

**B E R I T A**

# TRAC



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## Before Others Like Him Come Again

TRAC Pastors' School 2016

Global Discipleship Congress Asia 2016 Experience



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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](mailto:admin@trac.org.my) or call 03-7954 2836 website: [www.trac.org.my](http://www.trac.org.my)



**Rev. Dr. T. Jeyakumar**  
*President, TRAC*

## Before Others Like Him Come Again

Recently there was much unhappiness over the arrival of a speaker whom some said mocks other religions publicly in his talks. I have listened to one of his talks given elsewhere on Youtube. When a lady questioned him, he said, "I do not debate with women." Strangely, he gets to speak on the rights of women. I have heard him often on Youtube. He has memorised a few verses from various books of different religions. He quotes them out of context and merely excites the people who attend. Unfortunately, the listeners never get the opportunity to hear from the adherents of the other religions and never get to hear the actual content of the books the speaker is half-quoting, misquoting and quoting out of context. In one Youtube message they show how in five minutes this speaker makes 25 mistakes, even to the extent of 'quoting' people who never existed in history.

How should the church respond to such speakers? Should we have made police reports, or called for prayer meetings for his visa to be cancelled or should we have hoped for the government to prevent the man from entering this country like what two other countries had done?

I cannot speak for all Christians but I would like to suggest that we focus on the following before this man or others like him come here again.

1. In **1 Peter 3:15** the apostle Peter says, "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..." The first thing to do before we give an answer to anyone who asks us about Christ is to live our lives under the Lordship of Christ. If Christ is not revered in our lives, we have no testimony. If we say one thing and yet live another way then we have nothing to say to others about Christ. We have lost our testimony.

I visited a country last month where Christians are in the minority. I was informed that Christians have been given the charge over the treasury and the accounts of many institutions and companies in that country. The reason given is that Christians can be trusted with money. Now that speaks volumes about Christians. Though they are in the minority still they are catching the attention of the majority by living ethical lives. While Christians are persecuted for their faith they are trusted for their honesty. What a testimony! If we wish to speak about Christ and wish for Christ to be taken seriously we need to show it in our lives by submitting to His lordship.

2. We have to teach the congregation the actual word of God as contained in the Bible, so that they are clear about the content and meaning of the Word of God. Superficial story-telling and mere entertaining preaching are not going to help the people understand the Bible. They must be brought to the Bible and helped to know its content. When the speaker comes next year and twists the word of God our young people especially will not be taken in or influenced by false teachings. At the same time, we must challenge our congregation to read through the whole Bible in a year and repeat it yearly so that they will be familiar with the Word of God. Our people need to be guided to study the Bible with the help of commentaries and Bible dictionaries. Some of these things cannot be adequately done in the weekly small group meetings we hold in homes. We need to run separate discipleship classes, Bible studies, in groups or encourage individuals to undertake such efforts on their own by pointing them to helpful resources.
3. We need to teach the people the reliability of the word of God. Let them know that the Bible has withstood the test of time and other criticisms. This ought to make people take the Bible seriously and build faith in the word of God. The Bible is special because it is the inspired word of God. It is God who took the initiative to give us the Bible.

In the same country which I mentioned above where the Christians are in the minority, children ministry is taken seriously. If you ask them how Christianity survived the 1400 years of persecution, they would say it is because in the church and at home the Bible is being taught to the children from very young, in the language of the locals. As such, the children know the Scripture very well and they are not intimidated by challenges hurled at them regarding their faith and they are not worried about others trying to twist or distort the facts.

4. We must also equip our church members to defend our Christian faith. Teach the people apologetics. Help them to answer questions like "Is Jesus actually God or is He only another prophet?" "Is the Bible the word of God or is it corrupted?" Apologetics is not about condemning other religions but defending our faith and answering questions with regards to our beliefs. As Ravi Zacharias says, "When you throw mud
- at others, not only do you lose ground, but also get your hands dirty." When we condemn others' beliefs we have lost our right to speak and to be heard.
5. Gather your family and spend time in prayer and reading of the Bible. Don't let the minds of the younger ones be shaped by negative aspects of the culture and unprofitable popular thinking, but let them be steeped in the word of God. Let parent-child bonding be strong so that children turn to parents first when they are in doubt and not turn to their peers or strangers or the internet for answers.
6. Next, we need to teach people to do evangelism. Teach them to write and share their testimonies. Testimonies are powerful because people cannot argue with your experience of God. But before we can evangelise we need to love the people we share with. People must be convinced that we are not there to sell our religion to them and get another adherent onto our side. They must know that we genuinely love them even as we love our God.
7. When young people move from one place to another ensure that they are received by another church in their vicinity. Don't leave it to them to find a church when they move into a new city/town. Call the church you are in and ask for help to contact the church nearest to the young person's college or residence.
8. When young people come to your church receive them and lead them personally to a small group. Help them settle down in your church and city, and give them every support available. Follow up on them.

I came to Christ at the age of sixteen. Thirty-four years later I can say with much more confidence and conviction that the Bible is the authoritative and infallible word of God. The Lord Jesus is the risen Christ through whom salvation is given to all humankind. This Christ is the Son of God before whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that "Jesus is Lord." This Christ will in fact come again to judge the living and the dead. And all authority on earth and heaven belongs to Him.

Get ready now!

Blessings,  
Jeya



**Dr. Ting**

*Former Conference Lay Leader*

TRAC's 40-year journey as an Annual Conference (AC) has been richly blessed. She has been a blessing to the Methodist Church in Malaysia (MCM), serving the nation in unity with the other Annual Conferences, and supporting the Sabah Provisional Annual Conference (SPAC) and Persidangan Misi Sengoi Methodist (PMSM) along their journey towards full AC status.

My wishes and prayers are that TRAC will (1) continue to lead all members in their lifelong discipleship towards the likeness of Christ Jesus; (2) promote ceaselessly the nurture of wholesome families; (3) be the effective voice and conscience to Malaysia (particularly in these times), and (4) a shining beacon to the world; (5) remain at the frontline of cutting-edge ministries; (6) bond strongly with the Malaysian body of Christ in the Council of Churches Malaysia (CCM), Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) and Christian NGOs, and (7) become an Annual Conference that is solely and truly after God's heart.

In conveying my wishes and prayers above, my reflections are drawn to the period of January 1993 to 2000, when I served as an Associate Conference Lay Leader (CLL) for a year, encouraged

into this role by a group of visionary Aldersgate Fellowship Pastors and Lay Leaders. It was a shock to be told to take over as the Acting CLL for 1994 as brother Lim Toh Hoy who was the CLL then had taken up an overseas job! Again, the same group of praying friends encouraged me with the assurance of co-working diligently for renewal in the Methodist Church.

At the 19<sup>th</sup> AC held at the newly rebuilt Wesley Methodist Church Ipoh which was gutted by fire on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1992, I was elected as CLL and from then on, I served as CLL till December 2000, the maximum of 3 terms. That was the time when TRAC diligently and deliberately engaged in church growth strategies and ministries. DAWN's (Discipling A Whole Nation) Church Planting call led TRAC to launch "Vision 74 by 96", followed by the bold move towards "Vision 100 by 2000", and "Vision Beyond 2000". Although TRAC did not achieve her target of 100 new congregations, the courageous sequential Visions instilled a sense of urgency for dynamic growth, and revived dormant members, while reaching out to lengthen her cords and enlarge the place of her tent. **(Isaiah 54:2-3)**

Leadership Development, Community Building and Mobilising Resources empowered many lay persons to enter into part-time, bi-vocational, or full-time ministries to meet the needs of growing churches. Deepening Spirituality was a key call. Laity and Clergy enhancement in knowledge and ministry skills were emphasised. In all these, I praise God for very able and committed Associates in the persons of sister Lily Ch'ng and our strategist, the late Dr Chan Kook Weng, who picked up the baton to be the next CLL for a full 3 terms of 6 years. His role in laity development was strategic and dynamic. TRAC misses this dear brother Chan very much.

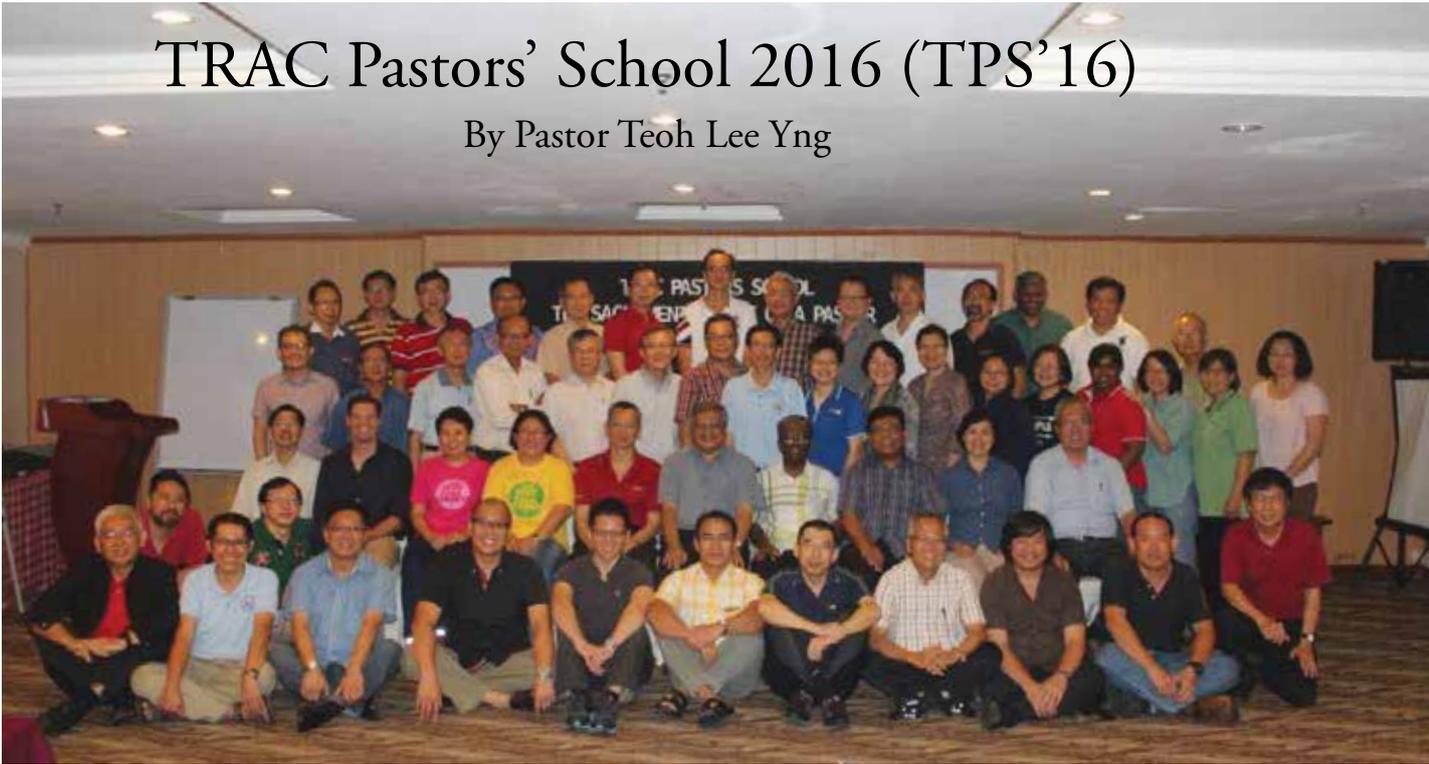
My most significant reflection as CLL was of the measures taken to cement Laity-Clergy synergy, and this is affirmed by the **1 Peter 2:9** declaration of the priesthood of all believers. There were challenging situations to negotiate through, but God is good all the time. TRAC weathered many storms, but landed safely on the shores of continuing growth through God's grace and mercies. My work with the General Conference and various agencies within MCM greatly enhanced my effectiveness in Methodist Education, via the COE and the School Boards.

Praise the Lord, unto whom all honour and glory is due! Deep in my heart, I thank God each time I think of the partnership in the Gospel **(Philippians 1:3-5)** that so readily comes from my co-workers in His Kingdom.

Shalom and a Happy & Blessed 40th Anniversary to the Trinity Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Malaysia. Amen.

# TRAC Pastors' School 2016 (TPS'16)

By Pastor Teoh Lee Yng



The TRAC Pastors' School was held from April 5-9 at the Rainbow Paradise Hotel in Penang and was attended by 51 pastors. TPS'16 commenced with a Holy Communion Service where our President, Rev. Dr T. Jeyakumar, preached on **Acts 14:1-28**, exhorting us to be mindful of opposition and temptation even when we are experiencing success in ministry. Our keynote speaker for TPS'16 was Bishop Emeritus Dr Robert Solomon who spoke about "The Sacramental Life of a Pastor" which was the theme of TPS'16. The topics were "The Meaning of Sacrament"; "The Ministry of Sacrament"; "The Pastor as a Sacrament" and "Dealing with Your Inner Child in Ministry". These sessions with Bishop Solomon were relevant, impactful and spoke deeply to many of us, especially on the calling of a pastor as a sacrament of God, given for His Church.

We also had insightful sessions with Rev. Tryphena Law from Pursuing Liberty Under Christ (PLUC) who spoke about sexual identity issues, and Mr. William Chang who shared with us about Sports Ministry and the





Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). Besides the many wonderful lessons and interesting sessions, TPS'16 was also a time for rest and good fellowship among pastors. We had the opportunity to spend quality time together over meals and leisure activities. We not only got to know one another better but it was also a time when we encouraged and spurred each other on to serve faithfully in the midst of a challenging pastoral ministry.

On a personal note, TPS'16 has indeed been an edifying experience and I went home with a nourished heart and mind, taking with me many good memories of time spent with my brothers and sisters, co-workers and fellow soldiers in Christ. I would like to record a special word of thanks to the Planning Committee, headed by Rev Paul Christie, who worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth running and success of TPS'16 and also to Rev. Ashok Amarasingham for arranging the bus transportation for some of our pastors.

Soli Deo Gloria!

# Global Discipleship Congress Asia 2016

## Experience (27-30 January 2016, Manila, Philippines)

By Datin Judy Chin (Conference Lay Leader)



Of the 20 young adults invited to attend the Global Discipleship Congress (GDC) 2016, 8 availed themselves, taking time off their work, seminary studies and ministries. This was an intentional follow-up to the joint focus of the Board of Laity and the Institute of Christian Ministry to identify and develop young adults who love the Lord and are currently serving selflessly. Coincidentally, a total of 12 disciples (8 young adults and 4 not-so-young) made our way to Manila, Philippines, for GDC 2016 to learn, experience and take home what was being offered at this Congress, together with 7,988 other participants from 26 countries.

GDC Asia 2016 was jointly organized by Global Alliance of Intentional Discipleship Making Churches (Global Alliance IDMC) and Christ's Commission Fellowship (CCF) with the theme "Pass It On". Distinguished plenary speakers were **Rev. Edmund Chan**, Leadership Mentor of Covenant Evangelical Free Church, Singapore and founder of Global Alliance IDMC; **Dr Ravi Zacharias**, Founder, Chairman and CEO of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries; **Dr Samuel Chand**, one of the top 30 Global Leadership Gurus and Advisor of EQUIP (Dr John Maxwell's ministry); **Rev. Joey Bonifacio**, pastor of a church in Fort Bonifacio, Philippines, and author of "The LEGO principle" and **Dr Peter Tan-Chi**, Founder and Senior Pastor of the more than 40,000-member strong CCF which hosted GDC 2016.

**Rev. Edmund Chan** warned that the church is in trouble owing to critical discipleship deficit and crippling dysfunctional leadership. He

declared: "Pass It On by passing on the Living Word of the Living God. Pass on the Truth when applied, changes lives. True discipleship is a redemptive journey, an encounter with Jesus. True knowledge is effectual knowledge which has power to transform lives. He quoted from Hudson Taylor, "If Jesus is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all of our lives." **Luke 10:42** "but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."



**Dr Ravi Zacharias** urged us to respond appropriately in different seasons of our lives by grounding our beliefs in seasons of **temptation**, knowing the guarantee of God's

peace in seasons of **pain**, exercising generosity of spirit in seasons of **power** and letting our light shine before man in contrary culture circumstances in order to be a

man/woman for all seasons because of the convictions which shape us. Dr Ravi also spoke on how to interpret our failures and conserve our victories through humility of heart, and spirituality in exercising faith.



**Rev. Joey Bonifacio** defined making disciples as immersing people in relationships with the family of God and with God. Discipleship is relationship, not a model or structure and all relationships are intentional. The LEGO principle is simply “Connect to God and Connect to others. God’s very nature is relational and He identifies Himself in family terms – Father, Son and Spirit.” **John 15:8:** “... bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

**Dr Sam Chand** spoke on the pain, relationship, exposure and character capacities of a leader and asked us to identify the areas where we need to grow our capacity with God’s help. He also spoke about leadership pains of being misunderstood, people leaving, betrayal, comparison, obscurity, disappointment and public versus private battles. His mathematics was Growth = Change = Loss = Pain; therefore, Growth = Pain. However, we are assured that encouragement comes from the Holy Spirit and the promise of God never changes.



**Dr Peter Tan-Chi** challenged all to finish well and strong by growing in Christ-likeness, setting the priority to love God, letting go of the past and persevering by fixing our

eyes on Jesus. He concluded with a quotation from John Wesley which he wrote in a letter to William Wilberforce: **“Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God is for you, who can be against you?”** Dr Tan-Chi concluded the Congress with these words: **“PASS ON JESUS to the next generation!”**

## IMPRESSIONS OF GDC 2016 BY TRAC PARTICIPANTS

- **Edwin Khoo – Captain, 1st Ipoh Co. Boys’ Brigade; Senior SU Staff**

**Matthew 6: 19-21.** “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

In other words, God reminded and convicted me during Dr Ravi Zacharias’ message that our spirituality in Jesus Christ and His applied Word of God in our lives are far more precious than the treasures we have on earth.

In my quest to provide for family and in my personal ambitions, it is easy to say but hard to do what was preached by Dr Ravi. All praise and glory to God that I found my conviction and conscience again to walk a different journey from my childhood buddies. The greatest compliment a man or woman of God can receive on earth is that the people who really know us testify that “indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you” when we move on from this earthly life. It is not your credentials, wealth or titles that will bring glory to Him.

I want to finish strongly and well in the Lord. I want to be faithful to my faithful God. I want to leave a legacy whereby my descendants will believe and honour God in their lives. I hope all the students and youths whom I have counselled and nurtured will be faithful disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. My wife, Ethel, and I pray earnestly that our children will follow Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. We will be the proudest parents if our children, Lucas and Shawn, will one day become pastors, missionaries or ministry workers. To God be the glory!”

- **Rev. Shearn Sya – Pastor, Christ Methodist Church Ampang**

“GDC Asia 2016 was a memorable experience due to the similar-to-KL-during-rush-hour-traffic, the 200-peso (~RM20) 6-piece Chicken McNugget meal, that awful compulsion to sample all cuisine unobtainable back home, the coffee that sustained the mornings provided by friendly baristas at the quaintly named Cup of Faith Café, the relationships formed and strengthened with my fellow spiritual tourists,



the experience of how a mega-church can deliver hospitable facilities, impressive worship experiences, and solid Biblical teaching and discipleship, and the teaching of those who lived out what they taught and inspired others to do the same.“

This literary *faux pas* of a long sentence (Microsoft Word's squiggly green line would agree) is symbolic of my experience in Manila—condensed, packed with a variety of stuff which needs to be digested and processed before it can yield the fruit of comprehension. But for all that, I'm thankful.

- **Lester Lim – Assistant Pastor, Wesley Methodist Church Johor Bahru**

“What is true discipleship?” This will be my final year of studies in Seminari Theoloji Malaysia. In the past few years of theological training, I have gained more knowledge about God, and have learned the theories and means of discipleship. But do I really know what true discipleship is even after I have graduated from seminary and obtained a theological degree? At GDC Asia 2016, I am reminded that true discipleship is about relationship. Gaining more knowledge of God does not mean that I am a true disciple of Christ, for true discipleship is a right relationship with Christ. This relationship challenges me to become more Christ-like, live for God, walk with God and live a holy life. These are the essentials of true discipleship. The theme of GDC Asia 2016 is “Pass It On”. As a pastor, what should I “pass on” when it comes to discipling? It is not just about the knowledge or theories of God but the life of a true disciple.

- **Chin Fung Hao – Perak District AYD, MYF Counsellor Wesley MC Ipoh**

GDC Asia 2016 was for me one of the most humbling experiences. As one put in different positions of leadership, I tend to get ahead of myself at times.

I would allow my own sense of pride and my justification to determine the actions and decisions made to achieve what I feel is right, but in the process missing out on achieving the true purposes in life—'losing the plot', as some might say. A thought that kept repeating in my spirit was—'Be humble; be teachable; learn from every experience in life; learn from every truth in the Word that comes from Me and know that I am with you forever.' GDC 2016 was great. The organizers managed to achieve the purpose for all who attended and who were seeking—to dwell in the presence of the Almighty. All glory be unto Him, forever.

- **Hannah Foo – TRAC MYF President**

Throughout the conference, a few things struck me. First, for discipleship to happen, God's truth must be lived out for it to be effectively passed on. It is not enough just to teach the truth verbally in church but we have to live by it. Do people see Jesus in me daily? Do I disciple others by intentionally applying God's truth in my life? The second thing was that the truth is simply the word of God. Rev. Peter in his session on “Finishing Well” stressed that the day we stop progressing is the day we are ready to fall.

These few lessons got me reflecting on my daily progress in my Christian journey and how important it is that I, as a leader in the youth ministry, need to constantly make sure that I am growing in Christ so that the ministry remains effective. We often get so caught up in being busy for God that we neglect to spend enough time with Him and His Word. Spending enough time with God and growing in our capacity as God's vessel is the very first step towards discipleship.

Lastly, I came to realise that there is no one chosen by God in the Bible who did not endure suffering and pain. Hence, we must persevere that we may be able to declare at the end of our life's journey what is written in **2 Tim 4:7** “*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*”

- **Gerviene Choo – Youth Council Moderator, Wesley Methodist Church Kampar**

GDC 2016 was for me an interesting and timely experience, amidst all the busyness and day-to-day routines that constantly clamour for attention. Above all it was a great space to learn and fellowship, to reflect on the way we do things and why we do the things we do. It also helped me to re-orientate and ask myself the difficult, even painful, questions and

to contemplate the connection of the work of God in the world today with the continuing work of God in my life. All in all it was a humbling and tremendously encouraging time, and I cannot be more thankful for this opportunity. May we all by God's grace continue to endeavour to finish well and "Pass It On"!

- **Ng Wai Ling – TRAC Institute of Christian Ministry Director**

Two things stood out for me in GDC 2016. The first was Ravi Zacharias' session on 'The Man for All Seasons' based on his reflection on the life of Joseph. He challenged us to ground our reasons for our convictions to be a person for all seasons—the season of temptation, the season of pain and the season of power; how we need to ground our beliefs and convictions in Him, experience His guaranteed peace and to allow the generosity of His Spirit to help us live out a testimony that speaks of His character, that is counter-cultural. It was challenging, yet deeply ministering to my own spirit and heart in this season of my own life. The second thing that I appreciated most was the various opportunities to connect and have conversations with the entourage from TRAC. It was engaging, meaningful and inspiring to catch glimpses of the hearts of the younger generation who love the Lord, desire to serve Him and have unique stories of their own faith and life—what a privilege, I thought, to share this short stint of learning and experience with them. I came away with a grateful heart.

- **Chang Choy Quin – TRAC National Youth Director**

GDC 2016 has reminded me again that discipleship is very important in our community. The theme was "Pass It on: Living it out and Passing it on." from Rev. Edmund Chan's session: "What do we pass on? We pass on the truth that must be lived out because truth does not change lives but truth applied changes lives."

As I am moving into the next phase of my ministry, I am reminded that I need to understand the culture of the local church/community and learn to 'speak their language'. How we live our life for God is very important. As we build our relationship with one another, we need to affirm one another, have open communication where we can trust one another and invest in spending time with one another.

At the last plenary session, Dr Peter Tan-Chi reminded us to finish well and strong. We are to **Progress** – always be learning; **Prioritize** – balance

our priorities, learn from our Past and move on, and **Persevere** – to fix our eyes on Jesus. It was indeed God's leading and timing that I attended this GDC where I have learnt from all the speakers' lessons to prepare my heart for my next journey with God.

- **Kalaiarasy a/p Subramaniam – Children Ministry, Grace Methodist Church Sentul**

GDC Asia 2016 changed my perspective about discipleship which had been merely another programme to me. On the second day itself, GDC Asia 2016 immediately convicted me for avoiding discipleship-related programs all this while. GDC Asia 2016 cleared all thoughts and impressions that had been a block to embrace discipleship. Now discipleship brings an image of a colourful and free-flying butterfly that confidently and calmly lands on my shoulder. It is neither heavy nor uneasy but it is all about relationship with God and the people around us.

The experiences of being in a foreign land, and sharing with participants and representatives from various countries opened my eyes to see how marvellous discipleship is, as well as how it has changed many lives. Now without any hesitation, I would want to disciple others, bring them to Christ and help them to experience our freedom and love.

- **Lim Cheng Hin – Captain, 7th PJ Coy Boys' Brigade (BB); Deputy State Commissioner, Selangor State Council BB**

I am thankful for the opportunity to attend this 2016 Global Discipleship Congress (GDC). During the four days, all the programmes just continued to build on the theme. I learned much from the role modelling of the speakers towards a Kingdom calling, which is to embrace God's Kingdom values and vision through their personal walk and family life sharing.

The opportunity to meet and get to know participants from different countries during travel times on the bus and during meal times also added to the wider experiences of the work and challenges of our fellow believers in the nearby Asian countries.

Our local host extended excellent hospitality; that itself was a lesson on love in action.

Lastly the building of relationships as we travelled together as a team from TRAC has brought us closer and also holds us accountable to each other in "living it out and passing it on".

It is indeed humbling and heart-warming to read of the love which these younger disciples have for Jesus and their willingness to make a difference with their lives in obedience. The participants are grateful to two generous sponsors who believe in continuous equipping of God's faithful servants to develop them further as disciples wherever God has placed them—at Conference, the marketplace, local churches, schools or family. We pray that more will also invest their resources in kind and time to encourage, journey with, and prepare the next generation to face the challenges in their personal lives and in the nation. Our prayer is for all who have been impacted to be catalysts in their various ministries to influence and disciple their peers and others, remembering that we are discipled to disciple others.

**“There is no success without a successor!”**

**– Dr. John Maxwell**

With this repeated emphasis at Conference and having heard the same from international speakers, we cannot ignore the urgent need to disciple the next generation for Christ. May the Word of God continue to teach us the truth; may the Light of Christ continue to shine in a world of darkness, and may the power of the Holy Spirit continue to transform lives for the glory of God by **“ LIVING IT OUT AND PASSING IT ON ”**

Workshop notes on LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION by courtesy of Rev. Edmund Chan / Rev. Tony Yeo and Rev. Tan Kay Kiong (Leadership Mentor, Senior Pastors of Covenant Evangelical Free Church, Singapore)

### 7 REASONS Why Successions Fail

#### A. Leaders Are Too Busy

- The Ministry Is Too Demanding
- Leaders Are Too Busy To Think About Succession

#### B. Leaders Are Too Insecure

- Their Security or Identity Is Tied To Their Ministry
- Fear of LOSS because of insecurity/need to control

#### C. Leaders Are Too Successful

- The Thought Of Leaving Their Success Or Position Threatens Them
- The Missing Link: The Possible Need Of A Transitional Pastor

#### D. Leaders Fail To Develop A Strong But Humble Team

- Competiveness Of Team Members With Successor
- Failure To Complement The Successor's Weakness(es)

#### E. Leaders Have Unrealistic Expectations Of Their Successor

- Expects Successors To Be Similar To Them
- Confuse Leadership DNA with Leadership Styles

#### F. Leaders Fail To Lead Their People To Support Their Successor

- People Do Not Take Change and Transitions Easily
- People Tend To Compare The Successor With the Predecessor

#### G. Leaders Confuse Intent With Implementation

- No One Can Do It As Well As Them
- Failure to Profile Their Successor

### 8 PRINCIPLES Of Leadership Succession

#### A. Establish Conviction For Succession

- Think Beyond Our One Generation
- The Test of Leadership is Found in the Third Generation

#### B. Cultivate Realistic Perspective

- Transitions are Complex and Difficult
- We Haven't Got It Until We Do It

#### C. Learn From Others

- Learn from Other's Failure
- Learn from Other's Success

#### D. Develop A Succession Plan And Stick To It

- When is the Right Time To Step Down?
- Who is the Right Person To Call – From Within or Outside?
- Should the Predecessor Stay Within the Organization?

#### E. Cultivate A Mentoring Culture

- Mentoring Through Developmental Tasks
- Profiling The Mentoree(s)

#### F. Accept New Roles

- Predecessor: Learning To Let Go Leadership Privileges and Prestige (simplify life)
- Successor: Learning To Take On Leadership Problems and Pilgrimage (pay your dues)

#### G. Establish Clear Rules of Engagement

- Promote A Culture of Mutual Honouring
- Distinguishing between Leadership DNA vs. Leadership Style

#### H. Grow To Be Larger Than The Chair You Occupy

- Understanding Servant – Leadership (Position and Responsibility)
- Cultivating Security: Where You Are vs. Who You Are

# Why We Believe In Arminianism Over Calvinism

By Rev. Dr. Andrew Tan and Dr. David Tan

## Introduction

This article and three more to follow are written to assist Methodist members to be aware of their own doctrinal position which is Arminian. We have particularly felt the need to do so in the face of some challenges from the Calvinistic position. 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.

## Revisiting an Old Debate: Arminianism and Calvinism

The “Young, Restless, and Reformed” (YRR) movement has captured the attention of many young Christians in the United States, and its ideas are spreading throughout the world. Following in the footsteps of historical theologians John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards, and led by contemporary figures such as John Piper, Albert Mohler, Timothy Keller, and Mark Driscoll, the movement emphasizes God’s glory, the need for deeper theological understanding, and a passion for mission. The movement also emphasizes Calvinism, a particular understanding of how God’s sovereignty and human free will work in salvation. Methodists, beginning with our founder John Wesley, have held to a different position called Arminianism. John Wesley strenuously opposed Calvinistic theology because he believed it distorts God’s goodness and undermines the importance of holiness in the Christian life.

The debate on Calvinism and Arminianism is one on which evangelical Christians have disagreed – often passionately – for over 400 years. This debate has reignited with the advent of the YRR movement, with some leading voices claiming that Arminians are barely Christian and that Arminian theology is human-centered rather than God-centered. As this debate re-emerges in evangelical circles, it is important for us as Methodists to understand what we believe. We need to welcome our Calvinist brothers and sisters in Christ and applaud their

work for the gospel while being able to explain why we disagree with them in some issues.

It is not the aim of this series of articles to resolve a debate that is over 400 years old. Rather, this series will introduce the debate, explain the key disagreements the two sides have, examine key scriptural passages, and address some of the criticisms and misconceptions commonly brought by the YRR movement against Arminian theology. We have done our best here to express the viewpoints of each position in the words of their defenders. Nonetheless, there exists a variety of views within Arminian and Calvinist theologies, so not every Arminian or Calvinist will express their position the way we do here. We hope that this will be helpful to all readers, Arminian or Calvinist, even though this series of articles is written primarily for Methodists.

## Unable to Choose God Except by His Grace

Calvinists and Arminians both agree that human beings, in our sinfulness, are not capable of acknowledging and following after God. There is something in us that yearns for God because we were made for Him, but our sinful nature will not yield to God, recognize Him as Lord, and worshipfully center our lives on Him. We are not capable of choosing God. We are not even capable of truly desiring Him. God must take the initiative if we are to be reconciled. He has done so in history, working His plan to reconcile the world to Himself by calling Abraham and the nation of Israel, dwelling among us in the person of Jesus, and breaking the power of sin and death through Jesus’ death and resurrection. Both sides are agreed on this.

The dispute begins with what happens when God works in the heart of an individual. For the Arminian, God through an act of (prevenient) grace by the Holy Spirit, restores our ability to choose God. In that space and time, a person is enabled by God to respond to the good news and acknowledge God as Lord, or to reject God’s

offer of grace and persist in their sin and rebellion. In other words, grace suspends our sinfulness such that we are truly free to choose or to reject God.

For the Calvinist, God's grace cannot be denied – it is always effective. Whoever God chooses will respond. The person who rejects the gospel message was never actually chosen by God in the first place. In other words, God's grace cannot be resisted. Once God's grace comes to you, you will respond positively.

### **God's Sovereignty and Human Free Will**

One of the difficulties Arminians and Calvinists have when talking to each other is that we use the same words or phrases to mean different things. This is especially true when it comes to "God's sovereignty" and "human free will."

To be sovereign, in simple language, is to be in charge and in control. Calvinists and Arminians both say God is sovereign. When Calvinists say this, they mean "meticulous sovereignty," or "divine determinism." God specifically foreordains and renders certain everything that happens, including how a person responds to the gospel. For the Calvinists, the Arminian assertion that we have the ability to accept or reject God's offer of salvation is a denial that God is truly sovereign.

Arminians say that God could exercise "meticulous sovereignty," but He does not. Instead He has created room for human beings to have true moral choice. In the matter of salvation, God has sovereignly decided that salvation is conditional upon human response. The human ability to oppose God is no true challenge to God's sovereignty. The only reason we can do so is because of God's own decision, permission, and enabling. The problem with the Calvinist view of sovereignty is that humanity's rebellion against God is foreordained and rendered certain by God Himself.

This brings us to human free will. When an Arminian talks

about free will, he means "libertarian free will," that our choices are free from the determination or constraints of human nature and free from any predetermination by God. We can act contrary to our nature, desires, and predispositions. "Libertarian free will" does not mean that there are no constraints at all – our circumstances, experiences, and knowledge all limit the choices available to us. However, in any decision we make, we could truly have chosen otherwise.

Calvinists, on the other hand, hold to "compatibilist free will," an understanding of free will that can co-exist with divine determinism. In this view of free will, a person is free to act as they desire, but they will always act according to their desires. A person could have made a different choice if their desires were different, but we always choose what we most desire. Since we are unable to control our desires, the only way for a person to turn to God is for God to intervene and change their desires in an act of grace. Once God has done that, it is impossible for that person to refuse Him.

### **The Problem of Evil and Unbelievers**

The primary reason Arminians hold the position on God's sovereignty and human free will explained above is because we believe God's goodness and love are at stake. Christians face the challenge of explaining how evil can exist when God is good and all-powerful. This will always be a difficult question to answer.

Arminians have always stood by the free-will defense of God. That God, in creating moral beings who could choose to love and obey Him took the risk that we would reject and rebel against Him. Without the possibility of choosing evil, we would not be moral beings; without the possibility of rejecting God, we would not truly love Him, because love cannot be coerced. Arminians do not celebrate free will because it glorifies humanity but because it glorifies a gracious, self-giving God who made us in His image at risk of pain to Himself. Sin and evil are the result of humanity abusing the gift that God

gave us. God made a world in which evil is possible so that we could exist. This possibility of evil did not have to come to pass – it is we, through our rebellion against God, who are responsible for that.

In spite of our rebellion, God in His goodness and mercy sent Jesus to die on our behalf, for our sins, and to rise again to triumph over death. God is at work reconciling the world to Himself. Yet, the Scriptures also teach that not all will accept Jesus as God and Lord, despite the fact that God desires that all should be saved. Why then will there be those who are not saved? Is Jesus death insufficient? Did not Jesus die for all? Is God’s grace not enough? The Arminian responds that the Messiah died for all, His death suffices for all, and God’s grace abounds to overflowing. Yet, God who in His wisdom did not coerce us into obedience to Him will not coerce us into repentance. It is His good will that we truly have free choice to love Him and worship Him as God.

The Calvinist has to come up with a different explanation for these two matters. With regard to how evil and sin entered into this world, the Calvinist must say that God foreordained it and rendered it certain. This rightly makes many Calvinists uncomfortable, so some choose to say that evil is a mystery. Many others however, stand by the implications of their position. Why would God render evil, sin, and the rebellion of humanity certain? The answer from the YRR movement is that this is for God’s glory, that His mercy and work of redemption might be displayed.

Arminians find this to be an unsatisfying answer, as God’s mercy and grace seem much-diminished if God is the One who foreordained our sin in the first place. Another Arminian criticism is that the Calvinist position seems to make God the author of sin and evil. Calvinists deny this, and rightly affirm that the responsibility for sin belongs to us. However, it is difficult to see how humans can hold the primary responsibility for sin when God must foreordain the desires that will lead us to “freely” rebel against Him.

Similarly, the Calvinist must account for why not all will be saved. The Calvinist response is that God will not save all, and has chosen not to save all. Jesus’ death is sufficient for all, but Jesus did not die for all (or, at minimum, God has chosen not to apply the benefits of Jesus death and resurrection to all). Why has God chosen not so save all, and instead condemn many? The answer again, is for His glory. The Calvinist will at this juncture point out that God has no obligation to save anyone, and that He can freely do as He wills, and that we have no right to judge God. The Arminian will agree with these three statements, but point out that this seems contradictory with God’s own revelation of His character in the Scripture. It bewilders us how creating human beings for the sole purpose of being condemned is consistent with a good and loving God, and how persistent rebellion brings glory to God.

### **A Conclusion – For Now**

We must be clear: Calvinists affirm the goodness and love of God, and deny that He is the author of evil. However, we Arminians believe that their views on God’s sovereignty and human free will are inconsistent with their views of His character. So, why do Calvinists believe what they believe? The Calvinist would say “because the Scripture teaches this,” and criticize the writers for appealing only to logic and philosophy in this article. This is a valid criticism, and one that needs to be addressed. Having established the issues at stake here, we will follow up with a survey of some of the key Scripture passages that pertain to this debate in the next article on this subject.

What does the Scripture Say?

Myths about Arminian Theology

How Should Arminians Respond

## Special Church Service In Conjunction With Police Day Celebration

By Mdm Cheam Swee Poh



On 24 March 2016 at the Wesley Methodist Church Kuala Lipis, 170 Christians gathered for a special worship service to celebrate the 209th Police Day Celebration. They are from the various churches in Lipis, namely Wesley Methodist Church Kuala Lipis, Kuala Lipis Christian Church, Roman Catholic Church and the indigenous people from Dusun Pak Senam, Lubuk Kulit dan Post Betau. Christians from Sabah and Sarawak who are working in various government and private sectors here also joined in the celebration.

Insp Welton anak Ibin representing the Christian police force here informed that the special church service is organised on a yearly basis to strengthen bonds between the police and the community. This is in line with this year's theme "Polis dan Masyarakat Berpisah Tiada".

(Police and the community together always). He was pleased that the Christians from various denominations came together to celebrate the Police Day. He then proceeded to convey the counsel of the Lipis District Chief of Police that all Malaysians should practice tolerance and respect towards other religion as we live in a multiracial multicultural country.

Rev Bernard Yogaraj, pastor of the Wesley Methodist Church, in his sermon encouraged all Christians to show loyalty to our rulers and respect towards the law enforcers, namely the police who aims to serve and protect. He said that Christians should abide by the law as long as it does not contradict God's teaching as found in the Bible. This is explicitly stated in the Bible "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities,





for there is no authority except that which God has established” (Romans 13:1) and “For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God’s servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience” (Romans 13:4-5). Thus, Christians who obey God should heed the advice given by the law enforcers. He also requested all those attending to pray continuously for the police and our beloved nation.

Among the highlights of the programme, was a dance performed by the Christian indigenous youths. As a token of appreciation to the numerous service rendered by the police department, the Wesley Methodist Church presented every police personnel with a gift.



**REV. WON EN MIEN**

Ordained as Deacon in 1963 and as Travelling Elder in 1965.

Married to Florence Kan in 1967. They have two children, Benjamin & Veronica, as well as two grandchildren, Elizabeth & William (children of Benjamin and his wife, Kimberley).

**RECORD OF SERVICE**

- 1963-1964 Assistant Pastor, Wesley Methodist Church, Kuala Lumpur  
(Also assigned to Grace Methodist Church, Sentu)
- 1965-1968 Pastor, Wesley Methodist Church, Klang
- 1969-1970 Pastor, Wesley Methodist Church, Raub & Kuala Lipis
- 1971-1975 Pastor, Wesley Methodist Church, Kuantan  
(District Superintendent, Eastern Malaya District 1969-1974)
- 1976-1980 Pastor, Trinity Methodist Church, Penang  
(District Superintendent, Northern District 1977-1980)
- 1981-1985 Pastor, Wesley Methodist Church, Ipoh  
(District Superintendent, Perak District 1983-1984)
- 1986-1993 Pastor, Wesley Methodist Church, Penang  
(Also assigned to Kulim 1989 and to Parit Buntar 1992-1993)  
(District Superintendent, Northern District 1989-1993)
- 1994-1998 Pastor, Wesley Methodist Church, Johore Bharu  
Retired from active ministry in 1998.

Rev. Won En Mien passed away on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2016.



**REV LAWRENCE FRANCIS**

Served as a minster of the Trinity Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Malaysia from 1976 to 2012, a total of 36 years. He became an Elder in 1981. Married to Teh Bee Gaik in 1984 and they have two children, Johanan and Ithrana.

**He served as a District Superintendent in TRAC as follows:-**

2.1 Perak District	1987-1988	2.4 Northern District	2004-2005
2.2 Southern District	1989-1991	2.5 Eastern District	2008
2.3 Eastern District	2000-2003	2.6 Selangor District	2009-2012

**He served as a pastor as follows:-**

3.1 Canning Garden Methodist Church	1976
3.2 Wesley Methodist Church, Kuantan	1977 - 1981
3.3 Wesley Methodist Church, Taiping & Wesley Methodist Church, Kuala Kangsar	1982 - 1983
3.4 Wesley Methodist Church, Alor Setar	Jan 1984 - May 1984
3.5 Post-Graduate Studies in India	1984 - 1986
3.6 Wesley Methodist Church, Mentakab	1986
3.7 Wesley Methodist Church, Taiping	1987 - 1988
3.8 Wesley Methodist Church, Kuala Kangsar	Jan 1987 - July 1987
3.9 Wesley Methodist Church, Melaka & Taman Asean Methodist Church	1989 - 1991
3.10 Grace Methodist Church, Sentul & Wesley Methodist Church, Kepong	December 1991 - 1995
3.11 Wesley Methodist Church, Kuantan	1996 - 2003
3.12 Taman Tas Methodist Church	1996 - 2003
3.13 Wesley Methodist Church, Kuala Lipis	2002 - 2003
3.14 Wesley Methodist Church, Penang	2004 - 2007
3.15 Christ Methodist Church, Bentong & Wesley Methodist Church, Raub	2008
3.16 Trinity Methodist Church, Sungai Buloh	2008 - 2012

Rev. Lawrence Francis passed away on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016.





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