

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR PETER CHEN,  
SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION  
AT THE GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY  
FOR BETHANY METHODIST NURSING HOME  
AT A SITE AT CHOA CHU KANG, AVENUE 4  
ON SATURDAY 23RD JANUARY 1999 AT 2.00 PM

I would like to commend the Methodist Welfare Services  
in your role in the care of the elderly in  
our nation. In your own words, your mission is reflected th  
rough your concern for the welfare of the  
needy in our community. We are all familiar with the passag  
e from Matthew 25, verses 35-36 :

"For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat;  
I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink:  
I was a stranger, and ye took me in;  
Naked, and ye clothed me:  
I was sick, and ye visited me:  
I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

And when Jesus was asked by the righteous, "Lord, when saw w  
e thee an hungered, and fed thee? Or  
thirsty, and gave thee drink? ...", his answer was unequivocal  
: "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye

have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

The Methodist Welfare Services has indeed come a long way since 1983 when it opened its first Home For The Aged Sick to 6 residents at St George's Lane. I have visited this home twice in the last 12 months. My first visit was during the Christmas season of 1997 when I was accompanied by my dear wife. I am sure Mrs Woo will recall that visit.

It is also noteworthy that the Methodist Welfare Services seeks to provide a model of holistic care to the elderly sick so that they will be able to find meaning in life in the Home.

The name of this new home "The Bethany, A Methodist Nursing Home" is well chosen. The name Bethany is inspired by the place where Jesus often found rest from his travels and where he raised Lazarus from the dead. It expresses your hope that everyone who comes to this home, The Bethany, will find it a place of peace and rest.

Caring for the elderly sick cannot be the sole responsibility of the family. Neither can it be just the sole responsibility of the government. It requires the involvement of the whole community so that the elderly will not feel abandoned by society. The elderly too were young once; they too have contributed towards the welfare of our nation. They too were once the father and mother of someone amongst us. There is no better way to show our appreciation than to care for them when they are sick in their old age and in their time of need.

It is important to see caring for the elderly sick as an opportunity to build relationships in the community rather than as a burden for the community. I am therefore much encouraged that the Methodist Welfare Services will seek to bring into the fold of this project all the 34 Methodist churches in Singapore. Together you will work to care for the elderly sick in our community. For do we not all share the same Christ who had said to us, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."?

May God's blessings be upon you all.

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