



Pray For All Leaders

LEAD2016 - DUMC'S Leadership Conference

Dedication of Jubilee Methodist Education Centre (JMeC), Jelapang

Reflections On The Methodist School For Intercessors

Pastors Who Constituted the First Session of the TRAC Conference in 1976

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Berita TRAC apologises for wrongly spelling
Bishop Ong Hwai Teik's name in the
"40th Anniversary TRAC Leadership History"
section on Page 8 of the
Berita TRAC 2015 Issue No.3.

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
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Rev. Dr. T. Jeyakumar
President, TRAC

Pray For All Leaders

In 1 Timothy 2:1-2 the Apostle Paul uses 4 words (requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving) to focus on a single theme, namely that prayer should be made for everyone. Prayer should be made for everyone, especially for kings and all those in authority (2a). This was a remarkable instruction since at that time no Christian ruler existed anywhere in the world. When the Apostle was writing this letter, Nero was the Emperor whose hostility and cruelty to the Christian faith was known to all. Churches were persecuted and yet they were to pray for the rulers. However, praying for such rulers was not something new. In the book of Jeremiah the prophet told the believers in exile to pray for Babylon's peace and prosperity. So the early Christians followed the instructions in the Old Testament and New Testament, and prayed for their leaders and governments.

One reason to pray for leaders is that everyone may live peaceful lives. When the nation we live in is free of war and unrest, then we live peacefully – this is a basic benefit. So, we should pray for the leaders. Are we called to pray for all leaders or only Christian leaders and especially church leaders? We are to pray for all leaders. Whether they are in business, politics, or church, leaders need our prayer. We must pray for them to make good decisions because their decisions affect all! Their good decisions and good governance will help establish peace in this nation. Pray for wisdom so that whatever they do will be right and good. Pray for the fear of God to fall on them so that they will shun wrong and evil. I believe sometimes nations suffer because of the prayerlessness of the people of God. In this nation God is teaching us to pray and we are just learning to pray.

In May 1989 a small group of people began to pray in Germany in a church called St. Nicholas Church. The group expanded. In October 1989, 2000 people were praying inside the church while 10,000 gathered outside to pray. Communism collapsed and the Berlin Wall came down. What is it that God will not do if you and I pray earnestly? I believe that if we pray, God will tear down the walls that have been erected to cause hatred and division in this country, and He will erect walls of safety and security around our nation. Then we will live peacefully in this country which we all love very much.

1 I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people — **2** for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

1 Timothy 2:1-2

God uses our prayers to bring healing to the hurting nation. We are literally standing at a crossroads in history. What will ultimately happen to our lives, lives of people around us, our nation and nations of the world will depend on our intercession. We need to pray “like never before.”

Jesu, Juva!

Arminianism and Calvinism: Debated Scriptural Passages

By Rev. Andrew Tan and Mr. David Tan

INTRODUCTION

This is the second 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 center-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 this article, we will examine some of the key Scriptural passages in this debate. 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.

THEOLOGY AND SCRIPTURE

Neither Calvinism nor Arminianism is directly laid out in the Scripture. If they were, it is unlikely that the debate over these two ideas would have persisted in mainstream Christianity for over 400 years. However, both theological systems are rooted in Scripture and attempt to synthesize and organize what Scripture has to teach on salvation into a systematic soteriology (theology of salvation). Therefore, both theological systems are derived from Scriptural passages that their adherents believe speak clearly on certain aspects of salvation and build upon it using logical arguments and derivation to develop a coherent and complete story. This story must then be tested against the Scripture as a whole, to ensure that we have not inadvertently contradicted Scripture in our attempt to understand and explain it.

Calvinists and Arminians alike believe that the Bible is God-breathed, and therefore authoritative, reliable, and consistent. We are not pitting one section of the Bible against another or trying to accumulate more proof-texts than the other side. Rather, our theology should be consistent with all of Scripture. Where apparent inconsistencies appear, we need to correct our theologies and/or improve our understanding of the Scriptures. In salvation, Calvinists believe that the Scriptures clearly teach predestination and election in a way that necessitates Calvinism and precludes Arminian theology. We will examine some passages from Romans and Ephesians that are commonly quoted to advocate

Calvinism. On the other hand, Arminians believe that the Scriptures teach that the offer of salvation is available to all (universal offer of salvation) and that the Scriptures warn that falling away from the faith is a real possibility. Both ideas are incompatible with Calvinistic theology.

It is not possible in the scope of this article to be exhaustive in the Scriptures relating to these subjects or even to go into great detail about the passages that we will examine. Arminian and Calvinist theologians alike will have variations on or even outright departures from the exegetical examples we provide here as examples of how these two groups approach these passages. Nonetheless, we believe that surveying these four topics and the Scriptures presented here will introduce the reader to the Scriptural framework of this debate.

PREDESTINATION

A central idea in Calvinistic theology is that God has predetermined which individuals will be saved – and, consequently, who will not be saved. Two main passages used in defense of this view are **Romans 8** and **Ephesians 1**, which talk about predestination.

Romans 8 is a discussion of how we become children of God through the gift of the Holy Spirit that dwells in us. Verse 29 is the key verse for understanding predestination:

“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.”

Calvinists believe that foreknowledge and predestination in this verse are practically synonymous. They argue that foreknowledge is not merely intellectual but implies choice and love. Throughout the Scriptures, knowledge is not merely about information, but implies relationship (e.g. **Matthew 7:23**, “*I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’*”). Therefore, a Calvinist understanding of the verse might read like this (italics ours):

“For those God foreknew *that he would call to be his own* he also predestined to be saved, and therefore conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”

Arminians have a variety of views on the exact nature of God's foreknowledge, but all agree that this foreknowledge is derived from future events and does not cause them to be. Or, to phrase it another way, if I were to choose between X and Y, God knows my choice in advance but does not determine what my choice would be.

In addition to the different understanding of foreknowledge, Arminians have a differing understanding of predestination in this passage. Predestination here is not predetermining individuals to salvation. Rather, for those God foreknows will accept His offer of salvation, he has created a special destiny – to be conformed to and thus share in the image of Christ. An Arminian understanding of **Romans 8:29** might look like this (*italics ours*):

“For those God foreknew would love him and answer his call and be saved he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son (so that we who were made in God's image, having being saved, will have that image restored), that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”

Both readings are plausible. The correct reading depends greatly on what “foreknowledge” means, as well as the larger context of Romans. We do not have the space here to properly explore the former but will return to the latter further on in this article when we discuss Romans 9.

Another important passage regarding the topic of predestination is **Ephesians 1**. At first glance, this passage seems to clearly support the Calvinist view, with verses 4-5 reading:

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.”

Calvinists understand these verses as God choosing individuals for salvation even before the creation of this world. God's choice of these individuals is entirely dependent on God's “pleasure and will.” In this view, predestination of individuals is part of God's overarching plan, as seen in verse 11, “In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.”

Arminians contend however, that the Calvinist interpretation misses an important point: the central issue that Paul is discussing in his letter to the Ephesians is reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles through Christ to form the Church. In this view, a careful reading

of the subject matter and Paul's use of the pronouns “us,” “we,” and “you” show that he is not discussing the salvation of individuals, but God's plan to unite both Jew and Gentile in the Church.

The theme of reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles is spelled out in Chapters 2 and 3. In these passages, Paul repeatedly uses the word “you,” to refer to Gentiles (e.g. 2:11, “Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands).” He describes how Gentiles were excluded from Israel, and how Jesus has torn down these walls so that “through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus,” (3:6). It is because of this, that “you” (the Gentile believers) “must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking,” (4:17).

Paul's discussion of Jewish and Gentile believers actually begins in Chapter 1, and is apparent when close attention is paid to the use of the pronouns in verses 11-13.

“In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,”

Here, “we” clearly refers to Jewish Christians, who “were the first to put [their] hope in Christ.” In contrast, “you” refers to the Gentile believers receiving Paul's letter, who “also were included in Christ” later from a chronologically perspective. In both cases, the pronouns clearly refer to corporate groups rather than individuals. Arminians believe that in verses 4-5, Paul, anticipating the theme of Jew and Gentile, is emphasizing God's choice of the Church, predestining both Jews and Gentiles to “adoption to sonship”. In this reading, the “us” of verse 4 refers not to individual Christians but rather to the corporate body of the Church. So the predestination that Paul is talking about here is not about individual salvation. Rather, just as God had chosen Israel in the past to be His people, God has now chosen the Church, ending the divide between Jews and Gentiles and bringing both into the family of God.

Some might ask, at this juncture, why God's choice of groups rather than individuals matters for understanding salvation. We point back toward the history of Israel. While God chose the people of Israel to be His people,

many individuals within Israel did not receive the benefits of God's promises due to their disobedience and their rejection of God. On the other hand, there are accounts of persons such as Rahab and Ruth who began their lives outside of God's chosen people, but who entered into this group by faith and thus received the blessings God had promised to Israel.

ELECTION

In the Ephesians passage above, we have already started to move from the subject of predestination to the subject of election. In our modern context, we associate elections with voting and democracy. The meaning of the word election, however, is simply to choose. For Calvinists, predestination and election are almost synonyms, both referring to God's choice of those individuals who will be saved. Arminians contend that the object of predestination is context-specific (as discussed above) and election in the Scripture refers to purpose and service, not to salvation. Indeed, the Scriptures contain various references of how God has chosen some foreign nation and their king to accomplish a particular purpose (e.g. Cyrus of the Persians, Isaiah 45:1). Surely God's choice of Cyrus has nothing to do with salvation.

The most noteworthy passage on election is **Romans 9-11**, a passage that has been the subject of extensive exegesis on both sides. Among contemporary Biblical scholars, John Piper and Ben Witherington are particularly well-known for their analysis of these chapters in defense of the Calvinist and Arminian perspectives respectively. The following is a very brief treatment of a complex and intertwined passage.

Before we get into the details of this passage, we have to begin by asking, what is **Romans 9-11** – and Romans as a whole – about? The answer that Calvinists (and others) give, is that Romans is about justification by grace alone through faith alone. Calvinists go on to assert that in this context of salvation, Romans 9 clearly teaches that God is in meticulous control of all aspects of salvation including how we respond.

Calvinists point toward multiple passages in this section to support their belief that God elects people to salvation. They show the example of God's choice of Isaac over Ishmael and God's choice of Jacob over Esau from before their birth (9:7-13); the example of God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart, resulting in Pharaoh refusing to allow the Israelites to leave Egypt (9:14-18); and the inability of the people of Israel to recognize their Messiah (11:7-10). Perhaps the section that seems to most clearly support the Calvinist position is Chapter 9, verses 19-23:

One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?" But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?

What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory – even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles?

Arminians agree that justification by grace alone through faith alone is an important theme in the book of Romans. If this was all Paul was discussing – if Paul was explaining the process of salvation apart from any other context – the Calvinists would be correct in their assessment of Romans 9-11. However, we (the writers) see the status of the people of Israel as the particular context in which Paul discusses the topic of justification. This has important implications for understanding **Romans 9-11**.

Throughout Romans, and in Romans 9-11 in particular, Paul tackles the problem of God's apparent rejection of Israel as His chosen people, an important question as most of the Jewish people had rejected the Church. This brings up the question of whether God is righteous and faithful – if God had not fulfilled His promises to Israel, will He now fulfill His promises to the Church? To answer this question, Paul examines how God has dealt with Israel in the past, makes the case that God has not indeed abandoned His people, Israel, and affirms that ultimately when the full number of Gentiles have come in "all Israel will be saved" (11:26).

If we accept this framework (that Paul is discussing the position of Israel as God's chosen people), a different understanding of Romans 9-11 begins to emerge. Israel's status as God's chosen people is not an end in itself, but for Israel to be a blessing to all the peoples of the earth (Genesis 12:3), according to God's promise to Abraham. Indeed, the Jews understood themselves to be keepers and instructors of the truth (Romans 2:19-21). Paul establishes that God has the right to choose whoever He will to fulfill His promise and Israel's purpose, and that this reaches its fulfillment in the person of Jesus (10:4). Even in the problem that Paul tackles – Israel's transgression and failure to recognize the Messiah – Gentiles were being blessed and grafted into God's people (11:11-12), fulfilling Israel's purpose!

Paul demonstrates that God has been faithful to His promises to Israel – upholding the integrity of God, and the reliability of all His promises.

With this in mind, God's choices described in **Romans 9-11** are not consignment of the individuals discussed to salvation or to reprobation, but rather God's choosing them to accomplish specific purposes regarding Israel. God's rejection of Esau as the heir to Abraham's promise is not the same thing as God predestining Esau to hell. The emphasis in **Romans 9** regarding Pharaoh is not eternal condemnation but the display of God's power. And, the discussion of the pottery in verses 19-21 is not about "salvation" or "eternal destruction" but has to do with "special purposes" and "common use." Furthermore, in verses 22-23, God's patience with "objects of His wrath" is not God postponing the punishment of those He has already condemned to eternal destruction, as is often claimed by Calvinists. Rather, in **Ephesians 2:3**, Paul makes clear that we believers were ourselves once "objects of wrath;" God's patience with these "objects of wrath" is that they might become "objects of mercy" instead.

In his argument in **Romans 9-11**, Paul is explaining the role of Israel as God's chosen people and how this is still true in spite of the welcoming in of the Gentiles and the turning away of most of the people of Israel. In the analogy of the olive tree in Chapter 11, there is continuity between Israel and the Gentiles – the tree is not replaced, but rather, branches are grafted in. And in this very passage there are conditions for breaking off and for grafting in the branches: unbelief and faith respectively (vs. 19) – which contradicts the Calvinistic idea that there are no conditions to receiving the benefits of salvation. It is consistent, however, with the Arminian view that while the offer of salvation is made unconditionally, the benefits of this gracious offer are only effective when received through faith alone (which God graciously enables, but does not force).

UNIVERSAL OFFER OF SALVATION

Arminians believe that there are themes in the Scriptures that Calvinism fails to properly account for. We very briefly address two here: the universal offer of salvation, and warnings against falling away from the faith.

Arminians do not believe that everyone will be saved, but that the offer of salvation is genuinely available to all. Throughout the Scriptures, "all," "the world," and "everyone" are repeatedly used to describe who Christ died for and who God desires to be saved (**John 1:29, John 3:16, John 12:32, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, Hebrews 2:9, 2 Peter 3:8-9, 1 John 2:1-2**, etc.). This stands in contradiction to the belief, widely-held by Calvinists, that although the cross would be sufficient to save all, God

only offers salvation to some, a doctrine called "limited atonement." This is a necessary doctrine for Calvinists, as they believe that God's offer of salvation is always effectual: those whom God calls are unable to reject His call. Since it is evident that there are non-believers, the Calvinist must believe that God does not call everyone.

Some Calvinists have tried to explain these passages by acknowledging that God does indeed desire that all would be saved, but that God has a higher and better desire (usually God's glory) that must take precedence. Some Calvinists have also appealed to mystery to explain how God can simultaneously offer salvation to all and effectively limit it to some. Still other Calvinists say that all people receive some benefit from Jesus' death (so Jesus did indeed die for all), but not all are offered salvation through His death. We find that these attempts to reconcile the language of the universal offer of salvation within these texts with the Calvinistic doctrine of limited atonement require stretching the understanding of the texts to the breaking point.

One passage that Calvinists have used to justify the idea of limited atonement is **Romans 5:12-21**, where verse 17 reads, "For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!" and verse 19 states, "through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous." The Calvinists claim that this and other passages (**Matthew 20:28, Matthew 26:28, John 10:15, Ephesians 5:25**) show that only some receive the benefit of Jesus' death, and thus Jesus only died for some.

Arminians have no problems with the first part of the claim – only those who receive God's gift of righteousness benefit from Christ' death and resurrection! However, nothing in these passages indicate that the offer of salvation is not made to all. The assertion that Jesus died for a particular group of people ("the many") does not mean that Jesus died for only that group of people (e.g. 1 Timothy 4:10, That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe."). On the contrary, if Jesus' death is greater than Adam's trespass (vs. 15-16), it would follow that His death must have some universal effect. Indeed, verse 18 states that "one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people." The Calvinist assertion that the limited beneficiaries of Jesus' death proves the limited offer of salvation only makes sense if one accepts the Calvinistic premise that God's offer of salvation cannot be rejected. This is a premise that Arminians do not share.

WARNINGS AGAINST FALLING AWAY

Most Arminians believe that the Scriptures teach that falling away from salvation is possible and clear warnings to guard against this are not merely hypothetical. Calvinists, on the other hand, assert that it is not possible for a believer to lose their salvation as this would be a human rejection of God's effectual call.

In our earlier discussion of Romans, we have already noted that in chapter 11:19, branches were broken off because of unbelief, which would suggest that falling away from the faith is a possibility. There are other passages with more direct warnings, such as Jesus' parable of the vine in **John 15:1-17**, where if "you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned." (v. 6), and passages with examples of people who have "made a shipwreck of their faith" (**1 Timothy 1:18-20**). These are not isolated passages; warnings on the subject are numerous with **1 Corinthians 8:11; 9:11-12, Hebrews 2:1-3; 3:12; 6:4-6; 10:26-29, James 5:19-20**, and more discussing apostasy.

With all these Scriptural passages on falling away from the faith, what is the Calvinist rebuttal? There are two main Calvinist arguments. The first is that those who appear to have left the faith were never true Christians to begin with. **1 John 2:19** states "They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us." There are a few ways to interpret this verse, but even if we take it to mean that this group were false Christians rather than genuine Christians who have left the faith, Arminians would argue that this passage refers to a particular group of church-leavers, and should not automatically be generalized to all cases.

The second major Calvinist argument appeals to passages such as **Romans 8:38-39**, which states, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Other similar passages include **John 10:28-29, Ephesians 4:30, and Jude 24**. These are important passages, and Arminians point toward these verses to show that we can be assured of our salvation, and that God is more than capable of safeguarding us. Still, we have to find a way to reconcile these teachings with the warnings against apostasy. The Calvinist view is that the warnings against apostasy are merely hypothetical or are warnings to those who are part of the church but are not truly elect – warnings that these non-elect would be unable to heed. Arminians think that a better way to hold these passages together

is found in Jesus' parable of the vine and branches – that so long as we remain in Christ and Christ remains in us, we are secure. Apostasy in the Arminian view is not something that happens accidentally, or through carelessness but by a deliberate choice (or series of choices) to leave the protection and security that God offers.

Of Making Exegesis there is No End, and Much Study Wearies the Body (cf. Ecclesiastes 12:12)

If you have made it to the end of the article, thank you for walking through all this exegesis with us! As we stated at the beginning, however, we have merely scratched the surface. Wiser and more learned people on both sides of the issue have studied and written in much more depth than we have, and still the debate persists. What then can and should we take away from this study?

Let us begin by stating what we don't expect to accomplish here. We do not expect to settle the 400 hundred year old debate on Arminian and Calvinistic theology. We do not expect to convince Calvinists who have already studied the topic in depth and come to their conclusions – though we do hope that any Calvinist readers seeing this sort of Arminian exegesis for the first time will take a deeper look with an open mind.

We stated at the beginning of this article that we hope that this series of articles will help us in the Methodist Church, to understand our doctrinal position and the Scriptures that support it. We hope that those who are challenged by Calvinists on their beliefs will see Arminian theology as credible, and be able to articulate and defend it – not that we want to promote dissension and antagonism over this issue, but we wish our members to be confident in what they believe. We hope that the work we have done shows that the Arminian position is Biblically-based and comes out of a reverence for Scripture. Our Calvinist brothers and sisters may believe we have an incorrect understanding of the Scriptures, but we hope they recognize that we, like them, are attempting to be faithful to God's Word. And, if you as a reader are introduced to this debate as a result of our writings and find yourself in the Calvinist camp after studying the Scriptures – we gently (maybe vigorously!) disagree with you, but are thankful that you have found the task of studying God's Word deeply worthwhile.

Our major exegetical work for this series of articles, incomplete as it is, ends here. In the following article, we will discuss common misunderstandings about Arminian theology. Some readers have inquired about references for further reading. That will come in the fourth and final article of the series, entitled, "Where Do We Go From Here?"

LEAD2016

DUMC'S Leadership Conference

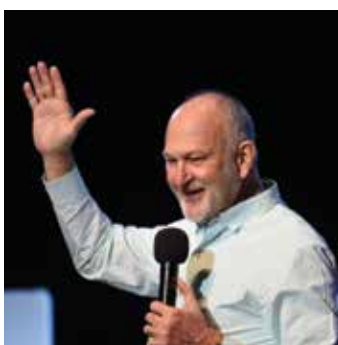
By Petulia Lun, editor of Floodgates, DUMC



Jeffery Rachmat



Joey Bonifacio



Gary Skinner



Joseph Bonifacio

DUMC's series of LEAD conferences was birthed from our Malaysian Cell Church Conferences which had been held annually in previous years to help equip churches on Cell Church concepts and practices. LEAD2016, the third in the LEAD series, was held at DUMC in June of this year.

Beginning from 2014, DUMC's leadership realised that the need had shifted to equipping Christians on bible-based leadership principles. For the Joshua generation, the Holy Spirit had revealed the importance of

Leadership. Evangelism. Assimilation. Discipleship.

LEADING ACROSS GENERATIONS

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you: and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the Earth (Acts 1:8 NIV)

It is vital for the church to not just lead this generation but to raise up leaders from the youth. DUMC believes that the spiritual development and health of the demographic of twenty to thirty-five is a vital link to longevity of the church.

DUMC also believes strongly in discipleship, and a core focus of the church is equipping and discipling our people to leave a legacy for the next generation.

LEAD2016 was blessed by the participation of more than 1000 delegates and they were privileged to have these renowned pastors as the plenary speakers:

- **JEFFREY RACHMAT**, Senior Pastor of Jakarta Praise Community Church (JPCC) and a sought-after speaker in Indonesia and internationally, on topics such as leadership, relationship, marriage and business.
- **JOEY BONIFACIO**, a pastor at Victory Fort Bonifacio – he serves on the leadership team of Every Nation Ministries and is also the Executive Director of the Real LIFE Foundation
- **GARY SKINNER**, visionary and a Team Leader of Watoto Ministries in Uganda – Gary and his wife Marilyn founded the Watoto Church and Watoto Child Care Ministries
- **JOSEPH BONIFACIO**, director of the School of Campus Ministry and Executive Director of Every Nation Campus Ministry in Manila.

The conference began with an opening speech by Senior Pastor Chris Kam. He spoke about our recent Holy Spirit sermon series and shared an inspiring quote a member sent to him, “it is not merely the visitation of the Holy Spirit that we want, but the co-habitation of the Holy Spirit within”. This encapsulates the focus of the entire LEAD2016 that all generations, young and old, need the Holy Spirit to live an empowered Christian life.

Pastor Jeffrey Rachmat spoke about the power of our salvation and how we need to live as Christians who truly believe that being saved is just the beginning. He gently reminded all that “we do not do good things in order to get saved. We are saved so we can do good things.”



Resonate Choir

Quoting from Acts 1:8, Pastor Joey Bonifacio stressed that a leader is empowered by the Spirit to in turn empower people and make disciples.



Pastor Gary Skinner’s heart is for children in third-world countries and he reminded us that God hears the cry of the needy and broken-hearted and He sends us out to serve (ref: Matthew 25:40-45). God wants to take the seemingly weak and insignificant to lead them to do great and significant things for Him. Lest we forget, the pathway to greatness is through servanthood in humility.

Finally, Pastor Joseph Bonifacio spoke about “A Leader that Follows”. The title suggests what today’s culture demands; that leaders should lead, yet he emphasised that Jesus is the perfect example of a leader; one who follows the will of His Father.

Indeed, leading across generations is something that we as the body of Christ need to keep in mind as we do God’s will. One generation raises up the one after.

The three-day conference ended with a finale performed by an intergenerational choir proclaiming the greatness of our God. We truly praise God for the privilege to be a part of LEAD2016. See you at LEAD2017. Register now <http://dumc.my/lead/>



Dedication of Jubilee Methodist Education Centre (JMeC), Jelapang

By Mr Choo Wang Teng

With Thanksgiving to Almighty God, Jubilee Methodist Centre Jelapang (JMC) celebrated its 21st Anniversary on July 3, 2016. The occasion was made doubly joyous when the celebration was enlarged with the combining of the anniversaries celebrations of the mother church Wesley Methodist Church Ipoh (WMCI—122nd Anniversary), the 1st Ipoh Company Boys' Brigade Malaysia (1st Ipoh BMM—25th Anniversary) and the Jubilee Methodist Kindergarten Jelapang (JMK—7th Anniversary).

At the same time, JMC dedicated its new building—the Jubilee Methodist Education Centre (JMeC). JMeC is a bright, multicoloured, 3-storey building. It is a unique landmark in Jelapang because of its rainbow colour, and is the only 3-storey building in its vicinity (pic below).



JUBILEE METHODIST EDUCATION CENTRE, JELAPANG
(To the left, adjoining JMeC, is JMC)



The Bishop and TRAC President accompanied by the Pastors of WMCI, JMC and Tamil MC Jelapang, and officers of the BB, watching the Parade put up by the 1st Ipoh Company BBM

JMeC is purposed for education, viz-a-viz, kindergarten and Sunday School ministries. The building contains 6 classrooms, a multipurpose hall the size of 2 classrooms, and a Sanctuary located at the ground floor.

JMeC was dedicated by the Bishop of The Methodist Church in Malaysia, accompanied by the TRAC President. At the Thanksgiving Service held at 5.00 pm, the Bishop preached from Judges 2:6-15 and Deuteronomy 6:4-9. The theme of his message was “The Power of One Generation”. In his message the Bishop reminded the congregation that the primary channel of faith is the home, the starting point of generational legacy. Children are to be taught from young not only to know God but also what He has done. The goal is “to love God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might”.

Highlights of the evening included a video show on the history of JMC, presentations by the Boys' Brigade, JMC Sunday School, JM Kindergarten, Youths from WMCI, JMC Choir, the unveiling of the memorial plaques by the Bishop and TRAC President, the cutting of 4 anniversary cakes and the 44-table dinner as the finale of the 5-in-1 Thanksgiving-Dedication-Celebration Service.



The Bishop preaching in the new Sanctuary at JMeC Jelapang, with Cantonese translation



Unveiling of JMeC Dedication Memorial Plaques by the Bishop and TRAC President



Cutting of the 4 anniversary cake—WMCI, JMC, 1st Ipoh Company BBM, JMK Jelapang

Personal Reflection for “Be Still” Retreat



Foong Lin

“Be Still” was a Kairos moment for me & God! To pause, reflect & hear God, who has been waiting to respond to my quest about my emotional & spiritual state. He spoke loud & clear to me through my silent & nature surround.

Praise God!

When I heard that there was to be a pastors' wives retreat, I was excited and wanted to attend it very much. Such retreats would generally give me encouragement of my ongoing role as a pastor's wife. These retreats would also provide me an opportunity to share, support, and encourage the wives of other pastors, especially the new ones. Such retreats would give me the privilege to make new friends. These retreats would also allow me the chance to refocus my walk with God. In the busyness of everyday life, I find the constant need not only to be still and quiet before God but to get right with Him.

I am very thankful to God for the beautiful place (Haven) to relax and do my personal reflections regarding my Christian life.

I made new friends and had the opportunity to share my experience (the ups and downs) as a pastor's wife with them. One part of the retreat where I enjoyed most was the session on doing a time-line since becoming the wife of a pastor and jotting down of the giftings and abilities that God has given me. I was pleasantly “surprised by joy” at the many giftings and abilities that the Lord has bestowed on me. The Lord God had gently guided, upheld, encouraged, strengthened, and eased me into the areas of His service. I am indeed grateful for the privilege of serving Him. I have left Haven with the knowledge that the Lord has more things for me to do and that I must be a willing vessel for Him to use me. As I make my journey towards the sunset years of my life, it is my fervent prayer that the Lord will help me to walk close to Him; be a channel of blessing to my family, friends and others whom I do not know; be able to hear his call to service clearly; and be obedient to the work that He has for me.



Girlie Wong



Grace Jeya

My desire to go for this retreat was to have a real encounter with God, to seek His presence and favour in my life.

2 precious lessons I learnt at this retreat:

Firstly, God is present in my ordinary routine. So I need to “be still” in order to experience Him and encounter Him daily and every moment of my life.

Secondly, I can be more than what I am because God loves me. Therefore, I need to celebrate my life and my role, and allow God to do a deeper work in me through silence and solitude.

This is my second time going to a Pastor's wives retreat and at first I was a bit hesitant in whether I should attend or not as I felt inadequate and had nothing to share of my journey as a pastor wife being only two years old. However with encouragement of sister Girlie Wong I signed up.

Our facilitator sister Kim Guat started the session with an ice breaker which was good for us to know one another as it was to most of us seeing each other for the first time. Then it was followed by a session on silent retreat. To me again being a first timer to a silent retreat was an eye opener. I felt relaxed during the time without thinking on the busyness of life and the passages of scriptures that were given for all of us to meditate on became more meaningful. As I experienced God's presence, he examines my heart and helps to purify me in my motives. During this time of sustained silence and submission I began to see his perspective and the importance of being still at times. Communion with the One who holds the future is the only thing that will take us past discouragement to determined faith. From that peace victory is won!

Hearing and learning from other pastors' wives on their walk and struggles has given me renewed strength and wisdom for this journey of faith. However, the conclusion comments from most of the wives with their uncountable years have inspired upon me that though sometimes in life it may be difficult in the beginning but with God as our guide we have nothing to fear. Most of them ended with the following comments, "I love being a pastor's wife and I will never trade this calling for any other."

Thus in conclusion the retreat ended well with memories of beautiful sharing given by fellow pastors' wives and the bonding we had with one another. Not forgetting too our warm, encouraging friendly facilitator and the breath taking surrounding place added well to the retreat and thus I am glad that I did not miss it.

A big thank you sister Grace for organising this retreat and will indeed look forward to the next one!



Shirley Soh

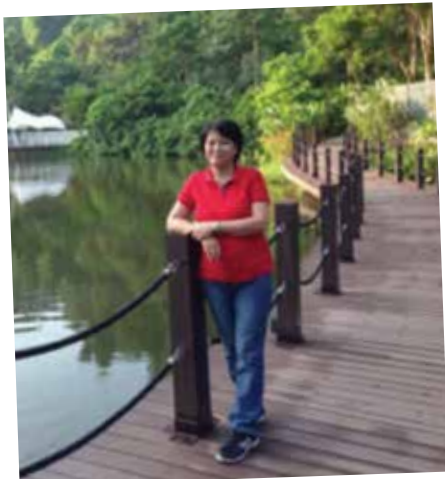
Indeed it was a wonderful time of meeting up with other fellow pastors' wives. We have had a time of open and honest sharing of ourselves, the blessedness and joy as well as struggles and challenges when we shared our personal stories.

I thank Kim Guat for her messages of encouragement. At this retreat, I'm glad I got to know some new friends and also a good time of meeting up with old ones.

Thank God for giving me this refreshing time to spend with Him and others.



Dorcas Ong


Jessica Piniah

Ini adalah pengalaman kali ke dua saya mengikuti TRAC Pastors' Wives Retreat anjuran TRAC. Saya mengucapkan berbanyak terima kasih kepada individu yang telah bermurah hati untuk membiayai semua perbelanjaan retreat ini.

Terima kasih juga kepada Pn. Goh Kim Guat yang telah memimpin dalam setiap sesi pembelajaran semasa di retreat ini. Beliau sememangnya di pakai oleh Tuhan dalam pelayanan beliau. Terima kasih juga kepada Pn. Grace yang telah mengatur semua keperluan untuk kami.

Dalam retreat kali ini, selain dapat berehat juga dapat berkenalan dengan isteri-isteri pastor dalam Track yang lain. Pelajaran yang saya dapat pelajari semasa di sini adalah; Sebagai isteri Pastor,

- Isteri pastor adalah individu yang akan selalu diperhatikan oleh semua jemaat dalam semua sudut kehidupan
- Isteri pastor diharapkan untuk memikul atau melakukan sesuatu pelayanan di dalam gereja walaupun kadang-kadang ianya di luar kemampuannya.

Sebagai isteri Pastor ini adalah sebahagian daripada tekanan-tekanan yang tidak dapat dielakkan dan kadang-kadang membuat isteri pastor itu putus asa dan merasa kecewa kerana menjadi isteri pastor, apatah lagi jika masih mempunyai anak-anak yang masih kecil. Pada akhir retreat ini saya secara peribadi di dorong dan belajar bahawa, saya harus selalu mengingatkan diri saya Bahawa jemaat-jemaat yang dilayani adalah manusia biasa dan punyai kelemahan mereka sendiri dan kami sebagai hamba Tuhan juga manusia biasa yang punyai kelemahan dan kadang-kadang akan terjadi perselisihan pendapat dengan jemaat. Untuk itu, saya harus bersedia untuk belajar dan bersandar sepenuhnya kepada Tuhan dalam Iman dan Doa agar menjadi isteri dan pembantu dalam pelayanan yang membawa berkat dan teladan yang baik kepada semua jemaat dalam gereja yang dilayani.

Sekian, Tuhan memberkati kita semua

I am always amazed at how good and gracious God is to His people. At every retreat that I have been too, I never cease to be touched and overwhelmed by how He graciously meets with each person and ministers to and encourages them. And it was no different at this retreat.

I went not knowing whether what I had prepared was in line with His purposes but trusting that He had been with me in my preparation and that He will be there to lead and overrule if I had discerned Him wrongly. Even though I sensed that He wanted to remind the ladies of His great love for them and to encourage and affirm them, it was still a humbling experience for me to see His hand at work amongst the ladies at the retreat. I believe that the Lord did His work of encouraging, healing, and renewing in everyone who was present.

One of the things that I brought back with me was the joy of seeing each one being affirmed again of how precious they are to God for who they are, and not for the role they play. I think it was very freeing for all of us to recognise again that we are all more than just pastors' wives but that we are each made lovingly with all many gifting and talents that He has seen fit to bless us with.

Another was the joy of getting to know and enjoy the fun and fellowship of all my precious sisters-in-Christ. Everyone was open and honest with one another and that was something very precious that can seldom be found among people who hardly know one another. It was a wonderful experience that we all shared together, something that I truly treasured and will remember with much thankfulness to the Lord who made it all possible.

I am really thankful and much blessed to have experienced those few short days of warmth, love and joyous fellowship with all the ladies there and also deeply grateful to Grace who put much hard work into making it possible!


Kim Guat

This is the first time I am participating in the camp organised by TRAC for pastors' wives. In this camp I have some time to reflect once again on the role and duty of a pastor's wife, as well as the plight of a pastor's wife. I was questioning myself, am I living how God is calling me to live or living for the term "pastor's wife"?

I give thanks to God that through all the reflections, God showed me that I am treasured as God's beloved; I am unique in my own way. Besides that, I have to learn how to build my self-esteem and self-confidence.

Unlike the other camps where speaker preached from a distance and participants were only the listeners, this time we're having group sharing sessions. The speaker Kim Guat reminded us to be still, pause and reflect on the very first session. Besides that, we know that pastor's wife has multiple roles in live, we carry the responsibility for caring, responsibility to take good care of the family, responsibility as a supportive wife, a role of a mother and we might also be an employee in our workplace. Sometimes, we are too busy living for others instead of for ourselves too. However, through this camp we had opportunity to reflect on our current circumstances - physical, mental and spiritual.

Psalm 139: 23-24 says, "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." These Bible verses reminded me that God cares for me, He wants me to commit myself to Him, as He will lead me into the future.

In those few days, we honestly shared with others the difficulties and obstacles we faced. I believe that our prayers and our cry came before Him. Our hearts have been touched, moved and renewed; and the wounds are healed by His mighty power.



Mui Tiang



Lilian Tan

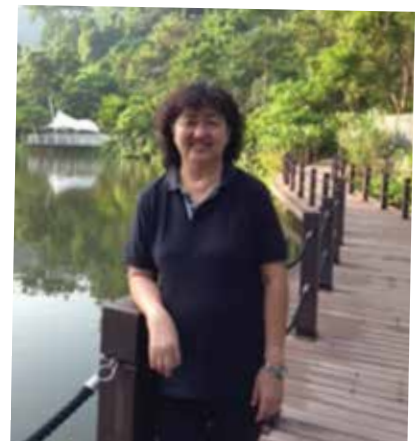
The camp reminded me of God's love, the need for us to trust him and be contented in His ways. I realized even with many years as a Christian, my heart needed an overhaul.

As Philip Yancey puts it so clearly, "The heart of sin lies a lack of trust that God intends the best for us. For our own well-being, we need to trust God for basic guidance of how to live"

So true, it's a lifelong journey. An endless pilgrimage of the heart! "Faith is not the clinging to a shrine but an endless pilgrimage of the heart" – Abraham Joshua Heschel."

The natural beauty of God's creation in the hills of Peace Heaven are refreshing for me. I experienced God's presence in the bright sunshine that warmed and relaxed my body, and lifted my mood. The 'pool', hills, trees, sky and good food blessed me also.

I am very thankful and blessed to have Sis Kim Guat to be with us and shared about her experiences as a pastor's wife. This indeed has brought clarity and renewed definition of me. I felt very encouraging as I listened to the sharing of other sisters in Christ. I am glad I can make it to the retreat this time. The fellowship and the bonding at the retreat indeed is very beneficial. I thank God for those who had put in long hours of hard-work that had made this retreat successful. May our God bless their labour of love.



Swee Kin

Sometime end of last year, my husband was accepted as a pastor in TRAC, which was a huge milestone for our church!

Subsequently, when we received the invitation to join the Pastors' Wives Retreat, two of us jumped at the opportunity to get to know other Methodist church pastors wives and understand what happens beyond the walls of our church. I was glad that it was a small cosy group of wives from different age groups and backgrounds because it gave us the opportunity to share deeper and know each one better. We had so much fun laughing, crying and 'lying' (we played a game called "3 truths and 1 lie").

My story is not about what we did but to share with you snippets of the conversations we had that led me to my conclusion about TRAC pastors' wives beyond my church:

- Most of them : "I've packed our bags __ times to different churches."
- All, "It was financially very tough."
- "I had to go back to work so that we could support our child for the varsity education. It was tough going to catch up on changes at work, and colleagues bullied me."
- All – "Family holidays were church camps"
- "I was told that my husband's priority would be God first, followed by church before family."
- Many – "There was no one I could share with in church because of our position."
- "I'm not an extrovert but I had to step forward to reach out to my members."
- ALL – "Despite the challenges, I love being a pastor's wife."

When I sat there and heard their stories, I was speechless. I have nothing to say about the struggles I face... they are nothing.

The conclusion ...they represent all the unsung heroes of every Methodist church and beyond. They are my heroines! Churches – you are so blessed to have them, treasure them.



Stella Kam

We sincerely welcome brothers and sisters in Christ who will be coming to further studies in Perth's universities in the coming semester. Immanuel Methodist Church (33 Cloister Ave., Manning, Perth, WA 6152) would like to assist you in settling down in Perth when you arrive. We also welcome you to join us in our weekly Sunday Worship Service: 8.30am and 7pm (Mandarin service), and 11am (English service); Chinese Youth Fellowship every Saturday 7pm and English Youth Fellowship every Friday 7.30pm. Let us love and encourage each other, so that we grow together in Jesus Christ.

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Combined Probationary Ministers' Retreat (English)

By Pastor Eric Tan Eng Leong



The 2016 Combined Probationary Ministers' Retreat was held in Wisma Methodist from June 12 to 14. Bishop Dr Ong Hwai Teik facilitated the sessions. There were 15 probationary ministers from TRAC in addition to others from CAC and TAC. The theme for the retreat was 'Sound in Doctrine, Vital in Piety, Faithful in Ministry and Effective in Administration'.

At the end of the first night's session, Bishop told us to reflect on the day's teaching to sense what God was saying to us and record it in our journal. The next morning, we had the opportunity to share our reflections with our group. It was encouraging to be able to share from our hearts and to pray for one another.

During the time for open discussion, we were able to dialogue with Bishop Ong on current issues and church concerns such as giving and tithing, Sabbath, membership, and LCEC matters. He then shared some key points for us to be praying about personally and as a church.

Bishop instructed us to feed, direct, heal, protect and inspire the people under our care. A minister is the chief worshipper. He instructs and nurtures, maintains body life fellowship, reaches out and serves the community. God has called us to this position and we are to take our responsibilities seriously and tend our 'sheep' wholeheartedly.

At the end of the retreat, Bishop Ong consecrated us to the Lord's ministry. He anointed us with oil and prayed for us individually. His prayer impacted me and the anointing with oil meant a lot to me. Being new in the Methodist Church, I took it as an affirmation of God's call upon my life and an acceptance into the family of The Methodist Church in Malaysia.

The retreat has done us good. We have been enriched by each other's sharing and fellowship and we look forward with anticipation to the next Retreat.

Reflections On The Methodist School For Intercessors

By Mr Yeoh Beng Keat



Our posture before the Lord

Several weeks before the MSI, it became apparent that this was not to be a normal Methodist conference or seminar or gathering. The Lord showed a picture of a group of people gathered in a room and there were tongues of fire over each person's head (as in Pentecost). We took this as the Lord's assurance that He would visit us at the MSI in a mighty way. True enough on the second day of the MSI, the Presence of the Lord was felt so strongly that another picture was given - we were all swimming in shoulder-deep water! We were embraced by His awesome Presence.

Instead of inspiring and information-filled sessions, we were treated to a continuous encounter with the awesome Presence of God – during worship, during sessions, at the Prayer Stations and the prayer sessions. Most of the participants were not so much impressed by what they learnt but rather they were more touched and moved by what they encountered. The Spirit of our Chief Intercessor was there among us and that Spirit stirred in us a spirit to intercede for the nation.

We envisaged learning how to be better intercessors, hoping to learn advanced techniques from the speakers. But the Lord taught us that to be His type of intercessors:

- We need to live crucified lives
- We need to spend time in His Presence and develop deep intimacy with Him
- We need to hear and bear the burdens of His heart

Normally at conferences, it would be the speakers that inspire and motivate the participants. In this school, it was God Himself that spoke, touched and revealed His heart PERSONALLY to the participants. Many were so moved that the word "wept" was the common response. Rather than an intellectual discourse, many had emotional encounters with the Lord Himself.

Some of their responses are shared here:

The times of prayer and worship brought me to my knees in tears. The presence of the Lord was very strong throughout the MSI. The strong presence of God was everywhere. It was like being tuned to GOD FM 24/7. What can I say of the sessions? It was as if Jesus Himself was sharing His heart! The messages cut to the heart and I was weeping most of the time as I received revelations from the Word. I had been like Jonah who did not intercede for His people, instead wanting them to deserve hell.

This conference I cried the most, never happened in any conference. Tears flowed during worship and tears of agony as we prayed for the country. I am not an emotional man but this is the work of the Holy Spirit as I prayed. It was a good time together as the Lord met with His people.

I was particularly touched by the Deep worship. One



Bishop with Indonesian intercessors



National Prayer Station

could really worship without any 'hindrance'...from our heart. At one time I found myself as though I was travailing for the church. I was sobbing uncontrollably as we repented of our sins when we sang "When I look into your holiness...."

Towards the end of this [National Prayer Station] journey, I found myself on my knees weeping before the Lord, interceding for our family institutions and the National Judiciary system. Righteousness and Justice are the foundation of His throne, we pray for Righteousness and Justice to be the foundation of our Judiciary system. Let the people of Malaysia see His glory!

The MSI is one moved by the Holy Spirit. Praise and worship sessions were powerful.

The Presence of God is very strong

This School was not just us being preached to but we took time to pray and the Spirit of God really swept over me during the second day of worship.

The Presence of God was so tangible both at the prayer sessions and the prayer stations

The National Prayer Station stirred my heart. I was moved to tears.

We were on our knees in repentance, seeking God's mercy and forgiveness for our wrong attitude towards our cousins.

Tangible presence of God felt during moments of repentance. Bowing on our knees in reverence and humble repentance moved me the most.

When Dr Iman Santoso read John 10:26 – "I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also..." I wept and wept having felt the Lord's heart longing for our cousins. The pain of the cry emanating from God's heart, "Ishamel is my son!" began to sink in.

The Lord ministered to the participants too. Some received healing of the soul, some had emotional wounds tended to. Some had their sense of self-worth restored – not because someone prayed and ministered to them, but it was the Lord who did all these Himself.

I had a great experience at the personal prayer station. The way they created the journey from the 1st point until the end was very significant. There was one point where they put a broken mosaic on the floor symbolising brokenness in life and we need to arrange it back as a symbolic of forgiveness and restoration. I was trying to arrange every broken piece but somehow I could not fix it. I spent quite some time before I just gave up, seeing persons next to me can easily arrange



Group photo



Iman Santoso

theirs. Slowly there was a whisper in my heart that I cannot fix the brokenness/ issues in life with my own strength, I need to surrender it all to God and let God help me. Sometimes when I found it so hard to give forgiveness, I need God to help me. It really reminds me to surrender everything to God and not to depend on my own strength.

I left the prayer station feeling cleansed, light and having a sense of freedom.

The Lord spoke and gave visions

*On the first day, I saw a huge angel figure appear at the right side of the stage and asked the Lord of the angel to reveal the specific meaning for appearing to me. I got a word “**watch over**”. Little did I know, most of the speakers urged God’s people to have the sense of urgency to pray and **watch over** our nation.*

*The Lord gave two words: **Network and Collaboration**. When the different churches and denominations in Malaysia collaborate and form a prayer network together, they will become a spiritual shield strong enough to protect the land.*

*The Lord spoke, asking, “Child, have you been crucified with me. Are you now crucified with me or is your flesh still in control?” Then I knew that He is looking for people who are crucified with Him to draft into His Gideon army of intercessors. The first criterion for eligibility to be God’s intercessor (His Issachar Watchman-intercessor) is a **crucified life**.*

Did the MSI have any impact on the participants
A sampling of responses received are as follows:

I will increase my daily prayer time from 30 minutes to one hour

I am motivated to seriously pray more

I want to pray more – 2 hours a day

I will filter news of Malaysia and our government from God’s perspective and change the way i pray for Malaysia

I repented from asking God to take away the burden to pray some years ago as it was very heavy. Now I ask him for strength and thank him for this gift of prayer We will guide children to pray during cell group time I have been given a greater urgency and earnestness to pray for all.

I will develop intimacy with God so that I can hear him speak

I am determined to live a more disciplined prayer life

I want to start building my personal prayer altar at home and a community altar at my place of work to intercede for my nation

I will pray for the children of this nation especially Christian children

I will “seek the face of God” each morning and each evening rather than just come and pray.

Nusajaya Methodist Church Shoplot

• Cost of building and minor renovations.		RM 1,100,000.00
• WMC JB Love gift.	RM 400,000.00	
• TRAC Churches love gifts.	141,728.00	
• NMC Development fund.	312,301.00	854,089.00
• Shortfall to the building fund.		245,911.00



Integration In The Church – A Transgenerational, Multigenerational, and Intergenerational Approach

By Dr. Herbert Tan

The church is defined by primary terms that include community, family, and body of Christ to name a few. As such, the issue of integration is a natural issue as it is one community, one family, and one body of Christ. As human beings, we attempt to manage this community, family, and body utilizing organizational management but organizational unity does not always equate to organic wholeness. This makes reflection and exploration into issues of integration all the more important especially when the church has within its local expression more than one generation. These generations within the church can be described as generations in transition moving from one stage of life to another, generations in omission with certain age groups conspicuously missing, and generations in isolation where certain generations are marginalized in one way or another.

A Transgenerational approach to generations in transition “transgenerational” is about acting across multiple generations. We as human beings go through normal transitions in life. There is the cradle to primary school years which are years of formation of core values. Then there is the transition from primary school years to lower secondary in what is sometimes called the branding years where selection of types and brands of products become more defined. Moving from lower secondary to upper secondary can be a major transition for some especially if one moves from one school to another. Then there is the high school to college transition followed by the college to work transition. And those in the work world will tell you there are multiple transitions in life due to change of marital status, change of jobs, geographical relocation, parenthood, care for aging parents, midlife, becoming seniors, etc. Often, these transitions become crisis points or seasons especially when one loses community or too many transitions happen at the same time. Children lose friends moving from one school to another or from one community to another. College friends are scattered all over in different work places and locations. Seniors lose their friends to death and dying.

A transgenerational approach to generations in transition

calls for us to build bridges in the transitions of life. One way to build that bridge is to remind our young of God. Deuteronomy 6 and Ecclesiastes 12 underscore the importance of establishing the fear of the Lord in our young while they are still young. And the home is central to the work of reminding our young of God. Core to the home is marriage which is key to providing the next generations a concrete earthly model and reflection of the image of God (Genesis 1) and the redemptive work of God (Ephesians 5). This will help provide our young a secure anchor to help negotiate the transitions in life and journey with God through life.

A second way to build that bridge is to mentor our young for godliness. When do we start? We start even before they are born (Psalms 78:5-6)! We are basically the product of about 100 years of education and what we do with the young today, we lay the foundations for 100 years of growth and development – teaching children yet to be born! We mentor people across generations (Titus 2:1-8; Proverbs 22:6) where the older mentor the younger and younger mentor the young in a mentoring chain transgenerationally across the many transitions of life.

A third way to build that bridge is to raise our young in community. There is an African proverb that says, “It takes a village to raise a child.” They need community and Scripture is full of imageries related to community – body (1 Corinthians 12), family (Romans 8:29; 1 Peter 3:8; John 1:12), building (Ephesians 2:21), nation (1 Peter 2:9). While they go through transitions that fragment their communities, can the community of believers be that enduring community to provide an anchor and security to hold on to?

A Multigenerational approach to generations in omission “multigenerational” is about or relating to several generations in a family or community. God’s covenant with His people is multigenerational in intent. His covenant with Abraham is not merely to be his God but the God of his descendants after him (Genesis 17:4-7). The command to honour father and mother is with

a promise not so much about long life, but that the people of God (multiple generations of the people of God) may live long in the land (Exodus 20:12). So in the Old Testament, we read of the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” We also read of the multigenerational call to pass on the faith (Genesis 1:28; Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Malachi 2:15; Ephesians 6:4).

Based on the last survey on the demography of families in TRAC, 51% of our adults are 50 years old and above, 19% are between 40-49 years old, 10% are between 30-39 years old, 10% are between 20-29 years old, 2% about 19 years old. Compared to the percentage of older adults (50 years old and above) in Malaysia which is about 10-15% of the population, it looks like the church is aging faster than the country. At the same time, the possibility of losing a whole generation is real as we see it happen during the post-Joshua era in Judges 2:10. On the ground, as I visit the Christian cemetery behind the very first church (Pioneer Methodist Church) established in Sitiawan where my maternal parents and grandparents are buried, I witness the burning of paper money and joss sticks all over. I was forced to ask what happened? Many of those buried there were products of the ministry of John Sung, the Chinese evangelist that God used to bring revival to many parts in Malaysia, but it looks like the 3rd generation is lost!

Are we raising up generations that will go missing or who will be blessings for many generations to come? We need to raise the young who can be models of what the kingdom of God is like (Matthew 18:3-4; 19:13-14), who can be prophetic voices in today’s challenging world (Joel 2:28), and who will play an important role in helping the church prepare for the second coming of Christ (Isaiah 11:6). We need modern day examples of Timothy’s grandmother Lois and mother Eunice who will build sincere faith in their young generations just like Lois and Eunice did in Timothy’s life (2 Timothy 1:5). We need parents and grandparents (sorry grandparents, your work is not over yet – Deuteronomy 4:9) that will help build multiple generations of godliness and build a faith heritage that will last long on the land the Lord has placed us.

An Intergenerational approach to generations in isolation “intergenerational” is about relating to or for individuals in different generations or age. We need to establish an intergenerational foundation for the community of faith. One way is to create intergenerational experiences that produce a positive impact and relevance. Some churches have embarked on having intergenerational worship services which is not a new thing as the church

of old was intergenerational in nature as you read Paul’s letters addressed to different age groups in a local church. But we have to be careful that our so called intergenerational worship service is intergenerational and not merely multigenerational as though the presence of different generations is synonymous with being intergenerational. Basically, an intergenerational worship service needs to connect and relate to every generation in a multigenerational context. The young especially, need to have a positive experience of such services so that they build a track record of positive experience and relevance. If they do, on the way, they will be echoing the words of the Psalmist – I long to be in your house, O Lord. I dead to think of the consequences of repeated negative “intergenerational” worship experiences that have no impact or relevance for the young who are less mature by comparison to the older in the community.

We also need to build intergenerational connections where there is a deep sense of community and familiness. The relational aspect is so strong that even when someone is away for a long period, there is always of sense of homecoming to the community whenever they return either from study of for a short visit. Events that include every generation helps when there is intentional effort to involve everyone and make the event relevant to every generation.

Then, to reverse the effects of generational fragmentation leading to marginalization of certain generations, we need intergenerational restoration where there exist intergenerational experiences that engage in redemptive processes. It means every generation is valued, prayed for, fought for, and intergenerationally ministered to so that as one family, we experience God’s grace and forgiveness of one another. It means allowing different generations to minister to one another since biblically, we need each other whether young or old (1 Corinthians 12:12-26).

Every generation should not have to function and pursue God by themselves. Every generation deserves to experience what a true Biblical community is like even as God continues to perfect the church, the bride of Christ, to be without spot or wrinkle. What one generation attains in faith and godliness as their ceiling should become the foundation for the next generation on which to pursue the growth of their faith and godliness instead of having to start from ground zero. Let us be intentional and an active part of God’s work in perfecting the church, the organic bride of Christ.

JS 2016 Testimonies


Deborah Goh

Trinity Methodist Church, Petaling Jaya

My commitments after Jeremiah School are doing daily devotions as well as journaling. I was reminded to not keep things to myself but to tell someone whom I can trust and rely on. I should also not make quick judgments about people but get to know them first. I must have more confidence in myself that I can make good decisions and not to rely on other people's choices. I want to be caring and helpful, and to always pray before I do anything.

Vanessa Woo

Emmanuel Methodist Church

When I came to Jeremiah School, I was relieved that a fellow youth from my church came as well. It was very hard for me because I missed my family. As the days went by, I started to open up to my mentors and JS mates. I came to realise that although each of us is different, we can try our best to understand each other even when we are in conflict with one another. I am very grateful to my mentors for their efforts in making me a better person. As I walk into the next phase of life, I hope God will continue this journey with me as well.

Daniel Yong

Sg. Way-Subang Methodist Church

I joined JS because I wanted to learn more about myself and God. I found the "Quiet Retreat" on Wednesdays difficult at first as I could not talk to anyone or even make eye contact. It was weird to ignore everyone. In time, I could concentrate and just focus on God the whole day. Every weekend, we would visit various churches. We planned games, worship, and short sessions for the MYF groups. JS was a life changing experience for me. I am proud to be part of the JS batch 2016. The six weeks in JS was time well spent.

Jason Foong

Taiping Wesley

God is truly a loving God but some of us do not see it. In JS, we learned that how we view our earthly father can affect our view of our heavenly Father. My dad's generation is concerned about providing material needs whereas my generation is concerned about spending time together. Dad does not spend much time with me but he always makes sure there is a meal on the table. Our fathers have expressed their love for us from the beginning – just like our heavenly Father. He loves us before we were born! God's love is best explained in the story of the prodigal son. No matter how far away we may run from Him, as soon as we take one step back, He will run to us.

Benjamin George

Sitiawan Wesley

In JS, the sessions were very interesting and the speakers were never boring. The sessions on 'Spiritual Warfare' taught me how to equip myself against spiritual attacks. In 'Methodism', I learnt how John Wesley first started the meetings and how the Methodist Church was formed. One of the best sessions for me was 'Freedom In Christ', conducted by the younger mentors. The quiet retreats on Wednesdays were really meaningful to me as I felt a deeper connection with God each time.

Jarren Foong

SSMC

To be very honest, I had no intention of coming to JS. The first week was extremely tough because everyone seemed to know everyone else through previous camps. Eventually I did develop a strong bond with the other participants. I also learnt about BGR, dealing with conflict, understanding your mind and your emotions. I can say that I have learnt to strengthen the weak areas of my life, and I feel I have grown to be a better person, thanks to Jeremiah School.

Cecilia Har

Sitiawan Wesley

It was not hard for me to get to know the 14 of us in JS as I am very loud and an extrovert. But through JS, I have learnt to be still and quiet to wait upon the Lord for direction and guidance. I have also learnt to encourage others. Growing up in a Chinese family, I rarely get encouragement from anybody and so naturally I find it very weird to give or receive encouragement. People in JS have given me lots of encouragement and it feels good when you know people appreciate you. I want others to know that they are appreciated too and I am beginning to learn to encourage others by speaking words that build them up.

Toh Chee Lim

WMC, Kepong

Waking up at 6.30 a.m. and spending time with God was not part of my routine. I used to play with my phone the moment I woke up every morning. But a beautiful thing about JS is that our phones are kept from us so the bonds I made with the rest are much stronger.

The most important thing which I learned during JS is that God is Love. I could really feel His love for me. God even sent His son Jesus Christ to die on the cross of Calvary for my sins. When the day comes for me to be judged, Jesus will be my lawyer. And He will say that all the sins I have committed have been "paid for". How gracious is God!

Elisa Tye Xin Yi

Trinity Penang

2 Samuel 24 is a story about King David who put his faith in the size of his army rather than in God's ability to protect them. Hands down, that was me before I decided to join Jeremiah School. Here I learnt a lot of stuff that I would not have taken the initiative to learn in my home church. I met a lot of different people with unique personalities very much different from my own. Surprisingly, they became my very own family in a short period of time. In JS, I also learned how to balance a healthy, fun and productive life. I am not a completely different person from who I was before JS but I have grown mentally and spiritually.

Jasmine Chea

Seremban Wesley

All in all, Jeremiah School is a precious experience that I will hold dear to my heart forever. I have improved in so many aspects. My relationship with God has grown closer and my faith in Him has grown also. I have found precious relationships with my fellow JS members and mentors whom I would consider as family. When I return home, I hope to apply what I have learnt in my daily life, and in my relationship with family and friends.

Sarah Yap

Emmanuel Methodist Church

I wanted an intimate relationship with God: not just to know about God but to know Him personally. So I decided to go to Jeremiah School. We have learned a lot, and grown spiritually. Now I am able to experience His presence in many ways, through the Scriptures, worship and even when talking with people. We took turns leading quiet time in our mentoring groups. This boosted my confidence in speaking to people and leading others. Because we had to hand wash our clothes, I learned to be more independent as a person.

Ethan Quek

Subang Methodist Church

Through the session 'Discovering the Love of God', I realise how God loves me through the loving acts of my father. I had taken his love for granted just as I took God's love for granted. Now with this knowledge and assurance of God's love for me, I want to spread this love to others. I have made the commitment to actively seek God through daily devotions. I have barely scratched the surface of knowing who God is. Although I am a little worried about maintaining my commitments, I am assured that I have an entire community that will support and encourage me towards my goal of growing in faith.

Vanessa Tan

Bountiful Grace Chinese Methodist Church

Through JS sessions, I now know that forgiveness is one of the most important elements in all relationships. I learnt to forgive those who hurt me intentionally or unintentionally and also to forgive myself. Forgiving myself is the hardest thing for me to do. In the past, I struggled to forgive myself. Now, I constantly remind myself that Jesus came to die for our sins; this includes mine. Since He has forgiven me, why should I stay emotionally imprisoned? The lessons we had from 'Freedom In Christ' have helped me to break free from this bondage.



Date: 13th April 2016

Dear Donor

Re:

FUND RAISING INITIATIVE FOR THE BUILDING OF WESLEY METHODIST SCHOOL PENANG INTERNATIONAL

Education has always been the key to knowledge and building of character. It opens the door to holistic development and empowerment of our young to eventually emerge in adulthood as an asset to society and nation-building.

The Methodist Church in Malaysia has a proven track record in her 130 years of existence in maintaining her tradition of providing holistic education based on sound ethos, principles and values. Her network of 69 Methodist mission schools were established from West to East Malaysia, in towns and rural areas as well as the famed the Anglo-Chinese School in Singapore. When education became more of the Government's focus and responsibility, The Methodist Church in Malaysia continued to play a responsible role by providing for free, all its School Buildings and usage of its land to become Government assisted schools.

Today, our country has now reached the stage of liberating the Education Sector, so as to allow for Private Schools, employing both the national syllabus and other international education syllabus. The Methodist Church in Malaysia has been granted permission to establish such a school and contribute to this critical area of quality human resource and national development.

Wesley Methodist School Penang (International) will be a private international mission school current to our times and national needs - a non-profit private institution using the IGCSE syllabus. Its campus from Year 1 to Year 11 students is planned to accommodate a total student population of 1500. Land in Penang has been acquired. Currently earthworks have begun on the site located along Tun Lim Chong Eu Highway, George Town, Penang. The first student intake is scheduled in September 2018.

As a donor, you are given the opportunity to participate in this worthwhile education initiative and be inspired to leave your footprint or that of your loved ones for posterity. Your

name or names of loved ones will be acknowledges in a plaque emplaced in the respective room or facility. This letter of appeal is the first fund-raising initiative launched where 54 Classrooms, 7 Science Laboratories, 7 ICT Laboratories, 2 Language Laboratories, 4 Arts Room, 4 Music Rooms, 2 Dance Studios and 4 Enrichment Rooms are available for sponsorship. Their detailed information is summarised as shown. Your kind and generous sponsorship will help pay for the costs of space including sound acoustic panels, flooring, IT and electrical infrastructure for the setting up of the respective rooms/facilities.

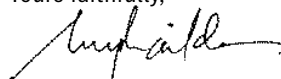
You may indicate your choice of items for sponsorship by filling up the table at the end of the letter.

Please mail your reply to us using the attached letter or call **Mr Khor Hong Yin** at **012-3645 310** or **Jenny Qua** at **012-6940 684** for any further information or clarification. Similarly you may WhatsApp to these numbers. We will acknowledge all payments received, accompanied by official receipts.

Thank you for sharing in our vision and mission, and helping us to fulfil them to bring about a private international mission school in the form of the Wesley Methodist School Penang (International) in the near future.

"By wisdom a (School) is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its room are filled with rare and beautiful treasures."

Yours faithfully,



Dato' Kee Phaik Cheen,
Chairman,
Fund Raising Task Force

To: The Chairman,
The Fund Raising Task Force
Wesley Methodist School Penang (International)
C/O Council of Education
69 Jalan 5/31, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan

Date:

I am agreeable to partner in sponsorship of rooms in the building of this WMS (I) by indicating the items as marked and quantum as indicated:-

	Quantity	Cost per Room	No. of Units	Quantum	No. of Instalments
1	54 Classrooms	RM135,000 per room			
2	7 Science Laboratories	RM135,000 per room			
3	7 ICT Laboratories	RM200,000 per room			
4	2 Language Laboratory	RM135,000 per room			
5	4 Arts Rooms	RM150,000 per room			
6	4 Music Rooms	RM150,000 per room			
7	2 Dance Studios	RM150,000 per room			
8	4 Enrichment Rooms	RM135,000 per room			
9	General Donation				

Herewith are my details:

Name:

Address:

Mobile No.: Email Address:

I will pay for this sponsorship in payments.

Cheques will be made payable to AEC of The Methodist Church in Malaysia

☐

Kindly communicate with me with respect to the details on the plaque

Signature by donor:

Council of Churches of Malaysia office bearers for 2016-2019:

President : Bishop Datuk Bolly Lapok
Deputy President : Bishop Dr Ong Hwai Teik
Vice President : Cor Episcopa Philip Thomas
Vice President : Rev Jensen Mojuin
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