

## Annual Thanksgiving

## Joy and Thanksgiving



**SATURDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2006:** The sun was gently disappearing into the horizon. Cars were moving slowly along Jalan SS 2/2, Petaling Jaya looking for places to park. Soon, cars lined both sides of the narrow road. People got out from their cars and made their way to house No. 35. Enoch Lau, regular keyboardist at the Centre, was working the ivories. Soft, calming music filled the air. As the guests approached the house, team members from Raphah Ministries welcomed and ushered them in. Greetings and sounds of laughter were heard everywhere. Soon, the place was filled with nearly 90 people.

Among the guests were VIPs: YB Yong Dai Ying, the State Assembly Representative from Bukit Lanjan Constituency; Rev. Dr. Vincent Leoh, Main Pastor of Glad Tidings Church and General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, Malaysia; Dato Tony and Datin Alicia Tiah; Dato George and Datin Cecilia Ting; and Dato Stanley Isaacs, legal advisor to Raphah Ministries.

Also among the guests were Mr. Albert Teh and his lovely wife Poh Gaik from Sabah; sixteen pastors from various denominations, and members from twenty-four different local churches.

Now who says that the churches have denominational walls?

The programme for the evening began with Rev. Vincent Lau, director of the Centre, warmly welcoming all guests

to Raphah Ministries' 4th Evening of Celebration and Thanksgiving 2006. He then outlined the highlights for the evening and thanked all present for supporting the ministry in prayer and kind. Thereafter, guests were invited to give thanks and celebrate the occasion with a sumptuous buffet dinner.

After dinner, Rev. Lau presented a quick review of the past year's ministry activities and also an update of the events that had been lined up for 2007. Next came a short message of acknowledgement, thanksgiving and tribute by Mrs. Linda Tang, chairperson of the Board of Raphah Ministries, to all pastors present, who as God's servants, were shepherds of God's children on earth. She also shared a brief testimony and video presentation of God's divine healing on her first grandson, Nathanael, who had suffered from epileptic seizures. This was followed by a touching personal testimony from Dr. Florence Wang, a joint-founder of Raphah Ministries, of her continuing involvement with the ministry (see Focus: Testimonies).

Rev. Dr. Vincent Leoh was then invited to pray for God's complete healing in Nathanael while Dato Stanley Isaacs was invited to pray for Raphah Ministries' work and to lead the cutting of the anniversary cake. As a memento of the evening, all guests were given a gift set of four bookmarks featuring water-coloured paintings by a Raphah Ministries' team member.

The evening of celebration and thanksgiving drew to a close with Sis Cheryl leading everyone in praise as songs of the season and the joyous spirit of Christmas wafted through the evening air.

Almighty God, thank you for yet another fruitful and blessed year!



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## Beyond Medical Reasoning:

## Why Raphah Ministries?

As a physician and doctor trainer, I teach my medical students to look for underlying causes of problems. But how deep can we go when all our work is confined to the human body? When there is an infection we immediately think of a bacterial, viral or parasitic cause, but we seldom go beyond to questions of immorality, smoking, frequent drunkenness. When there is obesity, we will consider overeating or under exercise; we fail to look into a life out of control, the need for comfort eating, and perhaps rejection. Generally, when a person has lung cancer we ask about smoking but may not delve into the compulsion to do so: the peer pressure, the stress, the addiction or frustration.

In 1993, while preparing for a Medical Mission, I thought I would get a troublesome thyroid nodule out of the way. In the process my vocal cord was damaged. I lost my voice; I could not speak, so I was grounded for two years. Looking for spiritual reasons for my “grounding,” I felt the Lord wanted me to know more of Himself and His Word. So the following year, at Ellel Ministries in England, I learned that we are body, soul and spirit, and that an unhealthy soul and spirit eventually eats into our behavior, relationships, and health, and is oftentimes the primary root cause of our various problems. Other root causes could be discrimination, envy, jealousy, hatred, frustration, judgmentalism, rejection and hidden sins.

Personal difficulties and struggles have a way of surfacing the need to be transparent; to seek help when struggling with issues such as low spirits, fear, backache, irritability, rigidity in attitude (inflexibility), etc. These are issues commonly seen amongst Christians in churches and on the mission field. Indeed many who are serving the Lord are struggling with personal issues and conflicts.

I believe many Christians hide their struggles with weaknesses behind barricades or strongholds. They secretly struggle to extricate themselves from their oppressive situations in their own way. They long for God but fear His scrutiny, fear the exposure of the truth, without realizing that they are also rejecting His demand for righteousness. This independence from God shows that idolatry is still very much the root of their problems.

In their quest for solutions many attend Bible studies, home fellowships, conferences; some attend Bible Schools, even go on missions. There they are told to pray more, worship harder, and play worship CDs louder. Some others resort to secular psychotherapists, psychologists or counselors while yet others have tried the occult such as Transcendental Meditation (TM),

Christian Yoga, TaiChi, mediums and related activities. Sadly, even those who go to Christian counselors also often find themselves confronted with different approaches and emphases in healing that confuse rather than help. As a result, many Christians have concluded that after accepting the Lord Jesus Christ, they still have to “fight for themselves” the rest of their lives: they have to lead double lives, put on masks, and hide their shame and failures.

One way some have chosen to cope with—or overcome—their struggles is to teach and preach strongly against the very thing or area they are defeated in, as seen in the recent exposure of homosexuality in a well-known American church leader in November 2006.

The Bible demands holiness and righteousness; cleansing of the inside rather than only the outside. Jesus spoke vehemently against whitened sepulchres. How many realize they are whitened sepulchres? Hebrews 3:12 says we need to be “converted in the unconverted areas of our lives.” We need to make known our issues (e.g. blind Bartemaues). God’s light has to shine into these areas.

Jesus says in John 12:46 that whoever believes in Him should not abide in darkness. God’s light enlarges our understanding of His power, love and ability to help us overcome the sins that shroud our lives; to show up our strongholds of self pity, self righteousness, selfishness, self centredness, jealousy, envy, shame, murmuring, competition, pride, addictions, imbalance in life, half truths, inflexibility, “demandingness,” inability to adapt, or excuses for our unhealthy attitudes. Even godly people—struggling with their issues—can be guilty of justifying themselves or rationalizing their behavior. They need teaching from the Word of God; they need God’s light to penetrate their hearts.

Through its activities, seminars, and training programmes Raphah Ministries tries to teach about different aspects of our lives that address the issues mentioned above. Raphah Ministries tries to show people that everything around us point to a need to relate firmly and lovingly to our God, and to be acceptable and pleasing in His sight.

Other than teaching seminars, Raphah Ministries offer opportunities to help people to be set free to walk in newness of life. They are encouraged to return to their churches and be built up in their churches. Raphah Ministries seeks to help people realize that they need to work out their salvation with fear and trembling and

## Why Raphah Ministries?

also that their salvation is nearer now than when they first believed (Philippians 2:12; Romans 13:11-14). After accepting Jesus as Savior, they still need to be healed of the consequences of their past way of life.

I see Raphah Ministries as providing a safe, confidential, private and spiritually clean place for people to be taught, to be open, and to be ministered to. Some who have come to us are so trapped in their wrong beliefs, barricaded in their strongholds, and chained by the enemy. They need to be extricated and the chains cut off.

Many local churches and para-church ministries around us are doing a great job; but people also sometimes want a neutral place, a dedicated place where they can safely reveal themselves.

Many of those who have passed through the Centre's doors are grateful that much time and careful attention have been devoted to them. The regular two-member ministry teams sometimes take between 20 – 40 man-hours to minister to just one person over a period of time. This is done because the love of God constrains us. We have nothing in ourselves that we can offer; some of us having travelled down the same painful road of struggle ourselves! But as we put ourselves out for this task, God shows us the full measure of His love and we get to know God more intimately for ourselves.

That is why Raphah Ministries is here: touching hearts, rebuilding lives!

**Dr. Florence Wang**



*Raphah Ministries' Team Retreat at Fraser's Hill*

### Waiting!

A friend recently asked me to share my spiritual experiences. In response, I racked my brain for some new cool testimonies but nothing came to mind. I also considered writing about the numerous challenges I was currently facing; in the end I replied her in two words, "Don't have." Another friend who knew about my personal situation chipped in, "You can write about being like an onion." Ah, that one is true!

I believe God is peeling me open layer by layer—for my healing. To use the word "challenge" to describe my situation is to be politically correct; but if I were to borrow the words of the apostle Paul, it would be more like 'pressed in.' HELP! And HELP did come in many forms: listening ears, counsel, advice, prayers, empathies, etc. After gathering these precious items in my lap, I had to sort them out and try to match them to my problems. These "items" helped a lot, but I quickly realized I needed a greater help: GOD! Above all else, I needed the Holy Spirit to guide me so that I could know what to do. GOD HELP!

Even as I write this short testimony, I am waiting on the Lord to lead and guide me in making the right decisions. While waiting on God, I know I also need to "do" a few things, to co-operate with Him and to focus on Him. I know He will give me patience and strength to wait—for victories in my life. AMEN!

**Janice Tan**

### A "Vision" for Raphah Ministries

On the morning of 28 December 2006, during a prayer time at the Team Retreat, the following four words were strongly impressed upon me: plant, united, rooted, and fruitful. In the first word, "plant," I saw a garden bed covered with a variety of beautiful and colourful flowers. I asked the Lord what this "vision" meant. Immediately, I had this understanding: the beautiful and colourful flowers were the different team members behind Raphah Ministries; each one unique in personality and ability. They had been "planted" together—not coincidentally, but by God's deliberate purpose—so that the work of Raphah Ministries may be fulfilled with the members standing "united" and "rooted" in Jesus Christ. Then they will be "fruitful" in the service and ministry of God's Kingdom.

**Pastor Irene Lee**

## raphah ministries' calendar of events

### april

- 07 (Sat) Embracing Your Identity and Destiny Seminar  
 09 (Mon) Healing Service #47  
 14 (Sat) A Comprehensive Approach to Cancer Seminar  
 16-19 (Mon-Thu) Prayer Counselling Course – "Understanding Christian Healing: The Issues" - Part 1.  
 20-21 (Fri-Sat) Prayer Counselling Course – 'The Practice of Christian Healing Ministry' - Part 2.  
 30 (Mon) Prayer Support Group

### may

- 01 (Tue) Ministry Team Day #2  
 05 (Sat) Reclaiming the Ground Seminar  
 07 (Mon) Leadership Meeting  
 12 (Sat) Ministry Team Training  
 14 (Mon) Healing Service #48  
 19 (Sat) One-Day Healing Retreat – Faith Covenant Tabernacle, PJ.  
 26 (Sat) Ministry Team Training – FGA, KL  
 28 (Mon) Prayer Support Group

### june

- 04 (Mon) Leadership Meeting  
 06 (Wed) Mid-Week Training – St. Mary's Cathedral, KL  
 09 (Sat) Power and Purity Seminar  
 11 (Mon) Healing Service #49  
 13 (Wed) Mid-Week Training – St. Mary's Cathedral, KL  
 16 (Sat) Ministry Team Training, FGA, KL  
 20 (Wed) Mid-Week Training – St. Mary's Cathedral, KL  
 25 (Mon) Prayer Support Group  
 27 (Wed) Mid-Week Training – St. Mary's Cathedral, KL  
 28-30 (Thu-Sat) Ministry Team at Ellel Ministries' Conference

### july

- 01-02 (Sun-Mon) Leadership Mid-Year Review  
 07 (Sat) The Father-Heart of God Seminar  
 09 (Mon) Healing Service #50  
 16-19 (Mon-Thu) Understanding Christian Healing: 'The Issues'  
 Prayer Counseling Course - Pt.1  
 20-21 (Fri-Sat) 'The Practice of Christian Healing Ministry'  
 Prayer Counseling Course - Pt.2  
 30 (Mon) Prayer Support Group



Seminar on "Understanding & Overcoming Depression"

### seminars and training

Recently concluded seminars at Beit Raphah, Petaling Jaya:

**"Understanding and Overcoming Depression"** one-day seminar on March 31 attracted a total of 39 participants from over 14 churches.

15 participants from 6 churches attended **"Embracing Your Identity & Destiny"** one-day seminar on April 7.

A Seminar on Cancer – **"A Comprehensive Approach to Cancer"** on April 14 was attended by 21 participants from 12 churches.

## raphah ministries' needs

Raphah Ministries is a faith ministry, trusting in God for its needs. But we welcome support from Friends of the Ministry and invite you to pray along with us. The following are some of our short-term and long-term needs:

**Staff:** Ministry Staff. Associate Ministry Team Members.

**Equipment:** LCD Projector, Video Camera & Stand, DVD Recorder & Duplicator, New Notebook Computer

**Facilities:** Larger facilities that can provide accommodation for residential ministry and programmes, as well as accommodation for supporting staff.

*Note: All payments and donations are to be made to 'Life Builders (M) Sdn Bhd'. Official receipts will be issued in acknowledgement of all gifts.*

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