

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

by Bishop Ng Moon Hing

Presented at the Diocesan Synod held from 23rd – 25th August 2007 at St. Mark's Church, Butterworth and Pearl View Hotel, Prai

THY KINGDOM COME

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CONTENTS

1. PREFACE
2. VISION FOR THE DIOCESE OF WEST MALAYSIA
3. THE CLERGY – MY COMRADES
4. THE LAITY – MY PARTNERS
5. DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIOCESE
6. THE CUTTING EDGE - SPECIAL MINISTRIES
7. HOW DO WE GET THERE?

CHAPTER ONE

PREFACE

I have deliberately chosen the title THY KINGDOM COME with one aim in mind that is to constantly remind us that all we do and plan for the Diocese of West Malaysia is to establish HIS KINGDOM on earth particularly in West Malaysia. We should all be directed again to the noble aim and intention of our early founders of the Anglican Church in West Malaysia through our bishops, namely, Bishop Roland Koh, Bishop John Savarimuthu, Bishop Lim Cheng Ean and Bishop M.E. Ponniah, and the laity. I am indeed humbled by the appointment as the 4th Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of West Malaysia. I sincerely believe God has placed me at this crossroad of the 21st century of our Diocese to lead this Diocese to take a quantum leap from the maintenance mode to the mission mode; from a walking pace to a running pace; from a traditional and uninteresting church to a exciting and vibrant church; from one diocese to many dioceses; from a clergy led church to a clergy – laity jointly led church; from one worship style church to one stop multi – ministry church. This is a tall order. It cannot be done by one man. The whole church must share in the vision and action. I am privileged to share this vision with you all at this Synod session but it is my hope that this vision will be transmitted down to everyone in the pews. I assure you that it is an open secret and there is nothing hidden. My motive is to be obedient to God through building, developing and leading the Diocese to greater height for His Honour and Glory.

By focusing upon God's Vision and Will, our people will return with greater fervor and passion to serve the Lord. Commitment and sacrifice will be the hall mark of our leaders. The Anglican Church will be a name commonly found in the lips of the general public; her relevance will touch and affect the community and her influence will be reckoned with, even in the political and social arenas.

Let us look at what the Lord wanted us to be in 30 years time. Are we going to be contented with one Diocese? Is God satisfied in seeing one Diocese? Do we want to see the church continuing in the same mode of operandi i.e. clergy-led? Are we longing to see the Diocese having strong churches in every State? Can our clergy and laity rise above the present

threshold of maintenance mode into a pro-active mission mode? Is there any room for the laity to serve? Can we have specialists in every ministry? Is there any sign of hope in our mission schools? Can we look towards to a Christian university and some Christian schools? Are we ready for the Return of Christ?

CHAPTER TWO

VISION FOR THE DIOCESE OF WEST MALAYSIA

WHEN THERE IS NO VISION, PEOPLE PERISH..... Proverb 29:18

The Anglican Church belongs to the **One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of God**.¹ Thus, we, the Diocese of West Malaysia, must be clear with our Diocesan focus i.e. a United, Biblical, Called and Spirit-led Community of Faith in West Malaysia. Our ultimate aim is to become God's Community on earth. This is in accordance to the spirit of the Lord's Prayer, where it reads, 'Thy kingdom come; Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.....'.² This is a 2000 year old 'Call of God' to His people in the words of Apostle Peter: "... you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."³ The KINGDOM of God on earth, to me, must resemble to a large degree in accordance with the description of the words Apostle Peter.

Are we the **CHOSEN** generation? Do we know that we are chosen? What does it mean by the notion 'Chosen'?

The Anglican Church must recapture the fervor of the original meaning and intention of the CHOSEN race. It is not by accident that you and I are called into the Anglican Church in West Malaysia. We have a role to play, a task to perform, and a mandate to fulfill. We are CHOSEN to spread the Love of Christ and not to instigate hatred; to be God's Servant to serve Christ and His people and not to lord over them and seek for name or position; to be the Prophet of the time to prepare them for the Coming of Christ and not to judge and condemn them; to be the Salt of the world by adding value to their lives and preserving them from deteriorating and not to kill or maim them; to be the Light of the world by showing them the true path and not to mislead and cause confusion with weird theologies.

¹ Resolution of the 1930 Lambeth Conference. Ian Bunting, *Celebrating the Anglican Way*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, Great Britain, 1996, p55.

² Matthew 6:9-13 '*The Lord's Prayer*'

³ 1 Peter 2:9

Do we know that we are the **Royal Priesthood**?

The Anglican Church must rise up to assume the role of the 21st century royal priesthood. We are called to stand in the gap between the living and the dead.⁴ Apostle Paul calls this 'Living Sacrifice'⁵, which must be kept holy and acceptable to God. Since Christ is the Great High Priest and His Sacrifice is once for all by his own blood⁶, therefore we have confidence to enter the Holy of Holies with a sincere heart in full assurance of Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We now in turn need to usher others into this pathway of Holiness.

Why are we called a **Holy Nation**?

We are called into the Nation of God which is Holy and Just. The Anglican Church is summoned to progress through the Sanctification process. We must be change from glory to glory as a united Nation marching ahead towards the High Calling of God. Concerted efforts in working and sharing together are very much treasured. There must be the sense of Trust and Comradeship among the people. Transparency is the key word here because there is nothing to hide. Everything is cleansed and being through sanctification process. We are building God's Kingdom and not our own.

If we are a people of God, then there must be the aroma of Christ and the fragrance of His love in our midst. It is not the outward form or appearance that matters most rather the inward beauty and character that portrays God in us. Apostle Paul refers this as 'led by the Spirit' but I wish to call it 'Growing in the Spirit'. No sanctification process can take place without the Holy Spirit. The phrase 'Being filled in the Spirit'⁷ has unfortunately caused some difficulties among some quarters in the church. We, in the 21st century Christians, should flow and move more evidently in the 'Virtual' realm of the Spirit of God i.e. tapping the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We are in Partnership with the Holy Spirit. He is the senior partner and we are the junior partners, and we working together and for the same cause. We should be able to serve god together even when we have different theological persuasions because the underlining basics and belief is the same.

I wish to call this process of ushering the coming of God's Kingdom into our midst as '**KINGDOMIZATION**'⁸. We must hasten the process of Kingdomization, given the signs of times especially on the Demolition of the Berlin Wall, September 11 and the Rise of Terrorism, the World Wide Web, the Flattening Process.⁹ We must be true to our calling to place ourselves into the Map of Malaysia and eventually the Map of the World. For the past

⁴ Numbers 16:48

⁵ Romans 12:1

⁶ Hebrews 9:11-12

⁷ Ephesians 5:18

⁸ **Kingdomization** means a deliberate invitation and allowing God's Kingdom to take shape in our lives and midst. God is the King and we are His subjects. His rule is not with force but love, joy, peace and blessings.

⁹ Thomas Friedman, *The World Is Flat – The globalized world in the twenty – first century*, Penguin Books, London, Great Britain, 2006. The world has never been spinning so fast as the last century. Things that are not possible 50 years ago are possible and easily attainable and at a low price. Everyone is the master of his own destiny. There is no more secret but there are crimes, frauds and falsehood. Human beings are most sophisticate and cunning these day and age. The Church must do more to stop the deterioration let alone reversing the trend.

37 years, we have been one Diocese and it is time for us to move at a faster pace to create Dioceses, two or three or even five, before we reach mid-life i.e. our Diocesan 50th Anniversary. By so doing, we must put more emphases on our weak areas. More heavy 'weights' must be sent to these places, namely, Southern, Eastern and Upper North Archdeaconries. This is also somewhat in line with Pak Lah's vision of the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER), Eastern Corridor Economic Region (ECER or the Oil Belt), and Southern Corridor Economic Region (SCER or Iskandar Development Region).¹⁰ With this in mind, I am intending to seek the Archbishop's permission to appoint two Assistant or Suffragan Bishops; it is not intended to have a top-heavy church, rather it is for the sake of mission so that work can proceed without many encumbrances. The Assistant or Suffragan Bishops are themselves parish priests but are given great responsibility and role to play in the arena of mission. I also have intention to carve out the States of Melaka from the Southern Archdeaconry and Negri Sembilan from the Central Archdeaconry to form a new Archdeaconry called the Lower-Central Archdeaconry. This is because there is no apparent growth in these two states except the addition of St. Chad's Ladang Geddes for the past 37 years. I am looking for mission-minded Bishops and Archdeacons. John Maxwell says, 'everything rises and falls with leadership'.¹¹ Please pray with me. We need to strategize, plan ahead and to share our personnel and resources with different Archdeaconries. We need to focus on areas of potential economic and industrial growth and where universities are located. These are the areas where people congregate and business are thriving. However, after saying this, we must not neglect the rural, which is very much in my heart. The rural will need the urban to support its ministry. I am advocating team ministry by also looking into creating rural deaneries where we can group rural congregations which are not self-supporting together, with the continual support from urban churches until they can be Missionary Districts or Parishes.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CLERGY – MY COMRADES

I strongly believe that on the day of my ordination, I have totally surrendered myself fully to God and say things to this effect: "Here I am, Lord! Use me and send me to the place You see fit for me".¹² Now that the Lord has placed His mantle over me to lead the Diocese of West Malaysia, I will surely totally commit myself to lead the Diocese to the level He has designed for us to reach. My aspiration is to do His Will and to see His kingdom come. It is always not my primary goal to see numbers. I know numbers will come when we commit ourselves to do a good job for Him as He has designed. I will want to do it joyfully and willingly even though I know the road ahead is very, very tough and rugged. I wish my fellow clergy will share the same passion and compassion in their ministry. We are not in any way

¹⁰ *The Star* newspaper on 31st July 2007; www.idr.com.my ; www.ncer.gov.my ; and www.mida.gov.my .

¹¹ John C. Maxwell, *Developing The Leaders Around You* – How to help others reach their full potential, Nelson Business, Nashville, Tennessee, 1995, p6.

¹² I have purposely chosen the hymn '*All To Jesus I Surrender*' before my consecration on May 5th 2007. This is the same hymn that convicted me to surrender myself fully to God in 1977 in Melbourne, Australia.

competing with other Christians or Churches. We will work with other denominations to bring about the reality of Kingdomization.

Many people have seen and asked me about the transfers of clergy. Some have made specific requests stating their preferences; some have made known their 'demands'; others have left to my choice. Frankly speaking, it is really difficult to make transfers due to the lack of workers in the Diocese. The Diocese cannot take in many workers due to the tight financial situation we are in. Therefore, I have no choice but to make do with the existing workers in the Diocese which will mean that some of the places will have no one to cover for a short period of time. But I am serious in trying to put the right man in the right church. Coach Don Neff, after a heavy defeat, once said to his basketball team: "Having the best players on the floor isn't enough. You have to have the best players in the right positions."¹³ I am creating a new ministry in the Diocese for the laity to participate in. This will be discussed at length in the next chapter. It is hope that more people can be released to do the work of ministry in the church of God.¹⁴

THEOLOGICAL TRAINING

In order for the Anglican Church to excel and be in the cutting edge of this world, the level of clergy-training must be seriously considered. More and more people in the pews are degree holders, and some are Masters and PhD holders, we cannot afford to have our priests and deaconesses remain in their level of education for the past 20 to 30 years. Frankly speaking, most of us after graduating from STM did not ever read a proper theological book of substance. We are mostly reading devotional and inspirational books for sermon or Bible study preparations. Issues like women ordination, lay presidency, homosexuality, HIV Aids, Global warming, Terrorism etc. are plaguing us and our society daily, and there is nothing substantial that has come out from the local Christian arena to defend or protect ourselves. Almost all the thinking and theologizing comes from the West. Where are the Asian theologians or Malaysian theologians? We are like fire-fighters, only active when there is a fire.

In 10 years time, we will not have anyone qualify to teach in STM because those who are teaching will retire by then. We have to systematically work out a schedule to send one candidate to do doctorate studies a year. This will mean we have to set aside funds for clergy upgrading. If we do not begin to upgrade those who qualify, to do Masters then there is no hope for doctorates. But the truth is that not all are academically inclined. For those who are not academically inclined, we will encourage them to do some specialized courses such as lay training, counseling, youth ministry, children ministry, women ministry, ecumenism, inter-faith, expository preaching, mission work, discipleship ministry, spiritual formation, church administration, social concern for the less fortunate, etc. All clergy must not stagnate in their learning. Stagnation will bring about loss of zeal, loss of focus, loss of interest, non productive, anger, self-seeking, jostling for position, causing division, falling into

¹³ John C. Maxwell, *The 360 Degree Leader* – Developing your influence from anywhere in the organization, Nelson Business, Nashville, Tennessee, 2005, p241.

¹⁴ Ephesians 4:11-13

temptation, demanding attention, lording over, self-righteous Service, etc.¹⁵ We hope that each parish will join hands in providing funds for clergy theological training. Theological training is a costly business. When someone goes for theological upgrading, there is no guarantee that he will succeed. It is our hope that we can encourage some to do Masters and some to do Doctorates, and we hope to find funds for them. So in due time, say in 10 years time, we have people teaching in STM and some doctorate degree holders leading and spearheading the various ministries in the Diocese. Only by then we can talk about specialization. This is an arduous journey because on one hand, we do not have sufficient clergy and on the other hand, we have to prepare for the future. I hope and pray that my clergy and deaconesses will rise up to the occasion when given the responsibility to study. Having left the study mood for so many years and coupled with parish ministry, it is not easy to return to serious studies. I am glad that STM is working towards having DTheol and DMin programmes soon. I am hoping to work with STM to create more campuses outside Seremban to cater for the Theological Education by Extension (TEE). The Ipoh Theological Centre (ITC) which is in existence since 1999 has churned out more than 20 graduands with Certificate in Christian Ministry and Diploma in Christian Ministry. Most of them are Anglicans. Some of our workers as well as lay people can attend this programme while serving in their parishes. One day we will see STM working with virtual courses serving the churches throughout the world.

SABBATICAL REST

The word 'STRESS' is frequently mentioned among pastors and church circles. There are many Christian literatures on 'Stress Management' and 'How to Cope with Stress'. Christian leaders are not immune to stress. We have seen and heard of church leaders crumbling down due to stress or burnout. Though stress and burnout are not identical, the suggestion for managing stress is the same as the ones for prevention of burnout.¹⁶ One of the key ingredients for stress management or burnout prevention is REST. A good and proper rest is essential for good productivity and effectiveness. A good rest do not mean doing nothing, though at some stage we may have to do nothing, but a purposeful and biblical approach to Sabbatical rest is essential. All our clergy needs a proper Sabbatical rest with a guided programme by a Spiritual Director. The Diocese is not in the position to provide a year-long Sabbatical. First, we have to work at a 3 month short-term Sabbatical through different opportunities like Companion Diocese programme, Dioceses within the Province, Seminaries, other related Christian based NGO, etc. Since the number awaiting Sabbatical is large, we have to work according to the urgency and needs of each one, and also depending on the sponsoring partners. The 3 month idea is never meant to be a magical figure. It appears mainly due to a convenient figure that comes to me which includes the cost factor and the parish without a worker for those months. Clergy while taking his Sabbatical if did not complete his full 3 month, does not violate any commandment and will not be compensated. A Sabbatical is a sabbatical and that is final, irrespective of the length or

¹⁵ Siang Yang Tan, **FULL SERVICE** - Moving from Self-Serve Christianity to Total Servanthood, BakerBooks, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2006, Chapter 6, pp 64ff.

¹⁶ Siang Yang Tan, **REST**, Experiencing God's peace in a Restless World, Regent College Publishing, Vancouver, British Columbia, 2000, Chapter 11, pp161ff.

placement. It is meant to allow clergy to have proper rest and in view of rejuvenating oneself in the ministry of the Lord.

SPECIALIZATION

All transfers will be carefully studied with the intention of the clergy – parish right fit. These may not be 100% possible due to the varied languages, multi-centre, churchmanship, distance, etc. Some will be sent for studies, while others will be sent to the needy areas like the South, East and North. It is my hope that every Archdeaconry can have at least a church with a niche ministry peculiar to them. To be in the cutting edge, we have produce some churches which are good at certain ministry like, Praise & Worship, Children Ministry, Social Ministry, Mission Work, Youth Ministry, Drama, Music, Bible Exposition, Cell Ministry, Liturgy, Vestments, etc.

In the midst of a 'broken and sick' world, there is a great need to provide care to broken individuals and families. Counseling and Healing ministry is in great demand. We are theologically trained but not psychologically trained to be proper pastors and care givers. I am 'pushing' the Malaysian Indigenous Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) as the way forward for one of the specialization ingredients among our clergy and workers. It is a foremost spiritual and character formation course with 70% practical ministry and 30% didactic work. In the West, all pastors and care givers must attend this CPE course in order to be qualified pastors and care givers; we shall adopt this for all our clergy and workers. We wish to thank Rev. Fr. Richard Liew from the Episcopal Church in US for helping us to establish a Malaysian Indigenous CPE in our Diocese. Bishop Lim Cheng Ean captured the opportunity when it came last year and 6 people were selected to be the pioneer in this field. At the moment, only 4 are going on to the second level where the total course to be a Qualified Trainer will take 4 years to complete. Everyone is requested to at least complete Level One which requires 400 hours. The end result will help our worker to appreciate and understand himself better. When he goes to give help to others, he will be in the position able to really offer good help to the ones he is helping. This will make our pastoral ministry more effective and meaningful. We, the pastors, will grow in the learning of ourselves as the Servant of God created in the image of God for the ministry of God. John Maxwell in another occasion written these profound words: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care".¹⁷

STIPEND AND INCENTIVES

As the world has progressed and the cost of things has gone up, we must relook at the stipend of the clergy and deaconesses. The Salary Commission is looking and revising the salary scale again. We are doing a complete overhaul especially after the demise of our beloved late Rev. Pathynathan. We are working on some sort of machinery where the family of the clergy will be properly cared for. This will be discussed in Chapter Six later. This exercise must go on even though we may not be able to implement it straight away. Depending on the strength of the Diocesan finance, we may have to implement it stage by

¹⁷ John C. Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* - Follow them and People will follow you, Nelson, Nashville, Tennessee, 1998, p107.

stage. In order to have the salary at a reasonable scale, we have to seek the parishes to share in this aspect. Some of the expenses will probably need to be paid by the parishes especially the transportation allowances, Cost of living allowances (COLA), Sabbatical allowances and part of the training expenses. The whole revision exercise will take into consideration the notion of incentives as well. It will never be on monetary terms. So far we have the long-service awards, we can also look into giving incentives to those who work closely with the church, the archdeaconry and the diocese, perhaps by providing early Sabbatical or selection to represent the Diocese for Diocesan, Provincial or International cause. An incentive evaluation scheme where every priest will be evaluated by three parties, namely, the PCC, the Archdeacons and the Bishop, will be implemented soon. The purpose is to accord incentive appropriately to the deserving ones. We are doing this against the traditional worldly method of punishment. This, I think is more like Jesus' way.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE LAITY – MY PARTNERS

In the 21st century, we cannot continue to operate as in the 16th century with clergy-led churches. Too much talking concerning releasing the laity - the cold storage community but nothing substantial has been done so far within our churches. Only those churches which have truly engaged in releasing the laity have seen real growth in numbers. It is indeed time for the Anglican Church in West Malaysia to move forward by engaging the laity in the ministry of the Church. The common problem of 'bottle-neck' is a reference to the control and command of the clergy. If the clergy moves, the church will move; if the clergy stays put, the church will stay put; if the clergy flies, the church will fly. We must do away with this unhealthy situation. We must change the control and command into connect and collaborate by developing a joint clergy-laity led church. The clergy and the laity are a team and they are partners, not superiors versus subordinates. The Anglican Church has actually moved along quite a bit in this respect but there is still much room for improvement.

LAY PASTORS

I am proposing to develop a new category of workers in the Church where, I think, the clergy is quite nervous about. I wish to increase the usage of lady workers and man workers. They are not of the ordained ministry. In the Bible, there is the category of Deacons, where in today's church the Diaconate is only a stepping stone to Priesthood. I wish to create a permanent diaconate consisting of lay people by using the existing almost defunct portfolio of the Parish Assistant. In line and in conjunction with the Provincial Dioceses of Singapore, Sabah and Kuching, the Parish Assistant will be given the title 'PASTOR' (or in short Pr.). They are Lay Pastors and they can function just as an Ordained Deacon except the 'ABC' which is Absolution, Blessing and Consecration. They will need to go through some form of training and the Anglicanism course. Theological studies are preferred but non-theologically trained candidates are acceptable. These are non paid honorary volunteers of the Church. For every church of 100 members, we can expect to have 2 to 3 Honorary Lay Pastors. They will be licensed by the Bishop initially for a term of 2 years. The term can be extended with the recommendation of their priest and PCC. Lay Pastors will not have automatic place in the PCC or MDC which mean they are not ex-officio members. They are like any electoral

roll members who can elect and be elected, except salaried workers who can elect but cannot be elected. Church workers who are on the church pay-roll can also be licensed as Hon. Lay Pastors. Their terms are determined by their contract with their Church. In consistency with the regulation of the Diocese, all licensed Hon. Lay Pastors will retire upon reaching the age of 65, and thereafter to a year by year license on the recommendation of the priest and PCC. No license will be issued to anyone above 65 years of age. Since we are introducing this new portfolio in 2008, we will have an exemption for those above 65 years and below 70 years of age in 2008 to be licensed. All Hon. Lay Pastors will have to have compulsory retirement at the age of 75. It is only fair to give others a chance to serve as Lay Pastor. Each Hon. Lay Pastor must have a clear cut portfolio of ministry with at least 20 people under his charge such as the leader for an outreach, an area leader for 5 cell groups and above, the person in-charge of a social ministry, a youth worker, a children ministry worker, a ladies ministry worker, a cell coordinator, etc.

RECRUITMENT FOR ORDINATION

We will be gradually doing away with the practice of accepting school leavers into STM. In future all potential candidates for STM will be recruited from the Hon. Lay Pastors category. A minimum of two years as a Hon. Lay Pastor and with suitable qualification will be selected for further training in STM. The common complain that we heard is that the candidates admitted to STM are too young and inexperienced. Other senior Hon. Lay Pastors with good track records and having theological degrees from recognized institution may be chosen for ordination as Full Time clergy or Non Stipendiary Minister (NSM). Church employed worker with theological degree may be ordained as Local Stipendiary Minister (LSM) who is considered as a NSM. He must be at least employed for a minimum of two years in the same church and having attended the Anglicanism course before we can consider him for ordination. All non baptized and non confirmed candidates do not qualify for licensing or ordination. New members transferred from other denomination do not qualify. A minimum of two years as a full member in the same church is the most basic prerequisite. A proper dress code will be introduced for the Hon. Lay Pastor. All Lay Readers do not automatic qualify for Hon. Lay Pastors. They too have to go through the Anglicanism course and other forms of training, and are recommended by their priest and PCC before being considered. Each Hon. Lay Pastor is licensed to one parish only. There is no crossing boundary into another parish. Special dispensation from the Bishop can be obtained for any Hon. Lay Pastor to minister in another parish. Pastors Conference will be organized biannually to foster fraternity and comradeship. Hon. Lay Pastors may attend Archdeaconry meetings but not the Diocesan Synod.

CHAPTER FIVE

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIOCESE

We are blessed with many lands for churches and schools. Many of these have no or little commercial value. However, there are a few we can use for development either through joint venture or outright sale. With the sale, we can re-invest into the land bank throughout the Diocese. With some extra cash, we can improve the financial standing of the Diocese. It is never anyone's intention to use the cash from any land sale to offset the deficit or to pay the

clergy. Church ministry must come from the churches. In the strategy of making Dioceses, we need to re-deploy our assets and distribute them to potential growth areas.

We have a moral obligation to help develop the other countries in the Province into National Dioceses. We need extra help before we can accomplish this great task; therefore we need to do it together with the other Dioceses. As we grow, we will want to help countries like Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos and Nepal. This is a high calling and a tall order. With the effort of one Diocese, it will take a long time before seeing any significant progress in these countries. The countries in the Province are distributed to different Dioceses to assist in the work of mission. The Diocese of Sabah is 'allocated' East Kalimantan, Cambodia and Thailand; the Diocese of Kuching is 'allocated' West Kalimantan; and the Diocese of West Malaysia is 'allocated' Medan in Sumatra, Cambodia and South Thailand. The remainder will be looked after by the Diocese of Singapore.¹⁸ This is commonly known as Partnership In Mission (PIN).

NORTHERN CORRIDOR ECONOMIC REGION (NCER)

Since the Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi has announced that Perlis, Kedah, Penang and North Perak will be zoned into the NCER, certain signs of activities have started or given extra emphases such as the Second Penang Bridge, the Double Rail Track, Muda Agricultural Development Authority, Kulim Industrial & Technological Park, etc. These are also our weak areas. We must do something about it, not because the Prime Minister is planning something there; it is obviously an opportunity for these earmarked places are potential areas of growth. Up to date, we have no church in Perlis; only 2 churches in Kedah namely, St Thomas Kulim and St Philip & St James Sg. Petani; 6 churches in Penang Island namely, St George's, Christ Church, St Paul's, Good Shepherd, Bagan Jamal Anglican Church and Emmanuel Harvest; 7 churches in Province Wellesley namely, St Mark's Butterworth, Church of Our Redeemer Butterworth, Bukit Mertajam Anglican Centre, St Mark's Prai, St Paul's Bukit Tengah, Bethel Church Jawi and Holy Trinity Nibong Tebal. We need to look to Kangar and Alor Setar as centres of growth. Most of our churches are so small that they need outside help let alone doing mission outreach in new areas. Therefore, we need to inject some extra helps into these churches especially in starting new churches, doing mission works in specific towns or centres and building up the existing smaller churches. We need churches to share resources and personnel together for the expansion of the Archdeaconry.

SOUTHERN CORRIDOR ECONOMIC REGION (ISKANDAR DEVELOPMENT REGION or IDR)

This is perhaps the most promising economic region in the country. It is situated next to Singapore and Johor Bahru is a fast growing city. It has only one state government to deal with unlike the NCER which have 4 state governments to relate. For a start, we are interested in strategizing our efforts in the few major towns in Johor such as Kluang, Batu Pahat, Muar, Segamat, Gemas, Kulai, and Labis. Johor Bahru itself can afford to have another few Anglican Churches, either by having new church plant and/or establishing new

¹⁸ This is distributed under the Province of South East Asia Mission Services (PROSEAMS).

churches from existing congregations within a church. There are 11 churches in Johor namely, St Christopher's JB, Good Shepherd JB, Good Shepherd Sri Alam, Good Shepherd Skudai, St Andrew's Ulu Tiram, St Stephen's Yong Peng, St James Batu Pahat, St Mary's Segamat, St Luke's Kluang, Kulai Anglican Mission Centre, and Masai Anglican Mission Centre. At the moment, there are only 6 priests and 1 evangelist serving in Johor. How fast can this Archdeaconry grow with the little personnel we have? There is no social outreach and 1 Anglican school within the churches in Johor. Traditionally, Johor is always the stronghold of the Presbyterian Church. We, in actual fact, are relatively a new comer but some of our churches are not so young though. If there are less than 6 strong parishes, we will not meet the basic requirement of the Provincial Constitution to form a Diocese. Heavy 'weights' of the church leadership will probably need to be sent to these places to help spur faster growth. Many priests and deaconesses will probably feel somewhat disturbed over this new intended move. We all need to pray more seriously.

EASTERN CORRIDOR ECONOMIC REGION (ECER)

This is the oil belt of the nation. It is a rich area. The progress in this region has started some twenty years ago but an impetus push was given by the Prime Minister himself recently. Though the non Muslim community is small, the catchment is still good for us to go in. Very few churches have grabbed this golden opportunity. There is generally an unfounded phobia among Christians to do mission work in Terengganu and Kelantan. Since the Eastern Archdeaconry was established by Bishop Savarimuthu in 1993, the work has progressed from 2 churches into 5 churches today. Kelantan has St Martin's Kota Baru and Gereja Immanuel Kok Lanas; Terengganu also has 2 churches namely, St Andrew's Kuala Terengganu and St Joseph's Kemaman; Pahang is still stagnated with Church of the Epiphany Kuantan.¹⁹ Pahang is a large state and there are many towns namely, Termeloh, Karak, Mentakab, Maran, Raub, Kuala Lipis, Pekan, Sg. Lembing without an Anglican Church. The East Coast might take a longer time to become a Diocese by itself but it can join with other states to form one. We hope that the bulk of the non Muslims who are from the West Coast and East Malaysia will continue to stay there for good. Their movement does not help the churches at all; it has become a minus factor because these 'Malaysian migrants' will eventually return to their hometowns. We need to reach the locals. They will likely stay longer but their youth are being constantly lured to face the old rhythm of migrating to Kuala Lumpur for work and education. We thank God for the building of new universities in these three states. This is one of the many ways God has chosen to reverse the trend of outflow where His church can bring in young and energetic people. We should be preparing for the eventual open door for the 'majority'.

¹⁹ All Souls' Church, Cameron Highlands is in Pahang but due to proximity, she was seconded to the Lower North Archdeaconry.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CUTTING EDGE – SPECIAL MINISTRIES

I firmly believe that the prophecy of Zechariah has not been fulfilled yet. Could we apply it as though God has this prophecy for us in this day and age?

“This is what the Lord Almighty says: “In those days, ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, ‘Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.’”²⁰

In the midst of the exilic period, God gave this prophecy through Zechariah as a promise to the Jews that God is going to bless Jerusalem, the City of Truth,²¹ where those who have the Truth of God will become the ‘Focus of Attention’ to the people around. We, the Children of God, now hold the Truth of God.²² We must march on towards achieving the ‘Excellence’ for God²³ and soar to a greater height in the ministry of God. We cannot afford to be slipshod, below standard, haphazard, disorganized, lack of preparation, sloppy Children and Church of God. To be at the cutting edge of the society and nation, we must upgrade and prepare our people to rise to the occasion, and be ready in season and out of season to give an account to the people outside the church. Some form of professionalism coupled with the touch of the Grace of God will seem to be the best option forward. For too long, the Anglican Church in West Malaysia apparently, was not highly regarded or considered by other Christians and non-Christians in the country or outside, both in terms of church growth and leadership. We must consciously reverse this apparent trend by the pursuit of specialization. By so doing, we hope one day in the future, the Anglicans will be greatly sought after for our leadership, learning, professionalism, humility, boldness, clarity in expounding Scripture, mission work, conference speakers, etc. We have to work very hard ‘against the tide’ because the problems in the Anglican Communion and worldwide these days are not beneficial and helpful at all. The media has somewhat inclined to sensationalize the Anglican issues more than others. We have to work doubly hard in order to achieve our target.

BIBLICAL EXPOSITION

We should work towards producing a pool of good Bible expositors, and eventually includes every priest and pastor. If we are serious with the Anglican Quadrilateral²⁴ and Article 6 of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion²⁵ then we should all the more spend much time reading

²⁰ Zechariah 8:23

²¹ Zechariah 8:3

²² John 1:1; 17:17

²³ Excellence, here, does not mean worldly standard of status or fame rather God’s high calling and Will.

²⁴ **Anglican Quadrilateral** is also commonly known as the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral (1888) which has become the basis for discussion on unity with other churches. The four terms set out in the Quadrilateral are 1. The Holy Scripture contains all essentials for salvation. 2. The Sacraments, Baptism and Eucharist, which are instituted by Christ. 3. The Catholic Creeds. 4. The Apostolic Ministry of Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

²⁵ Article 6 states ‘The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary to salvation’.

the Bible and understanding it rightly. We have to be true to the Word of God by interpreting and handling it correctly. Expounding the Word of God rightly to the people of God is our utmost responsibility as a guardian of God's Truth. 'If you know the Truth (rightly), the Truth will set you free.'²⁶ Expounding the Bible rightly is important but it is only one of the few important things where we have to take note of. There are other important practices and essential ingredients to our Christian walk.

PRAYER MOVEMENT

We should be known as a people of prayer. The chorus of a hymn goes like this: 'Little prayer, little power; more prayer, more power; no prayer, no power'. Though we may not completely associate prayer with power, we cannot rule out their connection and relationship. When we come to corporate prayer, it is a sad story for our churches. Some of our churches do not have a church corporate prayer meeting. Even some of our priests do not seem to practise corporately prayer (I wonder whether they believe in prayer), how then can our parishioners be taught and encouraged to pray at home and in church? Prayer is not a tool to demand God's answer rather a channel of humility and submission to God's Sovereignty and Rule. It is not talking to God rather communicating with God, often with more listening and less talking. 'Prayer is our primary pathway of relationship to God. It is an outward and visible sign of our inward hunger and thirst to know God more fully.'²⁷ We must be able to gather people to pray together as a Diocese at our Diocesan Prayer Rally if not annually, at least biannually. I am looking at 1,000 people gathering and perhaps, later with 10,000 when the time is ripe. I tend to agree with David Jeremiah, when he says,

"When we pray, we align ourselves with the purposes of God and tap into the power of the Almighty. Because we pray, God works through us in ways that He wouldn't otherwise. God has made certain things dependent upon prayer, things that will never be done unless we pray. Could God do whatever He chooses without prayer? Of course. But God has determined that He will use prayers of His people to accomplish His purpose on this earth. When we do not pray, we limit what God might do in our lives."²⁸

ANGLICAN CARE

We, the Anglicans, have always been boasting that we have St. Nicholas Home.²⁹ Of late, there are a few more Caring ministries springing up amongst our churches, mostly in the Central region. There is much room for improvement in the area of Care. The Anglican Care was deliberately set up with the noble aim to consolidate the Caring ministries in the Diocese in view of encouraging the setting up of more Caring centres and ministries by our churches. We are blessed to bless; saved to save; loved to love; forgiven to forgive. It is our intention to connect all our existing Caring ministries for co-operation and solidarity under one big

²⁶ John 8:32. Emphasis in parenthesis is mine.

²⁷ Siang Yang Tan, *Disciplines of the Holy Spirit* – How to connect to the Spirit's Power and Presence, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1997, Chapter 5, pp66ff.

²⁸ David Jeremiah, *Prayer the Great Adventure*, Multnomah, Sisters, Oregon, 1997, chapter 4, pp69ff.

²⁹ St Nicholas Home is a centre for the Blind and Low Sighted. It is well known worldwide due to the publicity done through the newsletter of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG).

umbrella, the Anglican Care. It is not to replace the on-going Caring ministries or to compete with them by setting up its own Caring ministry. It is a Coordination and Collaboration body for the Caring ministry of the Diocese. If we want to do it, we have to do it good. We shall have experts and trained staff, and later trainers. The CPE will come in handy as we go full steam into the organization and establishment of the Anglican Care.

MISSION AND EVANGELISM

This is an area where the Diocese has to put more attention on. The status of mission and evangelism in the parishes is far below the acceptable level. However, during the Decade of Evangelism (1991 to 2000), Bishop Savarimuthu has instructed every church to create a budget and a department for mission and evangelism. Since then, we are proud that many new churches came into being. In fact, the last decade of the last century was the fastest growing decade in terms of church membership and congregations. This is not enough; we need to create our own Mission Agency in view of coordinating and training mission workers for local and overseas consumption, and to help create mission awareness among churches. We have seen many Korean missionaries in Malaysia and all over the world. This is a testimony of Faith-In-Action and at the same time it is fulfilling the call of the Lord of Harvest to send out workers to the ripen harvest field.³⁰ We need to develop and train many full time mission workers as well as many tent-makers. The biannual Mission Conference must go on, and its priority is to usher the momentum of raising mission workers for the End-Time Harvest both in the unchurched towns and villages as well as in our Province and distant lands. The present Diocesan Missioner has been functioning alone and not so effective. I hope to lend a greater hand to this unit so that it will not be a lone ranger ministry. This unit needs re-structuring and to be given more input to run as a Mission Agency. We need to release a few more people to be Diocesan Missioners. They should be proven evangelists and mission workers coming from different language and age groups. It is my hope that in the near future, we can moderate and coordinate the mission workers who are already sent out by parishes; and eventually develop a Diocesan Mission policy and to establish mission training centre or course.

EDUCATION AND MISSION SCHOOLS

Many have commented on the losing grip of the mission schools by churches. We need to pray and work to arrest the decline in control and standard of our mission schools. We were once the sought-after schools but it is no longer so now except a few. We have to encourage more Christians to take up the teaching profession. In view of the 9th Malaysia Plan, the Education Minister has plans for the upgrading of all schools so that they can match the demands of the ever-increasing numbers of universities and university colleges. Policy changes are coming, and we must be alert to flow ahead to surf on the crest of the current. School boards are essential links between the school and the church. School boards are being created in government schools, too, to toe the line of the new concept of cluster schools. Christian private schools and universities are gradually becoming a reality in the not so distant future. Developing STM with other faculties other than theology is an alternative to

³⁰ Matthew 9:38

Christian university. If STM is set up for the training of eventual leaders of the Church, we are actually believing and saying to ourselves that we are entrusting the future of our churches into the hands of the lecturers of STM. If this is so, we shall all the more, quickly develop other faculties like, language study, counseling, psychology, communication, multi-media, IT, etc. within the umbrella of STM. We have the space and facilities, so we need to work at this paradigm shift among the STM faculty, STM Council, the sponsoring denominations and their members.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

The children and the youth are the gems of our families. But the gap between the older and present generation is getting wider and wider. Thus, it has created much heartaches and pains between them. The gap seems to be widened year by year and month by month. We need to study and apply a modified McGavran's Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP)³¹ where the principles are used for an age group across racial barriers instead of a racial group of all ages. High-Tech style children teaching materials are readily available worldwide but we are still using the photostated materials which are black and white. No wonder we cannot reach or keep the children in the church especially when they finish their primary education. Engaging children and youth workers is an excellent idea. First of all, we need to identify some people and challenge them to be children and youth workers. They will then be sent for some training, and later, we need to invest and engage them in continual education. **KidsGames** is one of the many programmes that will be welcomed by the children and youth, even adults find it exciting and meaningful. If we can develop such a programme, we are pretty sure that will touch base with the children and youth of today. We must commit ourselves seriously in producing children and youth worker for the Diocese and the parishes.

YOUNG ADULTS, LADIES, MEN AND GOLDEN CIRCLE MINISTRIES

Surprisingly, the Diocesan Women Conference and Diocesan Golden Circle Conference are doing wonderfully well in Diocesan level. They are mostly from the senior and retired age group where most people will think that they are the least active groups instead it turns out to be the most active. Of course, we are not contented with the Conferences alone, there is much work needed in the Archdeaconry and parish level. At least, the good conference attendance warrants something for them to shout with. The men's group is new and has just formed. It will take some time to gain momentum. But this is not so for the young adult group which is supposed to be the most vibrant and versatile people, and they are not attracting their own peers. Something must be done urgently. Of course, we can pinpoint at many things but let us not point figures rather put our minds together to find ways to help it grow. Surely there is a way forward and I am positive about it. That is why we need to scout for and develop our people to be specialists in every of these ministries. We need people to be trained as trainers and catalysts for our young adult, ladies, men and Golden Circle groups. We do not need clergy to do this. They certainly can help and give much impetus push to quicken the ministries. Lay people are the most suitable ones to set these ministries on fire.

³¹ Donald McGavran & C. Peter Wagner; *Understanding Church Growth*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1990, 3rd edition, appendix.

We have too long been clergy dependent, and their busy schedule is not being helpful. In future, I am trying to appoint lay people to head various ministries in the Diocese. This is to set the clergy, who has too much in their hands, with more free time to do teaching and pastoring. Many lay people have voiced out that their clergy are too busy with Diocesan affairs and often not in their parishes. This trend can only be reversed after we have licensed more Hon. Lay Pastors and Evangelists within our parishes. We need to set up systematic training for our Hon. Lay Pastors and Evangelists before we can appoint them. We want them to be 'properly' equipped so that they can do a good job in the given ministry.

ECUMENICAL AND INTER-FAITH MINISTRIES

The Anglican Church is not the only church in this land. We have to grapple with the reality of existing and living together with other Christians. We are chosen by God to be one of His many churches in this country and to co-exist together with churches of different expressions and theological persuasions. While building up ourselves, we have to consider seriously our collective Christian witness in this multi-ethnic, multi-faith and multi-culture land. We should stand and walk with our brethren from other denominations as one voice and witness to the whole nation. We should not be seen disagreeing among ourselves in the public; all this should be thrashed out in close door serious discussions. We have always been playing an active role in the Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM) and the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM).³² It is important that each individual church or denomination should not give its own stand or interpretation to public issues. Every church can certainly adopt its own stand and to declare it to her own members. For public issues, we should stand together in solidarity after having much deliberation and understanding of the particular issues and with proper guidance. Being a member of the CCM, we are also represented in the CFM and thus in the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism (MCCBCHST). In the recent issue of justice and apostasy, we are in one accord with the stand and aspiration of the MCCBCHST.³³ We need experts in the area of faith relations and the legal arena to assist and guide the Council.

EMERGENCY AND CRISIS

The present world is being bombarded with terrorism and natural disasters. Though many of these events are beyond our control, we need to be prepared for the eventuality. Some may say that when the Lord calls, it is time to go home and we just have to go home happily. The aftermath questions are: 'What will happen to the loved ones who are left behind?' Do we have any cushion or stockpile for the family of the victims? Therefore, we need to learn from the Tsunami experience in 2004³⁴ and create a CRISIS RELIEF ministry within our Diocese. We have to be ready at all times and to respond quickly when need arises. I have desired to

³² The Council of Churches of Malaysia (CCM) was formed in 1947. Its members are from the mainline denominations and some Christian para-churches. The Christian Federation of Malaysia was formed in 1986. It is made up of leaders from the Roman Catholic Church, CCM and the National Evangelical Christian Fellowships (NECF). The NECF has memberships from independent local churches.

³³ MCCBCHST, ,KL,2007

³⁴ On the 26th December 2004, a great tsunami was created off the shore of the city of Banda Aceh, Indonesia by a 9.7 Richter scale earthquake and killed more than 200,000 people in the affected countries.

propose a new ministry called **RELIEF, EMERGENCY AND CRISIS HELP (REACH)**. This unit is only to respond when there is an emergency or a crisis. It will be parked under the DSIU for the time being. Its composition should consist of representatives from each Board and Diocesan Council/Committee. We hope to develop this ministry into one that transcends ethnicity, language, creed, and geography.

DIOCESAN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION (DSIC)

The Diocesan Strategy Implementation Unit (DSIU) was formed in the year 2000 for the purpose of assisting the Diocese to implement and monitor the goals and vision of the Diocese. It has six units, namely, Restructuring, Wholesome Family, Global Issues, Resurgence of Religions, Multi-Media, and Mission & Evangelism. After seven years of implementation, I have found that there is a better way to get work done. So I have decided to change the DSIU to **DIOCESAN STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION COMMISSION (DSIC)** with the intention of making it the supreme body for ministry; just as the Standing Committee is the supreme body for the Diocesan affairs. The DSIC is a Commission and no longer a unit. It has a bigger role to play. Every head of the Diocesan Board, Council and Committee will automatically be ex-officio of the DSIC led by the Diocesan Bishop. Each head can and should send a representative if he or she is unavailable. I view the DSIC as the backbone of the Diocese. The decisions made in the DSIC should be channeled and filtered downwards to the Archdeacons and then to the parishes and finally to the grassroots. Of course, we can use other means to disseminate information such as Anglican Messenger, Bishop's Circular, Board or Council news, Parish Bulletins, Pamphlets, Internet, Diocesan Website, etc. The Bishop will keep a small group from the former Mission & Evangelism Unit to be his Think-Tank.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

In the 1890s, Arthur Pierson challenges the Church of his time to lay down its materialism in an effort to hasten the evangelization of the world, and says:

“I am a little afraid that the seeds of a great apostasy are in the Church of God today, that in the midst of this century and its closing decade it should even be questioned whether we could evangelize the world in our generation, when the luxuries alone that crowd our homes, that cover our persons, that are hung upon our walls and stuffed into our library cases, the gold and silver, the jewelry and the ornamentation, the costly furniture in our homes, would of themselves suffice to make the Gospel speed its way around the earth inside of a decade of years.”³⁵

³⁵ *Mission Frontiers*, The Bulletin of the U.S. Center for World Mission, Vol. 27, No. 4, July-August 2005, p.13, article: **Are We Trifling With Missions?**; Condensed from “*The Evangelization of the world in the Present Generation – How Made a Fact*”, a speech delivered by Rev. A. T. Pierson, D.D., at the First International Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, Friday, February 27, 1891.

Simplicity is a spiritual discipline which is gravely absent in this day and age. Richard Foster in his book entitled ***Freedom in Simplicity***,³⁶ emphasized that simplicity will lead to freedom to live and experience the Abundant Life³⁷ that Christ has promised to His disciples and followers. All the above vision and plans, however, great they may be, will be in vain if we have missed the important boat i.e. Servanthood. The idea of Servanthood is mooted by Christ in the Gospels. He stressed and reiterated that the power and authority that He has given to us lies not in the 'sword' or 'fist' but rather in the 'towel'.³⁸ Our Diocese can only progress as far as our understanding of Servanthood and our commitment to being a Servant of Christ. To be a True Servant of Christ means to be a bondsman or ***doulos*** of Christ i.e. with no right whatsoever. There is too much politics in the church. No way for anyone of us to tread onto the process of sanctification if we remain in the struggles and squabbles for control and command. God forbids that we should play politics in church. We should, all the more, return to the Scriptures and to adopt a Mind of Christ; to be a Living Sacrifice; to imitate Christ; to be a Candle for Christ and a Light of the World. Rick Warren, in his 'famous' book entitled ***The Purpose Driven Life***, has pointed out:

"Thousands of books have been written on leadership, but few on servanthood. Everyone wants to lead; no one wants to be a servant. We would rather be generals than privates. Even Christians want to be 'servant-leaders', not just plain servants. But to be like Jesus is to be a servant. It is possible to serve in church for a lifetime without ever being a servant. You must have a servant's heart."³⁹

Archbishop William Temple in his comment on the purpose of the church, he stated that 'the Christian Church is the only co-operative society that exists for the benefit of its non-members'.⁴⁰ We are called 'to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour'.⁴¹ By jostling for power and position, we are inevitably advocating bondage rather than freedom; binding instead of release; chained instead of setting free.

Kingdomization means the ushering in a kingdom with Christ as the King and we as the servants of Christ - to rescue the captives from the evil one; to restore the wholeness to the multitude; to save the lost; to equip the saints; to care for the needy; to teach the faithful; to strengthen the weak; to feed the hungry; to heal the sick; to provide for the seekers; to lead the flock; and to guard the truth.

For the next 30 years, it is our prayers and belief that the Anglican Church will shine for God in the facilitation of seeing:-

- A few Dioceses
- The name 'Anglican' becomes a household name.
- Strong in mission, care, biblical teaching, dynamic youth, lively children, creative ladies, jovial men, and untiring Golden Circle.

³⁶ Richard J. Foster, ***Freedom of Simplicity***, Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1981.

³⁷ John 10:10

³⁸ John 13:1-17 '***The feet washing ceremony***'

³⁹ Rick Warren, ***The Purpose-Driven Life***, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002, pp 257-258.

⁴⁰ Ian Bunting, *ibid.* p238.

⁴¹ Luke 4:18-19

- Joint Clergy-laity led Church.
- All leaders are true servants of Jesus Christ.
- Professional and Specialist clergy and lay pastors.
- Christian University and Schools.

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