

Combined Youth Conference 2020 (23-26 June 2020)

Reported by Ching E Shem

Due to the Singapore government's regulations on COVID-19 this year, our Combined Youth Conference (CYC) 2020 was held online via YouTube livestreaming service. We thank God for His providence that the Conference can continue despite the pandemic. On average, thirty to forty participants viewed the Conference live, with about another forty viewing the messages later throughout the week.

This year's Conference theme is "What Say I?", with 1 Peter 3:15 as the theme verse. This topic is chosen to address specific issues that youths today may face and how we can respond to them based on the correct biblical principles. While standing up for the name of Christ, unwavering and uncompromising on our beliefs, we are at the same time to be a good testimony by responding to those around us with meekness and godly fear. The speaker for the Conference was Bro Samuel Joseph who shared God's Word with us through eight messages as well as concluding with a time of questions and answers.

1. A True Christian Witness
2. Foundation – Inspiration of Scripture
3. Foundation – Preservation of Scripture
4. Application – LGBTQ+
5. Application – Social Media
6. Application – Drinking
7. Application – Worship Style
8. Application – Science
9. Q&A

We thank God for His Word so faithfully and fervently preached. Bro Samuel first laid the foundation for our faith, belief and practice: the Word of God. If the basis of our convictions is not on the truth of God's Word, it does not matter what our position is concerning the issues in life. And how clear it is from Scripture that God's Word is true, divinely inspired and preserved for our salvation and edification!

Over the course of the Conference, Bro Samuel then covered various practical and societal issues which many youths face today. He dealt with the biblical principles, and gave examples for us to be sensitive to the dangers of sin around us, not to succumb to temptation, combining both truth and love, and expressing our love for God in the right manner that glorifies the most Holy God. Practical steps and advice on how we can avoid falling into sin; and the right attitude and manner we must have when interacting with those with opposing views, without compromising our stand, were also given. The circumstances and challenges we face may change through the ages, but the Bible and its principles that guide our life remains true forever.

A time of question-and-answer was also available for the participants to seek clarification or to seek answers on how to deal with real situations they have faced or may face. As the

conference topics dealt with issues that are controversial and divisive, we thank God for giving Bro Samuel the grace and the wisdom to respond to such tough questions.

As the Conference was held via livestream, there was no discussion, but reflection questions were included in the conference booklet for us to ponder upon the impact of God's Word in our own lives, the situations that we may personally face and how we can respond biblically.

This year's Conference is a unique one (due to the implications of COVID-19) not just for the participants but for the Organising Committee as well. We had planned for a normal physical Conference, just like the many past CYCs, right up to February 2020. Even when the circuit breaker kicked in, we had hoped that by June things would return to normal. As it turned out, God has His plans. Not knowing when the government would lift the restrictions, as the situation was so unpredictable (to us), affected our Committee's planning. As a result, much of how the Conference should be run was decided less than a month before the Conference started. But none of these happened by chance, neither was the work of the Organising Committee wasted, for through it all we thank God for teaching us to lean and rely on Him for strength and wisdom. He truly provides for us as He is always in control.

Through this first virtual CYC, we truly thank God for His Word that encourages and instructs us especially at a time like this. By having it online, we were able to reach out to those who may not have been able to attend had the Conference been a physical one. And we thank God for all who attended and have been blessed. Thank God for feedback from participants on how they have been strengthened in their faith and knowledge of the Word of God. Only by the grace of God was it possible to have yet another CYC this year. We thank God for the labour of love of Bro Samuel and all others who have helped and made this Conference possible. All praise and glory to God!

*“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts:
and be ready always to give an answer
to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you
with meekness and fear.”
(1 Peter 3:15)*

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