually ubiquitous to the body of Christ.

Where do we go with this understanding of Child Theology and the 4-14 window? Perhaps the first step would be to continue to cast the vision to Christian leaders, especially senior leadership and seminaries, rebranding the consultation so that it is not deemed as only a children and youth ministry concern. It is not. It is the concern of the whole body of Christ. For a child was placed in the midst of the disciples to draw attention to the Kingdom of God (Matthew 18).

*About the writer: Melissa Chan is a scientist turned pastoral intern, serving in Community Baptist Church PJ, as its Church Wide Youth Pastor. She prefers Milo to coffee, is fascinated by Church History, and still wonders why people like sashimi!*

<sup>1</sup> Dr Keith White is a director of the Child Theology Movement (CTM), a global movement that works through consultation to create awareness and discussion about the significance of children in theological development for all aspects of the Church’s life and mission. White is trained in literature, theology, sociology, child development, social work and community development. He lectures at Spurgeon’s College, UK and at the Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary in Penang. He also preaches and writes.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 18: 1-5. Jesus answered his disciples’ question on who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven by placing a child amongst them.

# The 4/14 Window of Opportunity

By Arun Charles



*Little ones in praise and worship*



*Praying for South America*

**C**HILDREN between the ages of four and 14 number around 2.3 billion and represent the largest unreached people group in the world. At this age, they are most open to the Gospel compared to older children and youths, and many who come to believe in Christ do so within this window.

On 14 April 2012, a Global 4/14 Day of fasting and prayer for children of this age group was held worldwide. In Malaysia, the event was hosted by the Children's House of Prayer Malaysia (C-HOP).

It was heart-warming to see many young children turn up with their parents. A number of children from orphanages from as far as Seremban and Johor also joined the event at the Community Baptist Church, Petaling Jaya. When hearts are willing and eager, Jesus never fails to show up! From the start of worship led by a team of youths right to the very end, the sweet presence of God was evident.

Some children, as young as three and four, thanked Jesus for His goodness in their lives. The children also stood on a large world map spread on the floor and led by NECF Prayer Commission Executive Secretary, Rev Andy Chi, they prayed for the nations.

Indeed, the 4/14 window is open for us to reach in and sow the reality of Christ. This is a generation waiting to receive Him. We need to seize the day!

# Intentional Leadership Learning

By Patrick Cheng

**M**OST participants at the recent Eagles Leadership Conference (ELC) were below the age of 50, with the bulk in the 31-50 age range. This is an encouraging sign of second echelon leaders stepping up to lead the church of the future.

To that end, the ELC, which is a collaboration between the NECF Leadership Commission and the Eagles Leadership Institute (ELI) Singapore, held in June the first in a series of three conferences under a three-year leadership development framework. The younger participants included a few pastors and pastors' kids. There were also many lay church leaders.

"Leading Self" was the focus of the first ELC. The "Daily Office", an eight-week daily devotional booklet, was selected to help participants examine their inner lives for unhealthy spirituality, false self, baggage from dysfunctional family upbringing and other areas of brokenness. Dr John Ng, President of ELI, has found this tool so good that he has completed five cycles of this inner examination and still wants to do more.

After the conference, ELC participants were also given assignments as part of continuing their leadership development. They were given CD messages on Emotional Health, Cope Better with Stress and Corruption Compromises Character and are required to engage with the topics by writing a reflection paper. They also have to read the book "Dim Sum Leadership" and write a paper on its application.

The writing assignments are meant to help participants connect the issues to their own observations, previous experience or recent learning. The ELC employed this process of writing and reflection for all participants who had to pen down what they learned during the two-day conference in a 500-word reflection paper. Here are a couple of their reflections, used with their permission:

"One important principle that I have learnt [is] ... to be transparent and to be honest in all my dealings with people above, below and on the same level with me...to master the skill to state my own beliefs and values to those who disagree with me without becoming adversarial..." – Kwong See

"...God has reminded me [about] "Being with Him" [rather than] "Doing for Him". The emphasis is on the importance of meeting God in solitude and silence on a daily basis. This will help me to be consistently conscious of God throughout my daily life and to ensure that my inner person is able to slow down enough to focus on Christ. Don't let our quiet time become too routine until we fail to sense the presence of God." – Vivian Tan

We trust that the 150 participants from over 40 churches and organisations will grow in this three-year journey of self and leadership development so that the Malaysian Church will be stronger in its witness and outreach.

*Note: Those keen to participate in next year's leadership training are requested to email [patrick@necf.org.my](mailto:patrick@necf.org.my) for details.*

*"Leading Self" was the focus of the first ELC. The "Daily Office", an eight-week daily devotional booklet, was selected to help participants examine their inner lives for unhealthy spirituality, false self, baggage from dysfunctional family upbringing and other areas of brokenness.*

Yet I am writing you a new command, its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. 1 John 2:8



**Music for Malaysia's Jubilee!**

DOA MALAYSIA is a new album of songs on the theme of praying for the nation's Jubilee. Written by Malaysian Gospel singer-songwriter Patrick Leong and other local talents, it was launched in mid-August 2012. Get a copy and welcome Malaysia's 50th year with praise and worship! Sold at Canaanland, Chosen Treasure, Salvation and Burning Bush stores.

# Announcements

**prophetic intercession**  
RAISING A PROPHETIC GENERATION

Join the NECF Prayer Retreat and Seminar from September 13-16, 2012 which will culminate in the Hope of Jubilee Celebration.

Speaking at these events is Pr Julius Suubi, founder and director of Highway of Holiness Ministries International. This ministry is at the forefront of prayer revival in Kenya and is characterized by great anointing of prayer, prophecy, deliverance and healing. Pr Suubi's passion is to bring the nations back to God. He runs a 24/7 prayer tower in the heart of Nairobi city where intercession for nations of the world takes place. His work includes establishing prayer altars in different countries such as Uganda, Zambia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, South Korea, Australia and many others.

DATE	EVENT	TIME	VENUE
13-14 Sept (Thur - Fri)	Pastors & Prayer Leaders Retreat	6.00 pm (13/9) - 11.00 am (14/9)	Peacehaven
15 Sept (Sat)	Prayer Seminar	9.00 am - 1.00 pm	FGT, Subang
16 Sept (Sun)	Hope of Jubilee Celebration	7.00 pm	FGT, Subang

For more info please call NECF at 03-7732 8322

Name (Dr/Pt/Mr/Mrs/Ms): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Church / Ministry: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tel (Home/HP): \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

My registration:  Pastors & Prayer Leaders Retreat - RM 35  Prayer Seminar - RM 10  
 Cheque Payable to: NECF A/C 2 - Please attach registration slip with cheque  
 Cash bank in: NECF A/C 2, Public Bank Bhd Acc no: 314-089-9635  
 Please photocopy/scan the bank-in slip & post/email together with the registration slip.

Send to:  
 Mail: NECF Malaysia 30, Jalan SSK/103, 47300 Petaling Jaya, Selangor | Fax: 03-7739 1139  
 Email: prayer@necf.org.my

**Prophetic Intercession seminar**

Date: 15 Sept 2012

Time: 9am – 1pm

Venue: Full Gospel Tabernacle (FGT), Subang

The speaker, Pastor Julius Suubi, is founder and director of Highway of Holiness Ministries International, a ministry based in Nairobi, Kenya, that intercedes for countries of the world. His work has established intercessor groups in Uganda, Zambia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, South Korea, Australia and in many other countries.



**Hope of Jubilee Celebration (Klang Valley)**

Date: 16 Sept 2012 Time: 7pm

Venue: Full Gospel Tabernacle (FGT), Subang

This event marks Malaysia Day and the end of the 40-Day Fast & Prayer for the nation. The "Hope of Jubilee" theme focuses on restoration, liberation and rest for all of Malaysia and the people who dwell here. Pastor Julius Suubi will also speak at this event.

**Other venues for Malaysia Day (Hope of Jubilee Celebrations)**

Likas Stadium (Kota Kinabalu), Trinity Methodist Church (Kuching), Kuala Perlis Praise Centre (Perlis), Wesley Methodist Church (Alor Star), FGA Centre (Kulim), Holy Spirit Catholic Church (Penang), Chinese Methodist Church (Sitiawan), Tamil Methodist Buntong (Ipoh), Herald Church (Kluang), Pusat Kebajikan Calvary (Johor), Tamil Methodist Church (Kuantan), Raub AOG (Raub), Immanuel AOG (Mentakab), All Souls Anglican (Cameron Highlands), Life AOG (Kuala Terengganu), Christian Praise Centre (Kota Baru).



## Looking Out Looking Up

**SRI LANKA** Evangelical Christians here are trying to get government recognition to ensure they receive the same rights as other religious communities. The National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka is a member of the World Evangelical Alliance and wants to be recognised as the representative body of evangelicals there. Gaining official support will allow the church to play its role in reconciliation efforts as the country tries to heal rifts following the 26-year Sri Lankan civil war that ended in 2009.



**PRAY** – Pray that the government will grant the evangelical alliance official recognition. Pray for an end to laws, policies and arbitrary instructions to forcibly close churches by local authorities. Pray that the Sri Lankan government will take steps to ensure freedom of all religions and the freedom to choose one's religion. Pray that the church will fulfill her role as a peacemaker in national reconciliation efforts.

**NIGERIA** In July, fifty members of a church in Maseh village, in the Plateau State, were burned to death in their pastor's house where they had gone to seek shelter from an attack. This follows the 8 July murder of Dr Dantong Gyang Dalyop, a Christian senator for the Plateau State and a medical doctor. Known as a bridge-builder between different religious groups and tribes, he was killed while attending the funeral of more than 100 Christians killed the day before in a rampage by gunmen. These incidents underscore the sustained campaign against Christians in Nigeria by militants.



**PRAY** – for an end to the cycle of religious violence. Pray for more Nigerians to stand as peacemakers and bridge builders. Pray for peace and healing for those who have lost loved ones, property and businesses in the violence. Pray against the spirit of violence and ask God to open the spiritual eyes of the perpetrators to cease from their bloodletting. Ask for His mercy upon the land. – CP, OD

**FIJI** Like Malaysia, Fiji is also seeking revival and transformation. Native Fijians, the majority of whom are Christians, held the national Fiji Prayer Convention recently from 2 to 6 July with a focus on preparing the next generation to lead. Fiji has experienced revival in its business and tourism in the last few years after Christians started praying for forgiveness and reconciliation with ethnic Indians, the second largest group. Since Fiji's independence 1970, the two groups have battled each other in coups and civil unrest to wrest political control. Christian leaders have called for reconciliation and unity between churches, among Fijians and among tribal chiefs. The Transform Fiji initiative to see every village in Fiji transformed by 2020 was launched at the recent prayer convention.



**PRAY** – As Malaysians, we can identify with Fiji's difficulties of being a multi-ethnic nation where economic and political stakes are high. Pray for genuine love, unity and transformative revival for Fiji's Christians that they will be a blessing to their land and all its citizens. Pray for increased hunger among the other communities that they will desire to know the Lord. – TW

**IRAQ** US troops withdrew from Iraq in December 2011, but sectarian violence has risen as have attacks by Al-Qaeda which is seeking to strengthen its position after the US departure. July 2012 was touted by the press as Iraq's "bloodiest month" in which 325 Iraqis were killed. Of this, more than 100 people will be killed in a

single day from coordinated bombings and gun attacks across the country. Christians are caught in the crossfire between Shiite and Sunni Muslims and are also believed to be the target of Al-Qaeda attacks. An exodus of Christians from Iraq is taking place and those who remain are asking prayer for three 'P's – protection, provision and perseverance.



**PRAY** – Ask God to help Iraq's remaining Christians to persevere under divine protection and provision. Pray for the Christians who have left and are now refugees to find shelter and sustenance. Pray for divine intervention in the violence and against the relentless acts of terrorism. Ask God for mercy because He desires all nations to turn to Him. – OD.

**MYANMAR** The country may be on the path to reform and it managed to hold successful by-elections in April in which the pro-democracy opposition won in nearly all the seats it contested. But reforms have not addressed racism between Muslim Rohingyas and local Buddhists in the border areas, and there is little freedom of religion for Christians to start churches. Christians must obtain a letter of recommendation from the village chief for the purpose of securing a church permit, which may take one year to process. This is still not a "permanent permit" which must be obtained first, at the district level and then the central government. Permit fees are often too exorbitant for most grassroots believers.



**PRAY** – Pray for protection and perseverance as Burmese Christians meet in unofficial churches. Pray for favour in their permit applications. Ask God to bless the lives and ministry of grassroots pastors, who lack resources and training. Pray that they will receive training. Pray for an end to the Buddhist-Muslim violence. Pray that God will direct Myanmar's journey to reform. - OD