

DIOCESAN SYNOD 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

THE ABOLITION OF THE LAITY

1.0 THE IDEA

This title 'The Abolition of The Laity' itself will invite many questions and enquiries. I am sure a certain degree of curiosity and interests have been created in you. Let us together explore the possibility as suggested by the title of this address. At the 2007 Synod Presidential Address, I have emphasized on the title 'The Kingdom of God'. It is the intention as stated in 'The Kingdom of God' to allow the sharing of joint clergy-laity leadership in God's Church. In the Bible, there is no distinction between clergy and laity in position. This is purely a creation of functional and ministerial convenience.¹ On hind sight, I don't think the early church fathers have erred in separating the ordained with the non-ordained. It was for functional and ministerial purposes, just as in the case of the role of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.² Even the Bible has this distinction of '*episkopos*' (bishop or overseer), '*presbuteros*' (priest or elder) and '*diakonos*' (deacon or servant) created in the early church.³ What the present day church has unknowingly caused among us is the unwelcomed discrimination of the *power-position* role from the *responsibility-position* role. Certainly, responsibility does usually come with power in many instances.

The scenario of the *power-position* role can be described something like this:

The one who gets the position has the power and dominates or 'call the shot'. Thus, this has led to the dilemma of today's church with few people actually doing the task, which is mostly left to the ordained (who has the position hence, the power) while the non-ordained (who does not have the position thus with no power) was somewhat 'forced' to sit around waiting to be served. Such church will usually not grow. It will eventually die a long and winding death or a gradual and painful decline. The common scenario today is liken to an ordained person who assumes the *power-position* role and wishes to serve God and His church but is faced with the struggle between growing the church and doing the service. To grow the church, he will need to put priority on reaching the unsaved members which seems somewhat in contrary to the spending most of the time attending to the already

¹ The concept of 'Priesthood of all believers' does come from the passages in Ex 19:6; Heb 7:24; 1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rom 15:16; Rev 5:10 and 20:6.

² Ephesians 4:11-13

³ The three orders can be found in the Books of 1 Timothy and Titus. Bible commentators generally are in agreement that it was Ignatius who moved the early church toward a three-tier system of leadership, namely, bishop, elders and deacons. See Gene A Getz, Elders and Leaders – God's Plan for Leading The Church, moody publishers, Chicago, 2003, Part 3.

saved non-ordained. He therefore believes that in order to do both he has to command and instruct the non-ordained to go out and bring in new members and tell the non-ordained to grow up and not expect to be spoon fed. He firmly thinks that he is right in his method of delegation.⁴ Eventually nothing much gets done because the non-ordained feels that his role is to visit, feed, teach, serve and minister to their needs and at the same time bring in new members. Instead of understanding and complementing each other's role, he gets angry with self, church and sometimes with God and finally he gives up or moves on. Then another new ordained person comes, takes over and unknowingly repeats the cycle. This unfortunately, as in some cases, has led to murmuring and grumbling which eventually develops into quarrels and division of gangs. Subsequently, some leave the church and this attracts more dissensions and fights due to blames and backlashes on each other within the church. More members leave the church. Finally, the church splits into two or more smaller churches. The cycle repeats itself again and again many times over until sometime, somewhere and someone intervenes with the *responsibility-position* role.

The *responsibility-position* role can be described something like this:

The ordained person comes to the church and trains the non-ordained to serve God and His church together. The non-ordained people are willing and happy to be trained. He releases the task together with some related-power to the ones he has trained. Both of them together serve and train other non-ordained. Eventually, a relatively large pool of non-ordained members are trained and served God together. Tasks are distributed and delegated according to the gifting and ability of the trained non-ordained members. Everybody is serving God and each other. Every problem is tackled together and is never pushed to one person to make his own decision. Each one can take turns to lead and to bear each other burdens.⁵

2.0 THE ANTIDOTE

The First Myth: This sort of Cinderella syndrome of clergy-laity shared leadership is only good on paper and not practical.

The Bible is clear on the concept of 'Priesthood of all believers'. Everyone who calls on the Name of God is saved and he will be a member of the 'royal priesthood'. That is why all Christians are called 'saints' which mean the 'holy ones' or the 'ones who are called out or separated out'. This term 'saints' appears nearly fifty times in the new Testament almost always used to describe believers in the local church.⁶ Priesthood in the Bible does mean a

⁴ In John Maxwell's book on 'Developing the Leaders around you', Nelson Business, Nashville, Tennessee, 1995, pp159-166, he describes the 'dos' and the 'don'ts' in delegation.

⁵ A common illustration 'The flying formation of a flock of geese' is used. John C. Maxwell, *ibid*, p136, 'A good team fit requires an attitude of partnership.'

⁶ Gene A. Getz, *op.cit*, p51.

right of access to the Throne of Grace. All believers can and must have a direct line to God. They are to bring to God their own 'living' sacrifices⁷ and the sacrifices on behalf of those who are not yet believers. But this is not to be done as to the whims and fancies of individuals, rather as a collective body of believers. In this, the New Testament has always advocated the concept of 'Plurality of Leadership' which means a shared leadership to direct and guide the practices and lives of the Priesthood. The ordained and the non-ordained can work together well only if the concept of shared leadership is understood and accepted. This will mean that there will be no room for authoritarianism or dictatorship. No one is above the other.⁸ It is not democracy but collegiocracy⁹ (if there is such word).

The Second Myth: It is impossible to change unless we dismantle the whole structure of the present day church and start again.

It seems impossible to change the church structure but if we take a closer look at what we have, it is not so much the structure rather the appraisal and appropriation of the structure we have. If we look at the ordained as a different class of people then perhaps we can feel the discrimination strongly. On the other hand, if we treat the ordained as functionally different then we will appreciate it positively. So far with all the structures in this world, depending on how one receives it, it can be treated as obnoxious or fragrance. So then it is the understanding and acceptance of the concept of the shared leadership in the church of God that will make a difference.

The Third Myth: The Clergy is called by God and we must not disturb or challenge them.

There is a certain school of thought that teaches 'no one should touch the Lord's anointed'.¹⁰ We have to be careful of the interpretation of the text by not reading into it what it does not mean. It actually means that no one should take away or remove easily one's life or office which the Lord has appointed. This is to protect false accusation but in 1 Timothy 5: 19-20, Apostle Paul set out a guideline for both protecting and disciplining spiritual leaders. The Lord has called and the Lord will deal with it His way. This is in line or parallel with the concept 'Vengeance is mine, says the Lord'.¹¹ This is in no way asking us to sign a blank cheque or to be given a free license to the ordained to be above everyone else. The license for ordination is to signify that he is given the right to carry out the priestly function which the main concern is the cure of souls.¹²

⁷ Rom 12:1; 1 Peter 2:5, 19-21. 'To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.'(1Peter 2:21)

⁸ Gene A. Getz, op.cit., chp 25, p209-216.

⁹ Collegiocracy, I mean, a joint decision making process among a college of people through negotiation and consensus. In this case, it is the college of leaders in the church.

¹⁰ 1 Sam 24:10

¹¹ Rom 12:19

¹² Part of the Ordination vow.

The Fourth Myth: The Laity is not called and therefore they are not chosen to serve God.

Every believer is called and chosen by God to fulfill His purpose.¹³ There is no distinction between the ordained and the non-ordained in this respect of fulfilling God's Will. It is not God's desire for any to perish but that all should come to faith in Christ Jesus. Everyone saved by God is saved to a holy living. To serve God is not a task but a life for perfect freedom.¹⁴ James D. Dunn in his book, 'Jesus' Call to Discipleship', stresses that all believers are called by Jesus 'to recognize the reality of God's kingly rule and to follow him.'¹⁵ To follow Christ is to deny oneself and take up one's cross daily.¹⁶

3.0 THE RECIPE

This shared leadership concept is not a new phenomenon in the Christendom but it is certainly quite new in our Diocese. It does not and should not stop the shared leadership at decision making only but it does translate much further to the shared leadership in service, ministry and mission of the church. We know that it is doing well in a few quarters. In some churches, it is struggling and painfully toiling whereas in the large majority, it is absent. Therefore, I wish to take this privilege and it is also my hope to spur this momentum a little more vigorous in the progress of lay movement in our Diocese.

3.1 MY COMPANION THE ORDAINED

I desire to see all my clergy in the Diocese to go for continuing education in order to refresh and retrain in the area of shared leadership and lay movement. No company will progress without paying attention to the retraining of its staff.¹⁷ Retraining is a costly affair. We are always facing with the issue of the 'chicken and the egg – Which one should come first? – Getting the Funds? Training the Staff?'¹⁸ Without taking the risk, we will not be able to see our clergy progress and further equipped for better service, and the congregation will not be able to come on board in the shared leadership easily. We need to improve the confidence and the security of the ordained in order to usher them in playing a greater role in the development of the church and nation building. The continuing theological education can develop one's mind and belief system within the knowledge of God. The Clinical

¹³ 'Living a life worth of the Lord'; Eph 4:1; Phil 1:27; Col 1:10.

¹⁴ 'To know God is eternal life and to serve Him is perfect freedom', from the Morning Prayer of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.

¹⁵ James D. Dunn, Jesus' Call to Discipleship, Cambridge University Press, UK, Chp 2.

¹⁶ Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23.

¹⁷ John C. Maxwell, op.cit, pp61ff, 'Many organisations today fail to tap into their potential. Why? Because the only reward they give their employees is a pay-check.... Successful organisations take a different approach. In exchange for the work a person gives, he receives not only his pay-check, but also nurturing from the people for whom he works. And nurturing has the ability to transform people's lives.'

¹⁸ John C. Maxwell, ibid, p78, 'Invest money in people; it always yields the highest return on your investment.'

Pastoral Education can develop the character and personality of the person. Bible Study and Spirituality retreats can develop the spiritual and inner life of a person.

3.2 MY PARTNER THE NON-ORDAINED

The creation of the Lay Pastor portfolio is not for hierarchical development, rather for ministerial function. The Anglicanism Course should serve as the foundational step while it should be followed by other theological education and biblical courses. We praise God that it is also the desire of the Council of the Seminari Theoloji Malaysia to establish more campuses throughout the nation to provide more opportunities for the church members and to cater for local needs. I urge the non-ordained to take advantage of such opportunity to enhance self equipping while we still have the means and capability to do so. As I look around in the world of disaster and unrest, I fear that this golden opportunity may not last very long though I am praying against it. It is my hope that we will no longer send anyone fresh from school to STM for training. I hope to source the potential candidates for the ordained ministry from the pool of Lay Pastors. So if one wishes to admit to STM, he/she should first become a Lay Pastor for a minimum period of two years. Of course, exceptions will be made available for those who have other qualifications or experiences. Though we have not licensed anyone as Lay Pastor yet, we have in fact interviewed a number and have accepted them for Lay Pastor and they will be licensed in due course. The first two modules of the Anglicanism Course were already given to all churches and many have done or still doing the course. The last two modules are ready and you can obtain from the Diocesan website¹⁹ for your church.

3.3 LAY CANONS

In order to show that I am serious with and giving importance to the Lay Ministry, I have appointed two Lay Canons of the Cathedral in the person of Mr. Andrew Khoo Chin Hock and Dr Teoh Soong Kee. They should serve as a reminder to the Diocese that we are moving forward to the concept of shared leadership. It is my desire to see more non-ordained acquiring theological education to equip oneself for the ministry of the Lord. Both Mr. Andrew Khoo and Dr. Teoh Soong Kee have for some years on their own accord obtained a theological degree and are serving in their own capacity in their respective parishes. Though there is a limitation to the number of Canons we can have in the Cathedral, but this should not be the deterring factor for not acquiring theological education. Let us all acquire theological education for the ministry of the Church and God, and not for title. 'A leader who loves the status quo soon becomes a follower.'²⁰

¹⁹ www.anglicanwestmalaysia.org.my

²⁰ John C. Maxwell, op.cit, p58.

4.0 THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

There is a big scope in the mission field still. The ordained itself will not be able to do much. We are rushing against time – the sign of times is telling us that there is not much left.²¹ We need more workers both the ordained and the non-ordained to collect the ripen harvest. The church is not in any position to employ many people, thus it is appropriate to involve the non-ordained who formed the bulk of the membership to be honorary lay workers. We are presently facing a big dilemma. On one hand, we are faced with a lack of workers to do the work; and on the other hand, we cannot afford to employ them even if we have the people. So it is most appropriate and prudence to invite the non-ordained to come forth to share in the mission work.

When Jesus says to go and make disciples, teaching the new disciples to do everything Jesus has taught, it is clear that Jesus is not just recruiting “souls” for heaven. He is sending his agents into the world. He is launching a revolution, which he called “the kingdom of God.”²²

4.1 ASSISTANT BISHOPS

The appointment of the two Assistant Bishops is to decentralize, delegate and share the load of mission and ministry of the Diocese. It is my desire that the Assistant Bishop in the northern region should look after the mission and ministry of the Upper North and Eastern Archdeaconries, and the Assistant Bishop in the southern region should look after the mission and ministry of the Lower Central and Southern Archdeaconries. We hope that this arrangement can help us attend to the needs quicker and personal. Our Diocese has grown much since the last one year in new church plants. Many of these new plants need a lot of nurturing and caring. The Bishop can help his churches and new plants ‘to understand and articulate the changing context of the contemporary society; to build shared vision with his people; to embody the vision by their example in mission; and helping churches to live out the vision.’²³ The Bishop as the chief missionary will need more help in this respect. The clergy already has their hands full due to the shortage of priests. The demands from these new plants will certainly need the non-ordained to share in their nurturing and caring.

4.2 ARCHDEACONS

The role of the Archdeacons is multi-fold. Their first task is to inspect the land and building of the churches in their respective Archdeaconry and to see that they are in good condition. They are also to see to the needs of the ordained especially the vicarages they are staying in.

²¹ ‘The field is ripe for harvest’, John 4:35. The ripen harvest will rot if there is not enough workers to collect it on time.

²² Brian D. McLaren, *More Ready Than You Realize*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2006, p147.

²³ Alan Smith, *God-Shaped Mission*, Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2008, pp201-203. John C. Maxwell, *op.cit*, p27, ‘An important part of leadership involves casting vision. Some leaders forgot to cast vision because they get caught up in managing.....An effective vision provides guidance. It gives direction for an organization.....direction that cannot effectively result from rules and regulations, policy manuals, or organizational charts.’

They need to set up an Archdeaconry Building Committee to study and assist the Diocesan Standing Committee in any building extension or construction work of any church within their Archdeaconries. They are to inspect the church records, such as baptism, confirmation, burial, marriage, service and office administration filing annually. They need to follow up and make sure the churches will fulfill their share of the Diocesan Contributions.²⁴ Since all our Archdeacons are non full time and they too have a parish of themselves, it is most desirable for these parishes to raise a few Lay Pastors to help assist the ministry of the parishes. One of the crucial roles for Archdeacons is to work with fellow clergy to do a study of the whole archdeaconry and to strategise for mission and church planting. I have appointed the Rev. Canon Edward John and the Rev. Eddie Ong as the Archdeacons of the Southern and Upper Central Archdeaconry respectively. The two Assistant Bishops will remain as Archdeacons of their present Archdeaconries. They need the cooperation of all the ordained and the non-ordained to carry forth God's mandated mission effectively.

4.3 DIOCESAN MISSIONERS

The Bishop is the Chief Missioner but he is overtly bogged down with lots of meetings and confirmation services. Diocesan Missioners are set aside specially for mission in the Diocese and beyond. Presently, we have the Rev. John Ganapathy as the Diocesan Missioner since 2005. There was initially a little hiccup because this was a new phenomenon in this Diocese. After a few years of experience, we now are confident to set the course aright for such portfolio. I have released another priest as the second Diocesan Missioner in the person of the Rev. David Rajiah. Now with two Diocesan Missioners, the Rev. John Ganapathy will concentrate in the north and the Rev. David Rajiah in the south, with both crisscrossing the Central and the East. Their role is to help the Bishops, Archdeacons and Clergy to survey, strategise, plan and implement church planting seminar, training, mission teams, mission outreach, and starting mission works. It is my desire to find a few more senior clergy who have the heart for mission and church planting and have a good track record in mission and church planting. My ideal plan is to have one Diocesan Missioner for each Archdeaconry. They are to complement the Archdeacons. It is my desire to place importance on mission in the Diocesan profile so I have appointed the Rev. John Ganapathy to be the Canon Missioner of the Cathedral.

4.4 PROVISIONAL DEANERY

We are moving very much into the K-world. People wish to know and want to be informed. Without changing the Diocesan Constitution, I wish to create Provisional Deaneries for those churches and mission outreaches which are not in the position to become MD or Parish yet.

²⁴ The present parish share of the Diocesan contribution is 30% of the gross income of the parish two year previously. It is my intention to gradually reduce it to 20%.

The criteria to be a Provisional Deanery is set out below:-

- a. It must be a combination of mission outreaches or church plants which have reached beyond the membership of a parish but are not in the position to be independent due to financial or leadership constraint.
- b. It must be in a different geographical locality from the mother parish.
- c. This can include congregation of migrant workers who are meeting in a separate premise or locality.
- d. There is no limit to the size of the Provisional Deanery but it preferably should not cross Archdeaconry border. If it does cross border, it should consider multiplying the existing provisional Deanery into two Provisional Deaneries.
- e. If it involves outreaches of two or more parishes, it is prudent to have these parishes come to an agreement before such Provisional Deanery is set up.

The rationale to set up such Provisional Deaneries is to allow participation and presence of such ministry. Each provisional deanery can send one person to the Diocesan Synod as OBSERVER. He cannot vote and cannot be voted into any Diocesan Committee at the Diocesan Synod. Each of these Provisional Deaneries will be required to submit their Annual report to their respective Archdeacons. In this manner, we can trace and are able to have a better or more accurate picture of the whole Diocese thus better planning and mobilization of resources.

4.5 NEW DIOCESES

Last year I have projected a 30 year Vision and in which was the possibility of the creation of more Dioceses within our Diocese. We should not be in a hurry to see the reality of this new idea instead we should begin working towards it. Within the next 5 to 10 years, we can work towards creating two more Dioceses. First, we must concentrate our efforts in building up our existing parishes and growing our Missionary Districts to become Parishes. Second, we must plant more churches and have more mission outreaches especially in the unchurched areas. If we can work with a target of adding 200 churches within the next 10 years, I don't see why we cannot create more Dioceses. At present, we do qualify to create two new dioceses but it is a bit too thin and weak after the division. Third, we need to raise more workers both the ordained and the non-ordained. With the present ordained force of 70, we need to double the number within the next 10 years in order to cater for the target of 200 new church plants we have set. At the same time, we need to raise 500 Lay Pastors in 10 years. I have earlier said that it is from the pool of Lay pastors that we can pick our potential ordained. I hope that more ladies will come forth as Lay Pastors. Fourth, we need to be wise and guided by God in the investment of the assets in the Diocese with the view of distributing it among the different states. While keeping some for non disposable fixed assets such as lands and building for churches, we also need some for investment purposes.

4.6 PROVINCE OF SOUTH EAST ASIA

Since we are part of the Province of South East Asia,²⁵ we must play a part in the mission and ministry of the Deanery Countries, namely Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Nepal. The mission and goal of the Province is to see the church in each country becoming a national diocese. With the rate of the present growth, we are not going to see very much development within the next 20 years. Our Diocese has come of age and it is timely for us to be more involved in these countries. Of course, we can only do as much as the extent of our capacity. Medan and South Thailand are our immediate neighbours and we need to explore ways to reach these places. I have appointed Canon Dr. Teoh Soong Kee as the Coordinator for the Medan ministry. We were once a missionary diocese and the missionaries of the past have sacrificed and paved the way for us today. It is incumbent of us to do likewise to the neighbouring countries within our Province.

5.0 THE NEW KINGDOM – CHURCH WITHOUT THE LAITY

We need a new paradigm from a traditional clergy led church to a shared leadership church in decision making, in training, and in ministry and mission. Let us be a church that reach out; a church that is relevant to the times. Some call it ‘church without walls’; others call it ‘new expression church’; still others call it ‘purpose driven church’. Let us call it ‘church without the laity’. It is a church in the new kingdom and of the new kingdom and for the new kingdom. Every believer is a priest of God and Jesus is the great High Priest. The people of the new kingdom will have made a covenant with God. God’s law written is in their hearts and minds. There is no discrimination between the ordained and the non-ordained.

“‘The time is coming,’ declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah..... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord.” (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

5.1 REACH

The Relief Emergency And Crisis Help has been activated in response to the disasters in Myanmar caused by Cyclone Nargis and the earthquake in Sichuan Province in China. About RM70,000 was raised for the relief of both disasters which happened very close to each other in May this year. Immediately the first team was sent to Myanmar one week after the disaster. An initial amount of RM10,000 was advanced and brought into Myanmar while the fund raising effort has just launched few days earlier. The second team went with some selected personnel to meet specific needs. Another RM10,000 was brought in then. We

²⁵ The Province of the Church in South East Asia covers 9 countries which have over 500 million people.

hope to send more teams to Myanmar to do follow up and to monitor the progress of the relief work. At the same time, RM10,000 was remitted through the Council of Churches of Malaysia to the Amity Foundation for relief work. The balance will be channeled through the Provincial office to the Council of Churches of China which has lost thousands of people and hundred over churches in Sichuan Province. It is my desire to see that every church, board and council in the Diocese to appoint someone who is interested to coordinate such relief work when the need arises. Since REACH has been activated, we urge you to generously donate to this fund. Whenever there is a disaster that demands our help, without waiting for any announcement or circular, each one of us should try to response quickly to publicise event and to source suitable and willing people for relief work. The Diocese account on REACH is always open and available.

5.2 ANGLICAN CARE

This year we saw the first Annual General Meeting of the Anglican Care in May. It is our desire to streamline all the caring ministries in the Diocese and group them under the umbrella of one major parent body. I believe this is the right way forward especially in the area of being relevant to the society. We can certainly do more if we work together. This was one of the three prong strategy of the missionary church few decades ago.²⁶ The awareness and plight of the physically and mentally challenged is dominant in the present day and age. It needs great attention from every quarter of the society which includes the church. 'Many Christians view faith as both personal and private but the communities we are from are constantly seeking for caring fellowships, groups, churches and individuals to understand their pains and struggles.'²⁷ We could adopt a four-fold approach to develop the caring ministry in the Diocese. Firstly, we can develop awareness in caring ministry among our churches. Secondly, we can invite participation of churches, individuals or groups in the existing caring ministries. Thirdly, we assist churches in setting up caring ministry. Fourth, we can expand and create new caring ministries in new areas, and raise care workers. So far we have ministry to the blind, orphans, senior citizens, children with learning difficulties, poor and hungry. There is a great need in the area of 'disorder' or 'addiction'. Thousands and perhaps million of people in this country are struggling in their own private hell, trapped in circumstances of bondages: alcoholism, drug abuse, manic depression, pornography, compulsive gambling, compulsive stealing and lying, obsessive-compulsive behaviours, overeating, sexual addiction, compulsive borrowing from loan sharks etc.²⁸ I pray that there will be a few from both the ordained and the non-ordained who have some interest in this area of ministry and willing to be trained for such ministry.

²⁶ The early missionaries have adopted a three prong strategy in evangelism and mission at the beginning of last century. It is education, medical and social care.

²⁷ Ian Jagelman, *The Empowered Church – Releasing Ministry through Effective Leadership*, OpenBook Publisher, NSW, 1998, p24.

²⁸ Cherry Boone O'Neill and Dan O'Neill, *How to Cope with an Addictive Person – Living On The Border Of Disorder*, Bethany House, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1992.

5.3 ONE MINUTE PRAYER AT 12 NOON (1@12)

Nothing, in accordance to God's Will, can work without prayer. "Without prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit,' John Maxwell believes that none of these things in his church (congregation tripled, finance increased 8 times) would have happened. He continued to stress that "the glory and the honour of God belong to God. But the credit for releasing that power and keeping [him] protected day after day belongs to [his] prayer partners."²⁹ Prayer is part and parcel of the life of a believer. It is the 'breath' of the believer. The Diocesan Strategy Implementation Commission (DSIC) has decided and is promoting a 'One minute at 12 noon' prayer for the whole of the Diocese. Let us not forget to pray at 12 noon daily. 'It pays to pray. It pays not to give up.'³⁰ All of us are busy. Life is not slowing down, it is speeding up instead. Yet this is precisely we all the more must take time to pray. Oswald Chambers writes, "Remember, no one has time to pray; we have to take time from other things that are valuable in order to understand how necessary prayer is. The things that act like thorns and stings in our personal lives will go away instantly when we pray; we won't feel the smart anymore, because we have God's point of view about them. Prayer means that we get into union with God's view of other people."³¹

*Christian mission and ministry arises from a vision of God and is sustained by prayer and an inner stillness that is the gift of the Holy Spirit.*³²

5.4 CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION

Four more people were appointed and sent to New York for intensive training.³³ The total number of Supervisor-In-Training now is 8. Four seminarians have completed the Clinical Pastoral Education Stage One. The whole course has four stages. I hope that all the clergy, deaconesses, seminarians and the members of the church can take up CPE at least for Stage One. This will help equip the individual worker of the Lord to be more efficient and relevant to the church and the society. The course is specially designed to help each student to appreciate, understand, challenge and be honest to self. This is a character building course but done in a mirror reflective way rather than the traditional didactic way. This course helps each individual to see oneself in the other person he is helping. It is a tedious and indirect style but certainly a more effective way of approach and learning. The first stage may seem difficult because of its unfamiliar style and method of approach. In long term, the result and effect is useful and long lasting. We are blessed with the help of the Rev. Dr. Richard Liew who has been instrumental in this project. He has also purposed the privilege of hosting of the Asia Pacific Clinical Pastoral Symposium this November in KL. This is the first of its kind in this region.

²⁹ John Maxwell, *Partners in Prayer*, Nelson, Nashville, 1996, p4.

³⁰ David Jeremiah, *Prayer the Great Adventure*, Multnomah Publishers, Sisters, Oregon, 1997, p64.

³¹ *Ibid.* p48.

³² Alan Smith, *op.cit.*, p189.

³³ Initially four were selected but one did not go to New York for intensive training because he was unable to obtain a visa to enter USA.

5.5 THE POST MODERN GENERATION

Some call the present generation of children and youth who are born after 1984 the Millennials, others call them the Bridgers.³⁴ The Generation X by now has already become the young adults. Both these groups of the Generation X and the Bridgers are very crucial and important for the future of the church. There are the future and the young leaders of today. Many churches have difficulty in maintaining and thus, experience declining numbers of this group. Concerted and major efforts are needed to revive and attract them. Part of the problem is in the ignorance and lack in the appreciation of their world by the seniors and leaders. Formerly we call this generation gap but it is actually more appropriate to call it 'technology gap' or 'digital gap'. For example, in worship services, the seniors want it to move along slowly and predictably; the middle age wants to move at a faster pace; the Generation X want it to move even quicker, but the Bridgers look for variety and spontaneity. The seniors prefer softer lighting during worship as it gives more of a worshipful feeling. The middle age wants brighter lighting so they can see people well. But the Bridgers prefer a darker setting or other subdued lighting. The seniors generally like sermons with traditional messages like in-depth Bible sermon or evangelistic message. The middle age prefers a message with life application. But the Bridgers desire a message that appears authentic. What shall we do when we are seeing problems created due to the collision of changing generations in our churches? Instead of fighting, we need to relax and go with the flow, seeking to understand what is taking place, and developing a model of ministry for it. The Diocesan Youth Council and Diocesan Children Ministry need to relook at what they have achieved and done in the past and prepare and re-strategise ahead with some new methods and models without compromising our message or integrity. I have appointed Miss Sheerah Lee to develop KIDSGAMES as a new approach to this generation change. Parishes and Missionary Districts too must begin to appoint Lay Pastors who are young and are willing to be trained and equipped for these ministries. Every Parish or MD must be able to set a strong budget for these ministries. Look at our Children Sunday Schools, most of them need a huge revamp or a complete reorientation.

5.6 ADULT MINISTRIES

The Golden Circle, Women and Men Fellowships are progressing well. The Men Fellowship is the newest and latest addition and I am sure it will pick up in due course. In order to be at the cutting edge, all these fellowships as well as the Boards must be mission-minded. Let us not stop at 'people-mindedness' alone but to include the element of mission in your programmes. I am very impressed and gave thanks to God for you for the well planned and well attended conferences each year. The one major factor that must be included in each camp or conference is to ask each and every participant: What has each of you contributed and what have you learnt from it? I think we all do need a clear focus in mission. As Henry and Melvin Blackaby argue, "Churches are not an end unto themselves; they are to build the

³⁴ Gary L. McIntosh, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, Chp. 13.

kingdom of God.”³⁵ Similarly, we can use the same argument to urge our Fellowships to look beyond their Fellowships and build the Kingdom of God. The words of Jesus in John 18:36 set the tone for us in our Fellowships when he says, “My kingdom is not of this world”. The Kingdom of God is found wherever Christ is reigning. So we need to go and bring others into the rule of Christ through our interactions and connections with them. In that, I also mean, to make significant progress in our spiritual journey not alone but with spiritual friends and sacred companions. This provides spiritual accountability and interdependence and protection especially in the midst of this wicked and deceiving world. Spiritual friendship in small groups is also a reasonable and viable development we should have within our Fellowships. Too common a scene we have seen in our Fellowship where all come together for fellowship but the learning is left to individuals to decide. We have seen in ourselves and in others, many who have encountered ‘shipwrecked’ faith, barrenness, spiritual dryness, spiritual indifference, and spiritual overdosed. The way to prevent such happenings and to create healthy and fruitful faith is to subscribe to a spiritual journey with spiritual friends. Fellowships can prepare and provide such environment for spiritual development.

6.0 FINALE

I originally wish to send out this address to you one month ahead of time but I have miscalculated, therefore, it has to be given out to you without much time for you to digest. I hope that you can take back and slowly digest and then give to me your written reply within a month or two.

My ultimate intention is to get everyone in the pews involve in ministry. I am prepared to work towards a shared leadership ministry in all levels of involvement from decision making in the PCC to mission and evangelism. I hope to see a ratio of one ordained to three non-ordained shared leadership. Jesus reiterates, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few. Ask the Lord of harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’³⁶

³⁵ Henry T. Blackaby and Melvin D. Blackaby, *Experiencing God Together – God’s Plan to Touch Your World*, Broadman & Holman, Nashville, Tennessee, 2002, p233.

³⁶ Matthew 9:37-38; Luke 10:2; John 4:35.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Benner, David G., ***Sacred Companion – The Gift of Spiritual friendship & Direction***, IVP, Downers Grove, Illinois, 2002.
2. Blackaby, Henry T. and Melvin D., ***Experiencing God Together – God’s Plan To touch Your World***, Broadman & Holman, Nashville, Tennessee, 2002.
3. Blackaby, Henry and Richard, ***Spiritual Leadership – Moving People on to God’s Agenda***, Broadman & Holman, Nashville, Tennessee, 2001.
4. Daman, Glenn, ***Shepherding the Small Church***, Kregel, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002.
5. Jeremiah, David, ***Prayer the Great Adventure***, Multnomah, Sisters, Oregon, 1997.
6. Dunn, James D. G., ***Jesus’ Call To Discipleship***, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1992.
7. Fernando, Ajith, ***Jesus Driven Ministry***, IVP, Leicester, England, 2002.
8. Getz, Gene A., ***Elders and Leaders – God’s Plan For Leading The Church***, Moody Publishers, Chicago, 2003.
9. Grenz, Stanley J., ***A Primer On Postmodernism***, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996.
10. Hull, Bill, ***The Disciple-Making Church***, Fleming H. Revell, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1998.
11. Jackson, Bob, ***The Road to growth – towards a thriving Church***, Church house Publishing, London, 2005.
12. Jagelman, Ian, ***The Empowered Church – Releaving Ministry Through Effective Leadership***, Open Book Publishers, NSW, Australia, 1998.
13. Maxwell, John C., ***Developing the Leaders Around You – How to help Others Reach Their Full Potential***, Nelson business, Nashville, Tennessee, 1995.
14. Maxwell, John C., ***Partners In Prayer***, Thomas Nelson Pub, Nashville, Tennessee, 1996.
15. Maxwell, John C., ***The Difference Maker – Making Your Attitude Your Greatest Asset***, Nelson Business, Nashville, Tennessee, 2006.
16. Maxwell, John C., ***The 360 Degree Leader – Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization***, Nelson Business, Nashville, Tennessee, 2005.
17. McGrath, Alister E., ***Christian Spirituality***, Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 1999.

18. McLaren Brian D., ***More Ready Than You Realize***, Zondervon, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2006.
19. McIntosh, Gary L., ***One Church Four Generations – Understand and Reaching All Ages in Your Church***, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002.
20. McIntosh, Gary L. and Rima, Samuel D. Sr., ***Overcoming the dark Side of leadership – The Paradox of Personal Dysfunction***, Baker Books, grand rapids, Michigan, 1997.
21. Mims, Gene, ***The Kingdom Focused Church***, Broadman & Holman, Nashville, Tennessee, 2003.
22. O'Neill, Cherry Boone and Dan, ***How to Cope with an Addictive Person – Living On the Border of Disorder***, Bethany House, Minneapolis, Minneasota, 1992.
23. Oak, John H., ***Called To Awaken The Laity***, Christian Focus publications, Ross-shire, Scotland, 2006.
24. Smith, Alan, ***God-Shaped Mission***, Canterbury press, Norwich, 2008.
25. Walls, Andrew and Ross, Cathy, ed., ***Mission In The 21st Century – Exploring the Five marks of global Mission***, Darton, Longman + Todd, London, 2008.
26. Wee, Chow-Hou, ***Sun Zi Bingfa – Selected Insights and Applications***, Pearson, Jurong, Singapore, 2005.