



Being Authentic In The Midst Of Challenging Pastoral Conditions

The Birth of Living Faith Methodist Church

Living Hope Methodist Church... From Vision To Realization

Living Stone Methodist Church (LSMC) Constituting Church Conference

TRAC Archives Has A New Home!



GENERAL CONFERENCE LAITY CONVENTION 2015

Nation Building in the Workplace

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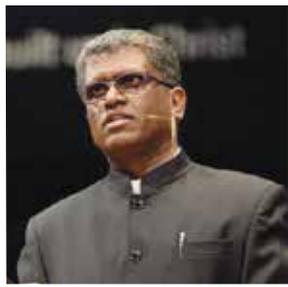
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GENERAL CONFERENCE LAITY CONVENTION 2015

Theme: Nation Building in the Workplace



Berita TRAC is a newsletter of the Trinity Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Malaysia. We welcome articles, contributions, comments and feedbacks that will edify the TRAC churches. The editor reserves the right to edit and publish selected submissions. Please forward all enquiries, comments and contributions to: admin@trac.org.my or call 03-7954 2836
website: www.trac.org.my



Rev Dr T. Jeyakumar
President, TRAC

Being Authentic In The Midst Of Challenging Pastoral Conditions – *Part Three*

3. AUTHENTIC SUFFERING

As pastors and church leaders, we sometimes think that we should be shielded from pain and suffering, of any sort, in life and ministry because we have made so many sacrifices. I have come across people who are “allergic” to church leaders and leadership in general. They often pick on church leaders and pastors by slandering them, falsely accusing, and gossiping about them through social media such as Facebook and twitter, SMSes, emails, as well as by word of mouth. I am sure those leaders, who are going through these sufferings, wish to understand the reason(s) for their experience. The truth is, more often than not, they do not understand why they go through what they are going through.

The great Apostle Paul was not immune to suffering. On the contrary, suffering was part and parcel of his life and ministry right from the very beginning. Paul was not entirely unlike us in his sufferings. Like us, he wanted very much for all of those pains to be removed (cf. 12:8). At the same time, Paul was very much unlike us in the sense that he was able to see the ray of hope even in the suffering (6:8-10).

And he understood that “when I am weak then I am strong” (12:10b, NIV). Paul experienced the deepest pain in life – slandered and rejected by those whom he led to Christ, loved and cared for. All said, “The happiest people in the world are not those who have no suffering – they are those who are not afraid of suffering.”¹ Those in church leadership, like Paul, must not be afraid of suffering, especially if we are suffering for Christ’s sake; for doing what is right, and for the sake of maintaining integrity. We too, must see the ray of hope in the midst of suffering.

There are various reasons why God allows suffering.

Although we do not have all the answers as to why we should suffer, yet, the Apostle Paul tells us four things that suffering can achieve in one’s life. We pastors must pay attention to these four points in order to gain a heavenly perspective of the benefits of suffering.

- 1. Suffering produces character (12:4-6).** Paul has had his ecstatic experiences. But here, in this chapter, he was in his weakness. He wanted the Corinthians to see him not for his past revelations but for his present weaknesses. The reason being, he did not want people to think of him as more than what he truly was. The fact that he could say this showed how his character had been wonderfully formed by all that he had endured. Suffering is a far greater tool to shape character and reveal the godliness of a person.
- 2. Suffering produces humility (12:7).** God allowed the suffering to keep him “from being too elated” (NRSV). “By means of Satan’s agency the sovereign Lord ‘gave’ Paul what was needful for him.”² In other words, the suffering was part and parcel of God’s will although it came from Satan. The revelations that he mentioned earlier did not result in him floating on cloud nine because the sufferings kept his feet on the ground.
- 3. Suffering produces dependency on God (8-9).** In the midst of suffering, Paul turned to God. In an age where we pastors are more dependent on our skills, our paper qualifications and our rich churches, the Lord desires us to be drawn to Him. Truly nothing makes us more dependent on God than suffering. In our suffering, God gives grace. If that is not enough, what is? In our sufferings, God gives us His favour to develop in us qualities of fortitude and resilience.

¹ Fernando, Ajith, *The Call to Joy and Pain*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2007), 55.

² Barnett, Paul, *The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Second Corinthians* (Leicester, England: IVP, 1988), 178.

4. Suffering brings God's power to transform human weakness (9b). Paul did not love the sufferings but he accepted them because he recognised that it was through these sufferings that God's power was made available to him. He recognized that God's grace was given to him because he was weak. Therefore, he would not allow his weakness to be an excuse to shy away from the work God had called him to do. It is precisely because of his weaknesses that Paul served God with renewed strength that comes from Him. God's grace "reaches its fullest measure and most powerful forms when issued in response to weakness.... If this is true, then the self-proclaimed strengths of the false apostles are devoid of grace!"³

The grace of God is sufficient for all physical weariness and pain. Some pastors are pastoring two churches. Some are holding leadership positions within the Annual Conference while taking on the full responsibilities of pastoring churches. We must bear in mind that God may not give us less work but he will give us more strength for the work that He has called us to do. God's grace is sufficient for all opposition. He may not remove us from places where there is opposition and slander but He will give us grace to stand against that opposition. When children and family do not turn out the way we expect, God's grace is still sufficient to comfort us. We must remember, "Our wounds do not disqualify us from Christ's service, neither do they in and of themselves qualify us. Rather as we bear them in the grace of Christ, they become vessels of grace."⁴

Conclusion

We end our quest for the authentic marks of a Christian pastor and leader by looking at the closing words of the apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 13:11-14, NRSV). They are extraordinary exhortations to encourage the Christians to push ahead. These words challenge the church leader to aim for perfection.

- **Put things in order.** Paul calls for the lives of the Christians and the life of the church to be put in order. We need to mend our ways, to correct our lives. Surely, the pastor must check his life and make progress. We must reevaluate what is important and follow the ways of the Lord.
- **Submit to the truth.** Paul calls them to listen to his appeal that they may submit to the authority of the apostolic exhortation. This is "not an optional extra."⁵ Where there is submission, we get our lives and our churches in order.
- **Be of one mind.** This is a call to unity without compromising the truth. "Though they had different abilities, different personalities, different lifestyles, the believers were to find common ground around the reality of Jesus Christ as Lord."⁶ Though we are different congregations within the Methodist Church, yet we have a common Lord. Even when we differ on some issues and practices, we must be united around the fundamental teachings of the Scripture.
- **Live in peace.** This is what is expected of a redeemed person and community. To do away with pride, selfishness, jealousy, boasting, slander and individualism is the way to demonstrate unity in Christ.

The bottom line is this: in order to remain authentic ministers, we need "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the God (the Father) and the communion of the Holy Spirit" (13:13 NRSV). "The grace shown by Christ condemns our self-centeredness and triumphalism, the love of God demonstrated by Christ's grace banishes our jealousy and factionalism, and the fellowship the Holy Spirit renders ridiculous the petty one-upmanship of minds mired in self."⁷

³ Carson, D.A., *From Triumphalism to Maturity: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10-13*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1984), 148.

⁴ Shoemaker, H. Stephen, *Strength in Weakness*, (Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1989), 164.

⁵ Carson, D.A., *From Triumphalism to Maturity: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10-13*, 183.

⁶ Dudit, Michael, *Joy in Ministry: Messages from 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1989), 149.

⁷ Carson, D.A., *From Triumphalism to Maturity: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10-13*, 185.

The Birth Of Living Faith Methodist Church

By Pastor Peter Ong

The 17th of May 2015 was an auspicious day for Living Faith Methodist Church (LFMC) for two reasons. Firstly, it was LFMC's 1st anniversary and secondly, and more importantly, it was the day LFMC was constituted as a Local Conference.

The brainchild of our President, Rev Dr T. Jeyakumar, LFMC saw her humble beginnings when the President first mooted with a few kindred spirits the idea of planting a church in or near Bandar Seri Botani, an up-and-coming township located at the southern end of Ipoh. With that aim in mind, a 3-lot shophouse in Bandar Cyber (next to Bandar Seri Botani) was identified and deemed suitable because only minimal renovations were required to convert the former biscuit factory into a church building suitable for LFMC's needs. Soon a pro tem committee called the Executive Team was set up to look into the initial groundwork to pave the way for the extension of God's Kingdom in Ipoh.



After a few rounds of meetings and with the support of the Perak District, coupled with lots of prayers and hard-work, LFMC had her inaugural service on 18 May 2014 with the President preaching on 'In God We Trust' based on Revelation 1:1-11. It was indeed an auspicious day because it happened to be Aldersgate Sunday when we, the people called Methodists, remember our founder John Wesley and his experience of his heart being strangely warmed. Our hearts were not only warmed by the Holy Spirit that day, but were also warmed when we saw as many as 280 people, men and women, young and old, near and far, who came to show their support to LFMC. So great was their support that we ran out of vacant chairs in church and had to run out to purchase plastic stools and borrow from the Tamil Methodist Preaching Point nearby!

Since that day, the Lord has been good in bringing visitors and friends to LFMC with some of them choosing to make LFMC their home church. Church school started in July 2014 and Small Group on 8 August 2014. Having seen the weekly attendance grow to an average of 50, Membership Indication Forms were then sent out with an aim to see how many persons would like to be founding members of LFMC. When we were near the required quota, the machinery of being constituted a Local Conference were set in motion by first presenting a resolution to the Perak District 2nd District Conference and subsequently to the 39th Session of TRAC wherein they were unanimously passed that LFMC be constituted sometime in 2015.

When the auspicious day finally arrived, 150 people turned up for the Constituting Service at 5.00 p.m. which was followed by the Constituting Church Conference presided by the President as the Perak District Superintendent had taken leave due to unforeseen urgent matters that required his attention. The total number of founding members was

36 persons, three members were below 21 years of age, and nine on the preparatory roll, the majority of whom were transferred from Canning Garden Methodist Church. After the membership was verified, the elective stewards (Mdm Cynthia Chow Sai York, Mrs Vivien Tham Yin Pin and Ms Jenny Yeow Geok Yen) were voted into office and with that, the church was properly constituted as "Living Faith Methodist Church."

This was followed by the First Local Conference (LC) being called to order with the President presiding over it. The Elective Stewards then proposed the name of the Lay Leader and with that, subsequent nominations were presented and the people were appointed into office as the Local Church Executive Committee 2015 as follows:

Lay Leader: Mr Danny Lai Weng Keong
LCEC Chairman: Mr Samuel Teh Sar Moh Nee
Recording Secretary: Mrs Vivien Tham Yin Pin
Treasurer: Ms Tang Sai Lin
Church School Superintendent: Mrs Yu Na Fong

Chairpersons of ministry:
Worship & Music: Ms Boey Sit Poh Yee
Property Management: Mr Samuel Teh Sar Moh Nee
Missions & Social Concerns: Ms Yee Mean Ling
Fellowship: Mdm Cynthia Chow Sai York

Delegates to the Annual Conference: Mr Danny Lai Weng Keong, Mr Samuel Teh Sar Moh Nee (1st Reserve), and Ms Yee Mean Ling (2nd Reserve)

Other committees elected were: PPRC and Nominations Committee (2015-2017).

Do continue to support us through your prayers and your finances that LFMC will live up to her Vision and Mission Statement of 'Living By Faith, Living Out Faith.'

Pastor Peter Ong is the pastor-in-charge of LFMC which is situated at No. 5, 7, 9 Jalan Lapangan Siber 5, Bandar Cyber, 31650 Ipoh. Tel./fax no. : 05-3119330, e-mail: livingfaithtrac@gmail.com

Living Hope Methodist Church

From Vision to Realization

Report from Dr Chan Chee Yan, LHMC, 8.08.2015.

The initiative of starting Living Hope Methodist Church (LHMC) came largely from Rev. Jeyakumar, who envisioned the setting up of a church to touch lives and bring Gospel hope to the communities in Kota Kemuning, Bukit Rimau, Kemuning Utama and the neighbouring housing estates in Shah Alam which had blossomed in the last few years. He had prayed over this for about six years before he fast-tracked efforts in 2013 to gather an initial team of about 14 believers, mainly Methodists, who had settled in the neighbourhoods mentioned. This group of Christians were members of different churches, viz. Klang Wesley, PJ Trinity, KL Wesley, EMC PJ, and later others from DUMC and SSMC came to lend their support. It is remarkable that people from different backgrounds and with different giftings can come together seamlessly and organize the smooth running of Living Hope, initially as a Preaching Point. We believe that it was God who had been preparing and laying the foundations all along. Much funding and many resources for the renovation of the church premises came from anonymous donors, largely through the tireless efforts of Ms. Jenny Qua, Rev. Jeyakumar and Mr. Alan Yong, the Selangor District Lay Leader. **Living Hope Methodist Preaching Point (LHMPP)** was inaugurated at a Holy Communion service led by the TRAC President, Rev. Dr. T. Jeyakumar, on Sunday 9 February, 2014. The service was attended by about 130 people from several churches in the Selangor District. Details on the formation of LHMPP and information about its other programmes and activities, such as Christmas caroling and a Guitar-Ukulele workshop, have been uploaded to our LHMC website, <http://livinghopemc.com/>, (thanks to Mr. Sharma Naidu, our LHMC webmaster).

In January 2014, Ms. Teoh Lee Yng was assigned to LHMPP as Pastor, and what a blessing she turned out to be for Living Hope in the preaching point's quest for recognition as a Local Conference. With the support of Emmanuel Methodist Church. as 'foster' mother church, as well as the TRAC Selangor District Conference, Living Hope obtained approval from the 39th Session TRAC (22-24 November, 2014) to be constituted as a Local Conference

in 2015. On Sunday 8 February, 2015, Rev. Jeyakumar presided over LHMPP's 1st Anniversary Celebrations. Six months later on 2 August, 2015, the target date to become a Local Conference, Rev. Jeyakumar preached in the Sunday worship service, led by Pastor Teoh and this was followed by the Constituting Church Conference of Living Hope Methodist Church.

By God's grace, about 120 people came to worship and witness this momentous occasion. The TRAC Selangor District Superintendent, Rev. Ricky Ho, presided over the Constituting Church Conference and invited all the charter members of LHMC to take the membership oath. Certificates were then presented by Pastor Teoh Lee Yng to all the charter members present. Five of the 37 charter members could not be present due to various reasons. LHMC has a total of 50 members of which 13 members are below 21 years of age.

The Lord had brought these members from 15 diverse churches in total:

No. of members transferred from	Church
3	Wesley Methodist Church, Klang
5	Trinity Methodist Church, P.J.
4	Emmanuel Methodist Church, P.J.
2	Damansara Utama Methodist Church
2	Wesley Methodist Church, K.L.
2	Canning Garden Methodist Church, Ipoh
2	Wesley Methodist Church, Taiping
2	Wesley Methodist Church, Parit Buntar
1	Subang Methodist Church, Subang Jaya
1	Shah Alam Chinese Methodist Church
2	Tamil Methodist Church, Klang
2	LCM-Kota Kemuning Lutheran Church
1	Straits Baptist Church, Melaka
1	Emmanuel Assembly of God, Ipoh
1	World Harvest Church, Wangsa Maju
6	- by Profession of Faith -

TOTAL 37

After the reception of the members, Holy Communion was served by Rev. Dr. T. Jeyakumar, assisted by Rev. Ricky Ho, Rev. Dr. Andrew Tan and Pastor Teoh Lee Yng.

The election of elective stewards followed, presided by Rev. Ricky Ho. The Charter members present agreed to have five elective stewards. Those duly elected were Mr. Cheah Lu Hsun, Ms. Janice Low Win Ching, Mr. Gilbert Hiew Wai Keong, Mr. Francis Chin Foo Sing and Mr. Desmond Jesudoss a/l Nelson.

After Pastor Teoh, Mr. Archibald Sitther and Dr. Chan Chee Yan had presented the name of the church, it was then declared as duly constituted and organized for the glory of God. And the Methodist Church witnesses a successful alternative approach to church planting. Praise the Lord!

The Constituting Church Conference was adjourned and, immediately following it, the Local Conference was convened and called to order by the presiding minister, Rev. Ricky Ho, at 12.05pm to elect the office-bearers.

The following were elected en bloc :

Ex-Officio Stewards:

- Church Lay Leader:* Archibald Sitther
- Lay Delegate to the Annual Conference 2015:* Chan Chee Yan
- Church Treasurer:* Lee Poo Lin, Linda
- Church School Superintendent:* Lau Chean Yee, Ian

Chairpersons of the Committee on:

- Stewardship and Finance:* Ida Khoo Cheng Ai

Christian Education: Charles Sharma Naidu a/l Achu Naidu

Christian Social Concerns: Koh Ai Lin

Membership and Evangelism: Dorita Sitther

Worship and Music: Lau Teck Chai

Property Management: Chan Chee Yan

Pastor-Parish Relations Committee [PPRC]:

Archibald Sitther (*Lay Leader*)

Chan Chee Yan (*Lay Delegate 2015*)

Sharon Renganathan (*Pastor's Appointee*)

Koh Ai Lin (*Elected member*)

Desmond Jesudoss Nelson (*Elected member*)

Committee on Nominations:

(2015-2017) Lau Chean Yee, Ian

(2015-2016) Chan Chee Yan

(2015) Archibald Sitther

Chairman, LCEC:

Pastor Teoh Lee Yng presented Dr. Chan Chee Yan as the nominee, and, there being no other nominations, and all being in agreement, Dr. Chan was elected to be the Chairman of the LCEC of Living Hope Methodist Church.

Closing : Rev. Ricky Ho adjourned the Local Conference at 12.30pm. Rev. Dr. T Jeyakumar then pronounced the Benediction, and Living Hope Methodist Church begins life as a Methodist Local Conference in service to God Almighty.



Charter Members of Living Hope Methodist Church with some of their children and honoured guests.

Living Stone Methodist Church (LSMC) Constituting Church Conference 9th August 2015

By Mr. James Teh Swee Huat

(All photographs by the courtesy of Mr Low Yang Cheng)

THE WORLD IS MY PARISH

When we speak of Methodism, we cannot avoid mentioning the name of John Wesley, the founder of the movement, and talking about his methodical and systematic approach in sharing the word of God. After his Aldersgate experience when his heart was “strangely warmed” by the Holy Spirit, John Wesley decided to bring the message of repentance with new hope of salvation in Jesus Christ to the poor and down-trodden working class. They often lived under squalid conditions in the era of the English industrial revolution. as portrayed in the movie, “Oliver Twist.” John Wesley revolutionized the concept “the world is my parish” in reaching out to non-believers and new seekers in open air preaching, instead of waiting for them to attend institutionalized church services which were then out of bounds to the proletarian society in any case.

The idea of bringing the message of God to where people are and to share the good news with them gives rise to “church planting” in our present context. Living Stone Methodist Church (LSMC) has its origin as a Preaching Point of Trinity Methodist Church in Bandar Utama Methodist Centre (BUMC) at Kayu Ara Business Park in Petaling Jaya, in September 2011. It was re-located to this current premise in Cova Square, Kota Damansara with a new name – Living Stone Methodist Church – on 16th February 2014.

A NEW CHURCH IS BORN

The significance of being a Local Conference means that the church has grown from infancy to adulthood, and is seeking financial independence from the mother church. It has the required number of constituted members (35 full members who are not less than twenty-one years of age). It will have its own pastor and its own committees to manage the affairs of the church. The church will fall back on the support of its congregation in all ministries to spearhead in its growth.

Today, 9 August 2015, is a historic day, as we witness the constituting of LSMC as a Local Conference, one and a half years after relocating to Kota Damansara on 9

February 2014. It is a new beginning for LSMC as a full-fledged church and we are to move forward in faith and zeal – trusting in God to be sovereign over all matters as proclaimed in **Zechariah 4:6**, “ This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts.” So be it. May the Spirit of God rain down His blessings abundantly upon His young church and nurture her that she may bring many fruitful returns in due season.



MSF Choir Presenting Anthem to the Lord

THE CONTITUTING SERVICE

The Constituting Service was graced by our TRAC President, Rev. Dr. T. Jeyakumar, whose sermon was on “The Deficient Church” with reference to **Revelation 2:1-7**. Other church leaders present were the District Superintendent, Rev. Ricky Ho; Pastor-in-Charge of TMCPJ, Rev. Dr. Timothy Ong, and Associate Pastor, Rev. Ting Moy Hong, and the Pastor-in-Charge of the new church, Pastor Aaron Ng. The service was blessed with the presence of the MSF Choir from the mother church.

The emphasis on a deficient church where God could raise up a church and He could equally allow the church to shut down because of its imperfection when they lost their first love in God and people even though they could be diligent in many other ways. He quoted an example of St Mary’s Church in Dublin, Ireland where even John Wesley has

preached in 1747. Subsequently, the defunct church was closed and sold. It was converted into a food/beverage and bar outlet.

Referring to **Revelation 2:1-7**, apostle John saw 7 stars and 7 lampstands where Ephesus was one considered an exemplary church with commendable diligent work; patience; tolerance; endurance; discernment against heresy but it lost its first love for God and people. To remove its guilt and imperfection, Ephesus must remember its failings and make good its shortfalls through repentance and return to its original fellowship with the Lord.



Rev. Dr. T. Jeyakumar preaching at the Service of LSMC

After the sermon, three leaders from LSMC presented the names of 52 persons who constituted the membership of the Constituting Church.

Later, the District Superintendent Rev Ricky Ho conducted the nomination and election of office bearers of the new church.

The service and election concluded on time. As it was nearly lunch hour, the guests and church members were invited to the foyer outside the sanctuary for some food and fellowship.



Rev Ricky Ho Presiding Over the Elections

THE ROAD FORWARD

Living Stone Methodist Church must aim to be an exemplary church based on an improved Ephesus model with love for God and people, and also not forget the dictum of John Wesley to “do all the good we can, in all the ways we can, for all the people we can, as long as we can.” To God be the glory.



A Section of the Congregation



A new LCEC with visiting Pastors

TRAC Archives Has A New Home!

By Mrs Goh-Tan Phing Choo



Early storage of TRAC Archives



Dedication of new Archives Room

We offered our grateful thanks to God as our TRAC President, Rev. Dr. T. Jeyakumar, dedicated the new ARCHIVES ROOM in the TRAC Headquarters to His glory and providence on 10 January 2015. It has been a long period of hope and anticipation for the Board of Archives and History (BAH) but one which eventually led to joy and fulfilment as its members marched through the door of the new Archives Room in the wake of the President and TRAC leaders.

As far back as I can remember, the photographs, books and other materials for the TRAC Archives had been stored in the Methodist Education Centre and several other locations, among which was the office of Ms Aileen Khoo in Trinity Methodist Church, Petaling Jaya.

Then, in April 2008, they were relocated to the TRAC HQ premises. The 'narrow strip of territory' wedged between the old and the new buildings was renovated with built-in shelving space to serve as the repository for the TRAC Archives. This tiny space was barely adequate even for storage purposes. The small handful of aging volunteers then engaged in archival duties were not equal to the task of preserving, managing and exhibiting TRAC's historical treasures for the wider membership in view of the ensuing space restrictions.

Thus it was with a feeling of joy and gratitude that we received the announcement in June 2013 from Pastor Jeya and the Executive Board, that the garden space adjacent to the kitchen area of the TRAC HQ would be renovated to serve as the Archives Room. Glory be to God!

The process of restoring, arranging and displaying archival materials in the new premises is underway with

the generous assistance of our loyal Board members as well as others who come in during their free time to carry out this labour of love. There is still much to be done!

A modest selection of essential equipment will have to be installed; old and treasured photographs need to be identified, arranged and catalogued; various kinds of church memorabilia to be restored and arranged; and oral history accounts of pastors and church members to be recorded and transcribed.



TRAC Archives entrance



New Archives Room

However, we are optimistic that by the middle of the coming year, the TRAC Archives will be ready to launch a modest welcome to researchers, students of theology and other users in search of information and materials on the history and development of our member churches. In the meantime, we also want to help our member churches set up their local archives. We shall continue to bring to them the importance of archiving their church records and historical materials no longer in current use, as well as to promote interest in the history and heritage of their churches and congregations, especially amongst the children and youth.

History is Ministry! It is remembering the past, being

grateful for the present, and inspiring and planning for the future. Our theme song, “Find Us Faithful”, reminds us of our commitment to these ideals as we prepare to celebrate the anniversaries of our various churches and ministries. It is, indeed, “a festival to the Lord” (UMC General Commission on Archives and History).

We gratefully record our appreciation for the support and benevolence of our President, Rev. Dr. T. Jeyakumar; the TRAC HQ Administrator, Mr. Lim Cheng Hin; the members of the Board of Archives and History; and all our generous donors and supporters for the roles they have played in making our dream a reality. Praise be to God!



Board of Archives and History

General Conference Laity Convention 2015

Theme: Nation Building in the Workplace

By Datin Judy Chin
 Conference Lay Leader

There were 231 people from all the seven Methodist Conferences gathered at Port Dickson Methodist Centre on 21-23 May 2015 for the General Conference Laity Convention (GCLC). The Convention speakers were Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik, Rev. Sivin Kit, Dr. Mark Lovatt, Tan Sri Lee Oi Hian, Dr. Sii How Sing and Dato' Dr. Alex Mathews.



Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik

Bishop Ong began by quoting **Proverbs 14:34** "Righteousness exalts a nation but sin condemns any people" and **Proverbs 29:4** "By justice a king gives a country stability but those who are greedy for bribes tear it down." He also quoted the five fundamentals of the Rukunegara which was established on Merdeka Day, 1970, namely:

Belief in God; Loyalty to King and Country; Supremacy of the Constitution; Rule of Law; Good behaviour and morality.

He highlighted the Social Principles in the Methodist Book of Discipline which provide guidelines related to nation building in the workplace. That this nation has deviated from scriptural, constitutional, and the Methodist Social Principles for nation building is evident in the economic, social, moral and spiritual state the nation is in. Bishop reminded us that all Christians are called to belong, to be, and to do God's service in the church and in the world. This requires an understanding of current issues in the workplace (or marketplace) based on scriptural principles in these present challenging times. God places us in different workplaces (inclusive of domestic and community work) so that spheres of influence vary, e.g. Esther becoming queen according to His sovereign plan. Being missional in the workplace is a calling which cannot be ignored even though Christians are the minority, like the Jews and Mordecai in Susa, the capital of Persia, or when facing exile or hostile conditions. We are called to thrive not just survive in the midst of racism, injustice and religious domination of the majority. "Exile is the worst that reveals the best." – Eugene Peterson

Bishop urged all Methodists to obey the three general rules of the Methodist Church formulated by John Wesley:

1. Do no harm.
2. Do good.
3. Attend upon all ordinances of God (e.g. the public worship of God, the ministry of the Word, the Holy Communion, family and private prayer, searching the Scriptures, fasting or abstinence).

The first session ended with participants making a pledge drafted by Bishop Ong. "We as God's called people in the Methodist Family who belong to Him in the Church of Malaysia, resolve to be sanctified people in our workplace, and to serve His Purpose in seeking the welfare of Malaysia by building this Nation in our generation. Amen."

The key emphasis in Rev. Sivin Kit's session on "Neighbours in the Workplace" is the hidden responsibility of every Christian on how to engage neighbours in the workplace for the purpose of nation building. Rev. Kit shared from **Mathew 13:33**, the Parable of the Yeast. He encouraged participants not to underestimate the yeast ministry. The minority may be much smaller in numbers but they are like yeast which, when mixed into a large amount of flour, will work all through the dough.

He raised some pertinent questions:

1. Are you angry with the people or are you upset with the policies in Malaysia?
 Everything is not political but politicized. Everything is political but politics is not everything. He encouraged everyone to address issues with cool heads, warm hearts and active hands.
2. Are we doing too much in church? Can we tithe 10% of church time for reaching out to the majority in the interiors? God can work through us in our hidden responsibility if we are willing to connect with or open doors to our neighbour. God can use anyone and everyone even just through having daily lunches together with our "neighbours".

He quoted Ignacio Ellacuria, a Jesuit priest and philosopher, who said, "We are a people of the Gospel, a gospel that proclaims the reign of God and that call us to try to transform this earth into as close a likeness of that reign as possible." Rev. Kit reminded us that we need to be sent into the world just as how Jesus was sent to us and we should not underestimate how God can use everyone in hidden responsibilities.



Dr. Mark Lovatt

Dr. Mark Lovatt, speaking on “Values in the Workplace”, presented the 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) where Malaysia scored 52 out of 100, and was ranked 50 out of 175 countries (the lower the score the higher the integrity). Bribery is contrary to God’s very nature and biblical references condemning it are found in **Exodus 23:8** “Do not accept a bribe for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous” and in **Amos 5:12** “For I know how many are your offences and how great your sins. You oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts.”

The difference between a gift and a bribe is clear. A gift is a natural part of relationship building out of love, friendship and gratitude. A bribe is given with the intent of generating obligation. The difference is often found in the amount of money involved, the parties involved and the motivation. Our values determine our priorities with regards to money, family, relationships, security, enjoyment, status and the Kingdom of God. Our values should be aligned with God’s values which are right relationships with people, justice, truth, love, holiness, humility, honesty and the fruit of the Spirit. God requires us to “act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with [our] God.” (**Micah 6:8**)



Tan Sri Lee Oi Hian

Two testimonies were shared by workplace corporate figures, Tan Sri Lee Oi Hian and Dr. Sii How Sing. Tan Sri Lee Oi Hian testified to God’s goodness in his personal life from a child till who he is today--the CEO of Kuala Lumpur Kepong Berhad, a company with 40,000 employees. He manages the company with organizational values such as honesty, integrity, fairness, looking beyond profits, developing potential and work satisfaction through mentoring and aiming for the best transformative practices. Tan Sri Lee walks the talk as evidenced by the building of low-cost homes, and the building of communities in plantations by providing preschools, infrastructure facilities and



Rev. Dr. Sivin Kit

medical care. He recognizes that people have different personalities, gifting, endowments, social positions, families, friends, and occupations which can be used to advance God’s Kingdom. He quoted Mordecai telling Queen Esther: “And who knows whether you have not come to the Kingdom for such a time as this?” (**Esther 4:14**) He raised a challenging question – “How can we be positive as the minority in the present climate to influence the majority? Hope and transformation of the nation will come from Christians. Revival will come after repentance before God can work in our homes, churches, cities and nation.” He ended by encouraging all to use our positions and relationships to lead people to the Lord whether in the workplace, social circles, family even schools. We can be a catalyst for God wherever He places us.

Dr. Sii How Sing, born in Sibuluan, was the GM and COO of a publicly listed company in Australia. Dr. Sii’s testimony had several humorous moments illustrating how he faced temptations which could have undermined his integrity and morality. This is his personal quote: “Collect stones from ourselves before throwing stones at others.” He encouraged us to memorize Scripture verses, which he has personally practiced since his youth and he found them handy when temptations arose. He quoted **Psalms 119:11**, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.” Dr. Sii reflected on the reality of inevitable temptations in the corporate world and how Christians can stand out as shining lights in the darkness of temptations. Many could relate to Dr. Sii’s honest and unashamed sharing of tempting moments in a corporate person’s life. He concluded with **Hebrews 10:24** “And let us consider how we can spur one another on toward love and good deeds,” reminding corporate personalities of their opportunities for doing good to their employees in policies and working environment.



Dr. Sii How Sing



Dato’ Dr. Alex Mathews

The closing plenary session was taken by Dato’ Dr. Alex Mathews, a gynaecologist by profession and a Board Member of Seminari Theoloji Malaysia, who made a visual impact by appearing in baju Melayu. Dr. Mathews challenged us to be agents of change by first changing ourselves. He confessed to learning humility from his patients and nurses. He pointed

“The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranks countries and territories based on how corrupt their public sector is perceived to be. A country or territory’s score indicates the perceived level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). A country or territory’s rank indicates its position relative to the other countries and territories in the index. This year’s index includes 175 countries and territories.”



Fellowship with plenary speakers



GCLC 2015 Plenary session

to Hudson Taylor as an example of how mission work was started in the interior parts of China by adopting the culture of the Chinese -- learning their language, and dressing and eating like them. Through his efforts to be like them, he was readily accepted by them. Dr. Mathews reminded us that all that we do is done for Christ. "If we love Christ, we should love the people He loves". Rather than complaining about what we don't have, we should talk about what we can do with what we have."

Participants were divided into their respective Conferences to discuss all that was said by the Plenary speakers. Conference responses will be submitted to the Council of Laity who will recommend follow-up action for approval by the General Conference Executive Council. Meanwhile, nothing can stop us from implementing all that has been highlighted at GCLC 2015 to be God's witnesses in the workplace to build the nation.

TRAC's total participation numbered 39, inclusive of 2 speakers and helpers. Findings from discussions and responses given, will be constructive and helpful towards final recommendations for nation building in the workplace. Summary of TRAC's responses are as follows:

On being missional

- (a) Visitations to non believers and their family members in times of need.
- (b) Be good employers showing love and concern to non Christian employees.
- (c) Be inclusive through sponsoring non believers in education and providing tuition for poor students.

On being neighbours

- (a) Remove prejudices and connect with friends from different faiths and social economic backgrounds.
- (b) Stop the hate syndrome.
- (c) Engage with local community leaders of different religious backgrounds.
- (d) Be involved in support groups to engage with non Christians.
- (e) Conduct Alpha Workplace courses.

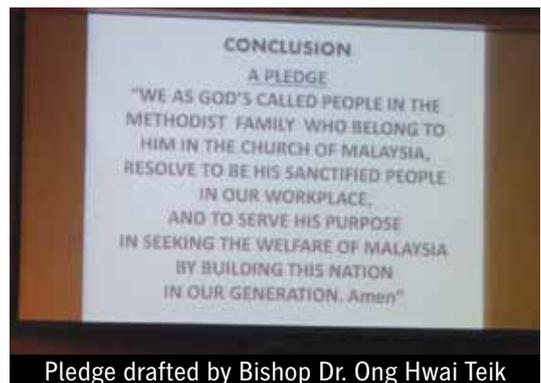
On being ethical

- (a) Practicing ethics in daily living even in small things as an effective form of witnessing
- (b) Share "Guide for Holy Living in Turbulent times" over the pulpit and in small groups
- (c) Build a culture of honesty and ethics and be the catalyst for change, starting with the local church then the community and thereafter the nation

Let us continue to pray and hope that awareness to Nation Building in the Workplace does not begin and end at GCLC 2015 but will be further developed to establish Christian presence and witnessing wherever we are. Let us be obedient to the Great Commission and be proactive in our missional efforts to "GO" and not stay within the comfort zone of the 4 walls of the church, to follow the second greatest commandment "to love our neighbours" through integration rather than segregation and last but not least, to be shining examples of Christian ethics beginning with small things so that we can be empowered to do greater things for Christ. Let us persevere with hope that God can use us to be agents of change at a "time like this".



TRAC participants



Pledge drafted by Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik



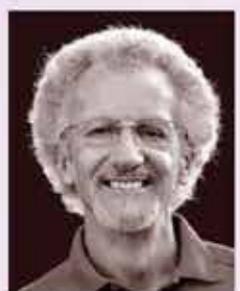
Where is God when it hurts?

DR. PHILIP YANCEY • 14 & 15 NOVEMBER 2015



A Conference hosted by Wesley Methodist Church Kuala Lumpur in partnership with PVM Harvest Resources

About Dr Philip Yancey



Growing up in a strict, fundamentalist church in the southern USA, a young Philip Yancey tended to view God as "a scowling Supercop, searching for anyone who might be having a good time - in order to squash them." Yancey jokes today about being 'in recovery' from a toxic church. "Of course, there were good qualities too. If a neighbor's house burned down, the congregation would rally around and show charity - if, that is, the house belonged to a white person. I grew up confused by the contradictions. We heard about love and grace, but I didn't experience much. And we were taught that God answers prayers, miraculously, but my father died of polio just after my first birthday, despite many prayers for his healing."

For Yancey, reading offered a window to a different world. So, he devoured books that opened his mind, challenged his upbringing, and went against what he had been taught. A sense of betrayal engulfed him. "I felt I had been lied to. I went through a period of reacting against everything I was taught and even discarding my faith. I began my journey back mainly by encountering a world very different than I had been taught, an expansive world of beauty and goodness. Along the way I realized that God had been misrepresented to me. Cautiously, warily, I returned, circling around the faith to see if it might be true."

Ever since, Yancey has explored the most basic questions and deepest mysteries of the Christian faith, taking millions of readers with him. Early on he crafted best-selling books such as *Disappointment with God* and *Where is God When it Hurts?* while also editing *The Student Bible*. More recently, he has felt the freedom to explore central issues of the Christian faith, penning award-winning titles such as *The Jesus I Never Knew*, *What's So Amazing About Grace?* and *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* His books have garnered 13 Gold Medalion Awards from Christian publishers and booksellers. He currently has more than 15 million books in print, published in 35 languages worldwide.

SATURDAY (9.30am - 4.30pm)

- Session 1: The Question That Never Goes Away
- Session 2: Where Is God When It Hurts?
- Session 3: The Secret of the Universe

SUNDAY (9.00am - 12.30pm)

- Session 4: A King and A Prostitute
- Session 5: Q & A

REGISTRATION

REG. TYPE	DUE DATE	FEE/PAX
Early Bird	By 15 Sep 2015	RM 40
Normal	16 Sep 2015 - 20 Oct 2015	RM 50
Late	21 Oct 2015 - 13 Nov 2015	RM 65
Walk-in	14 Nov 2015	RM 80

Full-time Student Rate:
50% discount off Normal registration fee.

- Registration must be accompanied by payment to be valid.
- Fees paid are non-refundable; however you may transfer your registration to another person.

For registration form, please download from www.klwesley.org
For enquiries, please call the Church Office, 03-2072-0338/9 or email to wmckl@klwesley.org

The Probationary Ministers-Local Pastors Retreat

By Teoh Lee Yng, Pastor of Living Hope Methodist Church



The Probationary Ministers-Local Pastors Retreat was held on 11–13 August 2015 at the Methodist Bungalow in Fraser's Hill and was attended by 19 pastors, including the facilitators. I found it personally to be an enriching experience.

For a start, it was refreshing for me to be able to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the city to a serene place on Fraser's Hill. The sessions held were also relevant and practical. From discovering our personality types through the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to getting familiar with the Methodist Discipline, the sessions were all helpful to everyday ministry.

Perhaps what was most encouraging to me was to be able to connect with other fellow pastors as friends. The conversations over meals and during break time allowed us to get to know one other better and to share with each other our thoughts and concerns. And one thing that came as a pleasant surprise to me was to discover how well our Methodist pastors can sing!

Overall, the Probationary Pastors' Retreat has been a good experience and I believe all of us would have been edified in one way or another.