



Private Circulation Only

# Anglican MESSENGER

DIOCESE OF WEST MALAYSIA

KDN : PP11463/05/2013 (032185)

APRIL 2019

## BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES

THOSE WHO GO OUT WEeping,  
CARRYING SEED TO SOW,  
WILL RETURN WITH SONGS OF JOY,  
CARRYING SHEAVES WITH THEM.

PSALM 126:6

# Diocesan Theme for 2019

## Bringing In The Sheaves

### Features



4



6



13



18

### Coming Events

- Diocesan Clergy, Deaconesses and family retreat at Gambang - 25-27 March 2019
- Anglican Care AGM - 5-7 April 2019
- Good Friday - 19 April 2019
- Easter - 21 April 2019
- Cozy Home AGM - 27 April 2019
- Chinese Board AGM - 1 May 2019
- 200th Anniversary of St George's Penang - 11 May 2019
- Tamil Board AGM - 20 May 2019
- Thy Kingdom Come Ascension to Pentecost - 30 May-9 June 2019
- Pentecost - 9 June 2019
- DWC AGM in Cameron Highlands - 21-23 June 2019

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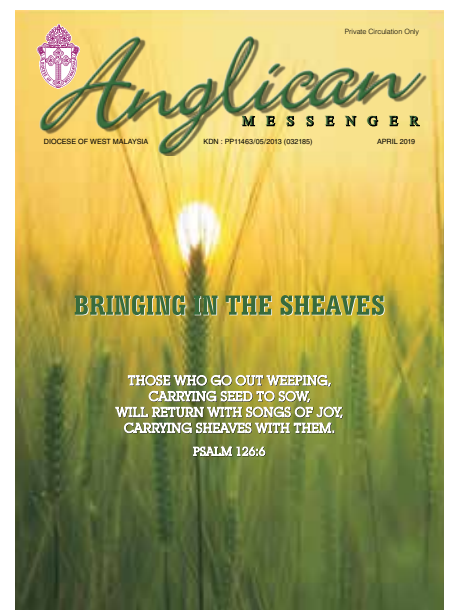
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The Editorial Board welcomes articles and photographs that focus on the theme. Please submit articles in Word document and relevant photographs in JPEG format of about 1 MB each by 30 June 2019 to:

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### Cover Design



The world is full of the sheaves of the Lord's wheat. How good a job have we done and are doing in fulfilling the Great Commission and bringing in the harvest? How much of that harvest is still out there rotting in the streets?

The church is in the business of saving souls. Are the Anglican churches doing enough to attract more souls to join it? Are individuals in their congregations challenged on a regular basis to declare the salvation of the Lord to all in the world? Remember it was the lay people preaching the Word wherever they went that brought about the rapid expansion of the Christian faith and the transformation of the then known pagan world.



# Bringing In The Sheaves

*by The Most Revd Datuk Ng Moon Hing*

*Archbishop and Primate of the Province of the Anglican Church in South East Asia  
and*

*Bishop of the Diocese of West Malaysia*

This is the ninth year of our Diocesan Theme for the Decade of Mission and Networking – Mission Challenge: One In Christ (2011 – 2020). The theme for this year 2019 is Bringing In the Sheaves. It is time for us to bring in the fruit and start counting the blessings and giving thanks to God while not stopping in our daily work and ministry. We have been Sowing, Nurturing, Planting, Guarding, Tending, Extending, Harvesting and so on over the last eight years. We thank God for the blessings and challenges in church planting, mission, evangelism, relief work, training, teaching and equipping. The Diocese has certainly seen much growth over the past 30 years, especially over the last 10 years.



*Archbishop Ng Moon Hing*

In 1985 the Diocese had about 45 churches and less than 30 Priests and Parish Assistants. In 2015, we grew to 155 churches with 125 Priests and Deaconesses and 16 Evangelists. Within the 155 churches, there are 255 congregations of various languages. Much of the growth was experienced between 1995 and 2015. While on the one hand we are quite happy with the increase, on the other hand, there is the challenge to keep up the pace and make sure we harvest the fruits and not allow them to fall off. There was a season in our history when we could identify with this fact in our churches – “the people came in from the front door but left through the back door.” During those years we prayed and worked very hard to retain the people in the church. Every measure was employed. We praise God that we managed to retain some and brought in others.

The Lay Readers and Lay Pastors Schools have certainly improved and brought in a significant number from the ‘frozen’ laity to serve in the church. The Anglican Institute of Ministry has further assisted many in the trail to ordained ministry as well as in the deepening of their knowledge and understanding of the Bible, God and theology. Anglican Care, the diocesan body for all social and welfare ministries of the churches, has encouraged many parishioners to serve in the arena of caring ministries. Today, Anglican Care has a membership of 18 Caring Ministries. The Relief Emergency And Crisis Help (R.E.A.C.H.) has reached a stage where it can now operate independently in relief and crisis work within Malaysia and beyond. The last three places of relief ministries were Kelantan in Malaysia, Palu in Sulawesi and Dhading in Nepal. The Diocese, through the Anglican Mission School

Board, which oversees all our mission schools, manages a scholarship grant for Anglicans who wish to study in the field of Education or related courses in tertiary colleges. This is to encourage more Christian church members to become teachers or enter the teaching profession in our nation. The Diocesan Boards and Committees are playing their part in equipping and ministering to the people. For example, the Diocesan Golden Circle reaches out to senior citizens, the Diocesan Women’s Committee to the women and so on.

Many churches have been planted over the years. Some have become Missionary Districts while others have become Parishes. Many churches have started new language services. Since 1995, when the BM and Iban services/churches were officially recognised as a part of the Diocese, there are now many BM/Iban churches. We have a BM/Iban church in all the States of West Malaysia while we have yet to see English, Chinese and Tamil speaking churches in all the States. One of the aims of the division of dioceses into three is to decentralise for Mission. It is our desire to spur growth so that we can bring in more sheaves into the Kingdom of God i.e. more ministries, workers, members and resources for the glory of God.

Let us work together and bring in the sheaves for His Glory and Honour.

AM

# Launch of the 2019 Diocesan Theme

by Chan Aik Lian



of gratitude for His goodness and for answered prayers. For us then, what can we offer God in 2019? The Archbishop pointed out that this must surely be OUR OWN HEARTS. The God who owns all of creation does not have our hearts until and unless we surrender them to Him. Colossians 3:12-17 calls us as God's chosen people to have hearts that are transformed and aligned to His Word, turning us from the ways of the world.

The Archbishop reminded us that our churches are losing their young people to the world. We need to be dedicated like Hannah and Mary and bring our young children to God.

The 2019 Diocesan Theme 'Bringing In The Sheaves' was launched by Archbishop Ng Moon Hing at Evensong on 30 December 2018 at St Mary's Cathedral, Kuala Lumpur. It was attended by over 160 people.

In his message, the Archbishop challenged the congregation with the examples of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:18-20 and 26, and Mary in Luke 2:41-52. Each gave her own precious child to God, out

In conclusion, the Archbishop stressed that in line with the 2019 Diocesan Theme 'Bringing In The Sheaves':

- The most important thing we can offer to God is our heart;
- We are to give our best and our young to God;
- We are to do it NOW lest the pressures of the world deter us from doing so.

The launch also included a short video clip in which the Archbishop briefly shared some key pointers with us:

- Growing the People: Through church planting and evangelism.
- Building the People: Through intentional discipleship.
- Sending the People: Into mission, and into 'care and concern' ministries.



Also as part of the launch, a big wooden cross was set up in front of the church, to which were attached the 2019 Diocesan Theme bookmarks for the congregation to take for themselves. A fellowship dinner followed the launch.

The 2019 Diocesan Theme may seem a formidable task in the light of our own human limitations and weaknesses. May this cause us to be constantly reminded of the need to draw strength and guidance from God Himself and of the need to work together in unity. May 2019 be a year of the Diocese bearing forth long-lasting fruits to the glory of God. **AM**

*Tan Aik Lian is an administrative staff in Kuala Lumpur and attends the evening service at St Mary's Cathedral.*



Video presentation on growth in the Diocese



# Collation and Installation Service

*by Andrew Woodliffe*



*Revd Dato Dr Yeoh Beng, The Ven Stephen Chan Mung Koon and Revd Canon Jacob George John*

On Sunday 3rd March, St Mary's Cathedral hosted a special diocesan service - the collation and installation of Revd Canon Jacob George John as Archdeacon, the licensing of the Ven Stephen Chan Mung Koon as Archdeacon for the Middle Central Archdeaconry and the licensing of Revd Dato Dr Yeoh Beng San as Canon Emeritus.

The service was conducted in the presence of the Archbishop The Most Revd Datuk Ng Moon Hing who preached from Luke 9 on the transfiguration of our Lord. The Archbishop reminded us that some would depart from the faith due to disappointment and disillusionment and that this should be cause for much lamenting. His Grace highlighted examples from his own ministry, where some had renounced their faith because they had entertained false expectations from God in the area of wealth, health,



marriage and children. It was a sombre reminder of the importance of proclaiming the promises of God alone, lest any are led astray by our proclamation of additional promises (or, as the Bishop put it, "plus plus.") For this reason, the appointment of

godly and faithful leaders is essential for the growth and maturity of the church. We pray for those licensed that they might exemplify holiness in life and truth in teaching:-

'Our loving Heavenly Father, who has given to the church the gift of ministers through Your ascended Son, we pray that You would bestow upon each of them the healthful Spirit of Your grace, that they would truly please You, and especially, that they might teach and rule in accordance with Your Word so that Your church will be built up. Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen. **AM**

*Andrew Woodliffe is a Pastoral Assistant at St Mary's Cathedral. He is married to Michelle, and together they have a baby girl, Isla. Prior to pastoral ministry, he studied engineering and taught mathematics.*

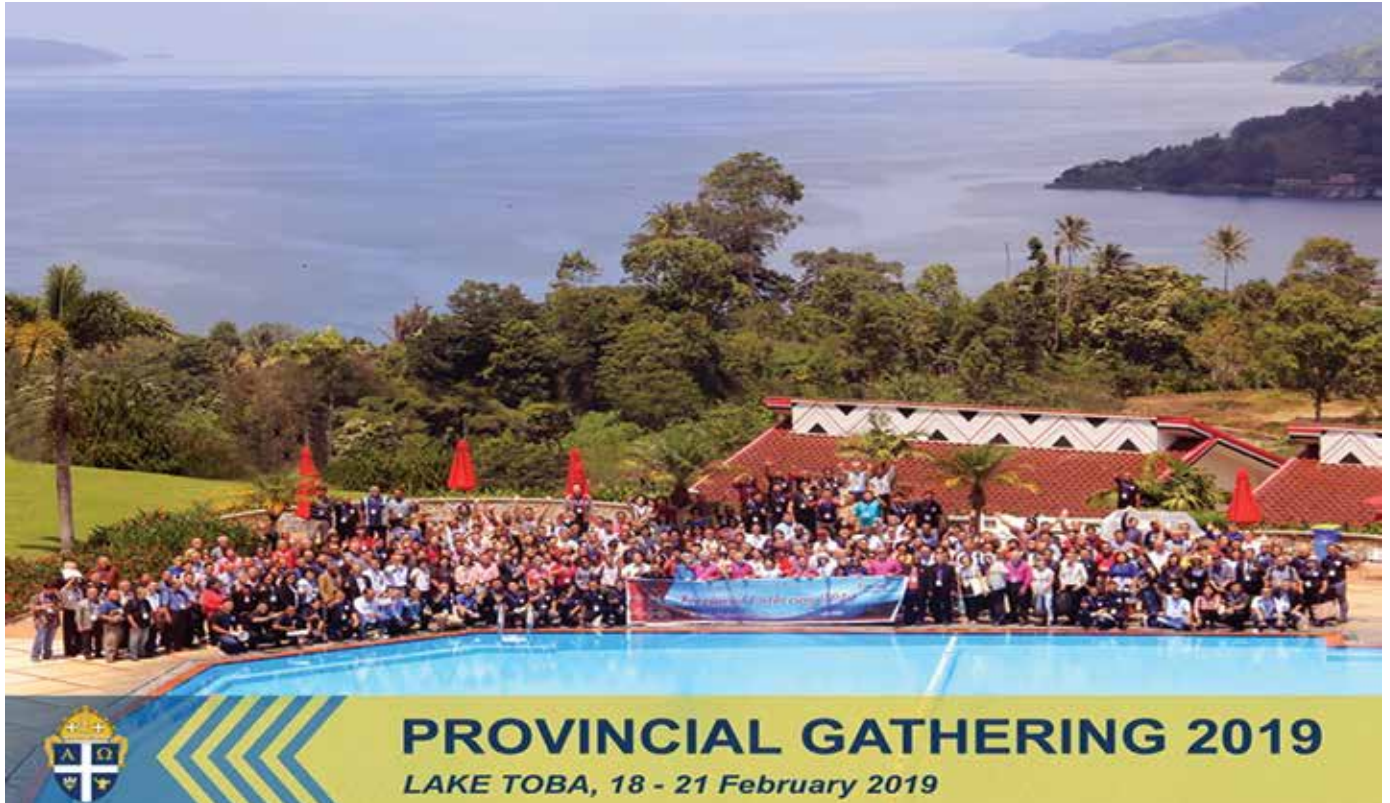


# ‘Oneness in the Body’

## Anglican SEA Provincial Gathering 2019

### Lake Toba, Indonesia (18 – 21 February)

*by A. Annamaney*



“I’m 71 years old and I made it!” yelled Nancy Teoh jubilantly from the tree-tops, when she completed her leg of the Obstacle Race. That summarised the excited and happy mood of the participants at the Provincial Gathering of the Anglican Church in South East Asia. Different ages, languages, ethnic groups and different dioceses, all bonded together as one.

As Archbishop Ng Moon Hing said, “This once-in-four years Provincial Gathering is a fantastic occasion for members of our Province to meet and share with one another for encouragement, bonding, joint projects and mission of the Lord.”

There was in all a total of 270 participants from the four Anglican Dioceses – the Diocese of Kuching, the Diocese of Sabah, the Diocese of Singapore and our Diocese of West Malaysia that participated at this year’s provincial



*Participants from the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia*

gathering. From West Malaysia there were 63 participants - 18 clergy, 4 deaconesses and 41 lay persons.

The gathering was well-organised by Revd Dr Timothy Chong and the helpful ‘Men in Black’ (T-shirts) who were members of the clergy of the Gereja

Anglikan Indonesia (a Deanery of the Diocese of Singapore).

The four-day programme was a good mix of physical, social and spiritual activities. The venue was Niagara Hotel, nearly 3,000ft above sea-level, overlooking the beautiful Lake Toba in Indonesia. The





*The Men-in-Black*

weather was cool and thankfully, dry, while we were there. The only setback was that the six storey hotel did not have a lift! Several of us had rooms on the 6th floor and we had to trudge down daily to the ground floor for our sessions. Meals were on the 5th floor, so everyone had to either walk up or down! As each day passed, we congratulated ourselves on succeeding in mastering the steps without collapsing!

The days were filled with ice-breakers and activities of various kinds including the presentation of hand crafted stoles to the clergy. It is impossible to list down and describe all the activities that were carried out but here are a few to tempt you to attend the next gathering in four years time.

### **Anglican PSEA Inter-Diocesan Challenge Trophy**



*The Obstacle Race*

a Durian Eating competition too, but in the end this was done away with and everyone thoroughly enjoyed eating the 700 durians laid out for us! It took us two days to finish eating the durians.

Thanks to our hard-working Sports Coordinator, Revd Matthew Chay, who organised us, we had four enthusiastic teams for the games. These games were held concurrently in different venues within the compound.

The Obstacle Race was run in the part of the compound for the Outward Bound Course. Even Archbishop Moon Hing took part in Basketball. Though we tried very hard, and had lots of fun, we did not win!



*The stoles to be presented to the clergy*

One afternoon was devoted to sports for the Anglican Province of South-East Asia Inter-Diocesan Challenge Trophy. Each Diocese formed teams for the Obstacle Race, Minute to Win, mixed team Captain Ball and Basket Ball. There was supposed to be



*Diocese of Sabah representative receiving the Challenge Trophy from Archbishop Ng*



The Challenge Trophy finally went to the Diocese of Sabah! Although no runners-up were named, we do know that for the Obstacle Race, our team was first, completing the race in 37 seconds! Sadly, the basketball match was called off due to an injury on the court.

### Social /Fellowship



There were plenty of opportunities to meet and fellowship with members from our own and other dioceses. For our welcome dinner, which was a poolside B-B-Q, we were allocated seats with members of other Dioceses. This gave us a chance to renew old friendships and make new friends. The hotel was fully booked for the gathering, so everywhere we looked, there were friends or potential friends. A cruise on Lake Toba and a tour of Samosir Island was organized on another afternoon. Samosir Island is believed to be the original home of the Batak tribe. Besides sight-seeing, there was also time for souvenir shopping on the island.

### Spiritual

But most important of all were the spiritual sessions held in the mornings and nights. The principal speaker was Revd Tony Yeo, the Senior Pastor of Covenant Evangelical Free Church, Singapore.

Taking us through the book of Haggai, Revd Yeo shared with us God's Word for the Drifted, the Discouraged, the Defiled and the Destined. For the Drifted, it was a reminder that we are living in the end times and the Church must not be caught sleeping. Look Out, lest we drift away. Discouragement is Satan's favourite tool in his toolbox. We are reminded that God

compromise. God's Word for the Defiled – Look Inside. For the Destined (Chosen), we are to look beyond our circumstances and concerns. Look Beyond – we are part of God's greater plan.

In the last session, there was a service of re-dedication where we were challenged to lead and serve the Lord as God's "chosen, royal, holy people of God" (1 Peter 2: 9-10). As the Holy Spirit moved among us, the people moved forward to be prayed for by Bishops and senior clergy.

Truly, there in Lake Toba, in an invaluable experience, God brought us

is faithful and Jesus ultimately wins and is victorious, so Look Up and press on. For the Defiled - don't trivialize sin! Never

together and drew us to be One in Him.

AM



*The re-dedication service*

trivialize what Christ has done for us on the cross. Lessons to learn – learn to disagree, learn to disapprove and never

*A Annamany is the Chairperson of Anglican Care and the East Asia Faciliator for the Anglican Alliance.*



# 66th Diocesan English Youth Camp



**T**he Diocesan Youth Council organised its 66th Diocesan English Youth Camp (DEYC) from 7 – 10 December 2018 in Chefoo Methodist Centre in Cameron Highlands, Pahang. The theme of the camp was ‘Saved to Serve’ and Tony Thavasilan was our speaker.

Valerie write, “‘Saved To Serve’ taught me that the reason I am living as a Christian is not because of my parents or race but because of me admitting that I am sinner who believes in the saving power of the blood of Christ and confessing that Jesus is my Saviour. As Christians the gospel should impact every action of our life so we can live a healthy Christian life.”

Hannah chimes in: “To summarise all the sessions, I learnt that the moment we miss the gospel, we miss the heart of service. To avoid that, I have to hear the Gospel ⇨ Admit I am a sinner and need help, Believe in the blood of Jesus, Confess that Jesus is my Personal Saviour ⇨ New Heart (Holy Spirit in us ⇨ New identity( Deny ourselves, Elevate Christ, Bear Fruit) ⇨ Serve (Fruit, Gift, Holy Spirit) ⇨ Share the Gospel.”

Alvin adds “Using the theme verse for the camp from 1 Peter 4:10 ‘Each of you

should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.’ Tony showed us that we all have different gifts and we need to use them to serve others, as faithful stewards of Christ, especially through different ministries besides the youth fellowship. Some of the ministries we were introduced to were prayer, music, ushering, audio visual, administration, and social work.”

Rohan continues, “I learnt that God gives us at least one gift and we must use that gift to glorify and serve him. As for me, I serve the Lord in the music ministry by playing the piano in church. The facilitators gave us a practical session where we got a chance to try out all of the ministries that we were taught. It was a blessing to all of us that we had this workshop.

We also had fun playing outdoor and indoor games prepared by the facilitators. In these games, we learnt hard work, team-building skills, friendship, leadership, and teamwork. It was also good for us to have energetic games by running from one station to another.”

Hannah concludes, “This camp helped me realise how important teamwork is.

During Fun and Games we had to go around and play as a group to earn points and my teammates were really helpful. On Fun Night, I had a great time because I helped my team to sketch out a skit and it turned out well and we had lots of fun doing it together. Not forgetting the game when all of us had to lose one of our body parts (I was blind). It was really a life-changing game because it made me realise how blessed I am being fully sighted.

In a nutshell, this was definitely one of the greatest camps I have ever attended. What was important were the fondest memories I had during the camp and friends whom I will cherish for a lifetime. When I got home, my parents were curious to know if I had had a good time. The only words that came to mind were ‘Can I go again next year?’”

Join us at this year’s camp from 6 to 9 December 2019 at Refreshing Springs Resort, Kalumpang, Hulu Selangor. **AM**

*This article was written with contributions from Hannah Cassandra of St Barnabas Church, Klang; Rohan Roy of All Souls Church, Cameron Highlands; Alvin A/L Sandiyavoo of St Mark’s Church, Seremban; and Valerie Jesumoney of St Katherine’s Church, Kajang.*

# ‘Christianity Explored’ Now Available in BM & Mandarin

*By Alexis See Tho*



*Launch of the Bahasa Malaysia and Mandarin translations on ‘Christianity Explored’.*

“Let us see that we keep God before our eyes; that we walk in His ways and seek to please and glorify Him in everything great and small. Depend upon it, God’s work, done in God’s way, will never lack God’s supplies.” - James Hudson Taylor, missionary to China.

A St Mary’s Cathedral and Christianity Explored Ministries (UK) collaboration to help more people in Asia meet Jesus in the pages of scripture came to fruition on 3 November 2018 when two new translations of the seven week evangelism course, Christianity Explored (CE) was launched.

“We exist to serve and support churches in their outreach ministries,” said Ian Roberts, chief executive of London-based Christianity Explored Ministries at the launch. The event was also a day-long training to help participants understand the design of the evangelism course and how bible study leaders and pastors can use the materials in their outreach efforts.

The course explores three fundamental questions about Christianity – Who is Jesus, Why did He come? and What is our response. The whole course is an exposition of Mark’s gospel, where each

week, participants begin with a Bible study on a portion of the book of Mark, followed by a 20-minute video presentation on the week’s topic, and a discussion on the implications of the passage.

The Bahasa Malaysia and Mandarin translations of CE materials (participant handbook, leader’s guide and videos) were undertaken by members of the BM and Mandarin congregations of St Mary’s Cathedral. Video dubbing for the BM translation was by Raydwin Robin, a news anchor at RTM 1, and dubbing for Mandarin translation was by Matthew Goh. The project took almost a year.

“The purpose of the translation project is to make CE materials available in non-English versions and at a cost-effective price,” said Lee Sue Yee, project director and executive producer of both translation projects. “This will allow churches to purchase and use them in their evangelism efforts in the long run.” Christianity Explored Ministries’ formal partnership with St Mary’s Cathedral also means that the church is a licensed translator, producer and distributor of CE materials for local use. Videos of the course are sold online through Christianity Explored Ministries’ publisher in the UK, the Good Book Company.

## **Twenty years ago at All Souls Church**

At All Souls Church, Langham Place in London about twenty years ago, CE materials were developed by Rico Tice and team under the ministry of John Stott and Richard Bewes because of a deep conviction that the best way for people to learn about Jesus is through reading the Bible. Tice said on the ministry’s website that his heart’s longing is that every member of the church family, from a 13-year-old to an 87 year-old, will feel that they can open up Mark’s Gospel with a neighbour and be able to share about Jesus.

For Revd Iben Arang, priest of the Iban congregation at St. Mary’s Cathedral, CE has been about reaching people in their native language. “It all started when we saw the English congregation do it, and it seemed to be very successful. We thought ‘Why don’t we translate it into Bahasa Malaysia?’” he said. His congregation had been using topical bible study materials in their cell group and found it unsystematic and difficult for non-believers to understand. “For non-believers [who] come to the cell, the material is too hard for them, like talking about the Holy Spirit, or the doctrine of God. But I think CE is just nice, starting from the Good News [and] who Jesus is,” Arang said.

Last year, Revd Andy Ng, priest of St Mary’s Cathedral’s Mandarin congregation, similarly felt a need for a more systematic course for evangelism efforts. But above all, it was the course’s utter allegiance to the truth in the gospel and discussion questions that do not shy away from topics of sin and God’s judgement that won him over.

“We’re always thinking of how to make evangelism better, but we were not focused on one tool,” he said. But when he saw the latest edition of CE, he felt that the content was easily digestible by a non-Christian crowd. “When I saw it,





*Craig Dyer sharing with the participants*

I loved it [but] there wasn't a Mandarin version, so I decided to do it," he said.

### **Fears in sharing the gospel**

"What makes sharing the gospel challenging?" asked Craig Dyer, Training Director of Christianity Explored Ministries, to a room of 150 participants from 55 churches at the training and launch day.

Fear of rejection and fear of being exposed as incompetent are two top reasons that Dyer hears whenever he asks the question. And there's a universal nature to the answers – he hears them coming from Christians whether in his home city Glasgow, Uganda or Malaysia.

"It's self-preservation," he concluded, a disposition that doesn't want to be ashamed, whether fearing rejection from friends, family or co-workers, and fear of looking like a fool for not knowing answers to questions from skeptical friends. This all makes 'sharing the gospel' a venture taken with great care to avoid shame.

But Christians need to look beyond the smaller issues coming from within and understand the larger problem – that "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ," said Dyer, quoting from 2 Corinthians 4:4.

He said: The fears that we have that stops us from sharing the gospel, are actually small compared to the scale of the problem - spiritual blindness. So it's not... evangelism difficult because I find it difficult, it's difficult because people can't see what you're talking about. The

way we encourage people, is to tackle that massive problem [that] dwarves all of our small problems and then show the wonder of what God is able to do as His people, as jars of clay with the treasure in them, speak of Christ.

### **"I've never attended a CE session"**

Two participants at the launch were Brian King and Sharon Ling from BEM Kuching Evangelical Church, and their trial-run of CE materials last year without any prior exposure to the course is a testament to the simplicity of the handbooks.

"I've never attended a CE session, never used it before, never heard of it before," said Ling, who volunteered to do a pilot-run of CE's youth version, Soul'd, in her home group last year. "But I was struck by how clear and simple it is."

King, pastor of the Kuching church, said that when he joined the church, evangelism "had taken a backseat" among some of its members. His desire is simply that the church will be excited again about reaching out to people and to be sure of the message of the gospel. "I wanted the church to have renewed confidence in [the] Scriptures," he said.

If lacking training in CE materials has proven to be a non-issue, what about its adaptability to Malaysia's culture? "The genius of the work of the Holy Spirit is

to speak into the world into every age, and stage and generation. There's a confidence [that] when we're pointing people to the Word of God, it's going to be relevant," said Dyer. "We've been thrilled to see how culturally adaptable the material is, and I think the reason for that is that it's just an exposition of Mark's Gospel."

Christianity Explored materials are used in more than 110 countries around the world and have about 60 translations. "One of the things [Jesus] said in Mark 13:31 is 'heaven and earth will pass away but my Word will not pass away.' There will never be a day that dawns that what He has to say has lost its relevance," Dyer said.

"For me, the highlight was when the pastors and leaders came forward and prayed together during the conference, giving thanks to God for the completion of the new translations and committing the resources to Him to be used for His glory," said Lee, executive producer of the translations. "It was important, because it witnessed to the fact that this was by no means a showcase project for anyone's personal glory, but a resource that came about thanks to the gifting and efforts of many individuals, only to be shared with the rest of the body of Christ, so that in the end, the gospel is preached and everyone who personally encounter Christ Jesus through CE will receive the gift of salvation and God alone will be glorified." **AM**

*If you are interested in running a CE course in your church or purchasing CE materials, contact St Mary's Cathedral for further details. CE materials will be available at Evangel Bookstore. To find out more, visit <https://www.christianityexplored.org> or write to [eastasia@christianityexplored.org](mailto:eastasia@christianityexplored.org)*

*Alexis is an Associate Editor of a Financial Management Magazine. She is a member of the Mandarin congregation which meets on Saturdays at St Mary's Cathedral.*

# Diocesan Spiritual Formation

by Raji Jacob



Revd David Cox and the participants with their certificates  
L to R Raji Jacob, Florence Low, Agnes Christian, Revd David Cox, Angline Tee,  
Deaconess Ding Siew Lan and A Annam

'As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of Your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for You, now and forever' ..... words from our daily Morning Prayer at Wellspring, our Diocesan Retreat House in Rawang.

*'After a few busy weeks of travel and work, it was good to get away for a few days to complete the Spiritual Formation Programme. The daily rhythm of prayer, quietness and fellowship was much needed. We thank God for Revd David Cox who led us in the past year in a time of reflection and learning. I will definitely miss the fellowship of my group as we have finished our one year programme. We started in December 2017 and completed in October 2018. We are also thankful to the Diocesan Women's Conference that subsidised half the cost of our programme.'* - This is what A. Annam had to say of the Retreat.

The aim of the Spiritual Formation programme is to intentionally enter into a deeper, more intimate relationship with God through spiritual disciplines. Spiritual Formation is not emptying ourselves but filling ourselves with the Word of God to be in His likeness. I have always desired

to have a deeper, closer and intimate walk with God, so when I heard that the Diocese was conducting a four session course programme, I decided to sign up.

Each session lasted for three days with morning, evening, and night prayer. Our Spiritual Director, Revd David Cox taught on people of the bible who had a close and intimate walk with God. We then spent silent time with the Lord meditating and contemplating on the truths we had learnt and how we could apply them to our lives. An activity we participated in was a Prayer Walk around the taman meditating on God's goodness and providence to us. On our last day, we saw a tree laden with ripe, red water-jambu and decided to harvest the fruit for our desert. That was a fruitful walk.

Below are reflections from members of the group:

Angline Tee felt the Lord spoke to her through the prayer of St. Augustine of Hippo:

*'Eternal God, who is the light of the minds that know You, the joy of the hearts that love You, and the strength of the wills*

*that serve You; grant us so to know You that we may truly love You, and so to love You that we may fully serve You, whom to serve is perfect freedom, in Jesus Christ our Lord.'*

Rathi had this to say: *Praise the Lord! Completed Spiritual Formation at Wellspring Retreat House at Rawang. Everyone should go for this retreat to equip herself to spend time with God. We thank Revd David Cox who guided and taught us on how to spend our quiet time with*

*God. Spiritual Formation helped me to sharpen my attentiveness to God.*

From Florence Low: *A very resourceful and thought provoking way to learn to quieten down before God and to learn to meditate upon His word and pray, finally to execute it. This programme is in fact a spiritual disciplined journey. It gave us an opportunity to run away from our busy schedule for a few days to:*

- 1. be quiet before God, to learn to be aware of His presence and to listen when He speaks.*
- 2. study Bible characters like Abraham, Moses and David.*
- 3. learn how we can read, pause, digest and enjoy reading Bible passages*
- 4. have a better understanding on how to observe the Lord's Day*

Agnes Christian said, *"I praise God that I took the challenge to attend this course. I had no idea what to expect. I had not attended a silent retreat before.*

• cont'd on page 15



# More than just a refugee school: St Mary's Agape Mission School

by Marianne Liaw



Agape School Group

pace, the staff of Agape engage with the families of the students too, often providing basic necessities such as cooking oil, rice and formula milk powder to their families. The Christ-like love and care shown by the staff and volunteers of Agape school have left a deep impact on the students in the school.

"I love coming to school, I love learning," Janice, a spunky 10-year-old student piped up when asked how she felt about Agape school.

**M**arianne Liaw, a member of St Mary's Anglican Cathedral, KL and a youth ministry worker with Scripture Union Semenanjung Malaysia had the privilege of meeting and speaking with the staff, volunteers and students of St Mary's Agape Mission School. The school has been under the care of St Mary's Cathedral for the past six years, and comprises mainly students from the Chin community, who are refugees or asylum seekers in Malaysia. The Chins have fled their homeland in Myanmar because of ethnic and religious persecution and have sought refuge in Malaysia.

## 1. Much more than just a refugee school

"I want them to know Jesus, because life is uncertain. Every morning, I can teach the children how to be safe in Christ. I'm so happy to be able to do so." These were Sian Lek's words when I asked her what her greatest joy as the principal of Agape school was. Having lived in Malaysia for seven years as a Chin asylum seeker, Sian Lek has served as a teacher with

Agape school for nearly two years. But Agape is much more than just a centre for educating the Chin refugee and asylum seeker community, many of them coming from underprivileged homes. "We used to get students from far away (a good distance away from the school), whose parents wanted their children to have a good foundation in the faith," explained Dr Mei Tan, the Director of Operations and Administration who has been overseeing the running of Agape for the past six years.

The school currently has 62 students, with a significant number whose parents cannot afford their school fees. Dr Mei and Sian Lek both explained to me that the school does not turn students away, even those who do not have the financial capacity to pay the monthly school fees. Instead, efforts are made to go the extra mile in raising funds or looking for sponsors for these students so that they can continue to attend school.

Aside from running the ACE program which helps students learn at their own

Another student, Jacob (15 years old) who has been attending Agape for two years said that being in the school, as well as being in Malaysia has made him wiser and has opened his eyes to things he had never known before. He has been able to experience things he never imagined he would have experienced when he was back in his homeland, the Chin state in Myanmar.

Nau Nem, a quiet and thoughtful 14-year-old has also benefited much from being a student of the school. In fact, she takes part in the Lametna project (Lametna means "Hope" in the Chin language).

Agape school started the Lametna project with the aim of helping mothers of the students to earn extra income by making beautiful crocheted handicrafts for sale. In fact, Dr Mei Tan explained that the demand for these crocheted handicrafts is very high, and mothers (and students) who are part of the project are able to earn extra income to help support their families.

• cont'd on page 14

The school has also begun teaching life skills to the students, equipping them with basic computer and book-keeping skills which will come in handy for the students when they go out to look for work in the future.

## 2. Hope amidst hardships

Life as a Chin refugee or asylum seeker in Malaysia is hard. This sad and painful truth is expressed repeatedly in one way by all who were spoken to at the school. The Chin students and teachers of Agape live in constant fear of being arrested, detained and deported back to their home land. They face harassment from corrupt people who demand that they pay bribes in order to avoid being arrested. When Janice was asked what Malaysians could do to help the Chin community, she innocently and candidly replied, "Don't catch us." She was referring to incidents of arrest by local authorities.

"I hope that people will stop taking money from us (by force)," another student commented, referring to instances where they were extorted for money by petty criminals who took advantage of their lack of status as refugees and asylum seekers

in Malaysia with threats of physical harm and injury if they did not comply.

The safety of being a citizen of this land, the ability to work legally and further one's education are gifts in life that we Malaysians often take for granted. But they are the very things that the Chin community really crave for when living as aliens in this country. However, Agape school strives to continue offering the chance for education and support to the students and families whom God brings their way.

## 3. Tragedy turns to joy

On 13 June 2018, last year, things took a turn for the worse when UNHCR announced that it would completely cease giving protection to the Chin community on the grounds that the Chin state is now safe and stable to return to. (See news link: <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/06/29/unhcr-chin-refugees-no-longer-need-un-protection-as-myanmars-chin-state-now-stable/>. See also R.AGE The Star's Documentary, "Refugees No More" - <https://www.rage.com.my/refugeesnomore-chin/>) This claim has been refuted by various official

reports by other international bodies, citing documented cases of military violence, forced labour, poverty and ethnic and religious persecution. (See report by Chin Human Rights Organization: [http://www.chro.ca/images/CHRO\\_Stable-and-Secure-report-2018.pdf](http://www.chro.ca/images/CHRO_Stable-and-Secure-report-2018.pdf) ) However, this decision has had a vast and devastating impact on the 30,000 strong Chin community in Malaysia. Many were driven into depression and felt a great sense of hopelessness.

At that point of time, when asked what the plan was for this school in the light of this decision, Dr Mei Tan said that the school staff and volunteer team, together with the school board comprising members of the Cathedral are committed to continue running for the sake of the students and their families until the very last day that they are permitted to by the laws of the land.

However, by God grace what was foreseen to be an impending tragedy has turn into joy! UNHCR recently announced that it has reviewed its cessation decision and based on new official reports of increasing instability in the Chin state, will now maintain giving refuge protection to the Chin community worldwide. (see newslink: <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2019/35c8a31984/unhcr-says-ethnic-chin-refugees-required-continued-international-protection.html>

All who are apart of Agape school rejoice and thank God for His grace in answering the prayer of His peoples. "Now, we will continue to move forward with our aim of providing competitive christian education for the students in our school," Dr Mei Said.

## 4. How can we help?

When the question of how Malaysian Christians could be of help and support to refugee schools like Agape and to the wider Chin community was raised, these helpful requests and suggestions were put forward:



*Sian Lek, principal of St Mary's Agape School with students and Marianne*



**Pray:** Thank God for UNHCR reversing its cessation decision. Pray that the safety and welfare of the Chin community in Malaysia will continue to be upheld and safeguarded. Pray also that the Chin will hold fast to their faith in Christ.

**Volunteer:** If you have a certain skill that may be of use and benefit to the Chin community, volunteer yourself at any Chin community school or centre and express your availability to provide training.

**Support:** If you can afford to donate basic necessary items such as food (i.e. cooking oil, rice, baby milk powder) to a Chin community school like Agape or a community centre, please do so. This will help ease the financial burden of the Chin community and allow them to save and prepare for the uncertain (and in all appearances, bleak) future that they will be facing. If you can sponsor an underprivileged Chin student whose family cannot afford to send him to school, that would be a great blessing too. For schools like Agape which are running projects like Lametna, support the students and their families by purchasing these carefully and delicately made handicrafts.

**Share:** Please help to create awareness about the Chin community and the struggles they face living as refugees and as silent seekers in this land. An increase of public awareness will greatly help the social work which is being carried out on behalf of the Chin community in Malaysia.

## 5. One Family in Christ

"We are blessed that God has chosen us to be His people," said Sian Lek, referring to the Chin community. And God's people they are indeed, for all who trust in Jesus as Saviour and King are part of God's



*Students packing up after school*

family. This then means that the Chins who profess faith in Christ are our brothers and sisters in Christ as well.

When speaking of the students in Agape, Dr Mei Tan said, "These students are just like our children. We love them. And while we are not sure what the future holds, we can only pray and trust that God has a plan for them."

As a family in Christ it should rightly be our duty and joy to reach out to our Chin brothers and sisters who are in need, to encourage and support them, in Agape school and beyond. This is the right response of those who have been saved by grace through faith in Christ.

"If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." – James 2:15-17 **AM**

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## Diocesan Spiritual Formation

*What I learnt made me think deeper about myself, my relationship with God and what God is saying to me. It was a very personal walk with God, exploring my inner being and opening my mind and heart to understand the heart of my beloved God.*

Deaconess Ding Siew Lan says, "The Spiritual Formation Programme has helped me to experience Abba Father in a unique way! The prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, 'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace' reminded me to be God's channel of blessings to sow love, faith, joy, pardon and light to those in darkness. The programme is scheduled in a way where I can commune with God in quietness, solely spending time focusing on Him in daily prayer (morning, evening, night), personal quiet time, meditating on the bible characters and prayer walk around the garden. To me SFP is a holistic experience because spiritually the experience of first love to God is being renewed, recharged and refreshed.

A special thanks to Revd David Cox for his teaching and guiding us to become 'a person after God's own heart.' Thanks to the Diocesan Women's Conference for encouraging women to attend by sponsoring half the fees and thanks to the Diocese for having such a programme where we can again get a touch from the Lord and renew our first love. **AM**

*\*Dear ladies, if you wish to attend, do contact the president of your church Women's Fellowship.*

*Raji Jacob is on the committee of the Diocesan Prayer Ministry and is the Chairperson of the Prayer Ministry in St Paul's Church, PJ.*

# Diocesan Prayer Gathering 2019

by Edna David



*Revd David Rajiah Chairperson of the Diocesan Prayer Ministry*

**H**ave you heard of the Diocesan Prayer Ministry (DPM)? Every month this ministry sends out the Diocesan Prayer Diary prepared by Revd David Rajiah, chairperson of the DPM which contains prayer points, to every church to pray for the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia and the nation.

In 2017, there was talk that the next general election, GE14 was going to be a crucial one for the nation. An urgent appeal was made to all churches to mobilize their members to pray for a clean government. That same year, the DPM committee organized the Diocesan Prayer Day at the Diocesan Chapel on 29 May from 9.00am – 4.00pm. Different churches in the Klang Valley came for a time of fasting and prayer for the nation. The following year churches began organizing Prayer Vigils, Prayer Days and Prayer Gatherings. The Prayer Ministry encouraged all churches in the Diocese to pray intensively for the election and in particular that God would raise up men and women of integrity to lead the nation. On 8 April 2018, a combined prayer gathering was held in the Diocesan chapel from 9am to 3pm. The ministry was encouraged to see how fervently the people prayed, beseeching God to act at such a time as this. The nation rejoiced

at the outcome of the GE14 results. Truly, God answers prayers.

From here was born the Diocesan Prayer Gathering which began with a small committee. The committee decided to hold monthly prayer gatherings in different churches to encourage members to attend. The main aim was to gather the Anglican churches in all languages to come together to pray for the Diocese and for the Nation.



*Prayer gathering in St Mary's Cathedral*

Praise the Lord! The first prayer gathering for the year was held in the Upper Central Archdeaconry on 12th January 2019 at St Mary's Cathedral when 23 people gathered for a time of praise and prayer. We praise God for the wonderful time spent praying together.

On 9 February 2019, the second prayer gathering was held at St James Church, Kuala Lumpur. About 43 people attended this gathering.



*Prayer gathering in St James Church*

On 9 March, 33 people gathered at St Paul's Church, Petaling Jaya to pray. It was truly a wonderful time praising and worshipping God in the English, Bahasa and Tamil languages.



*Prayer gathering in St Paul's Church*

The Diocesan Prayer Gathering will meet next on:

30 March - Emmanuel Centre Seremban  
- Lower Central Churches  
- 5pm - 7.30pm

11 May - St Katherine's Church,  
Kajang - 10 am - 1pm

Please join us. Prayer is the heartbeat of God and it is vital that we do everything by prayer. Come, pray and see a transformation in our churches. **AM**

*Edna David is the wife of Revd David Rajiah and worships with her husband in Emmanuel Centre Seremban.*



# Penang AIM Seminar on Comparative Religions

by Pastor Ang Joo Tat

There was once a king, who, in order to explain the relationship between different religions, commanded his people to bring an elephant to his garden. He had a few of his people blindfolded, then asked them to examine the item in the garden and make a report. One man, feeling the trunk, said, "This is a rope." Another feeling the elephant's leg said with confidence, "This is a tree." All the blindfolded people had their own opinions about the mysterious subject. All of them argued with confidence, insisting that they were correct. Only when their blindfolds were removed did they realize how foolish they had been. Said the king, "All religions are only part of the truth. Any one that calls itself the 'only true one' is just like one of these blindfolded people, calling themselves right." (Gavin D'Costa 'Is One Religion as Good as Another', The Incorporated Catholic Truth Society 1985 pages 1-2)

Though this is an analogy we are reminded through it that as Christians, we are facing a critical problem today – the relationship between Christianity and other religions and the theological conflicts that arise. While Christianity recognises that there are fine things in all religions, Christianity is not one religion among others, it is in a category all by itself. No other world faith can claim that its founder is God incarnate. However questions have arisen, 'Is it true that Christians believe that their faith is the only faith while other faiths do not hold any element of truth? Is it right that salvation can only be gained through Jesus Christ? Can religions be compared to one another? How should Christians treat people of other beliefs?'

Living in a country that is made up of multi-cultures, multi-beliefs and multi-



Participants with the Roman Catholic Bishop of Penang Father Sebastian Francis

races, these topics are worth our reflection. The Penang Anglican Institute of Ministry in its attempt to help its people understand their faith in relation to other faiths organized a seminar on Comparative Religions. Below is the feedback received from some of the participants.

## Feedback from Students:

AIM Comparative Religion served to discuss what religion is, why humans need religion and the differences between various religions. Besides lessons on Christianity, we were given sessions on Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Roman Catholicism. This was the first time I compared Christianity with other religions in an objective manner. The purpose of this seminar was not to prove that one religion was superior to another but to find out, objectively, how each religion answers this question: Why do humans need religion? The focus of our course this time was the interview with other religious leaders that was carefully arranged by the speaker. This was a very refreshing approach and we spent a total of two Saturdays meeting with two different religious leaders, a Buddhist and a Roman Catholic. After these interviews, I came to the conclusion that the reason why humans need religion is

because all humans are searching for the meaning of life. If we are not searching for the meaning of life then all we would be doing is merely existing and working to make a living. - Joshua Ooi

Although each religion has its own god, all of them teach people the need to display kindness and have strong moral values. However, I believe we need to find the God of creation in order to live a meaningful life. Throughout the lessons, what I found interesting was the visit to the Sifu or the Master of different religions to learn about their respective religions in an in-depth manner. The most challenging part of this course was to know that I need to respect other religions even though their adherents do not belong to Christ. – Ko Woon Hui

While doing my assignment, I came across terms such as exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism and others. I can sympathize with inclusivism. If other religions accept salvation, then many people will be saved, and that makes it fair, and Christians will be rid of their salvation privilege. While we sympathize with our non-Christian friends, what they need to do is to come before God in humility, and allow Him to remind them

# My 1-year as a St. Chad's Volunteer

by Peter Ooi

**W**hile waiting at Birmingham Airport for my check-in desk to be shown on screen a friend asked me what my top five experiences were throughout my one-year St Chad's Volunteer Programme (SCVP). Here they are:

## 1. His unfailing guidance



*With the senior citizens and the youths*

The first undoubtedly was my role as a youth leader. At the very first meeting with the Vicar Of Christ Church Bayston Hill, I was told that there was a need for a youth leader to start a cell group for youngsters. It was a surprise and of concern to me as I was in the middle of settling in the church. In my fears and doubts I turned to the Lord and throughout this year, He journeyed with me all the time. While seeking for inspiration and creativity I experienced His leadership and guidance.

I thank God for answering my prayers for the youngsters from Christ Church, Wrockwardine Deanery and Shrewsbury Youth for Christ. I was desperate to see their lives being touched by God's love and so it was really exciting and encouraging to hear how the youngsters had encountered and experienced His unfailing love and kindness through the dramatisation of The Prodigal Son & Rend Collective Concert.

## 2. People and Culture

Meeting the British gave me an in-depth knowledge of the practicalities of the English culture. One that I experienced and cultivated readily was politeness. I don't think I have ever used more "please" and "thank you" in my daily conversations this one year than I have in my lifetime. I realise I have become more polite and

No matter where I went I was constantly discovering local delights and cuisines. Sharing recipes with people I met and especially with my host family was a delight. Through this experience, I came to enjoy and love Sunday roast, lemon drizzles and banoffee pie. My host family on the other hand loved my prawn noodles.



patient in dealing with the various aspects of my life.

Secondly, I learned to kick off conversations with strangers regarding topics related to our daily life (weather, Brexit, football and anything and everything regarding our surroundings). I valued these opportunities for conversations, because I used them to share the gospel.

## 3. Food



## 4. Travel and Hiking

Whenever I ventured out, each journey I made was unique. Whether it was the mountains or the lowland, each was an experience in itself and each broadened my knowledge on the history and culture of the region. One of my greatest experiences was hiking up Mount Snowdon, the highest mountain in Wales. The joy and excitement of reaching the



*Enjoying Sunday roast lamb and prawn noodles*



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## Penang AIM Seminar on Comparative Religions

that salvation is gained through God's grace alone. – Michelle Wong



Other participants at the AIM seminar

Throughout this course, we not only learnt about the history of the various religions and doctrines, we also got to interview the Sifu, the Master of other religions in order to have our questions answered. These interviews allowed us to see their views on Christianity. From the AIM course I have learnt that I cannot focus on myself. I need to carry out Christ's great commission to go and make disciples. When we focus on our faith and not show compassion for another's beliefs and preach the gospel "brutally", it will cause people to turn away from us. We need to know our audience in order to speak to them better! Once we have captured their confidence, we will be able to rebuild their trust in us to listen to us when we bring the gospel to them. – Gene Loh

The blindfolded men's responses in the analogy of the elephant represent the different religions. Everyone views another's religion differently so we need to learn to listen and understand the others point of view. However, as Christians, we believe that there is only one God, and He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Without Christ, we will not be able to get to our Heavenly Father. – Ko See Lang

AM

Pastor Ang Joo Tat is a full time pastor in St Paul's Church, Penang under the tutelage of the Venerable Dr Stephen Soe.



summit were indescribable. Furthermore, hiking under the typical British weather (wet and misty) was quite an exciting experience.



Furthermore, I was invited to attend the National Youth Ministry Weekend (NYMW) in 2017. I was extremely encouraged by the worship leaders and inspirational leaders' testimonies. Insights I have gained listening to them will go a long way to make me an effective youth leader when I return home and lead in the ministries assigned to me.

My one-year experience as a St. Chad's volunteer has broadened my horizon and impacted my life radically. At the same time, I have become prouder of the beauty, colour and variety of Malaysia's (or Southeast-Asia's) culture. I thank God for such an exciting year. AM



Wet and misty day for hiking

## 5. Conferences



Attending Worship Central Conference 2017 and Leadership Conference 2018 were a 'dream come true' for me.

Peter Ooi works in Client Servicing at Times Media Sdn Bhd. He currently worships at Holy Trinity Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur.

# BRINGING IN THE 2019 SHEAVES

- ① **Intentional Discipleship**
- ② **Intensive Prayer**
- ③ **Integral Mission**
- ④ **Well-Being Awareness (M.I.C.P.E.)**
- ⑤ **Wholesome Study (A.I.M.)**
- ⑥ **Wellspring Encounter (Spiritual Formation)**

**2018**  
Releasing  
Talent

**2016**  
Enriching  
partnership

**2014**  
Guarding  
the yield

**2012**  
Nurturing  
the shoots

**2017**  
Enhancing  
ownership

**2015**  
Fostering  
ventures

**2013**  
Optimising  
God's vineyard

**2011**  
Sowing  
the seed

*"Sow in tears will  
reap the joy."*

*Psalm 126:5-6*

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