

Thesis Abstract.

The 'Schooling-Instructional' paradigm (SIP) that is presently employed as the framework for church education in many Malaysian churches is inadequate in nurturing them to 'be church'. The methodology of such a mindset focuses on schooling or classroom instruction as the primary mode of church education. Churches in Malaysia and particularly churches in TRAC have not been effective in carrying out their educational task of making themselves a functional covenant community/faith community. There is an urgent need to address this inadequacy and the adverse effects this paradigm brings, particularly age segregation. 'Classroom instruction' is certainly not always a reasonable starting point in educating the church to 'be church'. The onus is to return to the Scriptures to look at the educational principles of the faith communities in the OT and NT, and integrate them with a paradigm that would enable contemporary faith communities to educate themselves to be a functional 'church'. An alternate paradigm, which is the 'Faith Community' (FC) model, seeks to look into the life of the FC as the purpose, content, context, the teacher and the learner in its educational processes. It is making a paradigm shift from 'schooling-instruction' to taking everything a congregation does or does not do which has educational implications. Church education therefore is being intentional and should be a 'systemic' process.

The outcome of the thesis is to contribute to the possibility of building a faith community in TRAC through an effort of clarification and identification of some of the ways in using the FC model to church education so that she could be a functional FC.