

A Church beyond Walls

The metaphor “a church without walls” may sound cliché, but it is still what our community needs today. In August, our church deputation team visited Ps Tan Chin Seng, pastor of Prai Baptist Church and he truly embodied the idea—building a church without walls amongst the communities in Prai.

A Church in the Community

Prai Baptist Church runs a free tuition centre in the community and is planning to start a day care centre for elderly folks. Ps Tan strongly believes that when we call ourselves a church, walking into the community only is not an option but the community must know there is a church where they can always seek refuge.

Initial Challenges

In Ps Tan’s first year serving in the church, they invited poor families to celebrate Christmas with them. After the party, a church member came to him saying that his family is willing to pay for the poor to enjoy the food, but on the condition that they do not eat with them at the same table, as those poor people were dirty and would be a bad influence on his children. Ps Tan’s straight response was, “*Love has no conditions!*” He challenged this church member as the church could not serve the community with a group of people who despised the poor.

Another incident happened when Ps Tan brought a group of children from an orphanage to the students fellowship. Within the next two weeks, parents withdrew their children from the fellowship. Ps Tan soldiered on and implemented The Boys’ Brigade to introduce a disciplined lifestyle to the fellowship.

Changing Mind-sets

With this persistence in bringing light to the community, now all church members are ever ready



Ps Tan Chin Seng (3rd from left)



Fruitful sharing session

“When we call ourselves a church, walking into the community only is not an option but the community must know there is a church where they can always seek for refuge.”

to work alongside their pastor. They no longer see caring for the poor as a dirty job but rather a mission of God. After nearly 10 years of community work, now the neighbouring communities are not afraid to step into the church because they know that they are always welcomed with open doors.

“We enjoy too much grace! We never go through suffering and never understand what poverty is.” said Ps Tan. As the body of Christ, the church should not continue to enclose herself within her four walls. John 1:5, *“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”* Jesus is the light and we are the bearers of this Light! ■

Wendy Chin is a staff with Malaysian Care’s Communications Department, handling Church Relations. She believes equality can be achieved through our service.