Raising Spiritual Champions

Le Grandeur Palm Springs Resort — that was the destination across the Causeway into Malaysia that 13 families headed for on the morning of March 29.

**Purpose**

For the very first time a Young Families Retreat was organized by the Jurong Seventh-day Adventist Church.

It was a weekend of relaxation, fun and a series of talks by Dr Shee Soon Chiew, designed to help us become more aware of just what we parents need to do in order to begin raising our children to become spiritual champions.

**Kids Crew**

One might question how parents with young children could possibly ever sit through a series of meetings while dealing with their kids and actually get something out of the meetings. Well at this retreat there were youths, young adults and a few seasoned parents who stepped forward for the weekend to form what was known as the Kids Crew. These brave souls, with a bit of training and guidance, cared for, educated and kept our kids busy during the parent sessions with Dr Shee. The Kids Crew really did a fantastic job and you could see that the children were really enjoying themselves! On the last day of the retreat our kids performed for their parents, showcasing their theme songs, Jesus You’re My Super Hero and Let Your Light Shine as well as the costumes they had designed to go along as they sang. The weekend would not have been a success without the Kids Crew.

**Multitrack**

Other events that were intentionally designed for the weekend were Couple’s Time, Men’s Night, Ladies’ Night and Family Worship. While the children were working away with the Kids Crew, husbands and wives had some time to themselves without their children. The Friday night was set as Men’s night and the time was spent watching the film *Courageous*, while the mothers put the children to bed. This movie was a call to all men to step up and be the spiritual leaders that their
Parenting requires commitment.

Parenting

“Parenting is a Journey NOT from the day our child is born, but the day we were born, because we parent the way we were parented!” said Dr Shee. He spoke to us about the fact that we will most likely parent in the way that our parents parented us unless of course we become aware and make changes. If we want to truly raise our kids to be Spiritual Champions we first need to examine ourselves for emotional maturity, because if we are not emotionally mature it is impossible to be spiritually mature. In order to pass our faith to our children, we must first genuinely possess that which we want to pass on to our children. Each session with Dr Shee included some group discussion with our spouses as well as watching some short video clips.

Of course the weekend had to come to an end at some point so finally at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 31, we all boarded our cars and bus bound for Singapore. The weekend retreat not only provided a spiritual framework to place our parenting ideals into, but it also gave us a fun time where we could get to know better those families with young children in the church. It was a good time had by all and we are looking forward to next year’s retreat!
Revived for Action

Jerry Jacobs, Pastor
Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Church

His Excellency, Mr Noel Lehoko, Ambassador of South Africa to the Republic of Indonesia shared the second of three series of Revival meetings at the Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Church. From June 11 to 15, 2013, Mr Lehoko preached on important spiritual facets of “Planet in Rebellion” to a nightly audience of some 50 church members and friends.

Message

Although the world is in rebellion against God there is hope for mankind, asserted Mr Lehoko. That Great Hope is found in Jesus Christ! He has the answer to all the problems in our world. This timely message reminded his audience to continually focus on Jesus Christ!

Action

Mr. Lehoko has determined to make it a point to distribute the book entitled “The Great Hope” to anyone he meets; he is well known for being friendly and outgoing. Through his example, our members are encouraged to reach out to other people, simply by distributing this book. At the close of the meeting President Johnny Kan offered a prayer of dedication. Church members distributed more than 5,000 copies of the “The Great Hope” to their friends.
Ho

w do I know that God loves me? Can God forgive me? I am anxious about getting baptized because I am not sure if I am ready? These were some of the questions San Yu Adventist School (SYAS) students struggled with during a 3-day gospel camp.

**Learning about Jesus**

After the Week of Prayer messages of encouragement and inspiration by the speaker, Dr Tim Reisenberger, 50 students chose to learn more about God in the gospel camp that followed. Most of these students have not participated in a gospel camp before. They were introduced to Jesus and His love from the messages presented.

**Emergencies**

Reisenberger, an ER Physician from the United States, enthralled his audience with stories of his ER experiences, helping them realise that God comes through especially in the toughest of emergency situations. His humble and friendly style endeared him to the students. He assured them that God wants them to know about His love and accept Jesus as their Saviour. Assisting Dr Tim with the messages was Aimee Smith, who was the Week of Prayer speaker for the primary school section of SYAS.

God comes through especially in the toughest of emergency situations

**Jesus Loves Even Me?**

*Bayu Kaumpungan, Youth Pastor*

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**Youth Leaders**

Prior to the camp, some 30 youth from the Adventist churches across Singapore worked tirelessly in preparation to be facilitators and friends to the 50 students. Conference youth directors, Dr John Tan and Pr Charlie Oh, had earlier trained these youth leaders with the necessary skills to lead and guide the groups of students they were to be in charge of. The training paid off as the youth leaders connect beautifully with the students through the games and activities during the camp.

Acting as the camp commander was the newly appointed school counsellor, Christon Choo. He was assisted by Yew Hong Qi, from the Thomson Seventh-day Adventist Chinese Church. Both provided excellent leadership and ensured that the camp ran without a hitch.

Praise God, 12 students indicated they wanted to be baptized while 28 more requested for Bible studies. Let us with God’s help guide these students as they prepare themselves for a new experience with Jesus in their lives.
“Romancing for a Lifetime”

Charlie Oh, Pastor
Jurong Chinese Seventh-day Adventist Church

This couple talk event was organised by the Jurong Chinese Seventh-day Adventist Church. Mr Chan Hon Shek and Mdm Lai Fung Ling, well-known speakers from the Touch Family Services were invited to share their experience.

Pre-talk Preparation

All fourteen participant couples had to complete an online “Prepare/Enrich” couple assessment survey before the talk. The questions asked are based on research and are intended to help identify the unique strengths and potential growth areas of participating couple’s premarital or married relationship. The facilitators are trained to provide feedback by helping them understand their results and learn important relationship skills.

Feedback

The following are feedback from some of the couples who participated:

“Thank you for arranging such a meaningful session. The speakers are very experienced, being marriage counselors for many years and shared real-life examples of couples on the verge of divorce. Most importantly, they shared from a Christian perspective, giving encouragement and hope using God’s word. I am more determined to be a faithful and caring husband. The session was a healing session for all of us too. In one segment, couples were encouraged to hug their spouse, reaffirm their commitment, and seek each other’s forgiveness. The seminar ended with the husbands presenting a rose to their spouse as a response of love towards each other.”

~ Stephen Lau

“The couple talk has helped to guide us to appreciate each other again, to remind us of the vow that we made and re-kindle the kind of love we once had. It has strengthened our relationship and put our perspectives of life as a couple on the right track once again.”

~ Peter Wong

“Even after 17 years of marriage and four sons, the talk has certainly been enlightening and entertaining. We have rediscovered and reaffirmed our responsibilities for each other and are working to further develop our relationship and commitment to build a family fill with love and happiness always.”

~ TJ & Vernetta

“It gives me an opportunity to reconcile with my spouse.

~ Oi Lin

“We have learned that marriage is an ongoing process which requires each to explore. The important part of the process is to focus on the positive aspects of your partner because affirmation is better than criticism and to love your partner wholeheartedly as God had ordained. The seminar inspired us to understand our individual needs and renew our efforts to better manage our marriage relationship.”

~ MC

One rose says more than the dozen.

Presenters, Mr Chan Hon Shek and Mdm Lai Fung
Originally scheduled for June 22 to 23, the Youth Ministry Camp 2013 was pushed back indefinitely due to the haze that had worsened to a PSI of 300 earlier that week. Although somewhat discouraged, the planning committee was unbowed. Said Marcus Chua, 20, “We felt really stressed because we couldn’t find a date that could suit everyone after the first postponement. We thought of canceling it – but realized it will not accomplish anything. So we decided to take a risk by picking another date, and it turned out great!”

Joy in Ministries

**Bernice Leong, Jurong English Seventh-day Adventist Church**

The purpose of the ministry camp was to bring the groups of youth together and provide them a place in ministry that would suit their talent and passion so they could serve and use their talents for God.

Said one of the committee members, Kaylin Tay, 21, “Many of the youth were not from any cell groups and are new to the Youth Ministry, and so this camp serves also as an introduction for them. In the end, 51 of them turned up. About half of them were from the younger age group.”

“It was very different,” She goes on to say, “Because we are headed in a new direction where they also get to choose where they want to be in ministry – they are not just dumped according to their talents.”

**No Dumping**

Identifying Strengths

In the evening, the youth were given a skills inventory to fill out. While the youth did a showcase of what they had learnt earlier, a committee hunkered down to sort the youth into their different ministries according to both talent and choice.

“Some of them had talents that fit into the ministry they wanted – others didn’t. And so we interviewed them, telling them about their gifts and sussing out what they wanted,” Joash, 21, said. “It seemed hard at first, but God made it easy for us to decide as a team where each person should go.”

**Rotation Model**

The camp started on the Sabbath afternoon of July 13. The youth were grouped into four teams. Each team then went to one of the several ministry stations: cooking, sharing, games or music. Every forty-five minutes, the teams rotated to a different ministry station, so that every single one of them was able to experience each ministry before deciding which to join.

Eunice Ho, 15, felt that this experience was an eye-opener for her. “I got to try out new things at every ministry station,” She said. Another youth, Kayxon Tay, 17, said, “It helped me bond with the younger ones and learn more about the different ministries in church.”

*Diversed in spiritual gifts but united in one goal.*
The next day, the youths formed up with their new ministries for the first time. The new music ministry led morning worship, and the sharing team led morning devotion. The food ministry made breakfast, and the games ministry organised games in the afternoon.

**Spreading their Wings**

Each ministry was then led to separate locations for two sessions of workshops, where they learnt about the necessary skills needed to flourish in their ministry. The sharing ministry, for example, held a workshop on public speaking, and the music ministry invited a speaker to talk about leading worship. Every session and activity opened and closed with a prayer.

Said Marcus, “It was very fulfilling to plan something big like a camp and to see it turn out to be such a success – the planning process wasn’t actually that hard, because we pray a lot during our meetings and God really gave us the strength to pull it off.”

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**God, Why am I Here?**

*Jeffrey Rudolf Lonan, Jurong English Seventh-day Adventist Church*

Have you discovered God’s purpose for your life? We hope you have. Many others have not. The young adults of the Singapore Adventist conference took upon themselves to do this recently.

**A Retreat**

On the August 9 to 11, 2013, 18 young adult leaders from the local churches along with Pastor James Tham as guest speaker, got together for a 3-day retreat at the Harmoni One Resort & Convention Center, Batam. The underlying theme of the camp was “Unity.” The aim was to unite and build fellowship among the young adults who serve as ministry leaders in our local churches.

**Discover & Follow**

Away from the pressures of the daily grind, in the easy, relaxed atmosphere of the resort, Pr James Tham, homed in on how to discover, acknowledge and follow God’s purpose in each of our lives, and to use the talents and abilities God has provided us for His purpose. Thought-stimulating questions were also asked during the group discussions, allowing everyone to open up and share their life experiences with one another.

Besides the group discussions and sharing sessions, various simple social activities such as dinner together as well as planned and impromptu games, provided opportunities to relax, have fun and generally spend the time talking and connecting with one another, contributing to building up and renewing friendships among us.

On a personal level, I myself am really blessed to have spent the time to know my fellow young adults from other churches. As we all sang our theme song “Faith on Fire,” I hope that all of us can rekindle that faith in our hearts and reach out to our friends and families with the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. We also pray that the friendships established during this retreat will be the foundation of the inter-church cooperation and collaboration needed to build up the Singapore Conference Young Adult ministry to be a flourishing one that truly meets the needs of the young adults among our local churches.
Bearing Fruits

Paulraj Masillamony, Pastor
Indian Seventh-day Adventist Church

Seven years on the Indian Church continues to stay focus on its purpose to reach the unreached for Christ. Stepping out of their comfort zones, the members involved themselves in community services, evangelistic and outreach endeavors, visitation and giving personal Bible studies. The countless efforts to introduce Jesus Christ to individuals and finally usher them into the baptism required much soul searching and prayers.

Fraught with Challenges

As we looking back, those were challenging times. However, all those difficulties pale in comparison to the great joy that is finally experienced as we welcome them into the church family. Each one of them have committed themselves to be further discipled to be the beacon of light brightening their areas of influence.

The Future

With the blessing of God, and in the spirit of faith and perseverance we have come thus far. We want to earnestly submit ourselves to the Lord so that He can use us more to lead others to know Him.

Heaven Rejoiced

Jerry Jacobs, Pastor
Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Church

Uncle Stephen Cho, as he is affectionately known to members of the Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Church, has been worshipping the Lord since he was baptized on July 13, 1985. Though he was married to Mdm Anna Ee Goh Neo in 1996, he has been worshipping alone, first at what was then the Southeast Asia Union College Church and later at the Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Anna was also touched by . . . the caring and friendly members

Godly Influence

Attending church without his wife was a concern for Stephen. He shared his faith in Jesus with Anna. She was also touched by the regular visits of Uncle Lawrence Wong and his team and the caring and friendly members. She finally accepted Jesus as her Saviour at age 84 and was baptized on May 18, 2013. Heaven rejoices when one soul is baptized!