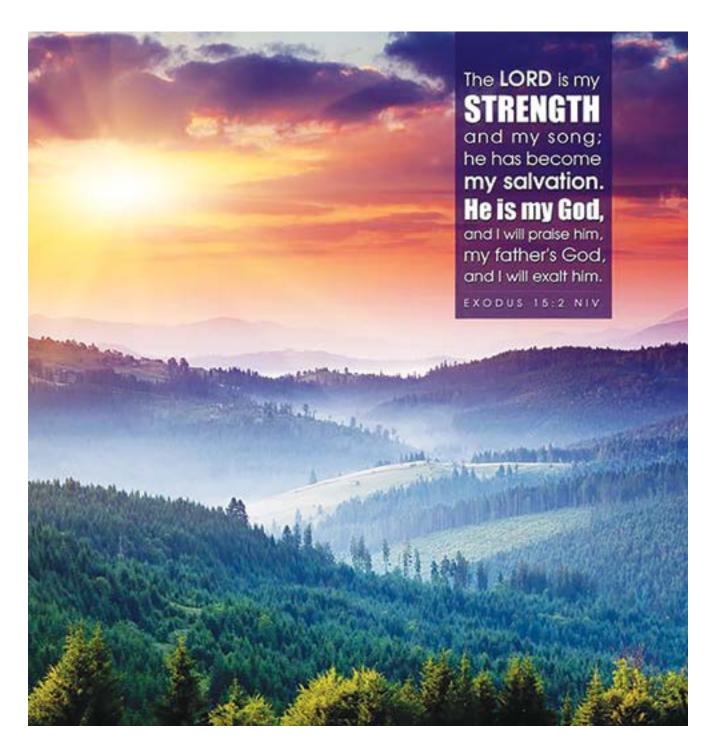
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The Operation Mobilization (OM) delegation led by their International Director paying a visit to the Bishop of the Methodist Church in January 2018.





Wishing You a Blessed Chinese New Year

From:

Bishop Dr. Ong Hwai Teik and Family and all staff members of Methodist HQ

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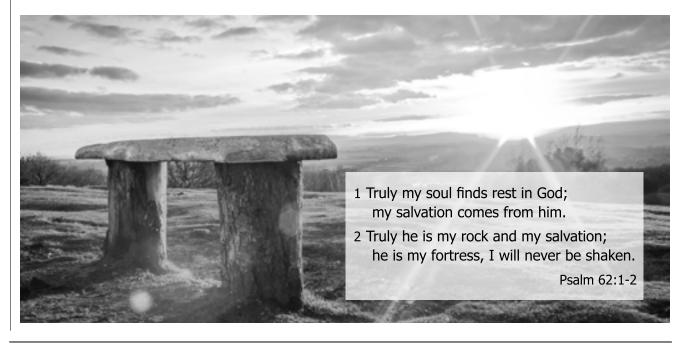
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Psalm 103:1-5

(NIV Version)

- 1 Praise the Lord, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
- 2 Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—
- 3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,
- 4 who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,
- 5 who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.





PELITA METHODIST, PUBLISHER, BISHOP DR. ONG HWAI TEIK; CHIEF EDITOR, BISHOP DR. ONG HWAI TEIK; EXECUTIVE EDITOR, MICHAEL WILLIAM; EDITORIAL BOARD, REV. DR. HII KONG HOCK, REV STEWARD DAMAT MAMBANG, REV KHON WENG JOO, MR WONG MENG LEI, MR ANTHONY ROW, PASTOR P.P. ABRAHAM. ALL CORRESPON-DENCE AND ENQUIRIES TO BE DIRECTED TO: PELITA METHODIST, 69 JALAN 5/31, 46000 PETALING JAYA, SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN; E-MAIL, pelitamethodist@gmail.com; WEBSITE, www.methodistchurch.org.my; PRINTED BY PERCETAKAN S & M, NO. 2 LOT 18026, SELAYANG INDUSTRIAL AREA, 68100 BATU CAVES, SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN.

A PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE EPISCOPAL OFFICE, THE METHODIST CHURCH IN MALAYSIA

2 Samuel 7:22 "How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.

The Methodist Church in Malaysia family praises and thanks Almighty God for His sovereign protection and providence as we stand steadfast in the light of unprovoked attacks on our Chinese Methodist Church, Kota Bahru, Kelantan [see CCM statement reported in Malay Mail On Line on 10 Jan 2018]. We continue to maintain prayerful vigilance even as we also pray for the perpetrators.

As the General Elections 14 [GE 14] that need to take place by August 2018 marches nearer, let us all pray for peace and orderliness for the run-up to the elections as well as integrity of the election process and for God's sovereign providential outcome thereafter.

Let us keep our eyes on the Highest Authority, Almighty God, as we pray for the high cause of the election of those who will guide the future of this beloved nation of ours – at federal and state levels. Let the Methodist churches unite with other churches and congregations locally to fervently pray for the GE 14.

Together as God's people, we shall reverently seek the sovereign Almighty God's glory in blessing our fair land with leadership of governance that is just, honest, compassionate and righteous - that would sincerely serve the people and committedly deepen their welfare, uphold the rule of law, honour the Federal Constitution and courageously act to unite the people of Malaysia.

As we fervently watch and pray, let us also committedly act where we can to contribute to a clean and fair election process and to fulfil our responsibility of casting our vote as citizens of this land.

Jeremiah 29:7 "Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you"

Romans 15:13 "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit".

Bishop Ong Hwai Teik The Methodist Church in Malaysia 16 January 2018

> A Reminder: Please take note of the Aug 2010 binding Decision of General Conference Executive Council of The Methodist Church in Malaysia -

"That the GCEC resolves that no Methodist church should apply for or receive government grants, irrespective of the party in power, in the period between the nomination date of any election to the polling date of the same. Given the present socio-political context, this will send a clear signal to everyone that the church is non-partisan. More importantly, it will make clear that the Methodist Church does not condone actions that are or can be perceived as being related to money politics."





News from SCAC

Telling the Truth Courageously Ong Hwai Teik: We are on the side of good governance.

The saying that "the church is against the government" is a very misleading remark and we do not know since when it is so widely circulated that it has even aroused the concern of the ruling parties. In response, Rev. Dr Ong Hwai Teik, the Bishop of the General Conference of the Methodist Church in Malaysia, reiterates that the church is not an anti-government organization, rather the church is non-partisan vis-à-vis political parties but expects certain qualities of good governance. The church also hopes to convey to the people the characteristics of a government that truly serves the people.

"The Church will not side with any political party and what we want is a just, compassionate and righteous government. The Church will do its best to opportunely express difference in opinions if any party violates justice and righteousness, be it states like Penang and Selangor which are governed by the opposition parties."

The Church remains neutral

In his interview by Mr. Wong Meng Lei, Chief Editor of Methodist Message, Bishop Ong emphasized that the Church is neutral politically and what the Church wants is a just, compassionate and righteous government.

He also encouraged brothers and sisters in Christ to be concerned about politics and speak out for the Lord, but as to which political party to join is their personal choice.

Admittedly, the Church is waking up because of the "Allah" issue and the incidents of abducted pastor and social activists. To that end, he urged the Church to be united and be concerted in prayer to address present as well as future challenges.

"By ratio, it is estimated that only 10% of Malaysians are Christians. Being in the minority, we have all the more to remain united to be strong."

Bishop Ong also placed great stress on the importance of prayer and that all brothers and sisters in Christ should earnestly and unitedly pray to our God. He disclosed that in more recent times, prayer movements are becoming more active in Malaysia. In particular, the "Prayer United" movement led by Bishop Emeritus Hwa Yung is spurring on many more brothers and sisters in prayer.

Secondly, registering as a voter is also an important way for Christians to participate in politics. In his opinion registering as a voter is a necessary step that leads to participation in the election and also to be concerned about politics for the welfare of our nation.

As citizens of this country we should get to know our country politically, spiritually, socially and economically. Bishop Ong suggested that to help church members to have a better understanding of current political issues the church can organize dialogues with political figures and representatives from both the ruling or opposition parties.

Christians should pray for courage and wisdom to speak the truth when we have the opportunities to meet the Ministers or senior government officials, and the wisdom to discern the current political situation and to make choices for the best interest of all.

Do not underestimate the "small things"

During end of June in 2017, Bishop Ong and Mrs Ong were attacked by dengue. Due to this sudden dengue strike, Bishop Ong was forced to take a good rest and it was during this time of enforced quietness and rest that he had new insights.

He said, "I was diagnosed with dengue on June 28 and admitted to hospital on July 1. I met two nurses from Sibu, Sarawak on the fifth day in the hospital. The first one told me that she was a member of SCAC and she was working in a palliative ward in a Singapore hospital. After working for few years she resigned to come back to KL because she could no longer stand having to keep 'saying goodbye to people who have become her friends'.

"The other one was curious about the thick callus on my fingers. When I told her that it was the result of playing the guitar, she told me that she was originally a member of a church. However, she has since become a Muslim two months earlier."

He was forced to put aside his busy work and ministry schedule while recuperating from the sickness and while in convalescence had the God-given opportunity of time to reflect and pray. "Work and assignments were mounting when I was healthy. While I still maintained my spiritual disciplines and tie with our Lord, times to sit back and rest could have been more and deeper. It was like a burning fire that was overloaded with firewood but with little breathing or air space for the fire to burn properly! The sickness gave me the opportunity to create more air spaces and also to clean up the pile of ashes, Ha! Ha! "

He added that another great gain from this sickness is not to underestimate the power of the "trifle or trivial" (such as a tiny mosquito) and small sins, because they can also kill (as Dengue can be fatal).

Solicitude for our Methodist Iban churches

Noting that various Annual Conferences were successively holding their conferences in November of 2017, Bishop Ong stressed that the Malaysian Methodist Church is like a big family when united we can do a lot of things. Although each Annual Conference is an independent entity, each can help the other in a family. For example, the Sengoi Mission Conference in West Malaysia and the Sarawak Iban Annual Conference (SIAC) are the indigenous people churches that need the help of the other Annual Conferences.

"Taking SIAC as an example, he stated that they are facing the dilemma of shortage of pastors. It is not that the youngsters do not love the Lord. In fact they are experiencing a mini revival. Many youngsters are willing to commit themselves to full time ministry. The problems are with the low pay, parents' concern about their children's future and so forth, prompting fewer and fewer Ibans to commit themselves to full time ministry and vocations. Instead they choose to become civil servants."

"So now the Methodist Family in Malaysia has helped them raise the pay of their pastors to a respectable level with a new salary scheme. We have agreed on a 50-50 plan, meaning that SIAC will be responsible for raising 50% of the salary while the General Conference will arrange for the other five Annual Conferences to raise the balance 50% for the first 2 years. After that, SIAC will increase their apportionment by 10% for the next 5 years. This is a seven-year arrangement beginning in 2017."

Bishop Ong also pointed out that while the Annual Conferences work in cooperation and unity, each should also focus on seeking revival and spiritual fullness and together they will be Annual Conferences after God's own heart. "If members of each Annual Conference put Christ as the centre of their lives, experiencing fire of the Holy Spirit and revival like the church in the Book of Acts, then together as a total Methodist Family, we shall be true followers of Christ who are after God's own heart, and possessing the full power of the Holy Spirit."

Another important point is that Methodists should not forget that the "General Rules of the Methodist Church" set up by John Wesley around 1743: "Firstly: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced. Secondly: By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all people. Thirdly, by attending to all the ordinances of God."

Wesley's reference to ordinances of God are: "the public worship of God", "the ministry of the Word, either reading or expounding", "the Supper of the Lord", "family and private prayer", "searching the Scriptures", "fasting or abstinence".

Bishop Ong said that if every member of the Methodist Church practices the "General Rules of the Methodist Church" as a Rule of Life, they will have a great impact on the society.

Methodist Church comprises various races

"We must recognize that each of the seven Annual Conferences has its own language and culture. So it is important that the General Conference (GC) tries to find ways to overcome, to care and to bring them together. GC has to take the lead in becoming a bridge between the Conferences by hosting combined conferences like the Combined Pastors' School (once in 4 years), GC Youth Conference, Methodist Women Conference and etc. Of course we face problems with the medium of communication because there are Chinese, Indian and Indigenous peoples in our big family. However, as English and Chinese are spoken by most people, they are the languages used and we have simultaneous Malay and Tamil translation using the earphone or smart phone technology."

To ensure that GC is well represented we are including representatives from each Annual Conference. E.g. SCAC has 4 representatives in the General Conference Executive Council. The GCEC meets twice a year and during the meetings we share about matters in each Annual Conference, pray for each other, share our resources like manpower and monetary resources, and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit make the necessary decisions for the total welfare of the Methodist Church in Malaysia.

"For example, recently the Sabah Provisional Annual Conference needed a gospel van for a very strategic Gospel work. GCEC thus allocated RM50,000 for the SPAC to buy the gospel van. Eventually they found one that cost RM70,000 so they raised the balance sum and bought that van. Another example is SIAC's payroll problem. The GCEC helps to raise 50% of the fund and they themselves are responsible for the remaining 50% for 2017 and 2018."

This is Bishop Ong's second term as Bishop of the Methodist Church in Malaysia with 2017 being the first year of his second term. So he will serve another three years before his term expires. He hopes that the members of the Methodist Church will be able to live more like Christ and to bring glory to God.

"God is good all the time and He is in sovereign control; let us never forget that this is our Father's world," concludes Bishop Ong.

Interviewed by Menglei Recorded by April Translated by KT Chew Features

News from SCAC (Direct Talk 总编面对面)

勇敢说真话

王怀德:我们站在好政府的一边

怀德牧师于2012年被选为马来西亚卫理公会的会督,2016年连任。在这之前,他曾担任两任西马三一年会会长。王牧师出生于马来西亚槟城,并先后在英国及美国念神学。2009年获美国亚斯理神学院教牧博士。目前马来西亚卫理公会共有6个年议会、1个宣教议会,合共千所堂会布道站,牧者五百余人,会友廿余万名,遍布全马各个城镇。

"教会都是反对政府的"这句极易让人误解的话,不知从什么 时候开始就在社会上普遍流传,甚至已经引起了执政党人士 的关注。对此,大马卫理公会总议会会督王怀德牧师重申, 教会不是反政府的组织,教会只是对一个好的政府有一定的 条件要求,并且向人们传达,一个真心为民的政府应该有的 特质。

"教会从不偏帮任何政党,我们要的是一个公正且公义的政府,只要任何一方违反公正与公义,教会也会尽最大的努力 适时地发出不同的意见,就算是由在野所执政的槟城与雪兰 莪也一样。"

教会保持中立

王会督在接受《卫理报》总编辑黄孟礼干事的"面对面"时强调,对于政治,教会始终是保持中立,但要秉持的立场是, 我们要一个有怜悯且公正公义的政府。

同时,他也鼓励主内弟兄姐妹参与政治,在适当的时候为主 发声,至于参与什么政党,则是弟兄姐妹的个人选择。

无可否认的是,因着"阿拉"课题、牧师失踪的事件,教会已 经醒觉了;为此,他促请教会要合一,并向上帝发出同心的 祷告,以便面对这些已经或是即将来到的挑战。

"在人口的比例上来看,大马只有10%的人口为基督徒。作为 少数的群体,我们更要团结一致,正所谓团结就是力量。"

再来就是弟兄姐妹当向上帝同心祷告。王会督透露,近年 来,祷告运动在大马已经愈来愈盛行,特别是由前会督华勇 牧师领导的联合祷告运动(Prayer United),更是带动了弟兄 姐妹的祷告之心。因此,祷告是必须的。

当然,成为合格选民也是基督徒参与政治的一种方式,他认 为,成为合格选民是一个参与选举的必要步骤,进而关心政 治以至我国的福祉。

还有就是身为国民的我们应该多多了解自己的国家,尤其是 政治、灵性、社会与经济等层面。会督建议教会可以邀请一 些政治人物进行政治对话,让会众可以更加了解国家目前的 政局;但首要前提是,无论是执政党抑或是在野党都要邀 请。

然后,身为基督徒的我们也要向上帝祈求有勇气和智慧。在 有机会面见部长或是政府高官时,要有勇气说诚实话,更要 有智慧了解目前的局势与演变,应该如何去做选择。

不要小看小事

6月杪的某一天,教会弟兄姐妹的微信群组中发出了一则"为 王怀德会督夫妇"代祷的信息;原来是王会督与师母一同患上 了在大马国内四处肆虐的骨痛热症,并已入院接受治疗。

这场突如其来的疾病,让原本计划满满、做事风风火火的王 会督被迫休息。然而,正是在这强制性的休息过程中,他有 机会静下心来,并有了新的洞见。

"我是在6月28日发现患上骨痛热症,7月1日入院,在医院的5 天,我认识了两位来自砂拉越诗巫的护士姐妹。其中一位告 诉我说,她是砂拉越卫理公会的会友,她原本在新加坡的医 院工作,但她一直都被安排在临终病房工作。在多年之后, 她再也忍受不了这种一直为病友送行的生活,于是她辞职回 到吉隆坡工作。"

"另一位姐妹则对我手指上的指茧感到十分有趣,当我告诉她 这是在教会弹奏吉他而得来的时候,她表示自己原本也是一 名教友,但就在两个月前,她已经转教成为穆斯林。至于原 因为何我就没有多问了,只是这位姐妹真的是很可惜。"

在他生病休养期间,他也被迫暂时放下原本忙碌的服事与工作。这给了他机会和时间去作更多的思考和祷告。"在生病之前的我,工作是一件接着一件来,没有停歇的机会,就好像一堆篝火一样,一直在燃烧,柴烧完了就继续加柴,几乎没有呼吸的空间让火可以烧得更旺。这次的生病让我有更多的空间把堆积成山的炭灰清理出来,哈哈哈……"

他笑称,此次生病的另一个最大得着就是不要小看一件小事 (如一小蚊子)的威力,因为它随时都可以致你于死地(骨 痛热症是致命的)。

"当然,在我生病痊愈,并重新返回服事岗位时,所有的弟兄 姐妹都来问候我,并都曾经为我代祷,真是让我非常感动。 在此,我也对所有为我和师母病情代祷的弟兄姐妹表示感 激,谢谢大家的代祷与关心。"

关注我们的伊班教会

正值大马各年议会陆续地进行一年一度的年议会,王会督强 调,马来西亚卫理公会是一家人,合一团结让我们能够完成 更多的事。他说,各个年议会虽然各自为政,但也是互相帮 助的一家人,如西马的Sengoi宣教议会和砂拉越伊班年议会都 是需要其他年会帮助的原住民教会。

"就以同在砂拉越的伊班年议会为例,他们正面临着传道人青 黄不接的窘境。不是没有爱主的年轻弟兄姐妹,反而他们正 在经历一个小小的复兴,许多年轻人都要献身,问题是薪资 的不吸引、家长们都以孩子的前途来衡量等等因素,促使愿 意全职事奉的伊班年轻人愈来愈少,他们都选择成为政府公 务员或是老师。"

"所以近年来,全马卫理大家庭已在帮助他们提高牧者的薪资 并提出新的薪资方案。我们议决50:50方案,即是伊班年议 会负责筹资50%的薪资,总议会则负责分配余下50%予另外5 个年议会负责头两年的募集。随后的五年,伊班年会将提高 10%的额度。此方案为期七年,并从2017年开始。"

此外,他认为,在各年会的合作团结中,卫理大家庭中的各 个年议会也要注重寻求复兴,一起成为合神心意的教会,让 基督在每个信徒的生命中都要居首位,并且要经历如使徒行 传中所叙述的圣灵之火与复兴。这样,整个卫理大家庭将成 为满有圣灵能力且合神心意的基督真门徒。

另一个非常重要的是,卫理信徒当不可忘记会祖卫斯理约翰 在1743年提出的"卫理公会一般总纲",即是"不损害人,远离 诸恶,尤其是应避开人所易犯之罪"、"广行善事,竭力施行仁 义;若有机会,应尽力为人群多做各种善功",以及"遵守上帝 所设立之各项礼节"。

会祖所指的礼节有6大项,即"共同敬拜上帝"、"聆听上帝圣 道、诵读或讲解"、"举行家庭祈祷或私自祈祷"、"领受主的圣 餐"、"查考圣经"与"禁食或节食"。

王会督说,如果每个年议会的会友都能遵循卫理公会的一般 总纲来生活,这将可以为社会带来很大的冲击与影响。

多元民族的卫理大家庭

"当然,我国的七个年议会都有着各自的文化与语言,我们也 必须承认这一点,所以总议会亦在努力地想办法克服。但在 这当中,互相联系与关心是非常重要的;因此,总议会就在 此扮演着带头的角色,成为年议会与年议会之间的桥梁,并 主办各个大会,如:四年一次的全国传道师学校、全国卫理 青年大会、全国卫理妇女大会等等,这些都是加强彼此之间 联系的机会。想当然耳,这些大会所使用的媒介语是一个难 题,因为卫理大家庭中有华人、印度人还有原住民;但由于 英语与华语是大多数人的语言,于是,所有的大会媒介语都 将以英语与华语为主,并提供马来语与淡米尔语的翻译。"

还有就是,为了让总议会能够更有代表性,因此,总议会中 有各个年议会的代表,砂华人年议会就有4位总议会的代表, 并且每年聚集开会两次。在会议中,代表们分享着各自年议 会所发生的事,不仅如此,还要为彼此代祷,更要参与其中 与共享资源,如财力、人力;同时,在圣灵的引导下共同做 出对整个卫理大家庭有益的决策。

"举例来说,前阵子,沙巴临年议会在一个很有策略性的福音 据点需要一辆福音车进行事工,总议会答应先拨款5万令吉, 让他们去购买福音车。最后他们顺利地找到一辆7万令吉福音 车,并筹得了余下的款项。又好比砂伊班年议会的薪资,从 2017-2018年,总议会协助他们筹集50%,而他们自己则要负 责余下的50%。"

王怀德牧师是第二次被选为大马卫理公会总议会的会督,2017年是他的第二次任期的第一年服事,就代表着在他的任期结束前,他还有3年的服事时间。为此,他希望,大马卫理公会的会友们能够愈来愈活出基督的样式,让别人看见我们荣神益人的生活,更期望上帝继续带领他在往后的3年服事时间。

"无论什么时候,上帝都是美善的,而且祂永远掌权。让我们 永不忘记这是天父的世界。"王怀德会督如此总结。

采访:黄孟礼(卫理报总编辑)

受访: 王怀德(马来西亚基督教卫理公会会督) 记录: 卢韵琴

Devotion

Beloved Children

In His love, He clothes us, enfolds and embraces us. (Julian of Norwich)

IN WORD: Every step you take is sacred. Perhaps you didn't know that. After all, it's easy to go through the motions of our day, living humdrum lives as we fulfill our responsibilities. Life can easily turn into routine, and routine can seem far from sacred. But that isn't reality.

No, reality is that we are sons and daughters of the living God. We have His spiritual genetics within us. We haven't simply been taught a better way, we have the Spirit of the true way living within us. We have been reborn and remade with a heavy, holy price.

Think about what it means to live as a son or daughter of God. Children of earthly kings have enviable privileges, the best that money and posotion can buy. They get the best education, never lack for work opportunities, have enough influence to say what thay want to say and live where they want to live, and they never go without anything they truly desire. While God does not spoil His children as earthly kings sometimes do, there are certainly

One Year at the Cross Devotional by Chris Tiegreen

parallels.

We are given His Spirit as a guide; we are placed in exactly the right opportunities for ministry; we are promised fruitfulness as long as we are faithful to Him; and we are given everything related to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). That doesn't leave much to the imagination; according to the Word of God, we lack nothing.

IN DEED: Yet we live as though we are the neediest of creatures. Is it that we have set our desires on the wrong things? Or that we simply haven't learned to apply the promises of God to our lives? Perhaps we have not distanced ourselves far enough from the ways of this world. Perhaps we have forgotten that every step is sacred.

Live with a sense of sacredness. You are a child of the highest King, a privileged member of the household who should never lack for anything that the Father wants you to have. Learn to live as a beloved child, and expect His abundance in your life.

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:26

Features

华人年议会第四十二届会议一合神心意的教会

报道: 黄珍琳 / 整理: 甘慧仪

2017年11月14至16日,马来西亚基督教卫理公会第四十二届华 人年议会,在波德申卫理中心进行。年会本届主题配合总议 会,是"合神心意的教会",出席的牧师、传道、会友领袖和 堂会代表,有约三百六十五人。

首日下午二时,来自香港的卢龙光牧师(博士),在年会议 会圣餐崇拜仪式中,分享信息"保持合一的教会"(弗4:1-6)。他说,信徒必须明白,蒙召是一生的事,在蒙召上要合 一;信徒行事为人要与蒙召的恩相称;保持合一的心;合一 不是统一,在多元中保持合一。

完成圣餐仪式后,吾会会长——郭汉成牧师(博士)敬奉圣 父、圣子、圣灵的名,宣布马来西亚基督教卫理公会第四十 二届华人年议会正式开始。郭会长也向会众介绍来宾,即砂 拉越伊班年议会会长——Rev. Steward Damat Mambang、会 长娘和三一年议会会友领袖——Datin Judy Chin。会长发表" 会长演辞"后,万福全弟兄代表会长制理事部报告,表示郭会 长行政能力强、透明度高,能积极发挥各部功能,是爱神爱 人的好会长。

翌日的早祷会讲员是卢龙光牧师,他以"爱中增长的教会" (弗4:1-16),讲述教会蓝图最后要达到的目标,就是用爱 心说诚实话、在各方面长进,连于元首基督。爱心的增长, 是生命素质的增长;用爱心说诚实话,能使教会在爱中增 长。

根据年会经济部主席——万福全弟兄的书面报告,2016年的年 会经常费总收入为RM 2,906,460,总支出为RM 2,722,677,剩 余款项为RM 183,783。截至2016年12月31日,年会总资产为RM 10,809,206,加上由年会存放于银行的教牧医药金储蓄、定期 存款和利息,共RM 2,400,221,年会总资产为RM 13,209,427。

2017年,经济部预算的堂会承担为RM 1,600,420,截至2017年 10月5日,年会财政处在年议会召开之前,收到款项为总承担 数目的100%。

年会经济部为确保每位有资格的教牧在六十五岁退休时,能获取应得的恩俸金,特别在2017年调整财务,每年拨款十万令吉,确保计划顺利实践。2017年,领取退休教牧恩俸金的牧师,是方既志牧师。方牧师侍奉逾三十六年,可得六万二千令吉。截至2016年12月31日,退休恩俸金的准备金存款户口,已从1986年12月31月之RM 172,573,增至RM 797,064(扣除赠送恩俸金于退休牧师后)。

2018年的宣教金收入预算为一百六十万令吉。截至2017年9月 30日,年会宣教金银行存款为RM 617,438。年会2018年预算案 是相当平衡的预算案,有多项是新事工;年会2018年财政预 算案总收入为RM 4,428,000,支出为RM 4,427,300(包括预备 金拨款),约剩七百令吉。

之后,牧职部注册员——黄迪华牧师当众介绍九位新同 工——关福龙、蔡光明、何嘉靖、刘家盛、伍伟伦、徐智 淳、陈福源、郭佳恩和李仁民,以及两位实习生——叶谦恩 和郭佳发。 当晚,资讯与出版部的部员——简永裕牧师在新书推介礼上, 简介南钟九十丛书系列的第一本书《医路有你——画那一道岁 月色彩》,作者是吴永基医生(年会前副会友领袖)。

接着,郭会长请王怀德会督报告总议会的事项,下列是概述:

- 一、总议会2017至2020年的主题是"A Church After God's Own Heart"(合神心意的教会);
- 二、2018年9月,卫斯理学校在槟城开课;
- 三、资助宗教与文化中心(2018年5月19日,是中心推展典 礼);
- 四、支持砂拉越伊班年议会牧者和教会同工的薪金;
- 五、2018年8月31日至9月2日,全国祷告大会将在诗巫进行;
- 六、2019年4月2至4日,总议会教牧学校将在波德申卫理中心 进行等等。

过后,年会布道部颁发奖励盾给所有在本年增加十巴仙新会 友的二十一间堂会/布道所和成立新布道所的代表们,以示鼓 励。

当晚,年会为已安息的吴秀珍传道、邱普恩传道和蔡山牧师 办追思礼拜仪式;他们的生平事迹,分别由杜奇贤牧师、杨 锺禄牧师和叶惠芬牧师述史。最后,方既志牧师为已逝者的 家属作祝祷。

按立牧职典礼

第三天,年会进行按立牧职典礼,卢龙光牧师以"装备信徒的 教会"(弗4:1-16)为题,勉励会众。

按立牧职典礼由王怀德会督主持,郭会长襄礼。牧职部注 册员—黄迪华牧师引领副牧—谭鸣晖和萧艾雁;长牧—林孝 标、刘立章、管伟业、许凯伟、颜子钧和陈联麒到会督面 前,恭请会督按《法规》条文按立他们为年会副牧、长牧, 并授权他们在上帝的教会中,传讲圣道和施行圣礼。

稍后,年会会友领袖一李祖国弟兄报告,砂拉越华人年议会 奉献十万令吉给吾会,来援助饱受水灾肆虐的槟城灾民。在 教牧荣休仪式中,王会督赠送荣休纪念盾给陈观凤牧师、叶 观池牧师、梅福龙牧师、林上泉牧师和张金祥传道。

2018年的十位教区长,是王有福牧师(北部)、雷德瑞牧师 (曼绒)、王昆和牧师(近打)、郭进吟牧师(中一)、凌 向明牧师(中二)、何汉寅牧师(中三)、杨锺禄牧师(中 四)、张世杰牧师(南中)、万富奇牧师(南部)和王祖兴 牧师(东部)。郭会长敬奉圣父、圣子、圣灵三位一体上帝 的名,接纳各教区长宣读的委任表,并授权他们召开教区与 牧区议会。

最后,郭会长主持第四十二届年议会闭幕礼时,向会众宣 布:2018年11月19至21日,第四十三届年议会将在波德申卫理 中心进行。本届为期三天两夜的年议会,顺利结束。

第四十二届华人年议会特辑

图文/摄影: 甘慧仪



- 一、议会圣餐崇拜仪式
- 二、左起为年会文书——黄约辉牧师、郭会长、王怀德会督和年会会友领袖——李祖国弟兄。



三、《南钟》九十周年纪念丛书的第一本新书《医路有你》推介礼:左起为黄约辉牧师、本书主编——简永裕牧师、王会督、本书作者——吴永基医生、郭会长和李祖国弟兄。
四、前左起为新长牧——陈联麒、颜子钧、林孝标;副牧——萧艾雁和谭鸣晖;新长牧——许凯伟、刘立章和管伟业。



五、左四起为林上泉牧师、叶观池牧师、梅福龙牧师、陈观凤牧师和张金祥传道,皆获荣休纪念盾。 六、左起为年议会主题讲员——卢龙光牧师、年会会友领袖——李祖国弟兄和年会前会长——莫泽川牧师。

2018ஆவிக்குரிய புதுப்பித்தலையும், எழுப்புதலையும் எதிர்பாாப்போம்(பகுதி -1)

நாம் கர்த்தருடைய கிருபையால் 2017ஆம் வருடத்தைக் கடந்து 2018ஆம் வருடத்திற்குள் வந்திருக்கிறோம். கடந்த வருடத்தில் கர்த்தர் நம் தனிப்பட்ட வாழ்க்கையிலும், குடும்பத்திலும், சபையிலும், தேசத்திலும் அநேக ஆசீர்வா-தங்களை தந்திருக்கிறார். அதின் மத்தியிலும் கஷ்டமான சூழந் ிலைக்குள்ளும் கடந்து செல்ல கர்த்தர் அனுமதித்-திருக்கிறார். இவைகள் நாம் கர்த்தரை உறுதியாக பறற் ிக் கொள்ள உதவியாய் இருந்நதது.

நம்மைசூழ்நதிருக்கும்உலகைபார்க்கும்போதுஇயற்கைபோ ிடாக்ள்,வெள்ளம்,பூமியதிர்ச்சி,தீ, சூறாவளி, காற்று மற்றும் தேசங்கள் மத்தியில் போர், பயங்கரவாதிகளின் தாக்குதல் போன்ற பலவிதமான நாசமோசங்கள் சமாதானம் இல்ல-ாத சூழநிலையில் அநேகர் கஷ்டத்தையும், வேதனையும் அடைந்ததாக பாரத் தோம். இவைகள் மக்கள் உள்ள-த்தில் திகிலையும். குழப்பத்தையும் உண்டாக்கியதாக இருக்கிறது.

11 தீமோத்தேயு 3:1-5படி உலகத்தில் அக்கிரமம் மி. குந்து கொண்டிருக்கிறது. அநேகருடைய அன்பு தணிந்து கொண்டிருக்கிறது. இந்த சூழ்நிலையில் நாம் 2018க்குள் கடந்து வந்தோம். இவைகள் எல்லாம் கடைசிகால அறிகு-றி என்று வேதம் கூறுகிறது.

1 பேதுரு 3:11- இப்படி இவைகளெல்லாம் அழிந்து போகிந-தாயிருக்கிறபடியால் நீங்கள் எப்படிப்பட்ட பரிசுத்த நடக்-கயும், தேவ பக்தியும் உள்ளவர்களாயிருக்க வேண்டும்.

நாம் சபைக்கும், சமுதாயத்திற்கும் அநேக காரியங்கள் செய்யலாம். ஆனால் நம் தனிப்பட்ட ஜீவியத்தில் "குளிரும-ின்றி அனலுமின்றி வெதுவெதுப்பாயிருக்கிறபடியினால் உன்னை என் வாயினின்று வாந்தி பண்ணி போடுவேன் என்று காத் தர் வெளி:3:16இல் லவோதிக்கேயா சபைக்கு கூறுகிறார்.

2018 ஆம் வருடத் தில் கர்த் தர் நம் மிடத் தில் என்ன எதிர் பா-ாக்கிறாா?.நம்மைசுற்றியுள்ளவைகள் அசைக்கப்பட்ட-ாலும்,இருள் சூழந்துகாணப்பட்டாலும் திருசச் பை எழுந்துப-ிரகாசிக்கவேண்டும் என்று கர்த்தர் விரும்புகிறார்.

இயேசு உலகத்தின் ஒளியாயிருக்கிறார். நான் உலகத்திற்கு ஒளியாயிருக்கிறேன். என்னை பின்பற்றுகிறவன் இருளில் நடவாமல் ஜீவ ஒளியைப் பெற்றிருப்பான்". யோவான் 8:12.

கரை தெரியாமல் 'அலைமோதுகிறவர்களை கரை சோக் க சபை ஒளியாக இருக்கிறது.

நாம் இயேசுவோடு இணைந்திருந்தால் தான் இந்த உலகத்-துக்கு வெளிச்சமாயிருப்போம். "நீங்கள் உலகத்திற்கு வெ- ளிச்சமாயிருக்கிறீர்கள். மலையின்மேல் இருக்கிற பட்டணம் மறைந்திருக்கமாட்டாது என்று இயேசு சொன்னார். (மத்-தேயு 5:14)

எழும்பி பிரகாசி உன் ஒளி வந்தது. ஏசாயா 60:1

 கிறிஸத் வாக் ள் வாழ்க்கையில் எப்படி ஒளி மங்கி-ப்போகிறது?

தேவன் மேலிருக்கும் நம் அன்பு தணிந்து நம் வாழ்க்கையில் தேவனுக்கு முதலிடம் கொடுக்காமல் நம் குடும்பத்தையோ, வேலையையோ மற்றெந்த கா-ரியத்தையோ தேவனுக்கு மேலாக வைத்து தேவனை துதியாமலும், ஆராதிக்காமலும் தேவனுடைய காா-ியங்களை அசட்டை செய்யும் போது நம் ஒளி மங்கி-ப்போய் விடுகிறது.

கர்த்தராகிய இயேசுவே நம் வாழ்க்கையில் ஆண்டவர-ாக இருக்க வேண்டும். அவருக்கே சகல மகிமையும் செலுத்தப்பட வேண்டும். ஆனால் நாம் செய்யும் காா-ியங்களில் சுயத்தை மகிமைப்படுத்தி சுய சித்தத்தை செய்துவரும் போது நம் ஒளி மங்கிப் போகிறது.

கர்த்தராகிய இயேசு சொன்னார், "நான் உங்க-ளில் அன்பாயிருக்கிறதுபோல நீங்களும்ஒருவரிலெ-ாருவர் அன்பாயிருக்கவேண்டுமென்பதே என்னுடைய கற்பனையாயிருக்கிறது". யோவான் 15:12

நாம் ஒருவரையொருவர் நேசியாமல், மன்னியாமல், ஏறற் க்கொள்ளாமல் இருக்கும்போது நம்இருதயம்-கோபத்திலும்,வெறுப்பிலும்,கசப்பிலும்நிரப்பபப்டுகிறது. அன்பறற்சபையில் ஒறற் மை இருக்காது, ஒளி பிரகாசி-க்காது.

நம் பாவத்தை அறிக்கையிடாமல் தொடாந் து ஜீவிக்கும் போது, ஆராதனை, ஜெபம், வேதவாசிபப்குறைந்துபே-ாகும்.உலகஇசன்சகளால்இழுக்கப்பட்டுஉலகத்துக்குஒ-த்த வேஷம் போட்டு கர்த்தரை நம்பி ஜீவிக்காமல் சுயத்தை நம்பி ஜீவிக்கும்போது கர்த்தருக்கு ஊழியம் செய்யவும், சேவை செய்யவும் மனம் அறற்ற போகும் போது நம் ஒளி மங்கி போகிறது.

கர்த்தருக்கென்று பிரகாசியாமல் நாம் மங்கி எரிந்து கொண்டிருப்போமானால், "துாங்குகிற நீமரித்தோரைவ-ிட்டுஎழுந்திருஅப்பொழுதுகிறிஸ்துஉன்னைபிரகாசிப-ப்ார்.எபேசியர் 5:14

இந்த வருடம் நாம் புதுப்பிக்கப்பட்டு எழுந்து பிரகாசி-க்கும் வருடமாக இருக்கட்டும்.

- அருட்திரு.(திருமதி)ஜாய் பாண்டியன்

Features

News from TRAC

Why We Believe in Arminianism Over Calvinism (Part 1)

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 humancentered 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 suspense 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 come to you, you will respond positively.

God 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 to 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

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