

# PP Annual Church Camp 2009 Reflections



## By elder Adrian Teo

For me, our 16th annual camp is memorable for the following:

- brand new resort facilities
- below budget deal for delicious durians, mangosteens, dukus & rambutans
- arguably best food ever – can't beat the variety!
- first public praise for the resort's chefs leaving behind a good impression of PPCOC
- tearful sharing of God's grace by Glen Gray
- largest turnout for 6am, 4 nation devotion, "prayer walk" – truly impressive to our visitors
- tearful "prayer circle" for our foreign preachers after their missions sharings
- children's "art & craft gallery" which brought lots of "wows" from many
- the "2 better than 1" work relationship between camp directors Chern Woon and Mia Cher
- the youngest camper Aaron and the oldest camper Richard
- Peter Lim who sets a new benchmark for us in the role of master-of-ceremony
- commissioning prayers for the various work /professional groupings
- except for one or two, campers have learnt to be patient and forbearing of logistical hiccups
- insightful camp devotions by Winston & Victor that help set the tone for the messages by Glen
- personal sharings at room devotions and group discussions
- the game & bonding session led by our talented youths – thoroughly enjoyed their two song presentations
- God's mercy and grace despite the H1N1 threat and other encounters
- pre-camp SIBI class on the Holy Spirit.

## By sister Dorothy Tay



If you were at the "thistle" in Port Dickson, you will know what I mean. At the "thistle" we had great food, great fun and great fellowship!

Food, glorious food: both spiritual and physical! Spiritual food came from Glen Gray, Dean of Apollos Institute, who gave 4 messages on Bringing God's Word to the Market Place. In lesson 1 he led us to the awareness of the "world view thinking", looking at Paul preaching in the marketplace (Acts 17:16-35), confronting a city full of idols, men praying to all kinds of gods, even to an unknown god. Similarly, we need to be prepared for the plurality of the mentality at the marketplace.

In lesson 2, Glen spoke of the Amazing Grace of God: given to all men freely and without favour, through His son Jesus Christ. (2 Cor 8:9, Rom 6:14, 5:15, Eph 2:8) All the world has fallen short of God's glory and needs the grace of God to redeem us from our sins. The story of the Prairie school boy who bent over the small boy to take the stripes of the cane epitomized the death of Christ on the cross, bearing all our sins! In the market place, we are to share this Amazing Grace of God.

Next, Glen reminded us to be the "salt of the earth," with the power of influence (Matt 5:13). Bible characters in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11, Barnabas (Acts 11), Timothy (1Tim 4:12) and elders (1Pet 5:3) are models of influence. God calls us "salt" because He challenges us to be in direct contact with things that need salting. Salt has properties of seasoning, healing, purifying and preserving. As salt, we need to get out of the comfort of the saltshaker to be the "salty ambassadors" in the marketplace, to make a difference in the world.

The final message spurred us to be the "metal in the marketplace" – to have the courage and commitment to be out there as disciples of Christ (Lk 14:25-34). Jesus demands our unrivalled love, unceasing cross-bearing and unqualified renunciation if we want to be His disciple. Jesus then commissioned His disciples to "Go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching everything I have commanded you." (Matt 28:19-20) The finest response is made when the hardest challenge is presented!

Other spiritual food came from the Prayer Walk led by

elder Adrian, Devotions led by elder Winston and brother Victor, the hymns led by deacon Paul and brother Jason, and the room devotions led by various brothers. The sharing by our foreign participants from the Philippines, Myanmar and India were testimonies of God's people at work all over the world. Their zeal and fervent commitment to the Lord's work is truly amazing. In particular, Samuel's work with the 47 orphan children in Myanmar and Philemon's leading the visually impaired congregation in India was heartfelt. There is much we can appreciate from their sharing.



The physical food was abundant and appetizing: a total of 9 main meals (breakfast, lunch & dinner) and 9 different spreads from the chefs that catered to everyone's fancy. Even the lady holding the door each time we entered the dining hall was delightful and charming!



We had fun in the sun! The children truly enjoyed the swimming pool and the adults the gymnasium and spa! With all the feasting there was a consciousness to go the gym. Others strolled in the resort lawns. In the evenings the lounge music provided good entertainment as we chit-chatted over coffee and ice-cream!

Our fellowships came in the form of discussions, deliberations and devotions. In our discussions in small groups we deliberated on the Intentionality MAP (IMAP) to identify where people are spiritually, ranging from the Apathetic to the Excelling, and how we can be intentional in everything we do to help someone to move one step at a time towards the final excelling relationship with Christ.

The room devotions also brought about closer fellowship among group members and with God as we deliberated on the year's theme: "two are better than one" in the light of God's character and in our work for the Lord in the marketplace. Can we then be the salt

of the earth? Can our Lord Jesus count on us? The song: "My God and I go in the field together. We walk and talk as good friends should and do..." rings a bell when I ponder on "two are better than one" theme!

And then a "cord of three strands is not quickly broken..." Our fellow workers worked tirelessly to put this camp together. We applaud the quiet, serious, conscientious and yet unassuming couple, Chern Woon and Mia Cher for their meticulous diligence and efficiency in the whole planning of the camp. Nothing could get pass them!



Then there was elder Winston with his discernment and foresight in putting together the camp programme, integrating the key messages, devotions, activities, right up to the commissioning exercise. Working by his side was loving mate, sister Hong Ngee.

We couldn't ask for a better captain to steer the "thistle" ship, than brother Peter Lim. As the Master of Ceremony he kept us alert with his "Peter says" episodes. Also, as bus captain of our Brown Bus (mix of yellow and black passengers), he was our "cheer leader" in the songs we sang on both trips, with spontaneous participation from the passengers. The Filipinos were as good as the Vienna Boys Choir! Even brother Henry entertained us with his store of jokes! There was great fellowship throughout!

Our theme song, "God's Family" says it all; our togetherness in all that we are, in all that we feel and in all that we do in the name of God! We thank the song leaders, Paul Lim and Jason Ng for leading us in praising God through the hymns.

We also salute all who led the children's programme, under sister Hedy's direction, the youth programme under Tom Goracke, Dean of Students, SIBI and the Hearing Impaired under brother Patrick Ong. And to our medics sisters Lynda and Soo Lang, who were kept busy right to the last moment, you were indispensable in your service! Thank you all!

And now I must present Glen's most apt illustration of fellowship! He spoke about his ROMEO club (Retired Old Men Eating Out) that got together to study and fellowship. Then in the retirees group discussion, the group, led by Siow Hwee (pre-retiree) described their ROMEOs to be financially sound, dining out with the

rich and trendy, with the means to travel around the world, being philanthropists in reaching out to the needy, etc., and yet having a heart for the Lord! Naturally we did not want to be the "Retired Old Women..." I couldn't help but stand to defend the JULIETs as "Just Us Ladies Interacting & Eating Together!" (coined by Rosalind and Wai Chin) How about that? Well, JULIETs, I'm counting on you to join me in interacting and eating at the market place!



The "Commissioning" exercise concluded the camp. It was truly a mountain-top experience as our elders made prayers of intercession for us to the Lord. We gathered in our respective industry groups (managers, administrators, trade & business, sales, medical, health care, judiciary, education, community, pastoral, homemakers, and retirees) and each elder took turn to pray for the needs and concerns of each group respectively. When the education group with hands linked took centre stage, brother Henry prayed for us. In his prayer he prayed that whilst we took charge in the educating and nurturing of the child, we should not be accepting to the general norms of inclusiveness but to stand firm in our faith of professing the Lord's word in all that we do.



Likewise, it was the commissioning prayer for all that whilst in the company of the world, we keep our identity as God's people, we keep our integrity to have God's Character and we keep our intentionality to share God's word. Be you a connector, a maven or the salesman, we each have a part to play in the Market Place!

**Ed's Note:** Check out sister Dorothy's camp reflections for last year's camp at our website - [www.ppcoc.org](http://www.ppcoc.org) > family life > church camp.



## My Camp Perspective – As a Young Parent with a baby by Kelvin Koo

This has been the most "different" camp for me, as I am approaching it from a very different perspective.

For years, I felt it was a crying shame that many young parents with babies seem to stop going for camps.

I thought the church could do more to make the camps more "infant-friendly" for young parents.

True enough, in the days/weeks running up to the camp, doubts began to creep into my mind when the reality of bringing Aaron to camp began to dawn on me.

- 1) Packing – there is so much to pack! Gallons of water for Aaron, steriliser, portable crib, stroller...and the list goes on.
- 2) Cost – It was going to cost me extra to bring my domestic helper along to help take care of Aaron.
- 3) Health/Safety concerns – well meaning people made comments like "Be careful, Aaron is not fully immunised yet".
- 4) Schedule Disruptions – Aaron was on a sleep/feed schedule that could be severely disrupted at the camp!
- 5) Pointlessness – What is the point of the hassle when we could most likely miss most of the activities. Pay so much and cannot enjoy? Furthermore, will we be made to feel guilty for skipping lessons when Aaron needs our attention?

These and many more doubts started to creep into my mind, but I put up a brave front as I did not want to worry Hwee Yee unnecessarily.

I also began to understand why young parents possibly stayed away from camp.

However, I felt that should not be the case and was determined that as a family, we should be part of the bigger Church family where possible.

As I was moved by the Holy Spirit during my sermon to commit to go for the camp, I was confident that God was in charge.

I gave it up to God and you know what? It was not as trying as I had expected!

It fact, it brought us great joy to have been part of the camp experience with Aaron.

It was also a welcome break for Hwee Yee after being cooped up at home for most parts of the 8 weeks since Aaron was born.

Yes, we did not get "as much" out of the camp since we missed some lessons and discussions and the afternoon games, but I think there is something intangible and priceless about having Aaron around with the Church family at a camp like this. I believe the fellowship is good not just for Aaron but also for Hwee Yee and myself. It is also about setting an example for Aaron that God and his family is of great importance.

I also knew that once we started skipping one camp, before you know it, you would have skipped 3-4 and the inertia becomes too great to overcome.

The camp was great. The lessons were good and I loved the room discussions concept as per last year. It was a blessing to hear the heartfelt sharing each night and I was especially encouraged by Iris's sharing and the example she sets for her kids and family.

The room devotions were the highlight of the camp for me (durians aside.)

Glen's lesson on Grace was so powerful that it moved me to tears.

Yes, I missed some lessons and activities but God worked through me and my family nonetheless.

He kept Aaron safe and our sanity intact.

That said, I think as a Church, we need to realise the reality of the challenges and fear young parents face and see how we can better cater to them and encourage them not to give camp a miss.

For example, in my case, I was blessed to have

- 1) My Parents: They were there to support and help (Can't imagine how we would have done it without them, AND the extra boot space to place Aaron's Crib and Stroller too)
- 2) Ability to Drive up : Going by the coach is not really an option. So the question is, for those young parents that can't drive up...how?

- 3) Chern Woon's support : He gave my parents and Hwee Yee adjoining rooms while placing my room just opposite theirs.
- 4) Domestic helper : Extra costs aside, it provided some reprieve for Hwee Yee and me in the hassle of packing/unpacking, which would have driven us mad. It was almost like shifting house. Had to pack two full car loads of stuff, including his crib.
- 5) There was no pressure on me or Hwee Yee to be present all the time for all activities, allowing us to put Aaron first. Yes, at times, we could have left Aaron with the helper but he was still young and we wanted to be hands-on with him at this stage.
- 6) General support and understanding from others, even if it sometimes disrupted his sleep schedule, it is always good to be surrounded by support.
- 7) The clean and comfortable resort : huge factor, especially with a newborn. A dirty or less comfortable place would have placed more stress on Hwee Yee and I as we catered to Aaron and his delicate needs.

While I cannot assume that the absence of young parents attending camps is due to the hassle of bringing their kids with them, I would like to strongly encourage and hope to see most young parents attending camp next year. Then it will truly be a "family" camp.



Thank you for the excellent leadership which you provide for the church in Singapore and Asia. It is demonstrated in part by the functionality and organization of the camp. It was a joy to be invited to such an event. It was a pleasure being with all of you.

I am reminded of the introduction on Sunday. You said, "When we heard Glen was coming we decided to kill three birds with one stone and invite him to speak at SIBI and camp and then to speak on Sunday." Well, you might say that this bird is dead! Got home on Wednesday at 1:30 a.m. exhausted. I do appreciate all the work that went into putting the camp together, the direction of the theme, and the spiritual growth that I could see even from just a couple of years ago. I am looking forward to coming next year with the Apollos Institute program.

**- Glen Gray**

## More 2009 Camp Reflections

**Elmer A. Palacio, Philippines** - I've shared lots of things from the camp with my teachers and to my co-workers here. I remind them that we're in the marketplace all the time. My experiences in Singapore and Malaysia gave me more energy, ideas and knowledge and encouragement to my ministries and as Administrator in our Day Care Center.

**Jonathan A. Ramos, Philippines** - God has shown me and my family a loving congregation, taught me a lot of things... of love, hope, trust, prayers, family and faith. Thank God for PPCOC from our hearts to yours...with LOVE.

**Gina Samonte Catalan, Philippines** - Good to be with you... enjoyed the camp... great lessons, great fellowship, great food, beautiful place with lovely folks. Everything great lah... thank you so much.

**Doreen Lum, PP** - My heartfelt appreciation to the church and the working committee for putting up an enlightening, encouraging and enriching camp that enable us to be 'Salt Ambassadors' of whatever profession we are, into our own marketplace. The programmes and the topics are so relevant for us as we are working in the marketplace.

**Samuel Thang, Myanmar** - I had a really great time together at all the events of PP Camp. The Camp was very well organized. It is amazing how the church ministers, leaders and members worked together at the Church and Camp. I could sense that all feel the church as family and home. It was wonderful to know many dedicated ministers from different countries in Asia. And it is so encouraging to know that the PP Church is very mature Church that have a great mission mind.

The welcome of PP Church was very warm and made me feel at home. The a capella singing class was so beautiful and motivated my spirits. The Hearing Impaired section and worship was so wonderful. I believe that the Lord has called them to reach the good news to many HI in Asia in which many HI are yet neglected and abandoned.

The Camp at Malaysia was very creative and well organized. All the programme was very well thought out and also very relaxing. Preaching, prayer walk, prayer for individuals, and room devotion were so strengthening and encouraging. The food was very delicious. God is so gracious to me, enabling me to meet many new Christian friends. I really appreciate all that you

have done for me. Thanks for hosting me that I could taste the sweet fellowship in God's Kingdom in this earth. The events at the PP Camp encourage me to work harder in the ministry and taught me a lot. It is also a turning point in my life to follow more closer to His will.

**Joe Swamy, India** - Thank You So Much For Your Warm Welcome and Hospitality, I had a wonderful time. The place of the camp was excellent and I loved every movement of it including the food.

I have learnt a lot of things from the camp such as, good organisation, commitment, loving service and co-operative spirit. I also appreciate the room devotions shared by different brothers and brother Henry encouraging us with his testimonies. I was very much impressed by the youth with all their activities. Also the Elders who prayed over all the people - I was touched by their prayers and examples.

When elder William took us to Sentosa, I loved the place and especially the underwater Aquarium. I would like to share my experience of Singapore with all our Mumbai brethren and letting them know how each and everyone has to work to make the Kingdom grow.

**Daniel Ng, PP** - As I reflect on the church camp at Port Dickson, I recalled the wonderful singing in the coach the moment we departed from the Malaysian Immigration. It was singing all the way to PD and on the return trip to Singapore. I am blessed to be in the coach with our foreign brethren who are so passionate about singing. We also get to enjoy singing spiritual songs in Tamil, Thai, Tagalog, Hindi, Hokkien etc. We are truly one in the spirit and one in the Lord as are bonded together in joyous singing, transcending all barriers of language, colour or national boundaries.

During the morning prayer walk we broke into spontaneous singing from memory. The adults were singing with good support before devotions, the youths were practising hard learning challenging songs and the children in their own class were also singing and enjoying spiritual songs. It is indeed great to immerse ourselves singing praises to the Lord.

**Erwin Panday, Philippines** - I am still in high spirits because of the church camp. I thank the Lord for the opportunity. I have been blessed more than I can say. Thank you to the brethren of PP.