

Name: Yong Ennie
University: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
Occupation: Speech and Language Therapist
Place of Work: (Company & State) Taiping Hospital, Perak
Duration serving at your current place: Since 23rd July 2007
Current Church: Taiping Gospel Hall

Email: an_ly@yahoo.com

Everyone learns about Taiping in history and geography lessons back in secondary school days. History – first railway station in Port Weld. Geography – highest amount of rainfall in Malaysia. Taiping used to be the capital city of Perak before it was replaced by Ipoh. It is the second largest town in Perak.

Taiping is known as ‘The town of everlasting peace’. The word ‘taiping’ (太平) itself means ‘peace’ in Chinese. I suspected it’s due to that the ISA detention centre is situated in Kamunting, just 15 minutes from Taiping. I was told that the townsfolk used to bet in the market, whether it would rain for the day. Drying laundry can be a problem as sunny hours (not even days) are few and rare. However, getting lost in Taiping is almost impossible, as there are only 3 main streets.



I was convicted of working in either an NGO or the public hospital during my university days. I realized that few people can pay for services which are very much needed for their children with special needs. Dr. David Gunaratnam was instrumental in pointing me in the direction of serving people in public hospital, as there is where service is most accessible. Unlike doctors, dentists, pharmacists and teachers, speech therapists do not get a choice where they want to be posted. This arrangement suited me well as ultimately, it is God who posts. I was praying about going to East Malaysia, but it was 45 minutes north of my hometown that I was sent unto. God has his surprises.



My first job is to set up the speech therapy unit as there was no speech therapist in Taiping Hospital prior to my posting. I have to start from scratch as there was really nothing for me to work with, or in (not even a room). I came to understand the meaning of working with government’s bureaucracy and certain individuals’ inefficiency during this time. I have to continuously ‘bug’ the relevant people for things to happen. Thankfully, I managed to get a therapy room and furniture in November, and other things are coming in slowly. As the year comes to a close, I managed to get money to order toys from the ‘unspent’ leftovers.

The past half year has been frustrating and exciting at the same time. The lack of ‘happenings’ has driven me to take more initiatives. I have asked to go to Parit Bundar Hospital with a paediatrician once a month. I might do the same for Selama Hospital if

more cases are referred to me. Besides Taiping, I also see cases referred from nearby towns such as those mentioned, as well as Kuala Kangsar, Bagan Serai and others. I hope to start clinic fully by January. I anticipate a very busy year ahead.

I'm currently attending Taiping Gospel Hall. I'm considering serving in the youth ministry. We have also started discussion about having play group with special needs children and starting a story telling club.

Many people, locals especially, are surprised when I told them that I love Taiping. Taiping is a beautiful place, peaceful and quiet, very well-kept by the local municipal council. Taiping Zoo can be considered the best in Malaysia. The Lake Garden is lush green and a good place to take a stroll or jog. Maxwell Hill is also a favourite spot of leisure. I believe if I train myself often enough with Maxwell Hill, I will be ready to escalate Mount Kinabalu! And this is free of charge. There are many exciting and fun things that can be done in a small town. Best of all, traffic jam is an almost unheard phenomenon.



There are difficult times though, times of loneliness and feeling of emptiness. Friends are few. Being a government servant, you can expect many to come and get transferred again not long after that. However, I know that only God can make me feel whole and fill the void in my life. I feel blessed that God has sent me a great companion and housemate in Nalini, as well as a few good friends, whom I know, will be there for me when I needed them.

We humans are very short-sighted, as we can only see what's in the present. I've learned to see the big picture, to find God's purpose in everything that happens. For I know nothing happens without God being in controlled. Everything is a learning experience and I thank God for enriching my life so.

“We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” (C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*)

How can I be contented with mud pies when God promises a holiday by the sea?