

BERITA TRAC



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A Vision For The World

TRAC Delegation To 11th Session General Conference 2016

Wesley Methodist Church, Penang - 125th Anniversary Celebration

TRAC Pastoral Appointments

27th PMSM CONFERENCE KAMPAR-2016



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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

Rev. Dr. T. Jeyakumar was re-elected as TRAC President on the first ballot at the 41st Session of TRAC held on 26-29 November 2016.

A Vision For The World (Isaiah 6:1-8)

Introduction

Bible commentators who look at Isaiah chapter 6 discuss whether this passage speaks of Isaiah's first calling or second calling. If you ask me, I will say it is neither. In the case of Isaiah, I propose that he had a call earlier. As a result of that calling, he had visions (1:1) and he spoke God's word to the people. But he did not identify with the people he spoke to and without second thoughts he was preaching "woe" to others - 1:4; 5:20. He had been telling people that they were going to be ruined. And so God found it necessary to give him this vision so that he could rededicate his life to God and gain a fresh vision for the world.

1. The Vision (vv. 1-4)

Under Uzziah the southern kingdom (i.e. Judah) prospered. A prosperous nation made the king become proud, so much so, he decided that he would offer incense in the Temple (2 Chron. 26). The Lord struck him with leprosy for taking upon himself the priestly function. In the year that King Uzziah died Isaiah had a vision of the Lord. Isaiah must have gone to the Temple umpteen times before, but there was no vision of God. Isaiah must have been quite somebody because he could go in and out of the Palace as he pleased. His life was good and he could just tell others how they must live. But when Uzziah was struck down by God and eventually died, Isaiah turned up in the Temple possibly feeling helpless or maybe even hopeless. That was when he lifted his eyes upward and had a vision. Can I ask us a question? Who or what is in our lives that is blocking that vision of God? What is in our lives that must die so that we can have a clear vision of God?

Isaiah saw God seated on the throne. He saw God in His sovereignty. He saw God in His holiness. The temple was filled with smoke (a symbol of the presence of God). He heard the angelic beings call out "holy, holy, holy." Isaiah probably understood why God was severe with Uzziah. It is because He is the thrice holy God. Because He is a holy God we need to live holy lives in order to serve Him.

2. The Conviction (vv. 5-7)

When Isaiah saw God in His holiness he was convicted of his own sins. He realized that he was not any different from the people he spoke to. Then he said, "Woe is me. I am a man of unclean lips." It is only when we admit our sins that God's cleansing comes and we become useful to God (vv. 6-7).

Why did Isaiah need a vision of God in the midst of doing ministry? Because it is possible to do ministry mechanically and robotically; because it is possible to lose the passion for the God-given task and the compassion for the people we minister to, and lose the vision and the mission altogether. If you and I are not careful it can happen to us. It is possible that after some time ministry is no more about God, or people, or gospel or missions. We need to guard ourselves against such a condition.

3. The Dedication (v. 8)

Then Isaiah heard God say, "Whom shall I send?" It appears from these words that God is always short of men and women with proper understanding of God and proper understanding of themselves. Isaiah, who had that fresh vision of God was all tuned in to hear God. God was not even calling him. God posed a general question. He overheard the question and quickly volunteered. After the vision and after the cleansing Isaiah was all ready to submit to the will of God. God's will is that everyone hears His message and repents and be saved. Isaiah was willing to submit his life to go wherever and to whoever God would send Him.

Leighton Ford puts it like this: "What beats centrally in the heart of our missionary God, as revealed in the Scriptures, must always be central in the agenda of his missionary people." Brothers and sisters, one cannot have been in the presence of God and walk away without sharing in the concerns of God.

In chapter 6, Isaiah initially only heard the voice of the seraphs. But when he had been cleansed he heard the voice of God. John Wesley said, "Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth." Wesley was certainly speaking about Isaiah kind of people. Thankfully there are still people who are hearing and responding to God and shaking up the gates of hell.

A Final Word

A vision of the holy God, the conviction of our own sins, and a rededication of our lives can result in a renewed vision to reach out to the world. Isaiah was blessed with such an experience. May I challenge us to seek the Holy God so that we may have a renewed vision for the world that is still lost!

(The sermon above, now in abbreviated form, was delivered at the Opening Service of the 41st Session TRAC.)

Arminianism and Calvinism: Debated Scriptural Passages

By Rev. Andrew Tan and Mr. David Tan

INTRODUCTION

This is the third in a series of four articles written to assist Methodist members to be aware of their own doctrinal position which is Arminian. In the first article, we explained how the “Young, Restless, and Reformed” movement has brought Calvinism back onto the theological centre-stage, and raises challenges to our Arminian beliefs. We also discussed issues of God’s sovereignty, human free will, and the problem of evil and unbelievers. In the second, we examined some of the key Scriptural passages in this debate. Now, we will look at some common misunderstandings about what Arminians actually believe. This article in particular draws heavily (though not exclusively) from Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities by Roger Olson. We hope that this series of articles will help us not only to understand our doctrinal position and the Scriptures that support it but also to see it as credible, and be able to articulate and defend it.

WHY DISCUSS MISUNDERSTANDINGS?

Why devote an entire article to discussing misunderstandings about Arminian theology? Arminian theology is often misunderstood, even by those who claim to be Arminians! As a result, beliefs that are neither Scriptural nor Arminian become confused with proper Arminian theology. This results in (1) the spread of unsound teaching among those who are Arminians, and (2) erroneous rejection of Arminian theology because of these unsound (but not actually Arminian!) teachings. Much, though certainly not all, Calvinist criticism of Arminian belief is due to these misunderstandings. While addressing these misunderstandings will not resolve all the differences between these two parties, (1) it can help Calvinists see Arminian theology as a reasonable belief, (2) helps both parties be on the same page in dialogue, and (3) keep us Arminians on track in what we actually

hold to.

As with each of the preceding articles, we are limited in both scope and depth, and a list for further reading will be provided in the fourth article of this series. The misunderstandings we will cover here are: (1) Arminianism promotes salvation by works and denies grace, (2) Arminianism is human-centred rather than God-centred, (3) Arminianism believes in human free-will and denies God’s sovereignty, (4) Arminian teaching that salvation can be lost leads to a fearful Christian life, and (5) there is a middle ground between Arminian and Calvinist theology.

DOES ARMINIANISM TEACH SALVATION BY WORKS?

A frequent accusation against Arminianism is that it denies salvation by grace alone because it introduces a human element of works. In this accusation, the Arminian belief that human beings can choose to accept or reject God’s offer of salvation is tantamount to earning salvation through our act of repentance. The only way to preserve salvation by grace alone, many Calvinists say, is to deny human beings any role in our salvation. Beyond this, the Arminian teaching that it is possible to fall away from salvation (which we shall explore in further detail below) makes staying saved dependent on human works.

Let us make it clear: Arminians affirm that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone. Nothing that we do can earn or merit salvation. Even the ability to accept or reject God’s offer of salvation must first be made possible by an act of God’s grace (see our first article, where we discuss prevenient grace). Does accepting God’s gift of salvation make us any more worthy, give us a better standing than other human beings, or earn us our salvation? To each question, the Arminian response

is no! If I were to receive a cheque for a sum of money as a gift, and proceed to deposit that cheque in my bank account, would I have earned that money or worked for it in any way? In receiving God's gift of salvation, we do even less – in the example provided, I would have had to travel to the bank and make a deposit! In receiving God's salvation, we rest fully in God to do all the work. Our only role is entirely passive – to stop resisting God's grace.

What then of works in order to “stay saved?” Many Arminians, John Wesley being a prime example, have emphasized the importance of works in the Christian life. This is a biblical teaching, exemplified clearly not only in the letters to the Hebrews and to James, but also throughout Jesus' teachings in the Gospels and Paul's teachings in his letters. Let us once again clearly state: we have been saved, not by good works, but for good works (Ephesians 2:8-10)! The call to remain in Christ lest we are thrown away and wither (the parable of the vine, John 15:1-17) is not a call to be hard at work for fear of losing our salvation. Rather, it is a clear statement that if we reject God's grace and fail to remain in Christ, we will perish. When we separate ourselves from Christ, one sign of that will be our inability to be fruitful, as true faith must be more than intellectual assent but a belief and trust in Christ that will necessarily result in a life of good works that reflects that belief (James 2:14-26).

IS ARMINIANISM HUMAN-CENTRED?

Another common misunderstanding about Arminianism is that it is a human-centred rather than a God-centred theology. This view states that Arminian theology places the focus on human free-will and choice, placing our ultimate destiny in our hands, and denying God the full glory of His work in our salvation. These critics then proceed to say that this high view of humanity in Arminianism has a tendency to diminish our acknowledgement of the centrality of God in our lives and in the world, compromising our ability to worship Him, leading us to put our faith in human beings rather than in God.

In actual fact, Arminian theology begins and ends with God. Yes, Arminian theology emphasizes libertarian free will – that God gives those He calls a real and free choice to choose or to reject Him. However, the concern of Arminians in upholding free will is not to put the spotlight on wonderful human beings but rather to explain why God is not the author of sin and evil, and to understand why the Bible teaches that not all will be saved. We have written at length on this in our first article, under the section “The Problem of Evil and Unbelievers.” Arminians teach human free will and choice because we believe the Bible teaches that it is the way God has chosen to relate to His creation, and because this doctrine should lead us to worship a good, generous, and self-giving God.

Arminian theology does not in fact have an optimistic view of fallen humanity. Both Calvinism and Arminianism affirm total depravity – that there is no part of human beings that is not affected and marred by sin. We are made in the image of God, but sin has marred that image and irrevocably crippled our ability to be good, to form healthy families, to love our neighbours, and to construct a just and equitable society. Our hope is not in human beings or human society, but in the fact that God's plan to redeem and restore the world, to create a new heaven and new earth, and to have His kingdom come and His will done on earth, as it is in heaven, come to fruition in His time.

DOES ARMINIANISM DENY GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY?

Many Calvinists believe that if libertarian free will exists, God cannot possibly be sovereign. If human beings can go against God's plan, it would mean that God's will can be thwarted. In this view, we Arminians may say that we believe in God's sovereignty, but in actual fact we do not believe that God is able to dictate every detail of the universe. If God is not fully in control of everything, how can He be truly sovereign, and how can we trust that His promises and plans will come to pass?

In our first article, under the section “God's Sovereignty and Human Free Will,” we have discussed the very

different Arminian and Calvinist understandings of this subject. It will suffice to say here that Arminians believe God can dictate every detail of the universe including every choice we make, but He has made us moral creatures with the real ability to choose good and evil, to choose God or to reject Him. We have discussed in the above sections of this article how both sin and God's grace have affected our ability to choose. Ultimately, our ability to choose or reject God is a God-given gift twice over – first in how God originally designed us to be, and second when by prevenient grace He enables us to receive His gift of salvation. God's power enables all this, and thus His sovereignty is preserved.

The question remains, however, whether human choice can thwart God's will. The Arminian answer to that is yes, but only with God's permission and enabling, and only temporarily. It may seem shocking that a Christian would claim that human beings can defy God's will, but if we think upon it, that is what sin is – human beings going against God's will. Each rejection of God, each act done in hate, pride, envy, or self-love, all these things are acts that clash with what God desires. And yet, if we look at the story of the Scriptures, God is able to take into account human sinfulness to bring good out of it, and to work out His ultimate plan to defeat sin and restore all creation to Himself. We see this in the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and his brothers, and the whole story of the nation of Israel. We see this at the cross in the death of Jesus at the hands of sinful men. Because God has triumphed at every point in spite of human rebellion, we can trust that He will be able to fulfil all that He has promised. In the meantime, we are called to pray as Jesus taught us, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

DOES THE POSSIBILITY OF FALLING AWAY CREATE A LIFE OF FEAR?

As we covered in the second article in this series, most Arminians believe the Scriptures teach that it is possible to turn away from the faith and compromise one's salvation. For those who hold to a "once saved always saved" view of salvation, the Arminian position

appears to be frightening. What happens to assurance of salvation? How can one know that one will persevere to the end? Won't such a teaching cause Christians to work to keep their salvation, rather than do good works out of thankfulness to God? And how can this belief be compatible with the peace, joy, and hope that Jesus promised?

The Scriptural basis for the possibility of falling away has been explored in more detail in the second article, under "Warnings against Falling Away." Briefly, Scripture contains both promises that God can and will keep us, and warnings that we can choose to go astray if we choose to remove ourselves from our connection with Christ, and from under God's promises and protection. Arminians contend that these two statements are not incompatible. We need not fear that we will accidentally lose our salvation, and we know that God works to protect us from the temptations of the world and to pursue us when we wander away. Yet, it remains possible for us to make a shipwreck of our faith (1 Timothy 1:18-20) by repeatedly and persistently rejecting God's grace until we no longer desire God or His grace.

The possibility of turning away from God should be a sobering and difficult teaching. Just because a teaching has unpleasant implications does not make it incorrect. How though, is the Christian supposed to find peace while heeding this warning? Let us start by comparing human relationships. I (David Tan) have a good relationship with my father. I know him and trust him, and I have never worried that our relationship could be damaged beyond repair. I realise that it is possible that this could happen, but it would require one or both of us to change in ways that are inconceivable. Simply put, I enjoy our father-son relationship, and know that it is a constant I can rely on. If this is the assurance one can find in a human relationship, how much more it should be with God! Scripture compares the relationship between Christ and the Church to the relationship between husband and wife. We know that in the broken world we live in, there are many marriages that fail, and many more that fall far short of what they should be. Yet, when a marriage relationship is healthy, husband and

wife can both recognize that their relationship can be wrecked, while knowing there is no reason that should ever take place. They need not live in fear or worry. This is all the more true for us as Christians, for it is God who is our partner, and He is faithful even when we are faithless (2 Timothy 2:13).

WHY CAN'T ARMINIANS AND CALVINISTS FIND A COMPROMISE?

When Arminians and Calvinists start debating, many Christians wonder why we can't find some middle ground, affirm both human choice and God's sovereignty, and move on. These arguments are often divisive, are never-ending, and seem irrelevant to many aspects of the Christian life. They would like us to find a compromise, establish unity, and focus on the work of preaching the good news of Jesus, and what he accomplished through His life, death, and resurrection.

Indeed, Arminians and Calvinists both need to recognize that we have a common cause – proclaiming Christ and His Kingdom – that is far more important than the theological differences we have. We have different understandings of how we are saved and how God's sovereignty is expressed, but we preach the same gospel. We may disagree, dialogue, and debate, but we should not let this obscure the fact that we are co-workers for Christ. Too much inflammatory language has been used, with each side accusing the other of distorting, or even denying the gospel. Seeking the truth is important; but so is our testimony to the world around us in the way we treat one another.

Having said this, there are at least two reasons why this debate of four hundred years and counting will not just go away. First, these theologies have important implications for our understanding of God, of the role of prayer, for how we explain and respond to evil and suffering, and much more. These are not merely theoretical issues, but affect the lives of individuals, the shared language of church communities, and the practice of pastoral care. Second, Arminian and Calvinist theology agree on many

points but are logically incompatible with each other. It is a gross oversimplification to say that Arminianism is about human choice and Calvinism is about God's sovereignty. Both Arminianism and Calvinism affirm human choice and God's sovereignty, but explain how these interact in different ways. One states that human beings can choose to accept or reject God's offer of salvation while the other denies this. One holds that salvation is truly available to all while the other affirms that salvation is only for some. It is possible for both to be wrong or incomplete, but both cannot be correct – this would go beyond paradox into sheer logical contradiction.

A CALL FOR UNDERSTANDING

We have tackled here four common misconceptions about what Arminians believe, and a fifth question that many frustrated with this debate have. It is not just Calvinists who have these misconceptions! Many Arminians have questions about their own beliefs, and we hope that these four misconceptions will provide a starting point for answering these questions. For those who find themselves in dialogue or debate with Calvinists, we hope that this paper will help to clear up these misunderstandings – not to score debate points, but so that you can have an actual conversation instead of talking past each other. And, to Calvinists, we recognize that this is an important and contentious issue. Let us seek first to understand what the other side actually believes before we put forth our objections.

Even as we call for understanding and hope that we can overcome acrimony, we realize that actual agreement may well need to wait until Christ returns. Beyond civility and mutual understanding, we need to figure out how we will live and work with each other, both in our local churches and in the larger Christian community. We will offer some suggestions on this and other issues in the final article in this series.

TRAC Delegation To 11th Session General Conference 2016 in Sibu Sarawak, With Bishop Dr. Ong

(Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik was re-elected on the first ballot)



A Pastoral Letter From The Episcopal Office

The Methodist Church in Malaysia Family praises and thanks Almighty God for His sovereign guidance and rich blessings received in our just concluded 11th General Conference [20-23 Sept 2016] gathering and proceedings that went smoothly and edifyingly in Sibü.

It was a fruitful time of fellowshiping, discussion, receiving input and reports, and discerning the will of the Lord of the Church in our decision making. The theme adopted for the 2017-2020 quadrennium is *A Church after God's Own Heart* [see item #5 below]. Please continue to uphold me in prayer as the Bishop, together with our brothers Anthony Row [GC Secretary] and Tan Swee Ann [GC Treasurer] as the elected GC Officers for the next quadrennium. Let me thank all our members and churches, as well as our friends from the wider Christian community in Malaysia for your steadfast prayers, warm concern and enriching support.

I also take this opportunity to call on us in the Methodist Family to pray fervently for our beloved nation at this *critical time of need* as we face many moral, political, social, economic, environmental, health, ethnic and religious challenges. We can do this together by using the intercessory strategy of the Issachar Watchmen Movement of the Methodist Church in Malaysia below, and adding other intercessions that you may have before God's throne of grace.

The 6 KEY STRATEGIC AREAS / PRAYER FOCI of the Issachar Watchmen Movement at the personal, local church, Annual Conference and General Conference levels are:

- #1. **We pray for the “clearance”/ breaking down of the influence of “the cosmic powers over this present darkness”,** “the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” [Eph 6:12] that infect our whole nation, invisibly and visibly.
- #2. **We pray for the rise, growth and completion of God's Church in Malaysia** – as we prepare and look forward to receiving the unreached people groups in our land, especially the obviously bigger ones, so that the Church of God in Malaysia may be complete.
- #3. **We pray for the crucial institutions in our land at this time** – viz Conference of Rulers, Parliament, Judiciary, AG's Office, Police Force especially the IGP's Office, MACC, the Military/ Army, Bank Negara and the Education Ministry.
- #4. **We pray for progressive political re-structuring and reforms** - so that there is greater effective “check and balance” in the governance machinery of our country.
- #5. **We pray for The Methodist Church in Malaysia to be a Church after God's Own Heart** –experiencing:
 - * **Every Methodist Personally Renewed** in his/her 1st love for Jesus.
 - * **Every Methodist Church Congregationally Revived** as in the Book of Acts.
 - * **The General Conference to be Nationally Refocused and Reframed** after the Word of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- #6. **We pray that we will successfully leave a generational legacy** – where a new God-fearing generation is raised up in the home/ family, the church and the nation.

May we as God's people called Methodists be A Church after God's own Heart, “keeping in step with the Spirit” now and into the new quadrennium [2017-2020].

Bishop Ong Hwai Teik
The Methodist Church in Malaysia
27 September 2016

Jeremiah Extension (JX)

Ministry Quest

By Pastor Chang Choy Quin

First, we would like to say that Jeremiah Extension (JX) is not only for those who have gone through Jeremiah School. JX is a rebranding of a programme called Christian Vocation Series (CVS) that the Board of Youth Work has been running for the past few years. We put all the syllabus together and added some practical sessions like internship in a church and field trips to Orang Asli kampungs and made it into a one-month learning experience. Another objective of JX is also to re-affirm and re-confirm God's calling into the full-time ministry.

A little history about CVS: Owing to the great need for full-time workers in TRAC, CVS was initiated by some JS alumni especially for those who have the heart for exploring full-time ministry but who are still working or studying. CVS has modules like *Understanding Yourself and Ministry Opportunities*; *Discernment: Understanding God's will*; *Understanding God's Heart*. We also formed support groups during CVS with the purpose of keeping the participants' hearts burning through the support of other Christians. We hope to lead them to be confident about the gifts and talents that God has given to them. This will hopefully encourage them to be more involved in ministry.

The JX mission is to transform the lives of those who have heard God's calling by partnering with local churches. We invite young people to explore God's call through community, mentoring relationships and dynamic learning experiences. We will then release them back to their community a little bit better prepared for Christian leadership and discipleship.

Romans 8:28-30

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.



The first impression that I got when I first heard of Jeremiah Extension (or JX for short) was that it was most likely going to be a seminar type of programme where we would stay at a "nice" hotel or a retreat centre like PDMC (Port Dickson Methodist Centre), and we would have perhaps up to 15+ participants. I felt that it was going to be a "conventional" style for us as alumni of Jeremiah School.

However, it turned out to be an eye-opening, God-encountering experience that helped me to assess myself throughout the programme. It also gets you pondering your next decisions in life and "where-to-go" after this – and what kind of ministry you can fit into. JX is all about reflecting and spending the most time with God on your life's journey towards ministry and responding to his call. It is about affirming your seriousness about going into full-time ministry.

JX is also a 'place' where I can discover which areas of my personality and character I should work on in order to be fruitful in ministry. This is where we learn from each other and gain more input and clarification from various speakers.

It is also an opportunity to get exposed to how different churches function and how they work together to contribute to the growth and spirituality of their members. During internship, I got to work with the pastor and the staff in the church office and understand how their styles of working differ from my home church.

All in all, I find that JX is worth exploring and helpful for finding one's niche. It is where one can dive deeper to discover God's calling (though it may not be a calling to full-time ministry) and also a sense of which category of ministry one can fit into.

Koo Jon King

Wesley Methodist Church, Ipoh
JX 2016

I went to JX to be exposed to church ministry. When I saw “internship” on the programme schedule, I did not know what to expect. Am I going to do real work, such as going to the bank and cashing in money, or typing out the sermon while the pastor dictates? I realized I did not know what ministry is like. I was assigned to Canning Garden Methodist Church and placed under the care of Rev. Thomas Chin for my internship during JX. I had the privilege to see many areas of ministry in CGMC. I would observe, and then Rev. Thomas would follow up on what I learn, and point out things that I might have missed out. Through this internship experience, I learned about the different roles of a leader, how to be an effective leader, and most importantly how to overcome the weaknesses of an introvert.

JX has also helped me to know myself more. During the first week, we did sessions in our S.H.A.P.E. – Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences. We did a survey to have a better idea about our spiritual gifts, and personality tests to understand our strengths and weaknesses. We also reflected on our experiences, how those experiences shaped us to become the persons we are today, and to see God’s hand in our lives. I used to always think that I am bad at teaching other people, be it teaching how to play the guitar, drums, or school subjects like mathematics and chemistry, and even Bible study. But

after going through all those sessions to discover more about myself – and also giving a sermon – I realized I probably have the gift of teaching. I just have not had much opportunity to use this gift. I need to take the initiative and make use of every opportunity to exercise the gifts that God has given me.

We also had sessions on discerning God’s will as an individual, and as a group. These sessions helped me in discerning God’s will, especially at this season of my life when I am looking for God’s plan for me, vocation-wise. Discovering about myself through S.H.A.P.E., morning devotions, reflection time every day, journaling time at night and examining the day helped me to realize and address areas of my life that need to be fixed: for example, being humble in serving, and serving without expecting anything in return. Being in the environment of JX also helped me to be more sensitive to God’s voice, whether through morning devotions or reflection time with the mentors and peers around me.

After learning more about myself and gaining new perspectives through JX, I have to keep on reminding myself about one thing: “It is all about God’s story, not my story.”

Chew Yi Hong
 Alor Setar Wesley
 JX 2016

Jeremiah Extension and Jeremiah School are two separate programmes. You do not need to go to Jeremiah School to go to Jeremiah Extension (JX). JX is a one-month programme to help those who are considering full-time ministry but are not so sure of their calling from God. This year JX was based in Wesley Methodist Church, KL, and most our sessions were held there. We had different speakers for different sessions and JX covered quite a range of areas to equip us for ministry. The JX programme included a visit to the Orang Asli Training Center in Raub as well as an internship at a church for 12 days.

Initially, I was quite reluctant to go to JX because I did not know what to expect; it would mean getting out of my comfort zone. The other reason was financial. I was helping out in two churches with their Boys’ Brigade and youth ministry respectively. Going to JX would mean that I would not have any income for a month. Of course in the end I went because God said so. He took away my worries and reaffirmed me in the decision. He spoke to me through my mentor, who advised me to go to JX and He provided for my finances through some people. So, though my concerns were gone; I still went with some anxiety, not knowing what to expect. However, affirmation came every day during the first week of JX, with God telling me that there was no need for anxiety, that He was watching over me and taking care of me.

During the first week of JX, we learnt about spiritual gifts; mine was primarily leading and teaching. Over the course of JX, there were times when I struggled

with the feeling that I should just take charge and lead my peers but at the same time I wanted to give them a chance to lead as well. During the second week, I heard God giving me an answer to my two-year-old question of whether He was calling me to go into full-time ministry. Of course I did not realize it at that moment of time when it happened, but only later when I was reflecting during our quiet retreat. I came to JX because I want to be 100% sure that this is God’s calling for me, and God spoke through one of the facilitators that as long as I am 70% to 80% sure, the other 20% to 30% comes from faith. That was when the realization hit me like a truck. That was the answer I had been searching for.

I benefited a lot from JX and, needless to say, I would recommend that anyone who is considering full-time ministry as a vocation to attend Jeremiah Extension. You will not only understand ministry as a whole (because it is not a happy day every day -- even in church) but you also get to experience the reality side of it in a safe environment because there is a group of people who will walk alongside you. They are capable and loving and will genuinely care for you. Indeed, I thank God for His providence, guidance and for providing such a group of people and this Jeremiah Extension platform for me and future generations of youth to come to hear His calling.

Eric Gan
 Christ Methodist Church, Ampang
 JX 2016

Wesley Methodist Church, Penang – 125th Anniversary Celebration



The weather ushered the 125th anniversary of Wesley Methodist Church, Penang with a bright and golden 21st August, 2016 Sunday morning! Forgotten was the heavy downpour the day before. God granted sunshine and blue skies for His three congregations to commemorate this special event together. There was a quiet sense of buzz as early birds resplendent in red, burgundy or white (the theme colour for the anniversary celebration) arrived at 8.30am in excited anticipation of the events tailor-made for the day! The limited seating in the Sanctuary was an added impetus. It was heartening to see the Sanctuary filled up in no time. By 9.30am there were no empty seats in the Susannah Room and the Hannah Hall, where there was a live feed of the service from the Sanctuary. The Church Choir accompanied by the symphony music of the string ensemble comprising Penang Wesley members and friends from our sister Methodist Churches filled the Sanctuary with melodious and joyous thanksgiving and praise. Ms Juwita Suwito a renowned gospel singer rendered the anthem "To God be the Glory".

Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik shared the Word from Judges 2:6-15 and Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The congregation was reminded of the legacy inherited from the hard work of the early pioneers and faithful servants of the Lord who came in 1891 to establish the Wesley Methodist Church, Penang. He challenged the congregation to ensure this rich heritage is passed down to the future

generations. The Bishop made reference to Eli and his sons. He urged the people not to sit on their laurels, lest their complacency leads to a generation who grows up not knowing the Lord nor what He has done for us. He emphasized that the home should be the bastion of faith, not rituals or festivals. He reminded parents that they are commanded to be prime movers of the faith to their children who will be the bedrock for the church's future. Bishop Ong was invited to lead in the consecration of the newly renovated Sanctuary and the replaced slate roof tiles, followed by the unveiling of a plaque.

The service ended at 11.30am and the congregation took a short walk to the restaurant at the Penang Plaza for a sumptuous lunch. Pastor Paul Santosh Christie led everyone in the anthem "To God be the Glory" and our President Jeyakumar gave a short speech. After grace was said the lunch commenced.

A handbook publication of testimonies from church members was handed out during the lunch to members and their guests. The celebrations culminated with the cutting of the anniversary cake. Everyone had a wonderful time blessed with warm fellowship, good food, door gifts and the great singing of Ms Juwita Suwito.

As part of the 125th Anniversary celebrations the following events were organized:-



- Discipleship Training Seminars - Teaching and instruction in the Word by distinguished teachers and Bible scholars like Bishop Emeritus Dr. Hwa Yung, Dr. D.A. Carson and Dr. Paul Barker;
- Starting of a Graduate Diploma Foundation Course in collaboration with the Malaysian Baptist Theological Seminary;
- A Community Day event which brought the church family (from 3 congregations) together on 23rd July 2016. Teamwork and co-operation were required for the many activities reminding one of 1 Corinthians 12:14-20. There was much fun and good fellowship.



Included in the above 125th festivities is a Vacation Bible School for children between the ages of 5-11 years of age to be held from 30th November to 3rd December 2016.

With the ambitious program drawn up for the Anniversary celebrations by the organising committee, substantial financial support was required from the church's coffers. Help came from gentle hands of the hardworking ladies of the Methodist Women whose 'Project 104 Slate' transformed the 104-year-old roof slate tiles into unique crafts and beautiful paintings to raise the funds.

Every Saturday afternoon from 2 to 6 p.m. continuously for 4 months, the Methodist Women scrubbed, dried, crafted and painted the 104-year-old roof slate tiles. Every Sunday morning commencing 5th June 2016, the ladies manned the stall set up to offer for sale the crafts and God-inspired paintings. God moved the hearts of the congregation to buy the





paintings and the crafted roof slate tiles. The support from the congregation was overwhelming! At the end of the 3 months 'Project 104 Slate' sale, money was counted and the proceeds were more than sufficient to cover the cost of the programmes!

Every minute detail was planned and carried out by the organizing committee which started planning and meeting almost a year before the grand event. God has revealed to us that we have to rely on Him for the celebration of His glory and to provide the necessary persons and money. To God Be the Glory!

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." **Jeremiah 29:11**

TRAC Appointments For The Year 2017

EASTERN DISTRICT

District Superintendent: Rev Woo Kit Sang

Wesley MC Kuala Lipis	Rev Bernard Yogaraj, Pastor
Wesley MC Raub	Rev Bernard Yogaraj, Pastor
Christ MC Bentong	Rev Eric Hue, Pastor
Wesley MC Kuantan	Rev Woo Kit Sang, Pastor Rev Eric Hue, Assistant Pastor

NORTHERN DISTRICT

District Superintendent: Rev Paul Christie

Wesley MC Alor Setar	Rev Lim Chaw Leong
Wesley MC Sg Petani	Ps Andrew Yeoh, Pastor
Wesley MC Kulim	Rev Joshua Chia, Pastor
Wesley MC Butterworth	Ps Andrew Yeoh, Pastor
Wesley MC Parit Buntar	Rev Joshua Chia, Pastor
Trinity MC Penang	Rev Yong Wai Yin, Pastor
Wesley MC Penang	Rev Paul Christie, Pastor Rev Wong Mun Wah, Associate Pastor

PERAK DISTRICT

District Superintendent: Rev Joshua Khong

Wesley MC Taiping	Rev Joshua Khong, Pastor Rev John Baru, Assistant Pastor
Wesley MC Kampar	Rev Gaurri Maniam, Pastor
Wesley MC Sitiawan	Rev Victor Leong Chik Seng, Pastor Ps Pangiran Baru, Assistant Pastor
Wesley MC Teluk Intan	Rev Christopher Rao, Pastor
CGMC	Rev Thomas Chin, Pastor Rev Yu Chiew Song, Associate Pastor Rev Richard Leow, Associate Pastor
GMC Ipoh	Rev Elaine Low, Pastor
Wesley MC Ipoh	Rev Dr Timothy Ong, Pastor Ps William Por, Assistant Pastor (<i>Until 30th June 2017</i>)
Living Faith MC	Rev Gaurri Maniam, Pastor
Bercham MC	Rev Lucy Lee, Pastor

CENTRAL DISTRICT 1

District Superintendent: Rev Ricky Ho

Whispering Hope MC	Rev Dr Andrew Tan, Pastor
Wesley MC Kepong	Ps Koe Swee Kee, Pastor
Christ MC Ampang	Rev Buell Abraham, Pastor
Wesley MC Kuala Lumpur	Rev Ricky Ho, Pastor Rev Tan Chew Mae, Assistant Pastor Ps Eric Tan, Assistant Pastor
Grace MC Sentul	Rev Aaron Ng, Pastor
Trinity MC Sg Buloh	Ps Soh Tian Soo, Part-time Pastor
Faith MC Cheras	Rev Buell Abraham, Pastor
Living Stone MC	Rev Aaron Ng, Pastor

CENTRAL DISTRICT 2

District Superintendent: Rev Ashok Amarasingham

DUMC	Ps Chris Kam, Pastor Ps Mike Ngui, Asst Pastor Ps Kelvin Yong, Asst Pastor Ps Jonathan Yeoh, Asst Pastor Ps Tan Moy How, Asst Pastor Ps Cheah Seuk Poh, Asst Pastor (Part-time) Ps Alex Tan, Asst Pastor Ps Gilbert Tan, Asst Pastor Ps Eddy Marson, Asst Pastor Ps Chris Manivannan, Asst Pastor (Part-time)
Wesley MC Klang	Rev Ashok Amarasingham, Pastor
SSMC	Rev Dr Ng Swee Ming, Pastor Ps Dr Ng Kok Moi, Assistant Pastor
Life MC Puchong	Ps Chang Choy Quin, Pastor
Living Hope MC	Rev Teoh Lee Yng, Pastor
Subang MC	Ps Robert Khaw, Pastor
Emmanuel MC	Rev Dr Andrew Tan, Pastor Ps Anna Ng, Assistant Pastor
Living Word Preaching Point	Ps Joshua, Pastor
Trinity MC PJ	Rev Ting Moy Hong, Pastor Rev Joshua Hong, Associate Pastor

SOUTHERN DISTRICT
District Superintendent: Rev Andrew Lim

Taman Ujong MC	Rev Ronald Yap, Pastor
Wesley MC Seremban	Rev Ronald Yap, Pastor
Taman Asean MC	Rev Andrew Lim, Pastor Rev Danny Chiew, Assistant Pastor
Wesley MC Melaka	Rev Andrew Lim, Pastor Rev Danny Chiew, Assistant Pastor
Wesley MC Segamat	Rev Andrew Lim, Pastor Rev Danny Chiew, Assistant Pastor
Nusajaya MC	Rev Shearn Sya, Pastor Ps Lester Lim, Assistant Pastor
Wesley MC JB	Rev Shearn Sya, Pastor Ps Lester Lim, Assistant Pastor

Special Appointments

TRAC Prayer Director	Rev Dr T Jeyakumar
TRAC Prayer Coordinator	Rev Joshua Hong
Rev Dr Hermen Shastri	seconded to CCM*
Superintendent PMSM	Rev Bah Saha
Part-Time Seniors Ministry Director	Rev Hwa Jen
Part-Time Seniors Ministry Associate Director	Rev David Loo
Part-time secondment to PMSM	Rev Bernard Yogaraj
Part-time Director of Evangelism & Discipleship, PMSM	Rev Richard Leow

(*with Bishop's consent)



**FAMINE
IN AFRICA**

SAVING CHRISTIAN LIVES

Many parts of Africa, including Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, are facing the worst drought for decades. Barnabas Fund's Project Joseph is working through local churches to support emergency feeding programmes. You can play your part to help save Christian lives.

Supporters may send gifts for Barnabas Fund online via Olive Aid Trust:
 Beneficiary: OLIVE AID TRUST Bank Name: United Overseas Bank (Malaysia)
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 HKD 140-901-653-2 GBP 140-901-655-9 USD 140-901-656-7

PROJECT JOSEPH

barnabasfund
 hope and aid for the persecuted church

JANUARY			JULY		
	Tue-Tue	Jeremiah School at PD	01	Sat	Youth Ministry Partners Training (Klang Valley)
08	Sun	Epiphany	07-09	Fri-Sun	ICM Discernment Retreat
13	Fri	BOM Meeting	09-16	Sun-Sun	ICM Discernment Retreat (Individually Guided)
13-15	Sat	Executive Board Meeting	09	Sun	Social Concern Sunday
14	Thu	Birthday of Yang di-Pertuan Besar NS	09-Aug 20	Sun-Sun	Ministry Quest (Formerly JX) Klang Valley
15-17	Fri-Sun	1st Executive Board Planning Retreat cum Meeting in PDMC	21-22	Fri-Sat	ICM History Makers 2017-WMC Ipoh
14	Sat	1st Executive Board Meeting in PJ	21-22	Fri-Sat	LPL – Homiletics at TRAC HQ
19	Thu	AEC (P) & COT (P) Meeting	22	Sat	MW Exco Meeting
20	Fri	COE (P) Meeting	25	Tue	Statistical returns to be submitted by churches
25	Wed	Statistical returns to be submitted by churches	27	Thu	AEC (P) & COT (P) Meeting
			29	Sat	OLM-2 CD1 Day1 at WMC KL
FEBRUARY			AUGUST		
05-26	Sat-Sat	Cont. of Jeremiah School at PD	05	Sat	OLM-2 CD1 Day2 at WMC KL
17-18	Fri-Sat	GCEC (KL)	12-13	Sat-Sun	LPL Biblical Interpretation
18	Sat	MW Exco Meeting	18-19	Fri-Sat	GCEC (Sibu)
			18-21	Fri-Mon	ICM Journey Retreat
			27	Sun	CCM Sunday
			31-Sep 02	Thu-Sat	ICM TRAC Children Ministry Conference
MARCH			SEPTEMBER		
01	Wed	Ash Wednesday	08	Fri	COE (P) Exco
03-04	Fri-Sat	ICM Living Out Sabbath	08	Fri	BOYW Meeting
04	Sat	CCM World Day of Prayer	08	Fri	Board of Appointment Meeting
10-11	Fri-Sat	LPL Old Testament	08-10	Fri-Sun	Joint Board in PDMC
19-22	Sun-Wed	Youth Prayer Conference (Ipoh)	10	Sun	3rd Executive Board Meeting in PDMC
24	Fri	COE (P) Exco	21-24	Thu-Sun	Women's Conference
25-26	Sat-Sun	OLM-2 SD at WMC Melaka	30-Oct 01	Sat-Sun	OLM-2 CD2 at TMC PJ
31-Apr 02	Fri-Sun	SFL 1			
APRIL			OCTOBER		
09	Sun	Palm Sunday	10	Tue	COE (P) Meeting
12-14	Wed-Fri	IMTF Conference in KL	10-13	Tue-Fri	26th MSF Annual Camp
13	Thu	Maundy Thursday	12	Thu	AEC (P) & COT (P) Meeting
14	Fri	Good Friday	17-18	Tue-Wed	BOM Meeting
16	Sun	Easter Sunday	20-22	Fri-Sun	SFL 2
20-23	Thu-Sun	BOYW Planning Retreat (Sepang)	21-24	Thu-Sun	Women's Convention
21-23	Fri-Sun	ICM Be Still and Know.....	25-27	Wed-Fri	28th Session PMSM Conf. in Kampar
25-28	Tue-Fri	Pastor's School	27-29	Fri-Sun	ICM Courage and Calling in Vocation
27	Thu	AEC (P) & COT (P) Meeting			
29	Sat	COE (P) Meeting			
MAY			NOVEMBER		
05	Fri	BOM Meeting	02-06	Thu-Mon	ICM Walking with Jesus Retreat Part 1 – His Life and Ministry
06	Sat	2nd Executive Board Meeting in PJ	18-19	Sat-Sun	MW Planning Retreat
08-10	Mon-Wed	ICM Board Planning Retreat	24	Fri	BOM Meeting
09-11	Tue-Thu	MSF Joint Consultative Retreat	25-27	Sat-Mon	42nd Session TRAC in PDMC
20-21	Sat-Sun	LPL - Christian Doctrine	26	Sun	4th Executive Board Meeting in PDMC
23-27	Tue-Sat	ICM Individually Directed Retreat	28-Dec05	Tue-Tue	National Youth Missions (Long Lamai)
25	Thu	Ascension Day			
27	Sat	Youth Ministry Partners Training, Pg			
27-30	Sat-Tue	BB/GB Concordia Camp			
27-Jun 27	Sat-Mon	Penan UPSR Coaching Mission (Team 1)			
JUNE			DECEMBER		
04	Sun	Pentecost Sunday	03	Sun	1st Sunday in Advent
09-11	Fri-Sun	ICM Educator's Retreat – Second Half in Christ	06-10	Wed-Sun	YLDP
24-27	Sat-Tue	GCYC Conference (PDMC)	08-10	Fri-Sun	Parents Track
24-Jul 25	Sat-Tue	Penan UPSR Coaching Mission (Team 2)	10	Sun	2nd Sunday in Advent
			17	Sun	3rd Sunday in Advent
			24	Sun	4th Sunday in Advent
			25	Mon	Christmas Day

