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Heeding a higher calling

By STEPHEN NG

Engineer-turned pastor Moses Khor shares about his life in the city of Melbourne.

FACT FILE

NAME: Dr Moses Khor Khiam
AGE: 39
HOMETOWN: Alor Star
EDUCATION: Kolej Sultan Abdul Hamid, Alor Star; Ridley College, Melbourne (Master of Divinity); Monash University, Victoria, Australia (PhD in Mechanical Engineering).
OCCUPATION: Lecturer in Biblical Studies and dean of students, Tabor College, Melbourne.
CURRENT BASE: Melbourne, Australia
YEARS ABROAD: 21 years

DESPITE earning his doctorate in mechanical engineering from Australia's Monash University in 1997, Moses Khor Khiam Sin has chosen to respond to a higher calling.

Khor worked for a few companies in Melbourne after his graduation but eventually decided to become the international students' pastor at Clayton Church of Christ in Melbourne.

The 39-year-old found more meaning in looking into the spiritual and emotional needs of fellow Malaysian students at Monash University.

From Alor Star, Kedah, Khor had been the beneficiary of such outreach work among members of Monash University's Overseas Christian Fellowship, for which Clayton Church of Christ had been famous from as early as the late 1960s.

While working as pastor, Khor pursued his Master of Divinity at Ridley College in Melbourne. Now, he is both a lecturer in biblical studies and the dean of students at Tabor College in Melbourne.

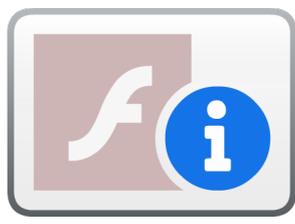
Married to Roanna and the father of seven-month-old Audrey, Khor said he has never regretted his decision to switch vocations.

"When I was still at university, I received a calling to serve God," he said. "My parents who are Christians were basically very supportive. They paid for my education, which is more than just having paper qualifications. The skills and discipline that I picked up while doing my PhD have made me a better person," said Khor.

"Most of us will live to about 70 years old. If we are strong, we may have another 10 or 20 years at the most. There is a purpose in everyone's life. It is not just about earning a living and building a family, only to find one ageing as the years go by," he added.



Moses Khor, lecturer in biblical studies and dean of students at Tabor College in Melbourne with his wife, Roanna, and daughter, Audrey.



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The former student of Kolej Sultan Abdul Hamid in Alor Star said when he first arrived in Melbourne in 1987, it was the church fellowship that helped him feel at home in Australia.

Soon, he fell in love with Melbourne. "The people here are friendly and we have an open society," he said. "I never encountered any cultural shock, except that people Down Under looked different from Asians. There was little traffic congestion as well, compared to cities like Kuala Lumpur."

However, Khor, who has lived in Melbourne for 21 years, said he and his wife have had to cope with other issues.

"Taxes here are very high, and cost of labour is expensive," he said. "Hence, we do all our own housework and home maintenance."

"But the best part about living in Australia is the long weekends," Khor said enthusiastically.

Two of Melbourne's public holidays fall on the first Mondays of March and June, giving reasons for people to enjoy their long weekends.

"Two other public holidays fall on Tuesdays – the Melbourne Show in September and the Melbourne Cup in November, and these always end up being super-long weekends as many of us would take the Monday off as well."

To Khor and his family, weekends and public holidays are social occasions to catch up with friends.

"Over the years, we have built our social network of church friends, social friends and work colleagues," he said. "Melbourne is also home to many Malaysians, ranging from students of the many world-class universities here, to migrants like my family, and holidaymakers."

Of all the places that he has travelled to, Khor highly recommends Sydney and the Gold Coast. "In my opinion, these are the two top tourist destinations in Australia with Sydney's fabulous harbour and Gold Coast's awesome theme parks," he said.

His advice to tourists travelling to Melbourne is to take a drive down the Great Ocean Road.

"It's one of the world's best driving holidays. I must mention one other must-go Australian destination – Cairns where you can explore the Great Barrier Reef and the Queensland rainforest.

"But for lifestyle, Melbourne is hard to beat. Its café culture matches Europe's best. Melbournians are as crazy about sports as Malaysians, and there are pockets of restaurants in Melbourne which transport you instantly to Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Rome, Athens, and wherever else you fancy!"

Yet, nothing beats his favourite hawker centres in Malaysia. "Every time we fly home, we take the afternoon flight, and after arriving in Kuala Lumpur in the evening, we go straight to the hawker centre," he said.

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