

# DIOCESE OF WEST MALAYSIA

DIOCESAN SYNOD – ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL KL /Grand Seasons Hotel Kuala Lumpur

24 AUGUST 2010

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS by Bishop Ng Moon Hing

## TAKE POSSESSION OF WHAT THE LORD HAS GIVEN TO YOU (Joshua 1:11)

### 1.1 THE TRANSIENT WORLD

Many people believe that we in Malaysia are living in the most exciting times. The expectation of change is greatly received with a huge welcome. Since March 8, 2008, there is never a day without excitement from the main or alternate media. The expectation of an imminent General Election is high. Political parties are riding on the crest of public favour by creating much positive fanfare for their own agenda and deliberately opening up many scandals of their oppositions. Can the Church of God play her part in this 'change'?

Never before in Malaysia has its Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) dropped so drastically.<sup>1</sup> We performed 4 times worse than Thailand, given the recent unrest by the Yellow and Red shirt group, and 3 times worse than Indonesia and Vietnam. Adding to the spice, a Minister in the Prime Minister Department, YAB Datuk Seri Idris Jala reported that Malaysia will possibly face bankruptcy by 2019 if the present trend of Government Subsidy is not amended or reduced.<sup>2</sup> Despite of this, the Malaysia GDP Growth is showing a surprisingly positive figure of 9.5% for the first half of 2010. Can the Church of God contribute anything positive?

The many issues of corruption have plagued the nation in an ever increasing manner. These have not given the present ruling government any good name. The newly restructured Malaysia Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) does not seem to have projected any difference from its former image, except a name change. The integrity of the Judiciary apparently has also suffered a great set-back due to its many cases which the majority public has opinioned as not up to acceptable standard but with much biasness and unfair treatment. Can the Church of God be the salt and light of the world?

The challenges on the usage of the word 'Allah' does not seem to have an easy solution. The reports of the rise in gangsterism in schools and at the same time the prohibition of non muslim religious societies in schools and universities seem to be inter-linked, perhaps. The human trafficking syndicates seem to be using Malaysia as an ideal nation for trade. The increasing

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<sup>1</sup> The Sun Newspaper reported "that Malaysia's Foreign Investment (FDI) plunged 81% last year to US\$1.38 billion (RM4.3 billion) – the worst in Asia excluding the Middle East – is a cause for serious concern, but not panic" (*The Sun*, Monday 9 August 2010, Speak Up column – Making Sens by Tan Siok Choo)

<sup>2</sup> YAB Datuk Seri Idris Jala – [www.pemandu.gov.my](http://www.pemandu.gov.my) – Subsidy Rationalisation Lab

number of legal and illegal foreign migrant workers has declined job opportunities of Malaysians. This has also been aggravated by the huge number of unemployable graduates of local universities. Can the Church of God take the lead?

The ever increasing natural disasters do cause a serious alarm to this deteriorating world.<sup>3</sup> The dysfunction families and people who are situationally, physically and intellectually challenged have and would be taking a big toll and contributed a lot of concerns to the social system of the nation and society. The voiceless people of the refugees and the displaced people across the nation and also the globe will need someone to give them a voice. The impending threat of nuclear armament and terrorism has caused leaders of nations' sleepless nights. Huge expenditures are used for security measures which are once unnecessary. Just like in the olden days, human built great walls and fortresses to keep human beings away from each other. Can the Church of God do something?

## **1.2 REACTION OR RE-ACTION**

We seem to have lost a lot of grounds these days to evil, unhealthy and unjust causes. How can that be? We also read in the reports that prayers and the name of God are disallowed in public places in some of the countries in the West. We are slowly finding ourselves in similar position. Certain words are seemingly banned in this country. I just wonder why foul languages and words are never banned.

The issue of sexuality has thrown the Anglican Communion into a disarray and impending split. Too much energy and money has already been spent on trying to repair the unavoidable tear. The Listening process seems to take priority over everything else. Now the Anglican Communion has virtually no or very little budget for mission and evangelism. We have lost lots of grounds to loose and liberal interpretation of the Scriptures. It is quite clear now that the controversy is not over the sexuality issue rather over 'Church Unity versus Orthodoxy'. How much will you be affected with two Communions rather than one? Is there a solution to it?

Our Diocese will be losing a lot of ground in the area of leadership and workers. I don't have any statistics of the laity but I have statistics of the clergy. In 10 years' time by 2020, the Diocese will be facing an acute shortage of priests. Among the present 81 clergy, 35 will be retiring by 2020 and another 24 will retire by 2025. This will add up to a total of 59 clergy retiring by 2025. The shortage of priests can actually lead to a decline of church attendance, thus a reduction of church funds, and may eventually lead to the closure of churches.

When there is no priest in a church, the first group of people who will leave the church is the new comers and those who are in need of pastoral help in teaching, attention, assistance and leadership. The second group that will leave within a short time is the young people. This is a group that is most fluid. Most of them will come and go due to studies and career. Without a priest, there is even lesser hope in retaining them. The left behind is the die-hards seniors and the faithful ones. However without new comers, the existing people will only grow older each

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<sup>3</sup> The recent forest fire in Russia and Portugal; flood in Poland, Pakistan, and China; earthquake in Vanuatu and Indonesia are disasters that are getting intensified and all happening at the same time.

day. This will eventually become a church for the aged. The strength and giving power will reduce over the years. It will be reduced to a pitiful state.

Some may argue that the clergy are not the only leader in the parish. There are many lay leaders too. In theory and practice, it is true. All the PCC members are leaders in their own rights. But how true it is – every time when a priest leaves a church on transfer, the Sunday attendance will normally drop for over a period of a year before it starts to pick up again. I have seen this phenomenon over and over again in almost all the churches in this Diocese. Can the lay leaders not able to maintain the flow and life of the church? Why and why not?

In order to get good preaching, we can easily invite good preachers; to have Holy Communion, we can invite neighbouring priest or retired priest to officiate, especially when we have so many priests retiring within the next few years. But to get good pastoral ministry, we will face a snag here. Only one's own shepherd can provide the pastoral care he requires. A neighbour's pastor cannot do the job for a long period; either the sheep will go over to the other field following the neighbour's pastor or become erratic. In pastoral ministry, many times the one to one and face to face meeting is so crucial. This cannot be calculated or be recorded in the job performance as such. The meeting can be in odd hours and over a long period of time. The presence of a priest in times of need is very crucial. There can be the preaching of love and care but at the most critical and needed hour, the absence of the priest can in fact cancelled the effects of all his preaching over the years. Can the lay people do a better job?

On top of the priest retiring in big numbers, there are still 36 churches without a worker, let alone a priest. 21 of them are Missionary Districts and Parishes to be. Some churches have existed for a long time but the lack of priest has also impeded its growth. The Diocesan Missioners and the parishes are planting churches. Since 2008 we have planted some 30 churches but we have not groom enough workers. The opportunities for church planting are great but the labourers are few. We need to pray to the Lord of Harvest to send out workers.<sup>4</sup>

### **1.3 REAL OR DREAM WORLD**

Our lay leaders are crying – give us the recognition and give us the role to play. A close scrutiny will reveal a totally different agenda between the priest and the lay leaders. Many lay leaders are looking at the daily and weekly outward role of the function of the priest i.e. preaching, leading services, visitation, chair PCC meetings and other meetings, attend seminars and conferences, occasionally lead a mission team, say the prayers at functions and meetings, lead Bible study and Baptism & Confirmation classes, do the funeral and weddings, attend dinners, etc. There are also the silent background workings which never got shouted or discussed at PCC meetings or printed in the bulletins, such as visiting and counseling some 'erratic' members for months, visiting bed-ridden members for months and years, attending to urgent matters when called upon in the case of accidents, emergency, death, police case, burglary, snatch thefts, lost of loved ones, lost of precious things, critical illness, absorbing verbal abuses and scolding over major and minute things, attending to different types of people, doing one to one evangelism, ferrying people home, attending to the friends and relatives of church members who need help,

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<sup>4</sup> Matt 9:37-38

to be the last one to leave the church and making sure everything is in place and ready for the next service, etc. It is this personal touch and human effort that have kept the church alive and active. The many faithful of the church stay on because of the touch and attention received over the years given by different priests in a silent way. When there is a death of a loved one in one home, the number of visits by the priest to the hospital and the home for the preparation before and after the funeral is countless. This is like a dream that has been forgotten after waking up from the sleep. Vaguely, there seems to be something going on but it could not be tangibly put down as hard fact.

Sensing the critical stage we will end up with, I have in the 2008 Presidential Address introduced a Joint clergy-Laity shared leadership. The idea of the Lay Pastor was introduced, and today there are already more than 20 people appointed as Lay Pastors. The early intention is to introduce a shared leadership so that some of the function of the priest can be taken up by the Lay Pastors, especially the silent functions. I know it will take time and slowly pick up. Instead, I have received letters addressed to me condemning the idea and accusing me of opening the flood gates for untrained people to become Lay Pastors. I have also noticed that certain parishioners refused and avoided services by Lay Pastors and deaconesses. Is this a healthy improvement? Now we have Local Ordained Ministers (LOM).

Looking at the above list of functions and roles played, almost everything can be done by laity, even if they are not appointed as Lay Pastors. I do realize the recognition plays a very important part for Christianity in the eastern world and Churches though I myself am not too much in favour of it. I believe, given sufficient time, we can see many of our Lay Pastors leading and pastoring a small flock each. This is so much more effective than the service of one pastor with hundreds of members. The concept of a cell group is precisely of this nature. Each cell group or area group is to be led by a lay leader. The early church has shown us sufficiently that this is the way forward by adopting cell group methods. All the big churches in the world operate with cell groups or small groups to form the internal structure of the church.<sup>5</sup>

It may come a time that our churches will not need too many priests but a lot of Lay Pastors. The Lay Pastors will do all the functions of the church to keep the church alive and going. While the priests will only do the priestly functions including training, teaching, critical pastoral visits and regional pastoral visits. The Roman Catholics has been operating in this manner decades ago and their churches have continued to grow. Some argue that they have to do this because they do not have sufficient priests. Are we not falling into this trend now? The question should be asked – ‘Is this a healthier way for the church?’

The idea of lay training is an old one. Perhaps a more concerted effort and strategy is needed before we can make the lay training an effect means to prepare our laity. The Sarang Community Church’s Discipleship Training is certainly a way forward. It is a lay training process. We will fail if we take the Discipleship Training as a module or a Bible study. It is also not a TEE class. It is a commitment and it is life-long learning. The end product for anyone taking the Discipleship Training is a disciple of Christ and not a certificate or a license. Many seem to be

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<sup>5</sup> Quoting from John Oak’s book – *Called to Awaken the Laity*, p215, “Bill Hybels, who has led the church from the beginning, said that he greatly regrets that he had not implemented small groups from the start”.

dreaming that once they have finished and obtained the Discipleship Training Certificate, they can serve as Lay Pastors or Readers, and can do the pastoral ministry. The reality is that the completion of the Discipleship Training is only Stage 1 and there are another 9 Stages to go. These 9 Stages are acquired from the daily walk with Christ and putting into consistent practices all the things learnt from the Discipleship Training.<sup>6</sup>

## **2.0 TAKE POSSESSION IN HUMAN RESOURCE**

A survey of the strength of our Diocese can tell us that we are neither a small nor a big church in terms of the Christian population in Malaysia. According to the statistics of the Malaysian census 2000, there are 9.1% Christians (i.e. 2,117,988) of the total population of 22+ million.<sup>7</sup> The total population of Malaysia as of September 2008 is 27,730,000. If we continue to take 9.1% for the Christian population then we will have about 2,523,430. A conservative count will give the Diocese in 2009 a total membership of 31,690<sup>8</sup>, which is only 1.25% of the Malaysian Christian population. Since the Roman Catholics claim 1 million adherents in the country which is 40%, Anglicans in West Malaysia is 2.08% of the non-Roman Catholics Christians. The 2.08% is a very small number but the 31,690 is a large number. On another perspective, we are a mega church already with 81 clergy and many lay leaders. We may not have the big name as the Saddleback Valley Community Church, Willow Creek Community Church, Sarang Community Church, City Harvest Church, New Creation Church etc. but we do have the number. This, itself speaks volume – human resource. We must look at the human resource we have and work out a strategy to optimize it.

### **2.1 GOLDEN CIRCLE**

The senior is possibly the largest group in the Diocese.<sup>9</sup> As medical and health technology advances, the human life span increases. We must tap on this vast resource. It is a God given resource that no one should ignore. Some people may be feeling that senior people are stumbling blocks to their progress and advancement. Though the Diocese has in its constitution

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<sup>6</sup> According the Sarang Community Church's basic prerequisites for anyone to be accepted into the Discipleship Training Course are: a. Must know Christ as Saviour and Lord b. Must be baptized c. Must be able to do Inductive Bible study for self and others d. Must know how to pray for others and pray daily e. Must be tithing for some years f. Must be willing to serve the church at least 6 months as traffic warden (for men) and in nursery class (for women) g. Must know the Bible well and have read through it many times h. Must be willing to submit to the leaders of the church.

<sup>7</sup> According to the 1980 census, there were only 6.45% Christians (842,990) of the total Malaysian population of 13+ million. The 1990 census showed 7.9% Christians of the total Malaysian population of 17+ million. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity\\_in\\_Malaysia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Malaysia) and [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org).

<sup>8</sup> A statistics taken from over the years, since Bishop Savarimuthu and Bishop Lim Cheng Ean's time for the report to CCEA meeting. I have just followed the same pattern and do the updating by adding and subtracting of the baptisms and confirmations from the annual parish reports. A certain proportion of allowance is given to migration and death. This figure includes all the baptism members adult and children.

<sup>9</sup> The Diocesan groupings are: Nursery/Creche – 0 to 3 years old; Sunday School – 4 to 12 years old; Junior Youth – 13 to 15 years old; Youth – 16 to 20 years old; Young Adult – 21 to 35 years old; Adult – 36 to 49 years old; Golden Circle – 50 +++. There may be some overlaps in some of the categories due to the size and activity of the churches and fellowships. The DYC constitution does provide for youth from age 17 onwards to join the Persidangan Belia Anglican. There is a proposal to reduce the age of the PBA delegates from 35 to 30.

stipulated that all clergy and workers are to retire at the age of 65, we must not allow this stipulation to deter us from serving the Diocese and God. There is no retirement in service but there is a limit to the licensing.

The key to continual service is continual learning which is most essential for lifetime growth. John Maxwell quoting Dan Sullivan and Catherine Nomura's book 'The Law of LifeTime Growth' states that 'Experience alone is no guarantee of lifetime growth'.<sup>10</sup> It is the daily transformation of experiences into service that can produce a source of growth in our life.

One thing I have discovered as I talk to senior people since the time I became a priest until now is the reality that many senior people do not have a 'life mission' after they have retired from their career. It is most advantage and helpful if senior can develop a personal mission statement or concept for the rest of their walk in this world. Bob Buford in his book 'Half Time' stated that '[most] likely, your first half was filled with good intentions springing from your core beliefs.....You will not get very far in your second half without knowing your life mission.'<sup>11</sup> Therefore, I firmly believe that a personal mission statement for every senior is one of the ways forward to activate the vast latent potential and work force. It is the beginning of a gigantic force for the Gospel. We need to properly guide the senior in the development of their own personal mission statement. In the process of developing a personal mission statement, one should consider the two important questions Peter Drucker, the father of modern management, has suggested – a. What have you achieved? (i.e. Competence) and b. What do you care deeply about? (i.e. Passion)

*"For most people, church work is not a hot fudge sundae, but like the broccoli and spinach your mother made you eat as a child.....Once you have discovered your life's mission, you are in a much better position to regain control over well-intentioned ministry efforts.....This way, you have regained control in a way that brings together your desire to serve God....."*<sup>12</sup>

The Diocesan Golden Circle is on the right path and doing well. They are the first auxiliary group in the Diocese that has set up regional councils/committees to promote and strengthen their ministry. There still quite a few churches yet to have their Golden Circle ministry set up. Of course, there are small churches where this may not be possible but the ministry can go on among the seniors. Every church must build up its Golden Circle. In order to increase the membership of the church, we can bring in more seniors. One thing for sure is that they don't migrate easily. In this way, we can share and work towards the vision of the province. The possible ways to release the seniors to the ministry of the church are discussed here.

## **2.1.1 LONG HAUL MINISTRY**

### **2.1.1.1 DROP-IN CENTRE**

There are so many seniors that need to be looked after these days. As I have said earlier, the life span of our seniors has increased a lot since four decades ago. A Drop-In centre will be viable

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<sup>10</sup> John Maxwell, *Talent is never Enough*, (Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tennessee, 2007) p.184f.

<sup>11</sup> Bob Buford, *Half Time*, (Zondervan, Michigan; reprinted by Printmate, Malaysia, 1994) p119-120.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p 131.

since many Malaysians view senior citizen homes as 'prisons'. A Drop-In centre is not a home and therefore the stigma is not there. We can determine the time for drop-in seniors. Since most of our church halls are not being utilized during week days, can we not consider such a ministry? Just like a drop-in centre for children, this is specially catering for senior people. The senior people can be sent there in the morning and to be picked up in the afternoon. Food and healthy programmes can be organized for them. The programmes must be adapted to suit the seniors.

#### **2.1.1.2 SENIOR CLUB**

The seniors while in their younger days used to join clubs to occupy themselves and to socialize. After they retired from their career, they may not have the means to join those clubs anymore; this is the precise time for churches to develop Senior Club. Such ministry will consume less time than the Drop-In Centre. It can be coffee club, chess club, games club, cooking club, line dance club, scrabble club, tea club, reading club, etc. They can meet daily in the daytime for an hour or two except weekends. Seniors from the community can be invited to join.

#### **2.1.1.3 E-LEARNING CENTRE**

This may cost a bit to set up. It can be a worthwhile ministry. This can reduce the digital gap between the senior and the world at large. Things are moving very fast these days. The less effort to catch up, the further behind we will be. Now most of the information is in the internet and many people are communicating with e-mail, twitter and facebook. The broad band is moving faster and faster and we are already entering a wireless world. It is not a luxury or a fashionable thing to play or communicate with computer but it is now a necessity. It is so much faster, easier and convenient to communicate with each other through computer. Now a lot of new handphones come with wifi facilities. If your church is not growing properly and not attracting new people, I suggest that you need some new ideas. You should be looking at the possibility of setting up an E-learning Centre.

#### **2.1.1.4 REFERRAL CENTRE**

There are so many retired professionals and skill workers. If all these experiences are added together and written down, I am sure we will have a problem finding enough room in the church to contain them. Malcolm Gladwell in his book 'Outlier' argues that success will naturally come after one has spent 10,000 hours on the same matter.<sup>13</sup> All our seniors have certainly spent more than 10,000 hours in their professional career, some even in church ministry. I believe that the seniors are the best people to man such centre. There are constantly so many young ones who are looking for some solutions or answers to their quests and interest. I call this a Referral Centre rather than a Counseling Centre because the senior people who are helping in this centre need no counseling skill. They can be there, using a roster, to man the place at that hour to assist and refer anyone who needs help. If the seeker needs medical help,

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<sup>13</sup> Malcolm Gladwell, *Outlier*, (Back Bay Books, New York, 2008) p. 38 – Chapter Two: The 10,000 hour rule. 10,000 hours is equivalent to one year two months or 14 months. If a person spends 10 hours a week, he needs 19 years to reach 10,000 hours. If a person spends 40 hours a week, he will need 5 years to be an expert in that field according to Malcolm's 10,000 hour rule.

we can speak to the person and then refer him to a relevant doctor or for medical help. If he needs to seek a solution for a particular need, the aim of the centre is to direct him to the relevant and suitable help. Sometimes there may be people seeking some spiritual helps where we can provide answers and guidance. This centre should not be dealing with loans or giving out money or donation. Even if people need donation or loan, he can be referred. Everyone must be referred to another source – spiritual help to priests or pastors, medical help to doctors or hospital, legal help to lawyers, car repairs to mechanics, school related matters to teachers or teaching professionals or tuition centre, university courses to professional people and tertiary educators, family matters to counselors or priests or pastors, teenage problem to youth workers or leaders, etc. I believe Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) can play a big part in training and preparing people for such ministry.<sup>14</sup>

#### **2.1.1.5 BOOK WRITER OR ARTICLE CONTRIBUTOR**

The vast experiences of all the seniors can be put down in written form. Those who can write can help those who cannot. Those who cannot write can put down everything in point forms or recorded it or get someone to interview them. The Anglican Messenger can use some of these articles. These can be done in different languages. How nice to have an article or two from the seniors per issue of Anglican Messenger. Don't wait to be interviewed. Get started today.

#### **2.1.1.6 SENIOR CELL GROUP**

The seniors can organize cell groups which are led by seniors themselves. This can be a weekly affair. They can be done in various homes in a rotation basis. These cell groups can be Interest Groups. It is an opportunity for the seniors to build up themselves and to link with the community so that through these cell groups, new people can be brought into the church. First the new people must find it comfortable with the cell group and then slowly been introduced into the church services and activities. The one major problem is that there are cell groups which have brought in new members to the cell group but they have nothing to do with the church. This is another dead end by itself. What I am advocating is the senior cell groups must be a part of the church and must flow along with the church's agenda and belief. The cell group should only be a link or channel for new people entering the church big family. Any cell group which does not reach out to new people is also a dead end by itself.

## **2.2 WOMEN OR LADIES**

The Diocesan Women Ministry is the strongest in the Diocese. Most of the Archdeaconries have a Regional Women Committee. They have been working well. Of course, there is room for improvement. The majority of the membership of any one church is women. Someone once said that 'women are the backbone of the church'. If they are really playing the role of the backbone, then all the more we must raise more leaders among them. This enormous human resource must not be forgotten. In fact most, if not all, of the lay ministry can be taken up by women. The women force must be seen as the largest force for evangelism. However due to lack of coordination and strategic planning, we are not able to release the potential of the

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<sup>14</sup> We praise God that Archdeacon Steven Abbarow is the first person in our Diocese to receive certification for CPE supervision and as trainer. We hope many others will join in the fold as trainers/supervisors.



women work force. Let me reiterate some of the possible ways to realize this potential. Some are common and usual activities and programmes our ladies are already doing in some churches.

## **2.2.1 LONG HAUL MINISTRY**

### **2.2.1.1 CLUB FOR LADIES**

Again the same argument goes for the seniors as for the women. The church hall is a place where many of these activities can be held. Instead of socializing in the coffee shop or saloons, we can organize the Club for Ladies with lots of new ideas and interest for the ladies. It is from such social contact that we can bring in new people. Our churches these days do talk about evangelism but there is virtually no opportunity for anyone to contact new people in our activities. All the activities are centered on our own people; even the complaints received are from our own people against each other. Such a Club must be adhered to with Christian values and moral. This cannot be compromised. I am advocating for such Club to be organized by the ladies of the church and their meeting to be in the church and not elsewhere. Once this is taken away from the church, it will be like any social club in no time. This is not my intention.

### **2.2.1.2 COMMUNITY INTEREST CLASS**

Some of the Clubs can incorporate some interest classes for the community. For some churches where they do not prefer a Club ministry, they can have a Community Interest Class which may be once or twice a week. These classes can varied – such as sewing, cooking, floral arrangement, reading, writing, e-learning, seminar, leadership development, parenting, role-modeling, grooming, singing, song writing, musical, and many special interests. Preferably, such classes should be led by women themselves. Again these classes are to be held in the church. This is to provide links between the community and the church people.

### **2.2.1.3 CELL GROUP**

Cell groups are important ingredient for any growing church. Ladies Cell group can be very powerful. They can do so many things if they come together in one accord and one mind. Together they can study the Bible, do mission, do evangelism, and become support group for the church functions. In some of the bigger churches, the women fellowship is also large. It will be better to form many cell groups within the women fellowship. Of course when the church has its own cell groups then we should not duplicate.

### **2.2.1.4 MOTHERS AND TODDLERS GROUP**

The idea of a Mothers and Toddlers group is not new. Many churches in other parts of the world already have such groups for a long time. In our Diocese, this is still relatively new. We can use such group to reach out to young mothers. The amount of fear, helplessness and frustration within a young mother is great and usually untold. It would be wonderful to have someone to go to when there is a need in the home particularly with the toddlers. The initial result may be meager but the impact will be great. The Sarang Community Church places this ministry very high in their priority list. This is where the future leaders come from. If the mother

is helped, the impact on the toddler will be unimaginable. It is from this Mothers and Toddlers group that you can find constant influx of Sunday School children.

## **2.3 YOUTH**

Youth is the future pillar of everything – the church, nation, business etc. Some say ‘youth is the leader of today’. Whether they are present or future leaders, we cannot ignore this category. Any church which does not emphasize or focus on the development of its youth is heading for closure. It is like a business entity putting up a sign ‘Closing Soon’ in the front door. Some churches today are doing exactly that but they are still happy doing their own business without smelling or willing to smell the rot. I can understand that many church leaders have great difficulty in reaching the youth of today. They are viewed as people seemingly having a culture of their own which is commonly known as – postmodernism.

### **2.3.1 POSTMODERNISM**

*“Postmodernism signifies a quest of moving beyond modernism. Specifically, it involves a rejection of the modern mind-set, but launched under the conditions of modernity. Therefore, to understand postmodern thinking, we must view it in the context of the modern world that gave it birth and against which it is reacting.”*<sup>15</sup>

No wonder it is so difficult for our churches to reach the youth of today. They have a different mind-set which in many ways is contrary to ours – the adult. Failing to appreciate and to address it appropriately will only bring heartache and frustration. This new emerging generation is very much influenced by the postmodern ethos which has in fact ‘brainwashed’ the youth in taking for granted the struggle and achievements under the conditions of modernity. They reject universal and ultimate truth, thus invalidate all human interpretations including the Christian worldview. They judge the interpretation on “the basis of pragmatic standards, on the basis of ‘what works’”.<sup>16</sup>

Our traditional approaches through camps, seminars, conferences, preaching, cell groups, fellowships, etc. will not work and does not attract the modern youth at all, unless we modify them accordingly and to engage with a systematic study and appraisal of what and where in the world they are now in. I don’t mean their physical presence rather what they belief and where their minds are. They have generally cast aside objective truth which in turn has led to an undermining of Christian truth at least in the doctrinal formulations. They reject absolute truth but rather subscribe to a relative reality. This is not helpful to traditional Christianity where our center is in the faith in God revealed in Jesus Christ. How then can we overcome this issue?

### **2.3.2 COMMON GROUNDS**

We can look for common grounds and begin our ministry from there. We simply do not share the sentiment of radical skepticism as a result of the loss of universality. Taking a hard look at the Bible and Jesus’ teaching, we can discover some common grounds where we can take

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<sup>15</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996) p.2

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p.164

advantage of with boldness to recover the lost grounds. Stanley Grenz in his book 'A Primer on Postmodernism' describes four possible postmodern Gospel approaches which "the postmodern critique is more [inclined] in keeping with Christian theological understandings".<sup>17</sup> They are namely, a. The Individual-within-community which is a post-individualism, b. Reasoning-with-human experiences which is a post-rationalism, c. Person-in-Relationships which is post-dualism, and d. Relevance of Faith which is post-intellectual formulation.

### **2.3.2.1 YOUTH CLUBBING**

In summary, we need to re-emphasize the place of an individual within a community against the concept of individualistic approach. This speaks of the recognition of any youth as an individual within the larger community which can be a cell group or a church. That is why youth today like to hang out together at odd times. To them, this is for strength, acceptance, recognition, identity, security, and action. The secret society and gangs understood this very well and through it, they can and have recruited many youngsters, thus increasing gangsterism particularly in school. We must approve and allow Youth Clubbing with the guidance of senior youth leaders and/or youth workers. They normally like to do this in the wee hours or late evening after their youth fellowship meetings. To them, the absence of such clubbing is like a chicken without wings.

### **2.3.2.2 VOCATIONAL INVOLVEMENT**

The youth today is not keen on academic excellence alone. They will very much long for a real personal experience from what they have learnt. It is not so much the 'Knowing' but also the 'Doing and Seeing Result'. Haven't we heard of young people challenging the world in any and everything they can think of? To the seniors, it is a sheer waste of time, money and energy to climb the highest mountain, to sail round the world alone, to make the longest sausage in the world, to have the biggest tomato throwing party, etc. But to these youngsters, this is very 'IN' and 'COOL'. I believe our churches need to explore this area of vocational involvement to keep our youth from losing to the world. Can our Youth Fellowships have a couple of projects a year to keep the energy of the youth intact? Preferably, those projects which needs a few months preparation. This can provide and instill comradeship and buddy-spirit. Of course, all projects will need funding. Can the PCC allocate a larger budget for the youth? Are they not the next leaders in line? It is not more worthwhile investing in them than on some Christmas dinners.

### **2.3.2.3 PERSONS-IN-RELATIONSHIP**

It is believed that modernity has elevated individualism to a high pedestal and it is not coming down what so ever. Grenz refers to it as "[the] modern world is an individualistic world, a realm of the autonomous human person endowed with inherent rights".<sup>18</sup> The postmodern world is a post-individualistic world – it has moves away from individualism to social networking. We must be careful not to lose the importance of the individual human person; otherwise we are just a floating unrealistic strange and funny group of homo-sapiens. The Gospel is for the salvation of individual. The radical individualism of me, mine and myself has been pressing forward so

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<sup>17</sup> Grenz, op.cit. p.163ff

<sup>18</sup> Grenz, op. cit. p.167ff

vibrantly over the last century and has been a major challenge to the Christian Gospel in the area of social and collective responsibilities, including doing church. In the former days we strive hard to get self-identity by doing things ourselves or being someone else. This is a stark contrast to the teaching of Jesus – love your neighbor as yourself. We must “offer a constructive alternate that is individual-within-community”, which means “the community of participation is crucial to identity formation”. Today the individual is no longer in the center stage. We must realize our Faith as highly social. From this day onwards, we must be able to address our Gospel to “the human person within the context of the communities in which the people are embedded”.

How do we do that? We need to build social networks within our churches and denominations. Big denomination like ours is an advantage. Diocesan and Archdeaconry events and camps are crucially important to social networking. Many churches have grown in size and they have engaged themselves in organizing their own parish youth and young adult camps, etc. Outwardly it looks harmless and sounds good. In light of the present world, such exclusive parishioners only closed camps will perhaps prove to be counter-effective in the long run. Considering the mobility of the young people these days, a larger social networking among youngsters from different churches will likely be the answer of keeping them in the Faith and in the church. Though they are individuals but they desperately need a community to find themselves and their self-worth. If we don't provide and encourage Christian social networking, someone else will provide some alternative forms of unhealthy social networking for them who are our beloved children and grandchildren. Therefore, Diocesan Youth camps, Diocesan Young Adult camps, Archdeaconry Teen Games, Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade, Inter-church Youth Gatherings, Youth Prayer Movement, etc. are avenues to arrest the disenchanting, disillusioned and 'lepaking' youth.

One of the ways in St Peter's Ipoh that I have to a certain extend successfully connected is to bring teams both youth or adults to visit smaller churches in the Archdeaconry of Perak annually. This has in a way linked the smaller churches in the villages or small towns to St Peter's Ipoh. Over the years, the church has experienced and received many Christians from these churches when they migrate to Ipoh. Friendship and relationship have developed over the years and it is natural for them to find the church where their friends are worshipping, even if it means that they need to travel passed 14 traffic lights.

#### **2.3.2.4 RELEVANCE OF FAITH**

Irrespective of our belief, it is generally understood that in the developed world, to be a Christian is an intellectual suicide. It is because the postmodern world has rejected the dimension of the supremacy of human rationalism of the assertion of truth and proposition which was once treated as the savior of the world of superstitions. In the presentation and the articulation of the Christian Gospel, “we must make room for the concept of ‘mystery’ – not as an irrational complement to the rational but as a reminder of the fundamental reality of God transcends human rationality”.<sup>19</sup> We must be careful to note that “our goal in proclaiming the Gospel should not merely be to bring others to affirm a list of correct propositions..... [rather we

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<sup>19</sup> Grenz, op.cit. p.170ff

should take] seriously a dynamic understanding of the role of the intellectual dimension of human experience and our attempts to make sense of life”.

The effect of the role and work of the Holy Spirit in the life of each individual is a non-compromising and essential evidence for the postmodern youth. The search here is not so much on the correct apologetics or theological propositions such as ‘sin’ and ‘grace’ but on the effect and relevance of faith and repentance as revealed and received in the journey of life with the encounter of God. That is why the tangible encounter from the ‘filling’ or ‘fullness’ of the Holy Spirit can validate the quest of postmodern youth. Can this be the way forward for our churches?

A lot of our camps and retreats are packed with sermons and messages and almost left without any quiet moment. Even the rest hours are filled with shopping and sight-seeing. Where is the place for God the Holy Spirit to work in us? Where is the space for the development of the spiritual dimension and encounter of our lives? Will there be any room for God’s transformation to take place?

Spiritual Formation or Direction is one of the many options to experience and encounter God in a personal way, especially in the impersonal cyber world. The Taize community, the Maranatha retreat, the Ignatius Exercise, Life in the Spirit retreat, Quiet retreat and others may be some possible directions to make our faith relevant. These have attracted lots of young people all over the world to seek for spiritual experiences. Of course, we have also heard of people seeking these experiences through eastern mystical practices. We need to make our Faith relevant in the same way as narrated in the Bible where Faith can be seen in the market places, law courts, schools, community, work places, leisure times, religious places, service areas, homes, restaurants, etc.

## **2.4 CHILDREN**

Today’s children are going through very packed schedule with lots of school activities, tuition classes, swimming lessons, ballet lessons, art classes, badminton lessons, special mental arithmetic classes, etc. Their parents are placing a lot of expectations upon them to do well and to excel in the class and school. They are sleeping with the dream of winning trophies and awarding with certificates and prizes. These are the aspirations that are built into them by the dreams of their parents. Today’s parents are almost always one generation behind time. What they could not obtain or fulfill during their younger days, they now are hoping and dreaming that their children will. They see their children as their living dreams.

Unfortunately, we, the church, are also living in such a dream. Many still unconsciously believe that ‘children are to be seen but not heard’. They still believe that giving them photostat black and white Sunday School workbook will satisfy and keep them quiet for one hour. In their own homes and schools, they are already into techno-savvy gadgets and internet. They find our church and Sunday School boring and old fashioned because we are still reluctant and so treasured to move away from the ‘God-ordained’ hymn books and prayer books to the powerpoint presentation in our sermons, prayers and songs. Can we try having Children Worship or Children Church?

### 2.4.1 AUTHENTICITY

One of the key words the present children are seeking is the word 'Authenticity'. This batch of children is always confronted with question like "Why am I living with my grandparents?" The percentage of single parenting in their generation is higher than any other generations in the world. The absence of their fathers or mothers has led to a world of confusion and distrusting adults. Gary McIntosh in his book 'One Church Four Generations'<sup>20</sup> describes that this group of children called the 'Bridgers' or 'Millennials' or 'Generation Z' will only trust those who care for them and those they get to know at a deep level. Their presupposed notion is "If it is real, it must be true". They usually have no problem with the fact that everybody is flawed in some manner and by not hiding them is a sign of authenticity. They are looking for people with authentic Christian life than programmes or sermons of Biblical truths.

*"Bridgers are astute enough to see through a church and church leaders who do not honestly believe what they are saying. Pastors and other leaders should be themselves and speak directly from their own life experience. One's own personal story of faith is the most powerful message to be delivered to this generation. Being authentic about one's struggles, doubts, and confusion regarding spirituality will get attention and respect."*<sup>21</sup>

### 2.4.2 KIDSGAMES

Many Sunday Schools are struggling due to lack of funding (even though churches are not financially poor), teachers (people see this as long term service without rest and with no or little appreciation except complaints), ideas (even when there are lots of new fresh ideas in the internet and bookshops), materials (not so much without materials rather without sufficient fund), encouragement (most teachers will miss out the Sunday sermons and are treated as baby sitters), and training (always due to no funding). What can we do to rectify the situation?

We must increase our budget for Sunday Schools annually. We need to engage children workers. We need to bring in more Sunday school teachers training. While waiting for these important plans to take place, we can utilize the KIDSGAMES concept and programme to prepare our children, teachers, and helpers. Evangelist Sheerah Lee is being sent for annual training for such ministry. This is the fourth year since we have introduced KIDSGAMES into our Diocese. So far they have reached only less than 10% of the churches in the Diocese. This is an excellent ministry where children can be taught the Biblical truth with fun and games, teachers and helpers can be trained, and potential teachers can be spotted and identified.

Deaconess Ruth Ong is leading the Children Ministry in another complementary direction through children choir and Children Bible Explorer's workbook series. She is collaborating with Pristine World in the Children Bible Explorer's Series (with computer animation and sound). We need to tap on to the computer technological know-how to reach this 'e-generation'; otherwise we will lose them completely. No Sunday School today means no church in twenty years time, then the idea of creating a province will just remain as a brilliant and wonderful idea on paper.

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<sup>20</sup> Gary L. McIntosh; *One Church Four Generations*, (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002) part 4 – The Bridger Wave, p.161ff.

<sup>21</sup> Gary McIntosh; op.cit. p.192.

### **3.0 TAKE POSSESSION IN LIFE-LINE**

As I move around the Diocese, I heard many great plans and activities in evangelism and church planting. This is contrary to what I have read in the bulletins of churches, where I noticed a general sense of absence in what I called 'Life-Line' – an avenue purposefully created for friendly in-road and recruitment of potential adherents. This absence does indicate and confirm a poor rate of new comers joining our churches. This can be reflected in the number of baptisms per year. It will definitely affect our vision of the multiplication of dioceses by the year 2020 from becoming a reality.

Every small and medium businessman and shop-keeper will tell us that they will like to create an environment for potential customers to walk into or visit his shop even just to see or to try the goods or window shop. The more frequent the same customer returns, the higher the chances for him to eventually purchase something from the shop. The shopkeepers will try to create an environment for the once-off customers to return a second time and then a third, and finally become regular customers. I call this 'Life-Line'. When I was in St Peter's Ipoh, I have created many Life-Lines such as Basic Christianity Classes, Community Nights, and Social/Mission Outreaches. These have constantly brought in many new people who eventually were baptized and became members of the church in a friendly, non-hostile and non-coercing manner over the past twenty years.

#### **3.1 LIFE-LINE**

Many churches organized evangelistic rallies or nights to do evangelism and bring people to Christ. This itself is a fantastic idea but for many churches this is only the second part of the whole episode; the first part – befriending them and doing pre-evangelism knowledge of Christ – is never carried out. This is like match-making where both parties do not each other before. This marriage does not have love relationship between the couple and soon after the children are born. Such children are in a very pitiful state. Half the time they are without one parent, and their upbringing is rather superficial and non-wholesome. This is exactly the idea I am trying to avoid and rather wish to introduce a new strategy here – Life-Line. A church without a Life-Line will not grow. The people who are brought to the evangelistic meeting and accept Christ there with the raising of hands are like people who are brought to Christ through match-making. They and Christ do not know each other earlier, and they we expect them to stick together and have an intimate covenantal relationship with Christ. How can this be possible?

The concept of Life-Line is the avenue and opportunity for the seekers to be familiar with Christ and His life before bringing them to meet or 'marry' Him at the evangelistic rally or meeting. Initially the seeker are strangers to Christ, we have to create an avenue called Life-Line to help them to be ordinary friends of Christ, and later to become close friends and finally one day to be His partners. We have to intentionally help the seekers to enter into a proper covenantal relationship with Christ rather than a cohabiting relationship out of convenience.

*“Those who cohabit find it very difficult to make a decision to be committed to someone forever because they have very little control over how someone else will treat them in the future. In a covenant relationship, it is easier to make a lifetime commitment because “I am in it for what I can give to the relationship and I have complete control over my own behaviour”..... Although many Christians were raised in a ‘cohabiting’ church culture where people didn’t commit, leaders were controlling or people pleasing, and true discipleship was lacking, the truth of the matter is that when we receive Christ [and go through baptism classes], we come into a covenant relationship with God and His people. Water baptism is the prophetic act that initiates this covenant.”<sup>22</sup>*

### **3.1.1 BASIC CHRISTIANITY CLASS**

Initially I try to use Baptism classes but it failed. I found out later that this is due to the name ‘Baptism Class’ which automatically has deterred and cut off a big category of people. People normally do not want to associate themselves with something different from their intended desire, such as baptism. So I changed it to ‘Basic Christianity Class’.<sup>23</sup> I have been teaching Basic Christianity classes for the last 20 years. Initially it started from one class and finally it has become four classes per week. They were four prongs – a. An opportunity for those who wish to be baptized and confirmed; b. An avenue for new comers in a non-threatening environment to know more about Christ; c. An opportunity for baptized Christians to be equipped with some basic fundamentals of Christian faith; d. An avenue for Christians to bring their non-Christian friends to know Christ. There were four such classes per week, namely Tuesday Afternoon class in the home of a member; Tuesday evening class in the church; Saturday afternoon class for youth; Sunday morning class.

The Tuesday afternoon class was carried out in church member’s home. The targeted people were the friends around the same area and the class would continue for two years at the same time and on the same day of the week. It was these constant meetings (like cell group) for two years that has led new comers to become regular members and later become baptized members of the church. The Tuesday afternoon classes have been conducted in Taman Cempaka, Ipoh Garden, Bercham, Taman Wing Onn, Jelapang, Pengkalan, and Menglembu.

The Tuesday evening class was conducted in the church premise. These classes have been around for twenty years. Many hundreds of people have gone through them. Each course of the Basic Christianity has 14 modules. Anyone can attend any module any time; they just have to catch up with whichever one they have missed. This has in fact resulted with the majority of the people staying on in the classes for an average of one full year. Initially the modules were only done in photostat copies; due to the great demand, the modules were later printed in book form.

The Saturday and Sunday classes were conducted for those who could not come on Tuesday and for the youth.

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<sup>22</sup> Kris Vallotton & Bill Johnson; *The Supernatural Ways of Royalty*, (Destiny Image, Shippensburg, PA, 2006) p.135.

<sup>23</sup> One day in 1987, I saw in the newspaper an advertisement that sparkled in me a new idea and name. Since then I changed the name ‘Baptism class’ to ‘Basic Christianity class’, and it works like a miracle.



### **3.1.2 COMMUNITY NIGHT**

The first Wednesday of the month was usually designated as Community Night. It was a night where relevant topics and issues of the community would be addressed. The night session is one and a half hours with one lively song and an opening prayer, the speaker was then introduced. The speaker would speak for 45 minutes and then he would open the session for Q&A and followed by a closing prayer and light refreshment. The topics we have chosen were real issues confronting the community then – such as ‘How to write a will?’ by a Christian lawyer; ‘How to keep our home safe and how to make a police report?’ by a Christian policeman; ‘How to live a healthy life?’ by a Christian Dietician; ‘Love your heart and kidney’ by a Christian doctor; ‘How to use Chinese medicine correctly?’ by a Christian senseh; ‘What is Geomancy and Fortune telling?’ by a Christian former fortune teller; ‘Parenting’ by a Christian worker; ‘Economic situation of Malaysia’ by a Christian economist; ‘A Happy Family’ by a Christian pastor, etc. All the speakers invited were preferably Christians.

Many non church-goers attended these community nights after reading it from the newspaper or hand-bills. Some of these people have never step into a church for their lives before. It was through this we have created a Life-Line. These people were once stranger to the church and slowly they become regular members, and later they became baptized members.

### **3.1.3 SOCIAL/MISSION OUTREACH**

Another possible Life-Line is through social and mission outreaches. We must create many opportunities to allow non Christians to meet with Christians and the church without apprehension or coercion. In the early years, the churches through the education mission, medical mission and social mission have touched many lives. Today we are reaping many of the fruits. This is possible because in the early stages, many non Christians were very hostile to Christianity. It was these mission schools, mission hospitals or clinics, and social services that have raised their level of trust for the church and Christianity, and thus, have reduced the level of hostile to a neutral mode. Some went further and were raised to a positive level in their trust for the church and Christianity. This is where they were ready to become baptized members.

However, the social or mission services must not be detached from the churches. We have lost many opportunities from the mission schools because our churches have gradually detached themselves from them both voluntarily and involuntarily. The connection and collaboration through the social or mission outreaches is an important Life-Line for the churches. We need to regain this connection.

The Anglican Care is purposely organized for this reason. Our churches have quite a number of social homes and centres. Many times we ourselves do not even know that we have these many services. Some have shouted loudly that we have done anything for the community. Yes. We must not have done enough but certainly we have started and have poured quite a lot of finance into these ministries already. I am encouraging churches to look into the possibility of create Life-Line through such ministries.

#### 4.0 TAKE POSSESSION IN SOCIAL BUSINESS

*“Social Business is a visionary new dimension for capitalism, developed by Mohammad Yunus, the practical genius who inspired microcredit and, with his Grameen Bank, won the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize. By harnessing the energy of profitmaking to the objective of fulfilling human needs, social business creates self-supporting, viable commercial enterprises that generate economic growth even as they produce goods and services that make the world a better place. It works because social business targets business opportunities neglected by traditional profit-maximizing companies, and invests any profits not in rewarding shareholders but in extending the ambition of the business. It is, in this way, not-for-shareholder capitalism.”<sup>24</sup>*

Our country is plagued with subsidies and danger of bankruptcy. The capitalism in this world seems to be heading to a dead-end and disaster. Mohammad Yunus has created a possible and workable pathway for the future of the world. It is new and is having a slow start. It is only twenty years old and I believe it is worthwhile for us to learn and to engage with such social business for our Orang Asli and Villagers. This is a good way forward and a bright future for our rural churches. One of the problems that have plagued our rural churches is the lack of finance. Social Business can help elevate the poor out of these doldrums.

Our social ministries have been doing a great job but we can only serve a small number of people. This is seriously affected by funding. For this reason, there is virtually no means of helping the needy people to stand on their own. These needy people will always be looking for hand-outs. We are not the government and thus do not have the continuous funding to carry out in a large scale in assisting the socially poor ones. The recent credit crunch and world financial crisis have given us a clear warning that the continual dependent on hand-outs is a bad idea and perhaps will not be long lasting.

The concept of the social business is based upon capitalism but with slight amendment to the profit-making for the shareholders. Everything is the same as capitalism except that “in social business an investor aims to help others without making any financial gain himself. [It] is a ‘non-loss, no-dividend company’, dedicated entirely to achieving a social goal”.<sup>25</sup>

For a long term solution, we can encourage the well-wishers and philanthropists instead of giving money to the social causes to give to a social business company which is a to-be entity entirely set-up by the church only for this purpose. The aim is to create jobs in special locations for particular disadvantage people with the concern that they will not need any more assistance in the future but in turn they can offer help to others. We can further study the Grameen model – Grameen Bank, a nationwide bank serving the poor in every single village of Bangladesh; Grameen Danone, a company that produces a delicious yogurt for children and sells it at a price the poor can afford; Grameen Veolia Water, a company that was created to bring safe drinking water to the villagers of Bangladesh where arsenic contamination is a huge problem; Grameen

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<sup>24</sup> Mohammad Yunus; *Building Social Business*, (PublicAffairs, New York, 2010) Description on Book cover. Also see my blog on <http://canonmoon.blog.friendster.com/2008/12/a-green-or-a-red-world/>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p.xvii.

BASF, a company that produces chemically treated mosquito nets in Bangladesh; Grameen Intel, a company set-up to provide healthcare in villages of the developing world where doctors and nurses are scarce and medical clinics are few; Grameen Adidas, a company that produces affordable shoes for the lowest income people; Otto Grameen, a garment factory in Bangladesh that will employ people who are often treated as economically marginal, including single parent women and the disabled; Grameen Healthcare, a company is developing health management centres in the villages that will keep healthy people healthy by concentrating on prevention and offering diagnostic and health check-up services, health insurance, education in health practices and nutrition, and also planning to establish a University of Sciences and Technology.

I believe that unless our church begins to engage ourselves with such new invention and creative endeavour, we will not be in the cutting edge of the world. If we can adopt and establish upon this concept, I believe it does not only benefit our churches per se, it will be force for our mission ventures into other countries such as Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, and beyond. I sincerely share the vision of Mohammad Yunus in the pursuit of 'the End of Poverty' where he remarks:

*"In the years to come, powerful multi-national social businesses can be created that will multiply the benefits of globalization for the poor and poor countries. Social businesses will bring ownership to the poor and keep profits within the poor countries rather than draining them away to further enrich the wealthy. Building strong economies in the poor countries by protecting their area of interest for the social businesses of tomorrow.... Most importantly, our international economic structure must build on the realization that we already have all the necessary tools to overcome our social problems.... Social business must be an essential part of the growth formula because it benefits the mass of people who would otherwise be disengaged. And when people are energized, so is the economy.... Social business can transform society very quickly because it will apply the amazingly powerful, rapidly-growing power of technology to improving the conditions of the poor and the environment. It will also liberate and harness the power of creativity, the sense of commitment of the new generation of young people of this new century, and the power of selfishness which defies all previous notions of human behavior in the economic world."<sup>26</sup>*

With the help of the Holy Spirit and concerted prayers couple with our commitment and passion in bringing 'the goodnews to the poor', we can certainly forge ahead with much confidence and joy.

## **5.0 HAVE FAITH**

Mark Chapman, the Vice-Principal of Ripon College Cuddesdon and Reader in Modern Theology at the University of Oxford, in his introduction to his joint editor book 'Christ and Culture', a Canterbury Series in Anglicanism, highlighted the challenges and controversies of the Anglican disputes over the compatibility of homosexual practice with ordination and the related issue of

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<sup>26</sup> Mohammad Yunus, op.cit. p. 203ff.

the use of Scripture, and remarked profoundly: “Being Anglican is thus not about following formularies but about discovering the living way of Christ”.<sup>27</sup>

The living way of Christ is a Christ-centered, Spirit-led, Bible-based, peace-filled, holy living, prayerful, lead by example, blessing-shared, truthful, authentic, opportunity-engaged, and purpose-driven. We need to ‘Take Possession’ of all the God-given resources such as Human Resource – children of God, Evangelistic Resource – Life-Line, and Social Resources – Social Business. The sheep of God’s flock cannot crawl like snails instead they should run and perhaps with horses. “Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”<sup>28</sup>

“Whom shall I send?”<sup>29</sup>

One area which I have not dealt with is the arena of PRAYER. In all that we proposed here, they must be girded with much prayer. Without which it is only human efforts, and there will be limitation. David Jeremiah quoting from John Piper states:

“Prayer is the essential activity of waiting for God: acknowledging our helplessness and his power, calling upon him for help, seeking his counsel. So it is evident why prayer is so often commanded by God, since his purpose in the world is to be exalted for his mercy. Prayer is the antidote for the disease of self-confidence.”<sup>30</sup>

Let us not lose the vision of creating a province of West Malaysia. We need more workers to be raised, and grow more churches and plant more churches throughout the Diocese.

To God be the Glory!

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<sup>27</sup> Martyn Percy, Mark Chapman, Ian Markham and Barney Hawkins (ed.); *Christ and Culture*, (Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2010)p.19.

<sup>28</sup> Joshua 1:9

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