

Newsworthy

A NEWSLETTER OF THE HCD INSTITUTE
Connecting you to child advocacy and development



Newsworthy contains news and information about our work and also the fellowship of the student alumni. It is published three times a year in English.

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The **Holistic Child Development (HCD) Institute of the Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS)** is a department for training, research and networking in holistic ministries to children. We seek to transform and enable the Church to do child advocacy and development through Christian-based theological education, research and awareness raising. The Seminary is part of the Global Alliance for Advancing Holistic Child Development, a network of theological institutions seeking to promote HCD programs worldwide.

In this issue

Highlights of the 2011 HCD Session

Grueling studies amidst plenty of fun – this article highlights some of the learning experiences of the 2011 HCD students.

I learned...

Some of our HCD students share their learning with us.

Quo Vadis?

'*Quo Vadis?*' means "Where are you going?" in Latin. Find out how our students practice the art of listening during their spiritual formation retreat at Penang Hill.

Training of Grassroot Practitioners

Together for Children is a training of trainers program developed by the HCDI for the Asian context. Find out how it began.

Breaking new grounds

We update you on some of our ministries in South East Asia.

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A few words...

Dear friends,

Greetings!

A friend once said, "*The only thing (besides God) that is constant is change.*" Change is frightening because it demands that we move out of our comfort zone to face unknown waters. While some people see change as a challenge, many are paralyzed with fear. In 1998, Spencer Johnson wrote the book "*Who Moved my Cheese?*" as a parable to show four different reactions to life changes. This book made the bestsellers' list for almost 5 years! Now what has that got to do with our ministry here at HCDI?

For the past years, the HCDI has served an international body of students and supported the South East Asia region in advancing HCD programs. We faced many challenges and learned to accommodate cultural differences, language limitations, political impositions, trainees' competencies, etc. In short, we had to change our preconceived ways of doing training and look at new possibilities. Without a flexible mindset, we would not be cutting edge. 2011 is our 10th year of HCD training at MBTS, and we are still learning how to do things better. For what God wants to do at the HCDI, may we always be willing to change.

Blessings,

Rosalind Tan

Highlights of 2011 HCD session

ONE feature of the HCD program at Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS) is that we are often blessed with various cultures in our student enrolment. This year, we had a record of 14 countries represented among the 19 students. The international flavor is also seen in our dedicated team of HCD lecturers from 5 countries – Keith White from UK, Glenn Miles from Cambodia, Thomas Swaroop from India; Denise Kjesbo from USA, Sunny Tan, Rosalind Tan, and Dan Brewster from Malaysia.

The M.A. in HCD program at MBTS has 3 modules, each with different focus and delivery approach. As part of their learning experiences, the 2nd and 3rd year students visited 2 local ministries to children and youths at risk. At the *Women Center for Change (WCC), Penang*, they learned how a local network is reaching out to protect children, youths, and women from sexual abuse. The students also visited the *Stepping Stones*, which is a work-based ministry of the Asia Community Services (ACS). ACS

serves the Penang community through early intervention programs for intellectually challenged children, respite care for their members and families; mobile library services for children lacking access to regular early intervention services; and an independent living center for its adult members who are preparing to integrate into society. These field trips have inspired the students to consider creative ways to minister to children in need. A new course, *Child and Family Ministry Models*, was added to the HCD syllabus and taught by Denise Kjesbo, professor of Child and Family Studies at Bethel Seminary, Minnesota. We also had Pauline Wong and her team from Malaysia Care to facilitate a course on *Early Intervention Strategies*.

Four weeks went by quickly and soon the 2011 HCD modules ended on July 1. As Tim Lee from UK puts it, "I came with an empty basket and now my basket is full." ■



Clockwise from top left: Students of the 2011 session; Denise Kjesbo (third from right) with group of students; The group visit to Stepping Stones Work Centre in Balik Pulau.

I learned...



■ "I learned that we are all theologians, and that we write our own Christology by the way we experience and respond to Christ. I also learned that children can have spiritual experiences but I was not aware of them. However, I was most inspired by the fact that God has entrusted us with the very difficult task of protecting the children regardless of race, religion, colour, and gender."

Hector Alicea, Indonesia
Module 2



■ "The HCD studies have been enriching and thought provoking for me. I felt God's grace through you all – the friendship and fellowship with my fellow students encouraged me very much. However, in my humble opinion, I think one month of intensive study is quite long and tiring for practitioners like myself."

Alex Abuda, Philippines
Module 2



■ "For me, the spiritual retreat was a good break in a unique way, to share with 7 adopted siblings and the extended family of HCD. It was also a time to reflect and, yes, to ask "Quo Vadis?" Never mind the grueling studies really, the experience was sufficient and I cannot ask for more."

Katherine Koe, Malaysia
Module 1



■ "My course mates are an excellent bunch, and this made the classes fun, and long hours go by quickly. For a group that have just met, our sense of 'familyness,' care and concern for each other is commendable. It's really great. I am indeed blessed to have met and known each one of you. Many things taught can be picked up from books, but these lessons were made very much richer by what each of us shared regarding the realities of what is happening from where we come from. And that is priceless."

Jacqueline Ng, Singapore
Module 1



■ "It was a privilege to study under lecturers whose teachings are enriched with knowledge and experience. I was challenged to minister to children in a better way. Also, there is no question about the beautiful environment at MBTS; but the most beautiful thing I have seen are those who worked with servant leadership qualities especially the HCDI team who made us feel at home."

Shanta Kumari, Sri Lanka
Module 1



■ "This year I felt the depth of the subjects. I really enjoyed traveling in the children's world of spirituality and to understand their thinking about God. Courses like *Child and Family Ministry Models* and *Early Intervention Strategies* have helped me rethink my ministry with children. HCD studies have really added a new dimension in my thinking and taught me to be creative in my ministry."

David Adhikary, Bangladesh
Module 3

Quo Vadis: Where are you going?

THE idea of an overnight retreat was mooted during an HCD curriculum review in 2010. The concern was that the students needed extended time for quiet listening in the midst of their intensive studies. Hence, the retreat emphasis was to come away and listen to God, to self, and to one another. Nestled in a woody and quiet hillock with a spectacular view of Georgetown, the *Bethel House of Prayer* at Penang Hill was the perfect place to practice listening. The theme for this year's spiritual formation retreat is *Quo Vadis*, meaning, "Where are you going?" in Latin. The question is found in John 13:36 when Simon Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, where are you going?"

Denise Kjesbo began the evening with *Lectio Divina* – reading, pondering, and praying from Psalms 23 and 138. Later that night, we sat on the porch to watch the flickering city lights below; which reminded us that the darker the night, the brighter the shine. The next day, HCDI director Rosalind Tan engaged the group of students in a morning reflection using creative storytelling.

Using 'floor pictures', she narrated the journeys of the Magi, shepherds, Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus, and led the group to reflect on the theme, "*Quo Vadis?*"

After the morning reflection, the group went for 'the walk.' They enacted their own spiritual journey by trekking along the winding mud path while reflecting on the question, "*Quo Vadis, where are you going?*" One student was so inspired by the natural surroundings that he climbed on a rock, and with a bible in hand, preached a sermonette. The session ended with each person sharing his or her own journey – where they came from and where God is leading them onward. God met us that morning. We thanked Him for directing our paths and prayed for those who are seeking directions. In this short period of time, friendships were strengthened, confessions made, healing experienced, and 'Ebenezers' raised. ■



Left to right, from top: Just before a sumptuous lunch; Dusk over Penang Hill; Trekking to the Bethel House of Prayer; Denise and Rosalind; Students together.



Breaking new grounds

■ *Together for Children: Training the Trainers*

In May, trainer Toyditz Cosico from Compassion International and HCDI personnel Rosalind Tan and Alice Shin went to Myanmar to facilitate a *Training the Trainers* session for 26 leaders from Bible schools and children ministry organizations. The students completed the first module of *Together for Children*.

■ Good Kids Preschool (GKP)

2010 HCD alumni Pranee Rungroadsataporn put her learning to good use by setting up the Good Kids Preschool (GKP) ministry for children aged 2-4 years old. Built according to Thai design, the center in Nong Wai village, Chiang Mai, offers bi-lingual (Thai/English) holistic education for rural children who otherwise lack access and opportunities to education.

■ Training in China

In March, Tryphena Chin (HCDI) and Toyditz Cosico, (Compassion International) went to China to help with our network training. The China training is our second cycle of students. Two tracks – Christian Education and Community Development – were offered to the students.

■ Child Studies Program at MBTS

Two Child Studies program have been launched in Kuala Lumpur and Penang for 2011. In total, there are some 50 students. The courses are taught in the Mandarin language.



From top: The *Together for Children* training in Myanmar; Teacher Pranee Rungroadsataporn interacting with three children at the Good Kids Preschool (photo courtesy: GKP/2011)

Training of Grassroot Practitioners

DO you have a systematic program to train your ministry team to be the best they can be in their service to the children?



The HCD Institute responded to this need by developing the *Together for Children: Training the Trainers* program. Six of the eight units of study are now completed and four have been tested in Myanmar with favourable results. The goal is to equip team leaders in children ministry with the skills and materials to train practitioners in their own contexts and languages. Developed by the HCD Institute and funded by Compassion International, these materials are photocopyable.

Each study unit can be completed in one of the following ways:

- A 6-hour training or 1-day workshop
- Two 3-hour sessions (2 weekends)
- One and a half hours a week over 4 weeks
- Any other time frame suitable for the group

The unit titles are:

- TFC101 Welcoming the Children
- TFC102 Children and their Development
- TFC103 Family Life Education
- TFC104 Counselling Children
- TFC105 Mission and Ministry to Children
- TFC106 Faith Formation of Children
- TFC107 Advocacy for Children at Risk
- TFC108 Children and Community Development

Please email the HCD Institute if you are interested to attend a trainers' workshop in 2012. For local churches in Malaysia, we would be glad to facilitate a session in your church.

Calendar of Events 2011

August

SEA Torchbearers retreat in Makassar, Indonesia

September

Diploma in HCD (Graduation of second cycle)
Training the Trainers, China

October

Training the Trainers, Myanmar

November

MBTS graduation

December

Partnership with the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia Children's Commission (EFCCC), Cambodia (Open agenda)

Announcements

The **Samaritan Purse** is looking for volunteers to help with their Christmas Shoe Box project in Malaysia. Those interested to help, please contact Mr Har Voon Pang at pangbleessu@yahoo.com.

Harvest Montessori School in Sentul, KL needs a fulltime house parent for their students. Those interested can contact Ms Beant Kaur at 03-40443179.

Two dedicated teachers are needed to spearhead a preschool education project for an Orang Asli community. Those interested can contact Dr Rosalind Tan at 04-8812462 or hcd.institute@gmail.com.