January - March 2014

A High SABBATH

Tan Jia Hong, Assistant Pastor

As was in the past the Conference-wide combined worship is a much looked forward to event. Held on September 21, 2013 at the Star Performing Arts Centre, it saw an attendance of some 1,300 members and visitors. The theme was “United in Mission.” Early birds at Sabbath School were treated to an interesting skit by the Balestier Church youth. A panel discussion on the week’s Sabbath School lesson on ‘Healing Broken Relationships’ by three representatives from the local churches occupied the greater part of the first hour.

A musical ensemble ushered in the divine worship segment. Led by a spirited worship team, voices were raised in praise and a deep desire to connect with the Creator God. One after another inspirational vocal renditions built steadily toward a climactic worshipful ambience. Even the scripture reading was well dramatized. By then the Church was ready for the ministry of the Word from Dr. Kenley Hall. An associate professor of Christian Ministry at Andrews University, Hall is at heart a church planter, youth pastor and a passionate disciple of Christ. He affirmed that our great God can give us a peace that goes beyond our understanding in the midst of all the storms in our life. When Jesus is on the boat with you the storm simply does not matter.

The lunch break provided a time of visits among members and friends. What followed in the afternoon was a multifarious display of sights, sounds and colors as the Festival of Praise opened with a pageantry of flags and costumes representing the worldwide nationalities in our Church. Various groups offered their musical gifts to the Lord. There was not a dull moment in the beautifully choreographed musical offerings. In the end one gets this incredible feeling that we are all different people but united in mission to fulfill the gospel commission in our part of the world!

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Pageantry of national flags and costumes

Song of Response

Indian members Sing Praises Unto His Name

The Balestier Church choir

Panel members discussing the week's lesson

Worship team leading the church in praises

20-strong music ensemble

Congregational prayers

Kenley Hall ministers the word

Acts 2 Young Adult Choir

Maranatha Chimers playing “What Child is This”

316 Choir from the Thomson Chinese Church

Juniors had their own Sabbath School program

Earliteens in discussion groups

The skit “Re-Moses: Are We There Yet?”

† http://vimeo.com/75924441 for video clip
We thank God for the wonderful response from the students during the Week of Prayer and the Gospel Camp held in the last quarter of 2013 at the San Yu Adventist School (SYAS). Fifty students decided either for baptism or Bible study.

The Urban Youth Community consisting of youth leaders from the various churches took upon themselves to help give Bible studies and befriend the students. This was a timely support when we had to cope with many students desiring to know more about God.

Currently, 18 students are receiving Bible studies; one has joined the Thomson Chinese Church by baptism. Of those who initially took Bible studies, many have left the school. As a result Bible studies for this batch have been discontinued.

It is our prayer that the seeds of truth planted in their hearts will continue to grow even as they return to their home countries.

The Week of Prayer and Gospel Camp in 2014 will be held from April 4 to 6. Please remember us in your prayers.

Sixty volunteers attended a 2-day Gospel Camp Facilitators Training on March 8 and 9, 2014 at the National Community Leadership Institute. Trainer John Tan taught how to run family groups, how to reach out to students and what to do in emergencies. In addition to learning theory, the volunteers also played games together providing further know-how to lead out in games and family group activities. All this learning will prove helpful in the upcoming Gospel Camp to be held from April 4 to 6, 2014.

At that time the 60 facilitators would split into two groups to conduct the English and the Chinese Gospel Camps. Both camps would be conducted concurrently. Students would be listening to motivational talks from camp speakers, Ricky and Stephanie Schwarz. They would also participate in bonding games and activities. Last year’s Gospel Camp saw a total of 11 decisions for baptism, and many more for Bible studies. We solicit your prayers.
Plan for Adventist Presence in SENGKANG-PUNGGOL

Johnny Kan,
SAC President

There are nine churches and church-companies scattered across the island of Singapore but no Adventist presence in the growing housing estates of Sengkang and Punggol. The combined population of about 250,000 residents in this part of the island comprises largely newly married couples and families with young children.

Our plan is simple. We need to build relationships on all levels. First, we connect with grassroot leaders and residents through our various community services and seminars. One program already planned to take place on May 4 is the “Pay It Forward” event to be held at the Sengkang Community Club.

Second, we are inviting members residing in that vicinity and who are able, to open their homes for need-oriented small group meetings. In the middle of September, a two-week seminar will be held in that area for the residents.

Third, once relationships with attendees are comfortably established, we encourage members to invite them to their local churches for further integration and assimilation. As Singapore is a small island, most people do not think in terms of geographical location but psychographically. This is especially true with the Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials when seeking a church.

As new buildings and basic infrastructures are erected especially in the Punggol area, we hope to establish a Centre of Influence whether it’s a preschool, a health food establishment or any need-based services in the near future. Furthermore, by the grace of God, if the opportunity arises perhaps a new worship group may be formed when all is said and done.

We seek your prayers, involvement and financial support in our evangelistic endeavours to touch lives in the Sengkang-Punggol area. We need only to uplift Jesus and He will draw all people to Him.
The Adventist Children’s choir comprising 37 children aged between 5 and 13 made its debut performance at a Christmas party hosted by the Geylang Serai CC and cosponsored by the Adventist Community Services and the Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Church on December 8, 2013. The choir members come from our local churches. MP Dr Fatimah Lateef was the guest of honor. It was an opportunity for the children to be involved in a community event.

The following week, the choir gave a 45-minute presentation of Christmas carols at one of Singapore’s newest tourist attraction – Gardens by the Bay. The event was well attended by members of the public. Many of our church members also came to support the choir.

This choir was organized by the Conference children’s ministries department in collaboration and support from the Adventist Community Services. The children were trained by Mrs Anita Fong, Junior Choir Director of the Balestier Church with the assistance of other local churches’ music and children’s ministries leaders.
Facing many changes in church and society, today’s church pastors and leaders are constantly expected to evolve in the numerous roles they find themselves.

The Singapore Conference realized that more development for its leaders is needed than just professional growth literature and sporadic seminars.

Johnny Kan, the conference president, initiated an intensive focus program during the regular ministers fellowship meetings. Time is spent in learning from video lectures on leadership development after which groups of threes are formed to evaluate each one’s own ministry setting and practices in light of the issues presented in the videos. The program includes training sessions on building healthy relationships and effective pastoral care.

Believing the effect that physical health has on spiritual wholeness and ultimately the pastor’s ministry, the regular ministers fellowship meetings make time for physical exercise, nutritious breakfast, team bonding activities, periodical health screening and health lectures. Already, these have positively impacted the well-being of everyone who participated.

Local church officers are elected for different roles in the life of a church. Each officer has an important part to play, not least is the church treasurer, an often unseen but essential person. Where needed, a church treasurer may be assisted by several others. From time to time, the Conference would hold a meeting for local church treasurers to align responsibilities and functions. Such a meeting was held on March 1, 2014.

Some feedbacks from those who attended the meeting:

- Joyce Tumbo (Filipino Seventh-day Adventist Church)
  The meeting was conducted in an organized manner. I had attended such meetings for three consecutive years and I found them very useful to my duty as church treasurer. Topics were discussed thoroughly in a systematic way by the conference treasury team. There was a Q&A session at the end of the meeting where attendees raised issues and feedback. Overall, the meeting gave us a clear idea of our responsibilities.

- Annie Ong (Chuan Hoe Seventh-day Adventist Church)
  The meeting was a time well spent as treasurers gathered to discuss how we can better manage God’s resources and learn from fellow treasurers the best practices of each church. During the meeting, SAC officers shared how the tithe and combined offerings are being used. This is important as the treasurers will be more informed and equipped to explain when required.

From the Conference treasury team:
We praise God for the faithfulness and dedication of our church treasurers. We thank all members, friends and others for their faithful support of the Lord’s work by their tithes and offerings.
Many do not realize that pastoral ministry is hard. Ministry with a strained marriage can be harder still if not impossible. There is a need for pastors to learn how to balance their marriage and their ministry.

The much anticipated training was conducted by Drs Chek Yat and Sally Phoon at the Southeast Asia Union Mission auditorium on January 11, 2014. After a fellowship supper with the pastoral staff, departmental leaders and their spouses, Drs Chek Yat and Sally Phoon shared insights on the key elements that will help prevent the conditions that often contribute to the breakdown of marriage and ministry.

It was often emphasized that the ministering couples have to make sure that their marriage relationship is primary and has to be protected at all costs. It was pointed out that when there is no unity between ministering couples, they need to step back and assess their direction and decisions, make adjustments before continuing. Because a couple’s personalities are different they can gain insight and wisdom from each other and see things from different perspectives.

Couple team ministry is God designed. It is a unique ministry. The required skills to produce effective church growth need to be learnt and practiced because a strong pastoral team ministry forms the backbone for every other ministry in the church.

Back in March 2011, Studio Elpizo proposed to the Singapore Conference the concept of a short half-an-hour program where listeners can ask a pastor any questions pertaining to a Christian walk with God. The concept soon actualized in the following month with Faith Toh hosting the program with the resident pastor, Johnny Kan. The team soon expanded to include Pastor Bayu Kaumpungan and Pastor Benjamin Kipzanang forming a three-pastor panel. Pastor Johnny Kan was later replaced by Pastor James Tham when he joined the Singapore Conference.

Questions from listeners were collected either through SMS, emails or live call outs. Soon the impact of the program could be felt. Studio Elpizo started receiving Bible study requests from listeners of the program, visitation requests or simply a call on the phone for one of the pastors. At times strangers recognizing the voice of the pastors, would come up to them asking if they are indeed the pastors from the Ask a Pastor program.

Today the program continues to evolve so as to meet the needs of Singapore listeners. The most current need of the program is for prayer teams to pray for listeners who are requesting prayers and for the growth and impact of the ministry.
Be My VALENTINE

Alma Nicol, Family Ministry Coordinator Filipino SDA Church

Valentine’s Day celebration was no flippant occasion for twenty happily-married couples from the Filipino Seventh-day Adventist Church. Recognizing God as the source of true love between a husband and wife, it was an opportune time to recommit themselves to each other. They enjoyed a night out at the River-Walk Tandoor Restaurant, Clarke Quay. The occasion was organized by the church Family Ministry. A palatable dinner was served. Specially planned games encouraged and enhanced relationship as a husband and wife team. Activities focused on how to grow their love for each other also reminded them that being married is not the end of courtship; that there is no “Perfect Couple” but only as God is kept central in a marriage relationship. Praise be to God for giving us our spouses. Praise be to God for giving us each other. Praise be to God for the Gift of Marriage.

“Display of affection” approved by smiles

Mark Chan, Pastor Balestier Seventh-day Adventist Church

More than 60 members of the Balestier Seventh-day Adventist Church distributed oranges to the residents of some 1,844 units in the Whampoa-McNair area on January 25, 2014. This youth-initiated program was a synergistic effort by various ministries of the church. Along with the oranges, GLOW tracts and pamphlets advertising the coming Daniel and Revelation Prophecy Seminar to be held at the church were distributed. All the gift packs were distributed within an hour. Residents warmly welcomed and accepted the gifts.

Opening hearts of HEARTLANDERS