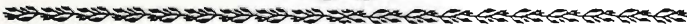


Post
Centennial
Blessings of
the Lord

BETHESDA HALL
(BRAS BASAH)
1964 - 1985

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FOREWORD

This book gives a concise account of the Lord's blessings on the assembly meeting at Bethesda Gospel Hall, 77 Bras Basah Road, Singapore, for the past twenty one years (1964 – 1985). It is a follow-up to the centennial brochure of the assembly (1864 – 1964) compiled by Mr M Finlay, then an Elder of the assembly, in 1964.

This account is being published because the assembly will be moving from its present site where the original premises were built in 1866. The assembly will move to her new premises situated at 601 Ang Mo Kio, Avenue 4, which is about nine kilometres from her present location. This move will mark a new phase in the history of the assembly.

Having been in happy fellowship in the assembly for more than forty five years before going overseas, I find this book not only interesting but also spiritually instructive and challenging. The believers present in this assembly together with those who have been associated with her in the past years will have much to praise, magnify and glorify the Lord for His continued blessings on the testimony that has gone forth from Bethesda (Bras Basah). May the reading of this book challenge you to faithfully continue living a holy life and serving the Lord while waiting for His imminent return.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” – I Cor. 15 : 58

JAMES HANAM

PREFACE

The brief account of the Lord's work in our assembly during the twenty one years to 30 June 1985 is a sequel to the centennial brochure "The Story of One Hundred Years of the Lord's blessings". It shows how the Lord has directed and developed her testimony since her centennial year in 1964.

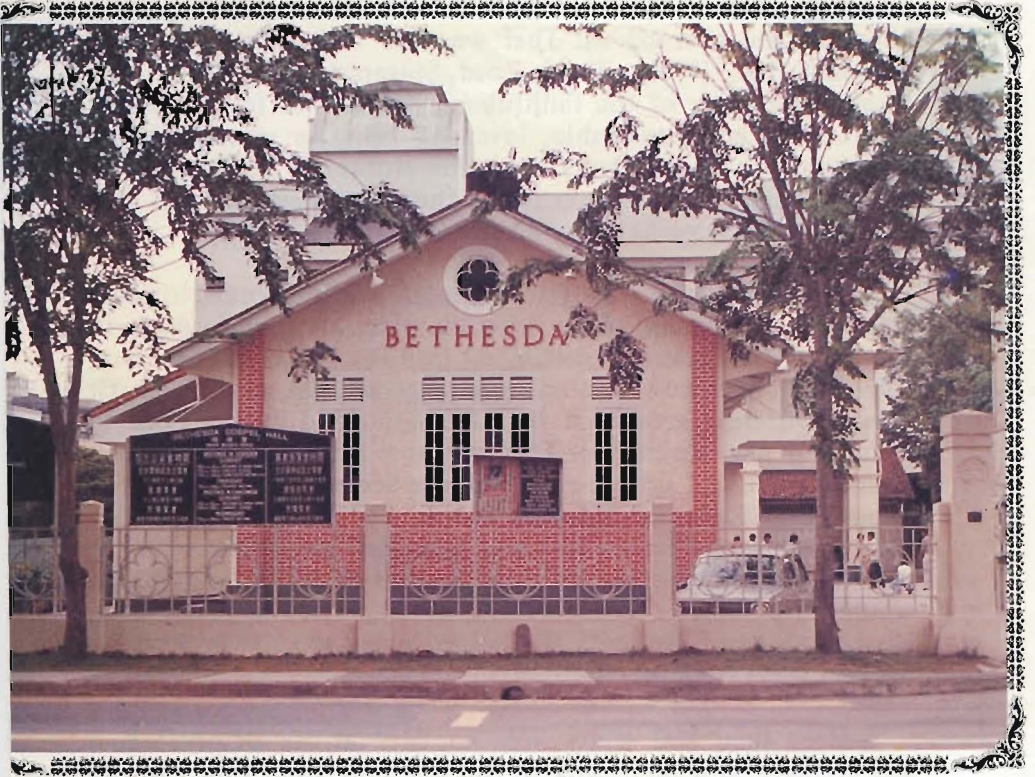
Although it is not a complete history of the assembly for the past twenty one years, what has been recorded is enough to cause us to rejoice in and to be refreshed by the Lord. We are of course appreciative of all the Lord's people who have been associated with our assembly testimony in one way or another from 1964 – 1985. It is because they cared enough to be involved in the Lord's work among us that our assembly has grown despite the large numbers that have gone out to the new assemblies set up during the past twenty one years.

Only about 17% of the assembly members as at 30.6.64 had continued to be in fellowship with us and they constituted about 11% of the assembly members as at 30.6.85. The rest were baptized and received into fellowship or received from other churches/assemblies during 1964/1985. Though she was the first assembly to be set up in Singapore in 1864, she has become one of the youngest in physical age with nearly 70% unmarried as at 30.6.85.

A word of appreciation is due to Dr James Hanam, an Elder of our assembly from 1967-1980, for his Foreword and thorough editing of the manuscript. Above all, we are indebted to our Lord Who alone has made this publication possible mainly because He is the Author and Architect of our assembly testimony.

15th September 1985

BETHESDA HALL (BRAS BASAH)



located at 77 Bras Basah Road
was founded in 1864.
More than 800 saints were baptised
here and received into fellowship
from July 1964 to June 1985

1

PRESIDING CONTROL

I Samuel 7 : 12

Twenty one years have elapsed since we celebrated our centennial year in 1964. During the past two decades in His presiding control, the Lord Jesus Christ has graciously guided, governed and guarded us. That we have been able to meet at Bethesda Hall, 77 Bras Basah Road, Singapore 0718, for so long speaks eloquently of the faithfulness, favour and fruitfulness of our Lord Whose leadership, love and light we wholeheartedly acknowledge. We can truly echo the words of David when he testified thus "Thou hast crowned the year (decades) with Thy bounty, and Thy paths drip with fatness." (Psalm 65:11)

In the 1960s and the 1970s, the Holy Spirit worked lovingly among us, motivating and moving the older brethren to go forth to pioneer new assembly testimony in Bukit Panjang, Toa Payoh (the assembly is now located in Serangoon), Balestier and Bukit Arang. Different groups of brethren were used by the Lord to plant four new assemblies. They are now located at 12 Galistan Avenue in Bukit Panjang, at 785 Upper Serangoon Road, at 15A Jalan Rama Rama in Balestier and at 114 Bukit Arang Road. Several others followed them and identified themselves with the new assemblies thus set up. The exodus of the older brethren would have depleted our numbers, but the Lord in maintaining His testimony at Bethesda Hall added more to us than what He has sent forth from us.

More than 800 saints were baptized at our Bethesda Hall and received into fellowship of our assembly from July 1964 to June 1985 apart from those who came to identify themselves with us from other churches/assemblies. The Lord has taught us well from His Word through His messengers. The rich heritage that we have received based on the New Testament principles has enabled us to continue in the pathway of the pioneers of our church, Philip Robinson and his colleagues, who founded the work in 1864 at 108 Bencoolen Street before moving to 77 Bras Basah Road in 1866.

Owing to various reasons, all the six brothers who were Elders in our assembly in 1964 are not in the oversight. Five of them left, one each year from 1965 to 1969 with the last in 1976. During this critical period of shrinking leadership, the Lord raised up two brothers in 1966 and 1967 to take on the responsibilities as Elders in our assembly. For about a year in 1976/1977 the two remaining Elders had the burden of our assembly, which was beginning to increase in good numbers despite more than a hundred going over to the new assembly at Bethesda Hall (Bukit Arang). In His mercies the Lord exercised the heart of a brother to share in the work of Elders. Meanwhile the Lord was preparing a number of brothers for pastoral ministry among us.

In 1980 when the number of Elders was again reduced to two, five brothers were thrust forth over a period of months to serve the Lord in undershepherding His flock. In 1983/1985 the Holy Spirit appointed another six brothers to be Elders in our assembly. As an assembly we are young with more than seventy five percent of us below the age of thirty, we are delighted that the Lord has deemed fit to appoint younger brothers to share in the pastoral ministry among us. I Timothy 4:12 has definite application.

In 1969 the Lord strongly exercised the then Elders of the New Testament principles regarding the autonomy of each assembly which should be directly responsible to the Lord Jesus as Head of the Church. Hence in 1969 two assemblies became autonomous: the assembly at 417 New Bridge Road which had commenced Gospel work in the late 1930s and the assembly at 12 Galistan Avenue (in Bukit Panjang) which started Sunday School work in early 1960s. Besides the Yio Chu Kang assembly which had in the early 1960s asked the Elders of our assembly to look after the work regained her autonomy. In July 1969 Mr Lau Kim Guan who had been an Elder in our assembly for about eighteen years left us to help in the Yio Chu Kang assembly as an Elder.



**BUKIT PANJANG CHAPEL LOCATED AT 12 GALISTAN AVENUE. HERE
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK STARTED IN EARLY 1960s.**



**BETHESDA SERANGOON CHURCH LOCATED AT 785 UPPER SERANGOON
ROAD WAS FORMERLY LOCATED AT TOA PAYOH ESTATE.**



IN 1969 A FEW BRETHREN STARTED A SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK AT 15A JALAN RAMA RAMA IN BALESTIER ROAD.



BETHESDA CHURCH BUKIT RANG AT 114 BUKIT RANG ROAD. MORE THAN A HUNDRED BRETHREN FROM OUR ASSEMBLY IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES WITH THIS ASSEMBLY.

In 1969 a few brethren started a Sunday School work at 15A Jalan Rama Rama in Balestier Road. Prior to 1969 some of our brethren started Sunday School work in their own apartment flats in Toa Payoh. When Bethesda Book Centre was set up in 1969, the mini Sunday Schools consolidated in the upper floor of the Book Centre. More of our brethren left us to identify with the new Toa Payoh assembly, which became autonomous in 1973. In 1975 the Toa Payoh assembly took over the work at Jalan Rama Rama. Several of our brethren who were helping in the work there stayed on to serve the Lord there. They eventually identified themselves with the new Jalan Rama Rama assembly.

On 19.10.74 we held a Thanksgiving and Dedication Service at Bethesda Hall (Bukit Arang). Thus began our extension work in Bukit Arang. On 30.6.79 the new work became an autonomous assembly with more than a hundred brethren from our assembly identifying themselves with the new assembly.

Our assembly has been located at 77 Bras Basah Road for more than a hundred years. One might well wonder why we had not bought the land from its owners. On hindsight, we now know the reason. The property was acquired by the Urban Redevelopment Authority on 10.6.81. Our assembly has been allowed to continue the use of Bethesda Hall (Bras Basah) on a Temporary Occupation Licence.

In 1982 the Geylang Gospel Hall belonging to our sister assembly, the Hokkien speaking Assembly, was also acquired by the Housing and Development Board. When the Elders of the various assemblies in Singapore met at their quarterly meetings on 24.4.82 they considered the accommodation problems caused to our assembly and the Hokkien speaking assembly (at Lorong 29) and decided to appeal to the highest authority to provide a piece of land for replacing the acquired properties. In the mercies of the Lord, the authorities decided to give us a 30 year lease of a vacant piece of land in Ang Mo Kio, Avenue 4 for a joint development

of new premises with the Hokkien assembly. On 25.4.83 the Steward Company of Singapore Ltd signed the lease agreement with the Housing and Development Board to erect a new church hall in Ang Mo Kio, Avenue 4. The Steward Company of Singapore Ltd (incorporated on 20.9.70 as a company limited by guarantee) would hold the new property to be known as Bethesda Hall (Ang Mo Kio) in trust for both the assemblies.

The Lord has so marvellously seen us through the past twenty one years. In the process He has rejuvenated the assembly with a host of younger saints: He has led many of the older brethren to greener pastures or promoted them to glory while He has brought into our assembly a larger number of younger saints. In the 1960s He opened up Bukit Panjang and Toa Payoh for our evangelisation. In the 1970s He gave us Balestier and Bukit Arang for the Gospel's sake. Now in 1980s He is sending us, not in small numbers but the whole assembly of young warriors, to Ang Mo Kio for 'Operation Jordan' (the theme for our 1985 Assembly Family Camp). As He has helped us in the past, He will surely be with us in the future. Our concerns will be to be obedient to His Lordship, overflowing with His love and occupied in His labour.

Our Annual Report for the year ended 30.6.84 struck the right note : "As Bethesda Hall (Ang Mo Kio) is a multi-storeyed building, it will need a team of workers weekly to clean up the premises. As the Lord has placed us in this large mission field in Ang Mo Kio, we will have the great responsibility to reach out to its inhabitants with the Gospel of Jesus Christ Whose blood will cleanse them of their sins. This means that every one of you is expected to be personally involved or to be more involved in the Lord's work – for the spiritual uplift of those in our future neighbourhood or for the simple upkeep of the premises. Gal. 6:9 While we plan for greater responsibility in Ang Mo Kio, let us always be prepared for the imminent return of our Lord Jesus."



NEW BRIDGE ROAD CHAPEL LOCATED AT 417 NEW BRIDGE ROAD.



YIO CHU KANG CHAPEL LOCATED AT 242 YIO CHU KANG ROAD.

2

PLANTING CHURCHES

Acts 11 : 20 – 22

In the first hundred years our church was responsible for planting three assemblies in New Bridge Road, Katong and Yio Chu Kang. The assemblies at Bethesda (Katong) and in Yio Chu Kang were autonomous when we celebrated the centennial year in 1964. However owing to dwindling attendances and inadequate number of brethren to help in the work, the Yio Chu Kang assembly formally asked our assembly to look after the work there with effect from 1.1.66. With some brethren from our assembly like Mr & Mrs Lauw Kim Guan, Mr & Mrs Tan Leng Ghee, Mr & Mrs Yeo Oon Boo, Mr Freddie Ho, going over to the Yio Chu Kang assembly to help in her activities, the assembly was revived and in mid-1969 she regained her autonomy.

Although the Gospel work in New Bridge Road was formally started in 1936 in English, Chinese and Malay, it was treated as an extension work from our assembly until the mid-1960s. In 1969 the Elders were strongly exercised that the assembly at 417 New Bridge Road should become autonomous. Circular letters and invitation cards were sent to all the assemblies in West Malaysia and Singapore informing them of the autonomy of the New Bridge Road assembly with effect from 1.8.69 and inviting them to attend the Dedication and Thanksgiving Service at New Bridge Road Chapel on 6.9.69. The assembly is now located at 3 Pasir Panjang Hill.

In the past two decades from 1.7.64, the brethren from our assembly planted four assemblies in Bukit Panjang, Toa Payoh, Balestier and Bukit Arang. Although in the late 1950s some brethren went to Bukit Panjang with the Gospel, it was only in early 1960s that a Sunday School (in English) commenced in the home of the late Miss Nancy Wee. In 1964 after a year's closure, permission was obtained to convert the residential bungalow into a Gospel Hall and the Sunday School was reopened. In 1966 Miss Nancy Wee gave her property at 12 Galistan Avenue to us for an assembly testimony in Bukit Panjang. The late Dr Lee Keng Chin, an Elder from our assembly, his wife and his daughter,

Dr Lee Guat Siew, and a few other brethren started the Bukit Panjang Sunday School. Dr & Mrs Wong Wai Chow and a few more brethren from our assembly joined the pioneering band. An English-speaking assembly testimony was thus established. (A Hokkien-speaking assembly had been set up in the home of Mr Long Seong Beng some years earlier.) On 5.7.69 a Thanksgiving and Dedication Service was held at the Bukit Panjang Chapel after it became autonomous on 1.7.69.

In the mid-1960s with the encouragement of Mr Lauw Kim Guan, a few brethren like Mr & Mrs George Lim from our assembly residing in Toa Payoh opened their homes for mini-Sunday Schools. In 1969 Mr Lauw Kim Guan tendered for a shop-house for a book store, and obtained tenancy of the premises at 551 Lorong 2 Toa Payoh. Because our assembly did not have an entity to hold property, the Bethesda (Katong) Church agreed to be the legal tenant of the premises, which became the headquarters of Bethesda Book Centre. The Local Committee comprising M/s Lauw Kim Guan, George Lim, Stanley Wong (a Deacon in our assembly previously) and Cheang Kim Seng considered the work as an extension of the revived Yio Chu Kang assembly. With the commencement of Breaking of Bread Worship on 6.7.69, some more brethren from our assembly like Mr & Mrs Richard Chen, Mr & Mrs Lawrence Leong, Mr & Mrs Freddie Poon, Misses Irene Phoon, Lim Jee Mui and Lim Jee Lee joined the new assembly in Toa Payoh.

Within seven years the upper floor of Bethesda Book Centre became inadequate to accommodate the growing assembly. After some years of searching for a suitable site within three kilometres of the Book Centre, the Lord in His goodness provided an old bungalow at 785 Upper Serangoon Road to house the assembly. This was the home of the late Mr C R Hale, a former Elder from our assembly. Thus the Toa Payoh assembly is now housed at Bethesda (Serangoon), 785 Upper Serangoon Road.



BETHESDA (KATONG) CHURCH LOCATED AT 17 PENNEFATHER ROAD.



12



In 1969 another sister, the late Md Oh Choon Sioh, paid for a greater portion of the price for an apartment flat at 15A Jalan Rama Rama in Balestier. A Thanksgiving and Dedication Service was held on 21.11.69 in the apartment flat. On 7.12.69 Mr Lim Soon Choon, then a Deacon in our assembly, and Mr R Gnanalolan and others from among us started a Sunday School. Mr Daniel Woon, Miss Doris Lee (now Mrs Woon), Mr Jimmy Lee, Dr Sally Wong and some others from our assembly went over to help in the Sunday School and youth work. Because of our intention to start a new work at our newly constructed Bethesda Hall (Bukit Arang), the Elders decided to lease 15A Jalan Rama Rama to the then Toa Payoh assembly from 1.1.75. Several of our brethren who had been helping in the work there decided to identify themselves with the new Jalan Rama Rama assembly.

At our Annual Meeting held on 25.8.73, the Annual Report for the year ended 30.6.73 included the following : "We are pleased to announce that we have awarded the contract for the construction of the Bukit Arang Bethesda Hall for \$382,000. The Contractors have started levelling work. The project is scheduled to be completed within a year from the commencement of construction. As at 30.6.73 we have \$170,000 in the Building Fund."

We are grateful to our Lord for enabling the Trustees of the land at Lot 412 Mukim XVII at Bukit Arang to repossess the property from the illegal occupants and for the gift of \$173,135.92 from the Gaw Khek Chiew Trust Deed dated 4.1.52 which had made it possible for us to pay towards the erection of Bethesda Hall (Bukit Arang).

The Annual Report of our assembly for the year ended 30.6.74 included the following comments on Bethesda Hall (Bukit Arang) "The new hall is virtually completed. We are indebted to the Lord for enabling us to overcome the many

difficulties in the process. A meeting was held on 6.8.74 to share with those interested in the Bukit Arang work the past, the present and the future of the place with the obstacles that have been overcome and the opportunities for the Gospel outreach. A Thanksgiving and Dedication Service has been arranged on 19.10.74." However owing to the delay in obtaining approval for the power connection, the Thanksgiving and Dedication Service was held on 26.4.75 while the Sunday School and Gospel Service commenced on 20.4.75 and 4.5.75 respectively.

With the encouragement of Dr James Hanam and Mr Lim Tian Leong, several brethren from our assembly like Mr & Mrs Tan Jing Hee, Mr & Mrs Herbert Chia, M/s Daniel Woon, Sonny Ng, R Gnanalolan, Constant Lee, James Lam, Edmund Chua, Miss Juno Ding (now Mrs Sonny Ng), Lee Bok Lan, went to assist in the Sunday School and youth work. With the growth of the new work at Bukit Arang, M/s Herbert Chia, Albert Lee, Ooi Ghee Siong and Yem Ah Chew were appointed Responsible Brethren by the two Elders of our assembly in January 1977 to oversee the work.

In July 1978 M/s Ooi Ghee Siong and Yem Ah Chew were exercised to become Elders for the new assembly at Bethesda Hall (Bukit Arang). Mr Albert Lee became an Elder in June 1979. A Thanksgiving Service was held on 30.6.79 in connection with the autonomy of the assembly which took place on 1.7.79. More than a hundred of our brethren, many of whom had been attending meetings there decided to identify themselves with the newly autonomous assembly.

Thus our Lord has deemed fit to use ordinary Christians like ourselves from among ourselves to plant four assemblies in Singapore. None of those involved were full time workers or missionaries, although a few subsequently were called into full time service for the Lord. It is the Lord's doings and it is marvellous in our eyes.

3

PASTORAL CARE

Acts 20 : 28 Ezekiel 34 : 8

In His divine wisdom, the Lord Jesus as the Head of our assembly has delegated His leadership to the Elders, which He has set up under His church government according to His glory and grace. He has appointed by His Holy Spirit to this leadership those whom He has raised up among His own to shepherd His flock. He is still the Chief Shepherd in overall charge of our assembly.

The six Elders in the centennial year were M/s Lauw Kim Guan, Tommy Cheong, John Chia, Matt H Finlay, W G Stott and Robert Tan. The first five names left, each a year from 1965 to 1969. Mr W G Stott left to return to Tasmania with his family in June 1965. Mr Tommy Cheong left in September 1966 to serve in Youth for Christ in Penang. Mr John Chia stepped down in May 1967 and went over to Bethesda (Frankel Estate) Church to identify himself with the Malay speaking assembly. Mr Matt Finlay withdrew from the oversight in December 1968 to return with his family to New Zealand. In July 1969 Mr Lauw Kim Guan, the longest serving Elder up to that time, withdrew from the oversight at Bethesda Hall (Bras Basah) after about eighteen years to become an Elder at the revived Yio Chu Kang assembly. Mr Robert Tan stepped down in October 1976 but continued to be in fellowship with our assembly.

In the meanwhile the Lord raised up Mr Lim Tian Leong and Dr James Hanam to become Elders in June 1966 and July 1967 respectively. From October 1976 to June 1977 these two brothers had to bear the burden of our assembly and how grateful they were to the Lord for having exercised Dr Lawrence Chan to share in the work of the Elders.

The Annual Report of our assembly for the year ended 30 June 1980 recorded thus: "As an assembly we felt a great loss when our esteemed Elder Dr James Hanam and his wife Pauline

with their son Philip left us on 10.3.80 for a short vacation before settling down in Richmond, Vancouver (in Canada). We have lost the wise counsel of one who with his wife has for the past decades been in the forefront of the Lord's work in this assembly."

Meanwhile the Lord has been preparing five brothers to take up the responsibilities of the Elders. So following the departure of Dr James Hanam from Singapore, M/s Albert Wong Siew Seng, Khoo Oon Soo, Daniel Woon Wee Seck, Chua Teck Koon and Dr Chong Kim Chow were thrust forth to undershepherd the flock of the Lord at Bethesda Hall (Bras Basah) over a period of months in 1980. The Holy Spirit appointed six more Elders in 1983/June 1985 : Mr Tay Kim Swee (July 1983), Mr Adrin Loi Boon Sim and Dr Lee Kok Onn (November 1984), M/s S V Ramalingam and Wong Tuck Keong (January 1985) and Mr Eric Choa Beng Liang (March 1985).

Why is there a sudden need to have such a large body of Elders? The need has always been there even before the centennial year because it is humanly impossible for just six Elders to provide adequate pastoral ministry. Since 1977 the Elders have been prayfully discussing the need of more effective pastoral ministry among the Lord's people. It was recognised in 1982 that a large oversight comprising elders ranging from below 30 years to above 60 years – youth, zeal and enterprise combined with maturity, experiences and knowledge – will also ensure effective continuity in the leadership of the assembly. Many assemblies had died when the few Elders had grown too old to pastor the assembly effectively or they died without succession or the old Elders were not prepared to share responsibility with younger brothers.

Pastoral ministry requires not only preaching of God's Word from the pulpit but also practice of it in the home. Visitation to the homes of the saints in the assembly is the best way to ascertain the effectiveness of the pulpit preaching. The Lord has



THE OVERSIGHT

SEATED (L - R): DR LAWRENCE CHAN KOK CHIN, M/S LIM TIAN LEONG, KHOO OON SOO & CHUA TECK KOON.
 STANDING (L - R): M/S ADRIN LOI BOON SIM, WONG TUCK KEONG, ERIC CHOA BENG LIANG, S.V. RAMALINGAM,
 ALBERT WONG SIEW SENG, DANIEL WOON WEE SECK & DR CHONG KIM CHOW.



MR TAY KIM SWEET



DR LEE KOK ONN



DR LEE JIN HWA



MISS THERESA KOO

THE LADIES COMMITTEE



MRS CHOW CHIN CHOO

(L - R)

MRS BOON YEN LING, MRS LEE LENG HEOK,
 MRS CHONG LAI WAH, MRS NG SWEE CHOO,
 MISS THERESA KOO, MRS ONG SU PING AND
 MRS JENNIFER LOI



MISS CHOY WAI FANN



ordained the home and the church as His two organisms of human society for the good of mankind. Hence there can be no effective church testimony apart from an effective home testimony. Visitation to the Christian homes is an essential aspect of pastoral ministry.

For decades the visitation work has been spasmodic – either it was done as and when the caring saints were free or it was limited to a small circle of homes.

In answer to the prayers of the Elders, the Lord burdened M/s S V Ramalingam and Lim Tian Leong in 1978 to visit the homes of our brethren on Mondays. The Lord then mobilised Dr Chong Kim Chow, M/s Adrin Loi, Godfrey Ong and Wong Tuck Keong into this weekly visitation. From time to time these brothers with others also make visits on other days. As the result, more than two hundred and fifty different homes with more than three hundred and fifty brethren have been visited during the past eight years. Several homes have been visited more than once.

One couple told the visitation team that this was the first visit from an Elder in their more than forty years of fellowship with our assembly. Nearly two hundred homes were visited for the first time, though many had been in fellowship with our assembly for more than ten years. However it was no easy work. There were those who took the opportunity to rebuke the visitors for the uncaring attitude of the assembly in the past or to find fault with the assembly. Some showed concern about the assembly. Some wanted to know more about the assembly and the policies and activities of the assembly. Many were appreciative of the visits, the sharing from God's Word, the word of encouragement and the intercessory prayers for those visited and their family members.

Under the direction of the Lord, the team learnt a lot from the visitation work: the home environment, the family members

and relationships, the personal particulars and the work environment and problems of the brethren visited. The knowledge thus acquired helped the team to pray intelligently for these brethren. On several occasions the team was thrilled by the leading of the Lord to be at the right place at the right time. The team visited a brother or a sister whose loved one (eg a parent) had only passed away that day and was able to be there to console the bereaved brother or sister. The team had also been led to visit a brother or sister who needed urgent pastoral help which was readily given according to God's Word. The team had been told that if the brother or sister had been visited on any other Monday he or she would not be in.

The other Elders and their wives and some caring brothers and sisters also visited some brethren from time to time. The Ladies Committee (which was formed after the Assembly Family Camp in 1980) especially Mrs Chong Lai Wah (sometimes with her husband Dr Chong Kim Chow), Miss Choy Wai Fann, Miss Shirley Wee (now Mrs Holland serving the Lord in St Ives, Cornwall, England) and Mrs Lee Leng Heok were a great help in the pastoral ministry among the sisters too. Some of them went to the home of some sisters to have weekly Bible studies with them.

There is much more to be done in the ministry of pastoral care and concern. However, we are indebted to the Lord for having exercised and encouraged some of His servants in the pastoral ministry especially in the homes of His saints. All the efforts to reach out to the unsaved and bring the saints into fellowship of our church will be in vain if there is no pastoral ministry to cater for the spiritual welfare and well-being of the saints. The Lord has made us stewards for these saints and He is our Sufficiency in our service among them. Let us then know them for the Lord and kneel to the Lord for them. In fact it is our privilege to love them, look after them and learn from them for the sake of Christ.

4

PRECIOUS CROPS

Acts 16 : 31

The Apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 3:6 that he planted, Apollos watered and God was causing the increase. Every such crop is precious to our Lord, Who as the corn of wheat has died to bring forth much fruit.

According to the centennial brochure "The story of one hundred years of the Lord's blessings", there were approximately four hundred saints in fellowship at our Bethesda Hall in 1964. Eight hundred and twenty were baptized and received into fellowship of our assembly from July 1964 to June 1985, viz :

Period	Brothers	Sisters	Total
July 1964/June 1974	126	189	315
July 1974/June 1984	172	279	451
July 1984/June 1985	25	29	54
TOTAL for 21 years	<u>323</u>	<u>497</u>	<u>820</u>

During the same twenty one years about fifty brethren were received into our fellowship from assemblies/churches in Singapore and Malaysia.

During the past two decades nearly forty saints migrated to Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan and USA while ten brethren returned to their homeland. Apart from those who identified themselves with the four new assemblies, there were those who joined the other assemblies in Singapore eg Bethesda (Katong) Church, Bethesda (Frankel Estate) Church, Bethesda (Geylang) Church, Pasir Panjang Church (previously New Bridge Road Gospel Hall) and Yio Chu Kang assembly, and other churches in Singapore. Several senior brethren went to be with the Lord, among whom were Mr & Mrs Robert Hanam, Mr & Mrs Gaw Khek Chiew, Mrs Chia Boon Leong, Mrs A P Frederick, Mrs Lim Chin Kheng, Mrs Yeo Chiang Swee, Mr & Mrs W Roberts, Mrs Sheares, Mrs M C Salmon.

Resulting from the above, the approximately four hundred brethren in mid-1964 were reduced to sixty nine only as at 30.6.85. Of the fifty odd received from other assemblies and churches, only thirty three remained.

Of those baptized and received into fellowship during July 1964 and June 1985, the number as at 30.6.85 was 510 with only 69 who had been with us since 1.1.64 :

Those baptized during	Brothers	Sisters	Total
July 1964/June 1974	30	68	98
July 1974/June 1984	140	218	358
July 1984/June 1985	25	29	54
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Sub-total	195	315	510
Prior to July 1964	24	45	69
From other assemblies	17	16	33
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	236	376	612

The Lord had used the personal testimony of His children to challenge and convict their relatives and friends of the need of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord would begin with a member of a non-Christian home and as the result of His transformation of that lone representative, other members of that family were also brought into the saving knowledge of the Lord. In some cases households were saved.

The Sunday School, the youth meetings, the Gospel Service and the Song Service were also fertile lands for the sowing of the Good Seed. With prayerful cultivation, precious crops had been harvested for the kingdom of God.

Our brethren came from diverse social environment: from those staying in a one-room Housing and Development Board flat to a privately built large bungalow, from lower income families to upper-middle class families and from semi-illiterate to those with tertiary and/or professional education.

As at 1.7.80 there were 46 married couples (both husbands and wives in fellowship with us) among us. During July 1980/June 1985 there were thirty weddings where the brides and the bridegrooms were from among us. But with three sisters widowed, two couples migrated and three couples baptised and received during the period, the number of married couples as at 30.6.85 increased to seventy four.

There were six other married brothers and twenty two married sisters as at 30.6.85. Their spouses were not in fellowship with us (some attended other assemblies/churches while some although attending our meetings had not expressed the desire to identify themselves with us; others were not saved) or had gone to be with the Lord.

As at 30.6.85 nearly seventy per cent of our brethren were not married. The rather high proportion of unmarried brethren among us should not be too alarming. Based on the number of weddings during the past five years 1980/1985, the situation should improve in the next five years.

The unbalanced sex ratio is typical of the churches in Singapore and other countries. Of those baptized during the past twenty one years, nearly forty per cent were brothers – a higher proportion than in most churches. Of the unmarried, the sisters almost doubled the brothers. This can be a more serious problem but we look to the Lord to provide the guidance for the singles.

Of the twenty one years under review, July 1979/June 1980 was the year with the most baptisms with sixty seven baptized comprising thirty two brothers and thirty five sisters. July 1968/June 1969 saw the least with nineteen baptized consisting of six brothers and thirteen sisters.

Of the two hundred and nineteen baptized during July 1979/June 1984, two hundred and ten were still with us as at 30.6.85.

Three brothers and one sister were called to glory with Christ while the remaining five brethren left us to join another assembly.

The following table shows the percentages of those baptized during July 1964/June 1984 still with us as at 30.6.85 :

<u>Years baptized</u>	<u>Brothers</u>	<u>Sisters</u>	<u>Total</u>
	(to nearest percentage)		
1964/1969	12	23	18
1969/1974	31	48	41
1974/1979	71	58	63
1979/1984	95	97	96

Irrespective of their marital status and age, our Lord had made use of the brethren in the various activity groups like Assembly Evangelistic Group, Assembly Youth Group, Bethesda Choir, Cassette Library, Creche, Diaconate, Flower Arrangement, Ladies Group, Library, Morning Coffee Stall, National Service Group, Newsletter, Prayer Voices, Regional Fellowship Groups, and Sunday School. Surely the Lord will not forget the brethren who through their identification and involvement had made our assembly more affectionate more alive and more acceptable in the Lord. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which you have shown toward His name in that you have ministered to the saints and do minister." (Hebrews 6:10)

All Christians are required to obey God's Word, to live spiritually and in holiness before the Lord. Individually and collectively as an assembly we are witnesses to the saving grace and keeping power of the Lord. By diligent study of God's Word we are to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord. We are to love one another as Christ has loved us. The Lord of the harvest will then add to our numbers.

THE DIACONATE



SEATED (L - R) : M/S TAN JING POI, GODFREY ONG SER THONG, NG LEE PENG, CHEONG YUEN WHYE, CHIA BOON HONG, WILLIAM KOH LOK KIANG AND DIEU ENG HOCK.
 STANDING (L - R) : M/S GAN KEE PIN, TAN SOO HOON, EDMUND YONG YIT LIN, KAN SHIK LUM, GORDON KWAN SOW KUEN, RICHARD MOO MUI SENG, BOEY SAN FEI AND JOSEPH SNG KOK WAH.



MR TAY KIM TEE



MR ANDY LOW TIANG LIANG



MR TAN KIAN HUAT



MR TAN CHEE HWEE

OUR ASSEMBLY CHOIR



THE NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

- SEATED (L - R) : DR LAWRENCE CHAN KOK CHIN, MRS CATHERINE LOW AND MR LIM TIAN LEONG
- STANDING (L - R) : MR ANDY LOW TIANG LIANG, MICHAEL WONG TUCK KEE, MRS TAN SHOOK WAH, MR CEDRIC TAN HEE SENG AND MR CHIA HOCK AN





REGIONAL FELLOWSHIP GROUPS' REPRESENTATIVES

SEATED (L - R) : MISSES LIM MEI LIN, BETTY YUEN PECK HONG,
LEE PECK EE, MR DANIEL WOON, MISSES MARGARET GWEE & KOH GEOK ENG.
STANDING (L-R) : M/S CHUA TECK KOON, HO KUANG CHENG, EDMUND YONG,
JOHNNY TEONG, GAN KEE PIN, ANDREW LIM, STEVEN LEE & RICHARD TING.



CASSETTE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

L - R): MICHAEL TAY, CELIA YEOH, RICHARD KAN, MICHELLE TAN & CHIA SOON TEEN



THE ASSEMBLY YOUTH GROUP



THE MORNING COFFEE STALL

A COMMON SCENE EACH SUNDAY MORNING AFTER THE MINISTRY MEETING.



MR MERVYN LIM

THE
ASSEMBLY
EVANGELISTIC
COMMITTEE



MR ERIC CHOA



(L - R): M/S CHUA TECK KOON, JOSEPH LIM, RICHARD TING, HO LYE THONG,
WILLIAM KOH & MISS HO MEI LING



MR GODFREY ONG



MRS JULIA CHEW



MR SUM SIEW TAK

5

PUBLIC COMMITMENTS

Acts 13 : 1 – 4

It is always a privilege and pleasure for any assembly to commend a brother or a sister to the Lord as a missionary. The brother or sister so called makes a public commitment to serve the Lord full time in fellowship with the commending assembly. While the missionary is accountable to the Lord for his life and labour, he has to so walk and work to continue to have the prayerful and practical fellowship of the saints in the commending assembly.

In the centennial year there were only three locally commended missionaries/evangelists, namely Dr G D James, Mr Charlie Tan and Miss Cheong Kok Eng. Dr G D James who was commended by our assembly in 1950 is currently residing in Epping, New South Wales, Australia. He and his wife Rose and a daughter Grace are in fellowship with the assembly at Epping Chapel. The founder of Asia Evangelistic Fellowship (previously Malaysia Evangelistic Fellowship), Dr James is an internationally-known evangelist and author of several books like "Arresting Anecdotes", "Exciting Encounters", "Decade of Destiny", "The Sins of the Saints", "Tragedy to Triumph", "Tales worth Telling". He is involved in counselling Australian and Asian students at the MacQuarie University and weekly radio broadcasts in Sydney.

Mr Charlie Tan was commended by our assembly in 1951. He helps in the pastoral work among the saints in the Peranakan assembly at New Bridge Road Chapel and doing evangelistic work among the boys in the welfare homes (Perak House and Wilkie Terrace Children's Home) and in the children's Pleasant Hour at the Pasir Panjang Chapel, where he and his wife are in fellowship.

Miss Cheong Kok Eng, commended in 1964, went to Hong Kong to serve in the Peace Clinic. In 1967 she returned to Singapore to inform the Elders that on account of her deafness she

would not be able to nurse adults at the Clinic or teach in one of the schools run by the Hong Kong assemblies. Despite strong persuasion by the Elders, she decided to withdraw as a missionary from commendation of our assembly. The Elders accepted with deep regret her decision on 10.3.67.

During the past twenty one years we commended seven brethren to the Lord as missionaries/evangelists, one of whom jointly with the new assembly at Bethesda Hall (Bukit Arang), namely Mr Robert Tan, Miss Nellie Yeo, Mr Tommy Cheong, Mr Sonny Ng, Mr S V Ramalingam, Miss Choy Wai Fann and Miss Shirley Wee (now Mrs Holland).

Mr Robert Tan who was then an Elder was commended in June 1965 to take charge of the Emmaus Bible School among other work in the assembly. The June 1965 issue of the Bethesda Newsletter recorded: "With the departure of Mr & Mrs Stott the Emmaus work underwent some major changes. Representatives of the English speaking assemblies in Singapore met recently to discuss the future of the Emmaus School. Mr Robert Tan has been appointed Director of the Emmaus Bible School." Mr Robert Tan stepped down as an Elder in 1976. He directed the Bethesda choir until 1982 when he left to join his wife (who is working in the Singapore High Commission) in London and handed the choir work to Mr Andrew Tan, his son. For the most part of July 1982/June 1985 he was in London, where he and his wife Emily were in fellowship with and involved in the assembly at Rossmore Hall Evangelical Church.

Miss Nellie Yeo, commended in August 1965, served in the youth work of our assembly. On 4.10.70 an announcement was made to the assembly: "It is with deep regret that the Elders have to announce that our sister Miss Nellie Yeo after much prayerful consideration has decided to withdraw as a full-time worker from the assembly. The Elders have met and persuaded her to reconsider the matter further, but she still believes that it is best for her to take this step."

OUR ASSEMBLY COMMENDED WORKERS



A FORUM CHAIRED BY OUR ELDER,
MR LIM TIAN LEONG (4TH FROM THE LEFT),
WAS HELD AT BETHESDA HALL (BRAS BASAH)

DURING OUR EASTER MISSIONARY CONFERENCE ON 17TH APRIL 1981.

(L-R) : M/S TOMMY CHEONG, S.V. RAMALINGAM, DR G.D. JAMES, M/S LIM TIAN LEONG,
ROBERT TAN, SONNY NG AND CHARLIE TAN.



MRS SHIRLEY HOLLAND



MISS CHOY WAI FANN

Mr Tommy Cheong was commended in 1969 and became an Elder in the new assembly at 12 Galistan Avenue. As an Elder he is deeply involved in the pastoral ministry among the saints there. Being a full-time Elder he has been given a lion's share of the oversight work and he spends much time in the visitation and counselling programme.

Because of the second casualty in 1970, the missionary zeal seemed to have died. There were missionary meetings and missionary vision but for more than seven years no one was prepared to move forward in response to God's call.

In 1978 a revival in missionary outreach emerged when Mr Sonny Ng Thiam Soon was jointly commended by our assembly and the assembly at Bethesda Hall (Bukit Arang). He and his wife Juno are in fellowship at the latter assembly. He is involved in the assembly's training, counselling and visitation programmes.

Mr S V Ramalingam was commended in 1980 for evangelistic work. Now an Elder in our assembly, he is actively involved in pastoral ministry among our brethren and engaged in counselling work among Christians. He also helps in the work of the Tamil speaking assemblies in Malaysia.

In April 1982 Miss Choy Wai Fann was commended to a pastoral ministry among the youth and among the ladies attending our meetings. In July 1984 she enrolled as a student with the Singapore Bible College to prepare herself for a teaching ministry among the ladies.

In June 1982 Miss Shirley Wee Siok Liang was commended to a teaching and pastoral ministry among the ladies in the Ladies and Bible Classes. After her marriage in January 1985 she followed her husband, Mr William Holland, back to St Ives where they are in fellowship with the assembly at Barnoon Gospel Room. She

is involved in Gospel outreach to the aged and a group of blind people in and around St Ives.

Therefore while in the centennial year we had only three commended missionaries/evangelists, we now have six more commended missionaries/evangelists from the post centennial period. In a write-up for our Easter Missionary Conference held on 17.4.81, the foreword read thus:

“The morning session of the Conference is to remind us that we as an assembly have commended them to the Lord’s work and that we have a moral obligation to extend prayerful and practical fellowship to them. Besides, it reminds us that instead of calling all of us to serve Him in full-time capacity, the Lord has graciously allowed us to send representatives to His mission field, be it overseas like Australia, or locally in other assemblies or even among us in this assembly.”

“The evening session is to remind us that as an assembly we have to communicate with and care for our missionaries. We praise the Lord for those among you especially the Prayer Voices for corresponding with missionaries commended by overseas assemblies for the Lord’s work in other countries. The missionary has of course the responsibility to continuously report to the assembly of his work for prayerful fellowship.”

“While the missionary is responsible to the Lord Jesus, he is expected to consult the Elders of the commending assembly in the spirit of fellowship before making any move or change of activities. Wherever practical, periodic consultations with the Elders will help to maintain control and continuation of the missionary in the fellowship of the assembly.”

Our Local Missionaries and Evangelistic Funds

We have offerings on the first and third Sunday of each month for the Local Missionaries fund which are distributed

to our commended missionaries/evangelists. The offerings of S\$998.45 for this fund in July 1968 were the highest up to that month! The offerings for the fund for the whole year July 1968/June 1969 amounted to less than S\$12,000. The annual amount for July 1970/June 1971 was S\$14,538. It increased to S\$22,115 for July 1972/June 1973. For 1979/80 the amount was almost two and a half times that for 1972/1973. The growth indices for the past five years are as follows :

<u>Year</u>	<u>Growth index</u>
1979/1980	100
1980/1981	137
1981/1982	176
1982/1983	213
1983/1984	238
1984/1985	245

We also have offerings for the Evangelistic Fund whence we extend practical fellowship to missionaries/evangelists commended by other assemblies, either locally or overseas. From the annual amount of S\$5,221.00 in July 1970/June 1971 the Evangelistic Fund rose 7.5 times in July 1984/June 1985.

Monthly Missionary Prayer Meetings and Prayer Voices

On the first Tuesday evening of each month we have our Monthly Assembly Missionary Prayer Meeting where a visiting missionary will give a report of the Lord's work, or extracts of letters from one or more missionaries are read, or extracts from assembly missionary magazines like Echoes, Missions, Tidings, Treasury, are read at its commencement.

In 1979 Mr Wong Tuck Keong, now an Elder, was led by the Lord to start a group among our brethren to correspond with and pray for the Lord's servants commended from local and

overseas assemblies. Thus began the ministry of Prayer Voices. The prayer warriors included Mrs. Wong Tuck Keong nee Elizabeth Choy, Mr Tay Kim Swee, now an Elder too with his wife Lai To, M/s Steve Chia, David Kwan, Tan Kian Huat and Richard Ting, Misses Irene Chong, Chow Wai Sim, Christina Gwee, Theresa Koo, Patsy Lee, Pauline Lim, Loo Chin Imm, Seng Boon Lee, Juline Soh, Jenny Tan, Tan Puay Hoon, Julia Wang, Wong Siew Chee, Wong Wai Meng and Betty Yuen.

Missionary/evangelistic trips

In the past a choir or a singing group from our assembly had visited a few towns in West Malaysia with a message in song and sermon. From time to time one or more from us had joined a group organised by a para-church organisation on a missionary trip to India, Indonesia, East and West Malaysia, and/or Thailand. The Annual Report of our assembly for the year ended 30.6.80 recorded thus:

“For the first time in our assembly’s history, a group of our young brethren went beyond West Malaysia to see the Lord’s work in action. M/s S V Ramalingam, Ho Lye Thong, William Koh, Sum Siew Tak, Tan Kian Huat and Wong Tuck Keong and Misses Joyce Hong, Theresa Koo and Wong Sau Fong spent about four days in mid-June 1980 at Phuket where Mr & Mrs Arnold Clarke, Mr & Mrs Ray Dadswell and Miss Margaret Pearce serve the Lord. The group had the privilege of preaching the Gospel and ministering the Word to the Thais with the missionaries interpreting the messages. They had a blessed time with the Thai Christians and saw much blessings during their stay at Phuket. The group also spent about four days in two refugee camps near the Thai Kampuchean border on the invitation of Dr Geoffrey Atkinson. We praise the Lord for those blessed by the messages given by the group and for the fellowship enjoyed by the group.”

In June 1982 another group visited Phuket and Chiangmai, in Thailand. M/s S V Ramalingam, William Koh Lok Kiang,



THIS WAS THE FIRST GROUP OF BRETHERN WHO MADE A MISSION TRIP TO PHUKET, THAILAND. (L TO R: JOYCE HONG, THERESA KOO, WONG SAU FONG, TAN KIAN HUAT, SUM SIEW TAK, HO LYE THONG, WONG TUCK KEONG AND S.V. RAMALINGAM) NOT IN THE PICTURE: WILLIAM KOH



PRAAYER VOICES GROUP



OUR 2ND GROUP OF BRETHREN WHO VISITED PHUKET AND CHIENGMAI
IN THAILAND. PHOTO TAKEN AT THE HOME OF MR & MRS ARNOLD
CLARKE.



THE MILITARY SERVICE COMMITTEE

SEATED (L - R): MISSES KOH JOON LEE AND LIM KOON ENG.
STANDING (L - R): M/S ERIC COOKE, EDMUND YONG AND CHOY WAI MUN

Daniel Chew Chee San, Richard Moo Mui Seng, Godfrey Ong Ser Thong, Walter Pang Gek Pang and Tan Chee Hwee and Misses Eng Soo Wah, Pauline Lim Poh Poh and Margaret Teo Kee Eng (now Mrs Chia Boon Hong) had a profitable experience at Phuket and Chiangmai, fellowship with the missionaries and the Thai Christians and privilege of ministering God's Word. The team was grateful to the Lord for His provision and preservation at Chiangmai. The Lord put the team together with Dr Geoffrey Atkinson and others through a time of testing to bring them closer to Himself and to one another. It was an experience that the team would not forget and that proved again the sovereign control and supreme care of the Lord.

Four of the team, M/s S V Ramalingam and William Koh Lok Kiang, and Misses Pauline Lim Poh Poh and Margaret Teo Kee Eng then flew to Rangoon, Burma, while the others returned to Singapore. The Lord opened the way for them during the four days in Rangoon to have an insight of His work there. They enjoyed the fellowship with the Burmese Christians and had the privilege to encourage the saints and share their faith in the Lord Jesus.

During the past three years from July 1982 to June 1985 no one had stepped forth in public commitment to serve the Lord as a missionary/evangelist. However we know that the Lord has been preparing His servants and will thrust them forth to His work in His time. All those who desire to serve Him full-time have to be proved and approved by Him as they move among the assembly of His saints. It is also in their interest to know our brethren and to be known to them if they intend to be commended by our assembly.

6

PRAYERFUL COMMUNION

Matt 18 : 18 – 20

It has been well said that the Assembly Prayer Meeting is the barometer of the spiritual condition of the assembly. Poorly attended prayer meetings are symptoms of a spiritually sick assembly – sick because of the failure to draw strength from the Life giver, the Lord Jesus.

The Assembly Prayer Meeting is the power house of the assembly only if she is of one accord under the Headship of her Lord Jesus. It is a tremendous promise that the Lord gave in Matt. 18 : 19 – a blank cheque book all ready for us to use to pay for anything, if we fulfil His conditions. There is no limit to what we as an assembly can ask as long as we comply with His prerequisites.

With such prospects, why are there so few comparatively at the prayer meetings? Many Christians are under the erroneous impression that only audible prayers count at the prayer meetings. It must be pointed out that participation in corporate prayer meeting is not limited to audible prayers – it is being in the midst of the assembly and in practice praying inaudibly for most of the time. We do not pray for the ears of our fellow saints but for the ears of our Lord Who being omniscient hears all whether audible or not. In fact the Lord abhors the “audible prayers” which are mere excuses to minister, or to announce one’s involvement, to those present at the prayer meetings. He also abhors meaningless verbosity of eloquence in audible prayers. The inaudible infant cry of a saint speaks louder to the Lord than the audible parade of knowledge, whether scriptural or not, in prayers.

In the 1960s our prayer meetings experienced fluctuations ranging from less than ten on a few occasions each year to over a hundred on a few occasions, with the average of about 40 per meeting! This situation continued into the mid-1970s when the average increased to about fifty.

The following are extracts from our Annual Reports for years ended 30 June 1980/1985 :

1980 : "We have always been encouraged by the sixty and more Christians who faithfully assemble together to exercise their holy priesthood before the Lord at the Assembly Prayer Meetings. This has no doubt spelt blessings for the assembly."

1981 : "We bless the Lord for the burden He gives to the more than sixty saints whom He faithfully gathers by His Holy Spirit to intercede for others. These praying saints are the means of spiritual blessings to the assembly."

1982 : "It is now common to see more than eighty saints assembled by the Holy Spirit to exercise their holy priesthood before the Lord at our Assembly Prayer Meetings. We praise the Lord for their priestly service which has proved to be the powerhouse for the assembly in her evangelism and education programme."

1983 : "We have often been refreshed by the more than eighty saints gathered by the Holy Spirit in intercessory prayers. We bless the Lord for their exercise of holy priesthood for the church growth programme."

1984 : "Our dependence upon the Lord is evidenced in the gathering of about a hundred saints at our weekly Assembly Prayer Meetings. Their exercise of holy priesthood has contributed to our church growth. We are greatly indebted to our Lord Jesus for the many answers to our prayer requests."

1985 : "Our Assembly Prayer Meetings continued to attract about a hundred saints gathered in the common bond of prayer warriors. In their holy priestly service, they rejoiced in and requested for the presence, promises, provision and preservation of the Lord in fulfilling His church programme."

There is no doubt that the growth of our assembly resulted from the Lord's people who dared to claim His promise in Matt. 18:19 by being in our Assembly Prayer Meetings and praying audibly or inaudibly. These brethren did not only talk about the importance of prayer but they showed the importance of prayer by their personal presence at our prayer meetings. They believed that if they did not speak to the Lord for saints and sinners, they had no right to speak to saints and sinners for the Lord. There are those who claim that they do pray individually or in small groups, but there is nothing like praying together in fellowship with our brethren in the Lord's House of Prayer.

We have witnessed the glory of the Lord in our Prayer Meetings – the great things that He has done in our midst because we asked whether audibly or inaudibly. The Lord healed many of our sick brethren of their serious illnesses. He restored to good health those who underwent delicate operations because of accidents or diseases. Of course it was His will whether to cure or not, but it certainly thrilled us to see the evidence of His answer to our prayer requests.

Despite the mistakes made by the developers in the construction of the neighbouring hotel/shopping complex which affected the structure of our ninety years old building, the Lord preserved it for our use till He provides another hall. Our Annual Report for the year ended 30.6.82 reported that "like David, we are satisfied with the goodness of the house of the Lord despite the measures that have to be taken to preserve the physical structure of the premises." In the following year it was reported that "In His sovereign control, supreme care and superb concern for us, He has ensured that Bethesda Hall has remained physically fit for our use as His place of worship, witness and work." Because as an assembly we prayed, the Lord preserved the hall.

The Lord gave us the land at Ang Mo Kio Avenue 4 not because of complaints and murmurings by some but in answer to the persistent prayers of those at our Assembly Prayer Meetings. The Lord moved the Elders of the various assemblies to appeal to the relevant authority and the rest is history.

Many churches and assemblies have made collections for their Building Funds with donations from non-Christians through appeal letters, fun fairs, concerts, fund-raising schemes. We thank the Lord that for all our building projects in the past two decades like Bukit Panjang Chapel (re-construction), Bethesda Hall (Bukit Arang), and our current erection of Bethesda Hall (Ang Mo Kio) we have only to look to the Lord and He has not failed us. In response to the fervent prayers of His saints at the Assembly Prayer Meetings, He has exercised the hearts of His people to give generously to erection of His House at Ang Mo Kio.

We have prayed as an assembly for the Lord's servants in the mission field spread across the planet Earth, in countries hostile to the Gospel, or plagued by famine, or overrun by tribal wars or indifferent or disinterested to the Gospel. How we rejoiced to hear of reports from these missionaries regarding the Lord's shelter, sufficiency and strength for His servants and salvation, security and satisfaction for the sinners.

It is true that Bethesda Hall (Bras Basah) was never shaken after we prayed, but it is wonderful to know that the Lord has shaken with consequential evidences. However, our Assembly Prayer Meetings become more meaningful when we focus wholly on our Lord Jesus than on mere answers. W. E. Sangster has well said : "No truly advanced soul prays just because of the consequences of praying. The more mature we become the more we pray just to have fellowship with God and for God to use this fellowship how He chooses."

7

PROJECT: CHRISTLIKENESS

Phil. 1 : 18 Col. 1 : 28

The Great Commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ is not limited to preaching the Gospel to large or small congregations or sharing it with some one. It involves disciple-making. According to Col. 1 : 28 we are to "proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom that we may present every man complete in Christ." We are also to remember the words of our Lord in Matt. 23 : 15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte: and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves." The new converts are to become Christlike.

Our Gospel Service is chiefly for evangelism. Our Song Service which started with the same purpose has for the past decade been mainly for the edification of the saints. Our Sunday School, our Assembly Youth Group and our Ladies Group have the responsibility to be involved not only in evangelism but also in disciple-making. Our Assembly Evangelistic Group, our Choir and all the other singing groups provide the support services for our Gospel and Song Services and other evangelistic meetings in our hall or other public halls.

About fifty per cent of our brethren had their new birth by attending our church programmes, viz Gospel Service, Song Service, Sunday School, Assembly Youth Group, Ladies Group, Assembly Youth Camps, Assembly Family Camps and special Gospel Rallies/Meetings. The ministry of God's Word and Bible studies provided at our various church programmes, the pastoral ministry and personal involvement in the Lord's work have helped in our spiritual growth.

Every one of our brethren contributes to the growth of our assembly whether positively or negatively. About forty per cent of our brethren were adopted into the family of God through the personal testimony of one or more of our brethren or those

who had been attending the meetings of our assembly. Personal testimony is the most powerful single factor in leading others to Jesus Christ for salvation.

The rest were saved and then introduced into our assembly's activities by one or more of our brethren.

GOSPEL SERVICE

The Lord has been pleased to use our Gospel Service to convict precious souls of the need of the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour. The weekly average attendance grew from about 150 in the 1960s to about 200 in the early 1970s. Gospel Meetings which concluded with baptism services in those years attracted as many as 300.

Our Annual Report for the year ended 30.6.81 recorded: "During the past four years the attendances at our Gospel Meetings have gradually dwindled and it is occasionally that we have crowds more than 150 (when there was a baptism service.) The attendances during the past four years have generally been between 60 and 100 although at times between 100 and 150. Many reasons have been advanced for the drop in attendances but the lack of interest in the Gospel among the assembly members and of faith in the dynamic power of the Gospel are two basic causes. If Christians are not interested in the Gospel which has saved them, they cannot expect others to be. If Christians do not expect to see salvation of precious souls at the Gospel Meetings, they will not see it."

The same scenario has been more or less prevailing during the past four years to 30.6.85. During the past twenty one years the following have taken a series of four or five meetings at our Gospel Service : Dr G D James, M/s Tommy Cheong, S V Ramalingam, Seet Poon Soo, Tan Jing Hee, Tan Kok Beng, Neivelle Tan, Robert Tan, Stanley Wong, Yem Ah Chew and Yeo Oon Boo.

Sunday School

A primary function of the Sunday School is to evangelise through systematic Bible teaching the children and young people attending our Sunday School. An equally important responsibility is to use God's Word to make disciples of those who have been saved.

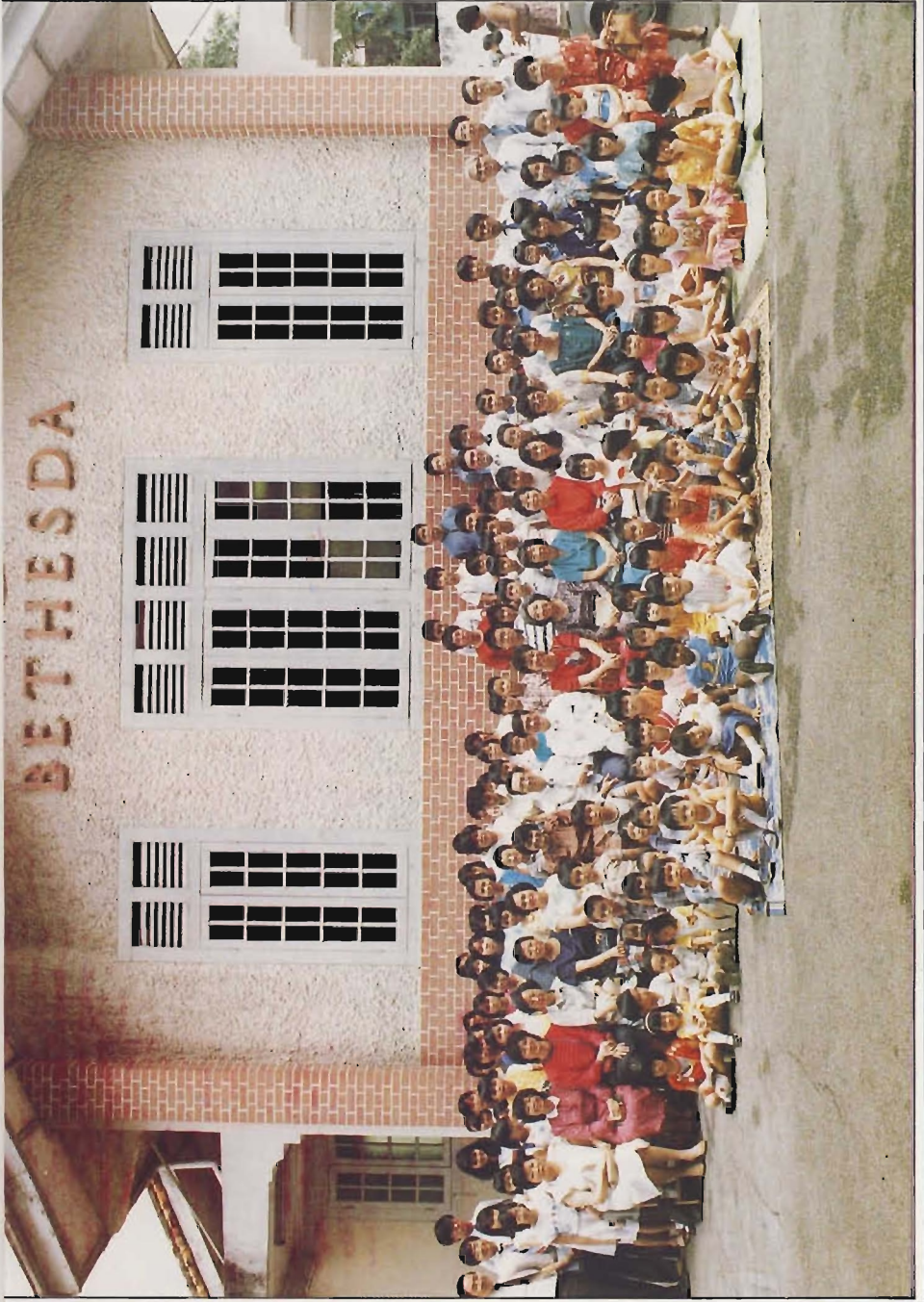
The weekly average attendances reached record heights in the early 1970s with 400 plus to even 500 plus on some Sundays. However, the attendances slid in the mid-1970s to about 230 in 1979. Then the attendances improved gradually year by year to 277 in 1984.

We bless the Lord for the number of Sunday School Scholars that have been saved over the past two decades and for those who are now Elders, Deacons, full-time workers, Sunday School teachers, Committee members in the youth, evangelistic and ladies groups and the other activity groups. We thank the Lord for the many faithful brethren who have taught in the Sunday School for one or more decades.

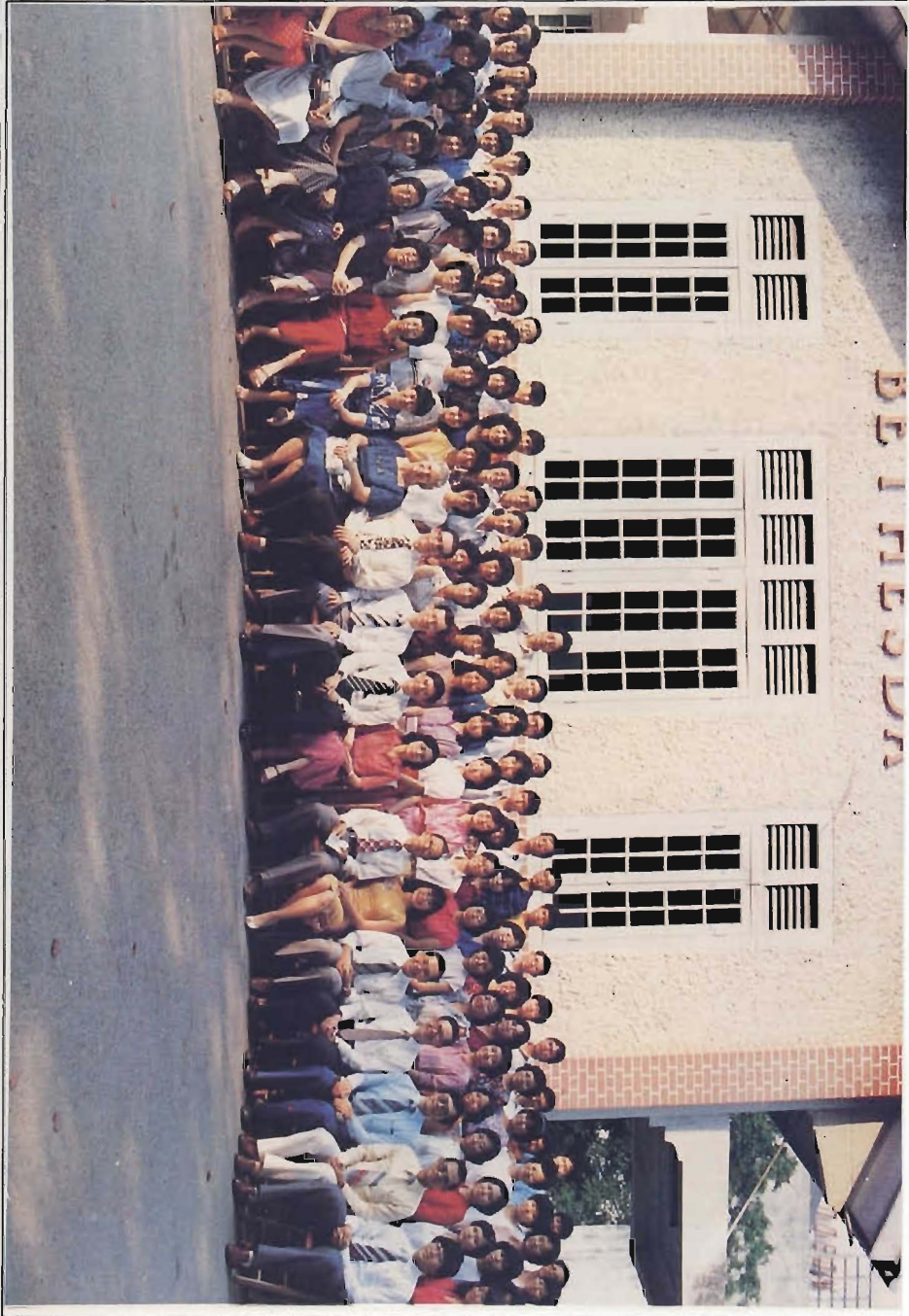
In an article on the short history of the Sunday School at Bras Basah Road in the April/May 1985 issue of Bethesda Newsletter, Mr Gaw Synn Ghee and Miss Tay Siew Lian paid tribute to our brother Dr James Hanam, viz:

“By 1979 Dr James Hanam's superintendentship came to a close. He had served his Lord faithfully and true from 1944 to 1979 except for a broken period – 1955 to 1958 – when he went to U.K. to read a post-graduate course.

“A total of 31 years of selfless devoted service to the Lord Whom he loves and is now still serving. A record of service which is second to none in the history of Bethesda Sunday School. Those of us who are close to him know only a little of the toil, sweat, blood and tears he went through in his Master's service.



JUNIOR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND SCHOLARS (PICTURE TAKEN IN 1985)



SENIOR SUNDAY SCHOOL AND BIBLE CLASSES
TEACHERS AND SCHOLARS (PICTURE TAKEN IN 1983)

Happily, he did not quite go through all alone. Pauline Hanam, a godly lady and a Sunday School teacher, came into his life. And for the remaining 18 years she shared his burdens." Truly we thank the Lord for the faithful service of Dr & Mrs James Hanam.

Mr Khoo Oon Soo, now an Elder, took over from Dr James Hanam in 1980.

Assembly Youth Group

The Assembly Youth Group has the similar primary objectives as the Sunday School except that it has its activities on Saturdays and through more varied avenues like group Bible studies, special Gospel meetings, recreation and informal discussions.

The Youth work restarted in the early 1960s with less than thirty young people gradually grew to weekly average attendances of about a hundred by late 1960s. Our Annual Report for the year ended 30.6.74 stated : "The Assembly Youth Meetings continued to have about 100 weekly at the Senior, Intermediate and Primary sessions. Again the weekly averages varied from time to time with a large turnover."

The weekly attendances remained more or less the same for the past decade with occasional attendances of more than a hundred for the Senior and Junior Departments and the Children's Corner. Over the years the average age of those in the Youth Group has become younger because more and more helpers in the Youth Group are retiring with less than five years' service.

Unlike the Superintendents of the Sunday School, most of the Chairmen of the Assembly Youth Committee served less than five years in that capacity, while most of the Committee members served less than ten years. A few of the past Chairmen are now Elders in Bethesda (Serangoon), Bethesda (Bukit Arang),

Yio Chu Kang assembly and our own assembly. A number of those saved at our Youth Group are now Elders, Deacons, Sunday School teachers and serving in our various church programmes.

Ladies Group

After many years of prayer the 1980 Assembly Family Camp gave birth to the Ladies' Group when the Lord mobilised five sisters to commence a ministry among the sisters and ladies attending our assembly programmes. The main thrust of their ministry was pastoral work although the Ladies' Committee organised monthly Ladies' Meetings.

Except for the series of special meetings (eg on "Christian Parenting", "Family", "Sign Language"), the attendance was generally not more than twenty.

In view of the increasing number of our brethren getting married, a sub-Committee was formed in 1984 to provide some assistance to the bridal couples in connection with the wedding services and reception. Other sisters in the assembly though not in the sub-Committee had also been rendering help to bridal couples.

Support Services

The Assembly Evangelistic Group, the Choir, the other singing groups, and the Cassette Library provided the support services at our Gospel and Song Services and special evangelistic meetings. There were several departments in the Evangelistic Group namely counselling, ushering, tract distribution, follow-up, social outreach, and drama.

The ushering, tract distribution and counselling departments were involved in the weekly Gospel Services. The social outreach work was to provide tuition for and/or have recreation



AT THE CLOSE OF THE BREAKING OF BREAD WORSHIP IS THE MINISTRY OF GOD'S WORD.



OUR ASSEMBLY PRAYER MEETING
HELD AT 8.00 PM ON EVERY TUESDAY WITHOUT FAIL

with the boys at the Perak House, a welfare home, with the view of evangelism. The follow-up department was responsible for nurturing the new converts in the Lord and channelling them into our assembly programmes.

The Choir had always been in attendance at the Easter Song Service, Christmas Day Service and Christmas Song Service. The Choir also sang at the broadcast service when one of our brethren would be the speaker. Occasionally the Choir rendered an item or two at the Gospel Service. The other singing groups and individuals gave items at the Gospel Service too.

MINISTRY OF GOD'S WORD

At the close of the Breaking of Bread Worship is the ministry of God's Word. We bless the Lord for His edification and enrichment of His saints through His messengers. We thank Him for the many who love God's Word and listen attentively to His Word as expounded by His servants. During the past twenty one years the following have taken a series of four or five ministry meetings : Drs Benjamin Chew, Lawrence Chan, James Hanam, G D James, Bobby Sng, Peter Wee and Wong Wai Chow, M/s Tommy Cheong, Khoo Oon Soo, Lauw Kim Guan, Lim Tian Leong, Charles Lingam, W A Peterson and Tan Kok Beng. Visiting speakers included Dr M Griffiths, M/s A Catchpoole, Stan Ford, A C Jacob, W McVey, W Paterson, A E Philips, Justus Samuel, W Wilson.

During the past ten years we have been much encouraged by the ministry of the younger brothers at the close of the Assembly Prayer Meetings. We are sure that the Lord is preparing them for greater ministry.

We are indebted to the Lord for having been pleased to make use of our various programmes to lead men and women, boys and girls to the Lord Jesus for salvation, as evident in about half of us having been born again because of these programmes. Of course, it was the Holy Spirit Who transformed our lives. Only He will make us Christlike.

8

PREMISES CRISIS

Psalm 46 : 5

Since 1950s we had been looking for a piece of land to build a new Bethesda Hall. In 1966 Miss Nancy Wee gave us 12 Galistan Avenue which became the home of the Bukit Panjang assembly. In 1969 Md Oh Choon Sioh contributed the major portion of the purchase price for 15A Jalan Rama Rama which the Jalan Rama Rama assembly is using. In 1975 we built Bethesda Hall (Bukit Arang), but the Bukit Arang assembly is making use of it.

It was therefore ironical that though the Lord had in His wonderful way given us three properties we should be in a premises crisis in 1980s. We were without a home as Bethesda Hall (Bras Basah) was on a lease which would expire by the end of the decade.

On 22.1.80 Mr Lim Tian Leong as Hon. Secretary of the assembly wrote to the assembly on the Bethesda Building Project as follows:

“The Lord crowned 1979 with His bountiful blessings for our assembly. Many were encouraged and enriched at our first Assembly Family Camp and by the ministry of God’s Word at the close of the Breaking of Bread Worship every Sunday. Many others were saved through our various evangelistic outreach viz. the three day Gospel Rally in June, the Gospel Services, the Sunday School and Assembly Youth Meetings. A record number of seventy six believers obeyed the Lord through the waters of baptism and were received into our fellowship. A good number gathered together for the weekly Assembly Prayer meetings. The decade has definitely ended on a rejoicing note. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!”

“With such an influx of saints during the past few years, the Lord has graciously more than compensated us for the exodus

of more than a hundred to start the assembly at Bethesda Hall (Bukit Arang) in 1977. It is therefore not surprising that some of you have experienced difficulty in getting a seat inside the hall for the Breaking of Bread Worship/Ministry."

"Although plans are being made to cater for the overflowing crowd for the Worship Service, these measures can at best be only temporary. We need to have another site to provide for a permanent accommodation for our growing assembly. For this purpose, a Development Committee was appointed in November 1978 to look for suitable properties in or around Districts 9, 10 and 11 with a minimum area of 20,000 sq ft for the development of another church building. It has been estimated that the whole project will cost about \$1.5 million for the land and the construction."

"As our Building Fund currently stands at about \$90,000, the Development Committee finds it difficult to make any offer for suitable sites especially when the property market is enjoying a boom. However, as the assembly has approved the purchase of a property in June 1979, the Committee has seen several properties, some of which were unsuitable while others were too costly."

"God willing, 1980 will see another Assembly Family Camp in June and a five day Gospel Rally at the Singapore Conference Hall in July with Dr G D James as the evangelist again. We are confident that the Lord will continue to pour His blessings upon us if we are prepared to bring the "whole tithes into the treasure house". Can we count on you to participate in the Lord's blessings."

Within eighteen months of the above letter, Bethesda Hall (Bras Basah) was acquired by the Urban Redevelopment Authority on 10.6.81. The Lord knew it and prepared us to meet the crisis.

On 3.1.82 the Hon. Secretary of the assembly wrote to the assembly again on the Bethesda Building Project thus:

"It is almost two years since I wrote to you on 22.1.80 on the above project."

"During the past two years our LORD has continued to make HIS PRESENCE felt among us. Many were exhorted and edified at our two Assembly Family Camps in 1980 and 1981, our Assembly Youth Camp in 1981 and by the ministry of God's Word at the special meetings of Mr W A Peterson, Easter Conferences and at the close of our Breaking of Bread Worship each Sunday. Our LORD added another eighty nine to our assembly after their public testimony to HIM. The activities of the Assembly Evangelistic Group, the Assembly Youth Group, the Sunday School and the Regional Fellowship groups all saw bountiful blessings. We are sure that our LORD has also blessed you individually in His way."

"However, we are still looking for a piece of land for the development of another church building. This has become more urgent as our present premises have been acquired by the Urban Redevelopment Authority. In my previous letter, I indicated a sum of about \$1.5 million for the land and the construction, although in subsequent announcements to the assembly we have revised the sum to \$3.0 million as a more realistic amount for the project since property prices skyrocketed in 1980."

"The Building Fund rose by about five and a half times from 1.1.80 to 31.12.81. This averaged about \$16,000 per month. Our monthly total collections including those for Local Missionaries Fund, Evangelistic Fund, General Fund and earmarked gifts amount to about \$35,000, which is reasonable in view of the limited earning capacity of our young assembly. However, this rather small sum makes it difficult for us to make any offer for

any suitable site although the property market has more or less stabilized during the past few months after an initial fall from the peak in 1981. But the construction industry remains overheated on account of the number of prestigious urban redevelopment projects resulting in acute shortage of construction labour and materials and consequent high construction costs."

The letter then dealt with the offer by the Housing & Development Board of a piece of land of about 2,000 square metres at Tai Gin/Ah Hood Road (in Balestier area). As the Elders did not have clear indication of the LORD's will on the offer, the assembly was urged to ask the LORD to show them HIS will. Though unclear, we tendered for the land and we were not disappointed that our tender was not successful.

Our Annual Report for the year ended 30.6.82 commented on our premises crises thus : "We have prayed and done much to purchase another site for the development of a new hall, but in vain. This may indicate that the Lord has another plan for us. In the meanwhile, we should be prepared – with all things ready – to move forward the moment He directs us. We have been encouraged by the sacrificial giving of several of you and we thank the Lord for you."

Within weeks of the above Report, we received news that we might be given a piece of land for joint development with the Hokkien speaking assembly. It was almost incredible! But we have a God Who specialises in the impossible!

The search for the land for the time being was over, but a new chapter on our Lord's wonderful works on our behalf would commence.

9

POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Rev. 1 : 12-16; Acts 2 : 37-42; Eph. 4 : 4-16

In the Centennial brochure "The Story of One Hundred Years of the Lord's Blessing", Mr M H Finlay, then an Elder in our assembly and compiler, evaluated the principles on which the pioneers of our assembly in the light of a hundred years of experiences and concluded that the Lord "still uses the foolish things of the world to fulfill His all-wise purpose".

Another twenty one years have gone by and we still have evidence that the Lord has honoured His New Testament principles as the foundations for His local church. What are then the positive characteristics of our assembly as embedded in "the framework of the First Annual Report" which are the essence of the New Testament principles, viz :

1. We believe that a local church comprises saints who have personally committed their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ and by their consistent life confirmed that they have the life of Jesus Christ.
2. We believe that only those who have the new birth can be baptised, as baptism is an act of obedience to the Lord, an outward confession of inward faith and a picture of the saint's identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (to new life).
3. We believe that simplicity is the keynote of New Testament Church and we consider it our responsibility and privilege to assemble together on the first day of the week after the manner of the earliest churches planted by the apostles, viz. for the Breaking of Bread Worship/Ministry.
4. We believe in the unity of all believers. All true Christians are welcomed since personal relationship with the Lord Jesus is the only pre-requisite for fellowship with us.

5. We believe in the priesthood of every believer. This means that every saint can pray whether audibly or inaudibly because of the right of access into the presence of our Heavenly Father through our Lord Jesus Christ without any humanly appointed mediator, clergy or priest.

6. We believe in and recognise spiritual gifts from the Lord, the appointment of Elders by the Holy Spirit and the pastoral ministry of Elders. We observe a clear distinction between the priesthood of every believer and the spiritual gifts entrusted to the local church for the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ.

7. We believe in the corporate responsibility of the assembly and in the individual responsibility of each saint in the Gospel testimony to those around them. We also believe in practical fellowship with the Lord's servants labouring in the Gospel throughout the world.

8. We believe in the all-sufficiency of God's Word. Our Annual Report for the year ended 30.6.81 stated that "In these days of experiential spirit (the legacy of existentialism, humanism and paganism), the only remedy for this widespread disease is our absolute and complete subjection to the authority of God's Word."

9. We believe that those who have been called into missionary/evangelistic work should depend on the Lord for their daily needs, direction and development of His work, since they are not the servants of men but of the Lord. The missionaries/evangelists work side by side with other self-supporting Christians labouring "together for the faith of the Gospel".

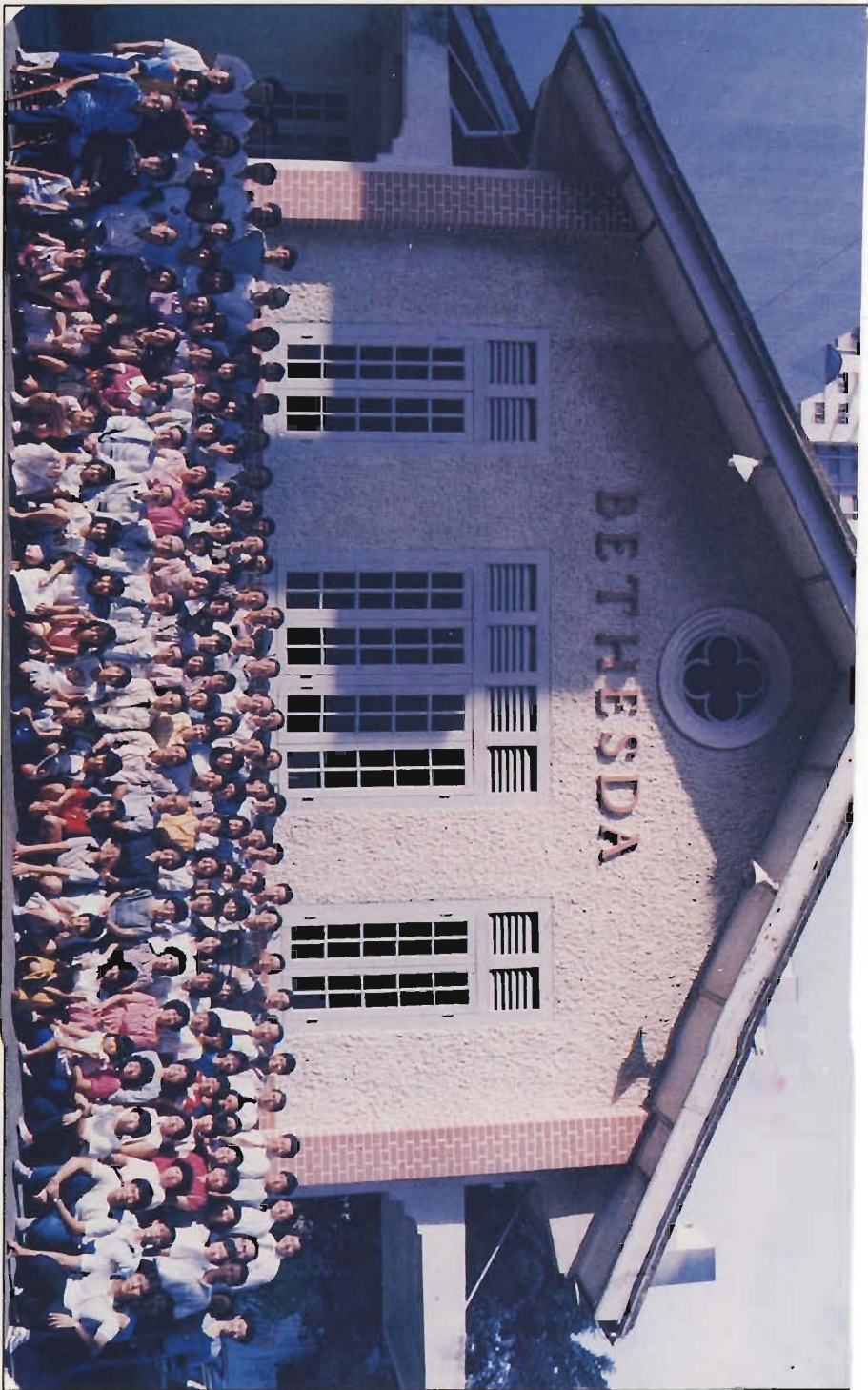
10. We believe that the Lord will supply all the financial

needs for His work through His people. The Lord has entrusted His funds to His people so that they can discharge their responsibility as stewards for the furtherance of the Gospel. The giving by our assembly to the Lord has risen by 3.4 times from July 1970/June 1971 to 1979/1980, and again by about 3 times from 1979/1980 to 1984/1985. We thank the Lord for having enabled our assembly to exercise their stewardship to the eternal glory of our Lord.

11. We believe that the ultimate purpose of the assembly was to occupy with the Lord's work faithfully while looking forward to the imminent return of our Lord Jesus. This is the greatest incentive for all of us to press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus and this is also our blessed hope on which we rest.

In addition we believe that each assembly should be autonomous and directly responsible and accountable to the Lord Jesus as Head of every assembly. However, all assemblies should maintain close fellowship with one another.

Our history of one hundred and twenty one years has proved the validity of the New Testament principles for the foundation and growth of the assembly and for the Gospel testimony. The Holy Spirit Who has prescribed these principles for us to follow has graciously ensured that despite our failures and frailties His work of evangelism and edification goes on to the salvation of sinners and sustenance of saints. The Holy Spirit has not only established us in His Word but also equipped us for His work. By His grace, guidance, guardianship and gumption, the Holy Spirit has seen us through another twenty one years.



OUR LAST ASSEMBLY ANNUAL MEETING AT BETHESDA HALL (BRAS BASAH) WAS HELD ON 17TH AUGUST 1985.
OUR HISTORY OF ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY ONE YEARS HAS PROVED THE VALIDITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES
FOR THE FOUNDATION AND GROWTH OF THE ASSEMBLY AND FOR THE GOSPEL TESTIMONY.

10

PRIZED CHALLENGE

I Thessalonians 2 : 19-20

Ang Mo Kio, here we come! Yes, we are all set for you. For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even you before our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy IF WE TRULY BECOME GOD'S CHANNELS OF BLESSINGS TO YOU.

We have discussed and decided on the many programmes we propose to implement to reach out to the thousands of people in Ang Mo Kio housing estate – kindergarten, tuition classes, school fellowship meetings, evangelistic Bible Study, Daily Vacation Bible School, evangelistic regional fellowship groups, tract distribution. It is time to get down to do the work. Are you with us? Do you want a crown of rejoicing?

The ministry of life can only be channelled through redeemed human agencies. The Lord has saved us for this purpose – to be channels of blessings to others through the ministry of life. Our Lord regards every member of His Body as important and expects all members to help one another to grow and mature in Him. Every one is expected to make a contribution to the total work of the Lord in the assembly. Only those who have life can minister life to others. Only Christians can preach, pastor and pray.

We need dependable, devoted and dependent people for 'Operation – Ang Mo Kio'. Dependable people can be counted on to do the work even when no person is around or when others have given up. They keep on doing because they are alive to the omniscient presence of the Lord. They stick to their job because they know that their labour in the Lord is not in vain. They do it for the glory of the Lord, not for self.

The devoted saints love their Lord and are willing to serve Him even unto death. Their loyalty to the Lord Jesus cannot be questioned. They will not change sides even when the odds are against them. They stick to the Lord in appreciation of what He has done for them. They are on His side in whatever circumstances.

The dependent people know that only through Jesus Christ can they do anything. They are completely dependent upon the Lord for everything. They fully trust in Him for He alone is worthy of their trust. They commit all things to Him Who is able and willing to be alongside them in every situation. He is their sufficiency, supply and satisfaction.

Ang Mo Kio poses a challenge to us to evangelise. How are we to attract them? The Gospel of Christ is still the power of God to salvation to every one who believes. But how can they believe if they have not heard it? They will not hear what we say about Christ until they have seen what Christ has done in our lives. We will not be able to influence them with our lips regarding the claims of Christ unless we are able to impress them with lives manifesting love, faith and hope, the characteristics of the dependable, devoted and dependent Christians.

Looking ahead . . . while we plan and work for church growth in Ang Mo Kio, let us also be prepared and willing to be with Christ when He comes to take us back to His eternal abode.

ANG MO KIO, HERE WE COME! YES, WE ARE ALL SET FOR YOU.



**FRONT
VIEW OF
THE
BUILDING**



OUR NEW HALL AT NO. 601 ANG MO KIO AVENUE 4, SINGAPORE 2056, IS SEEN HERE AT ITS LAST STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT. WE NEED DEPENDABLE, DEVOTED AND DEPENDENT PEOPLE FOR 'OPERATION - ANG MO KIO'.



**BACK
VIEW OF
THE
BUILDING**

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77 Bras Basah Road, Singapore 0718