

God's Love Is Eternal

“Rev. Peter Young challenged the churches to see people with special needs as God saw them.”



The first graduates of the DTC proudly display their certificates at St. Paul's Church.

Celebrating the Day Training Centre's 25th milestone brings much joy to us in Malaysian Care because St Paul's was the first church in the country to sign a Memorandum Of Understanding with us to formalise a partnership that reached out to people with learning disabilities via the setup of specialised services.
– Malaysian Care Executive Director, WONG YOUNG SOON



People with special needs acquire baking skills from St Paul's DTC.

This year, St. Paul's Day Training Centre (DTC) is celebrating its 25th anniversary. On May 8, 1993, the then Anglican Bishop, the late Rev. Tan Sri J. G. Savarimuthu, officially opened and dedicated St. Paul's DTC. Our church had earlier signed a Memorandum Of Understanding with Malaysian Care to formalise a partnership to serve people with learning disabilities. We were the first church in Malaysia to respond to Malaysian Care's call to partner with them in this special ministry. Congratulations to St. Paul's Church! The Lord prepared the right people in the church to start this ministry.

It all began in 1991 when St. Paul's Women's Fellowship organised a Caring Seminar and the moderator was the founding Executive Director of Malaysian Care, the late Rev. Peter Young. At this seminar, a mother of an intellectually challenged child requested help for her child. Thus, with the approval of St. Paul's Parochial Church Council, the ministry began. We are thankful to Malaysian Care staff who trained our pioneer staff and helped us to set up the ministry.

St. Paul's DTC expanded its services on January 28, 1996, when the Bethel Early Intervention Centre (EIC) in Puchong Jaya was officially opened and dedicated by our former Bishop, Rev. Dr. Lim Cheng Ean. The centre is still serving pre-school children (ages 2-6) with special needs and their parents today! Malaysian Care continues to partner with Bethel EIC by sending their staff and contacts for exposure.



Pastor Nesam Ebenezer (in red with a black scarf) and participants at the DTC Camp 2016

God has chosen all of us to be His Disciples

(Acts 10:44-48)

The Lord God revealed in Caesarea, a town along the Mediterranean Sea, that the Gospel was for all people, whether Jews or Gentiles. Caesarea had a garrison where the soldiers were Romans and the Lord, to the astonishment of the Jews, revealed that salvation was also for the Gentiles. Through an angel, the Lord told Cornelius, the Roman Commander, to look for Peter who was in Joppa, a nearby town. Peter's heart was also prepared for this new event. When Peter came and spoke to Cornelius and his household, the Spirit of God was poured upon each one of them and they spoke in tongues, praising God. Then they were baptised. This came as a shock to the Jews who were with Peter, but God had revealed His plan that He favoured all men.

Just as the early church had initially not accepted the Gentiles, in Malaysia in the 1970s, people who were intellectually challenged were kept in their own homes with no hope of being able to contribute to society. Rev. Peter Young, as I remember, worked tirelessly to bring awareness of these special people. He challenged the churches to see them as God saw them. Our special people are not mentally challenged, or people with learning disabilities. St. Paul's DTC programme brings out the unique gifts these special people have. Thus our Anniversary theme this year is *"Releasing Talents of the*

Differently Aabled". There is a significant group of them who are doing very well in their workplaces and one ex-student, having won a Malaysian scholarship, is now studying in Oxford University. Two of our graduates are serving in our church: Felicia Fang is our Church Office Assistant and Esther Moo is a teacher's aide in Bethel EIC.

God's Love Is Eternal (John 15:12-13)

Jesus said, *"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you"*. (v.12) . This love is known as agape in Greek. It is a Greco-Christian term referring to the highest form of love as revealed by our Lord. Jesus expressed in v.14, *"You are my friends if you do what I command"*. I believe these are the words that motivated St. Paul's Church through the Women's Fellowship and individuals to become involved in this special ministry. The church has been very supportive of this ministry. We thank the Lord for our staff, volunteers, sponsors, donors and prayer warriors without whom the ministry would not have been successful.

Conclusion

Twenty-five years is a long journey, but we are grateful to our Lord who has been our Leader. St. Paul's DTC ministry is a timely reminder to us all that when we are obedient to the Lord and let Him lead us, we will be a blessing to all those around us. All glory to Him. ■

Pastor Nesam Ebenezer is Chairperson of St. Paul's DTC and had served in Malaysian Care from December 1982 to June 2005. Her last appointment in Malaysian Care was Director of Prison, Drugs & AIDS.