

Combined Youth Conference 2021 **(22-25 June 2021)**

Reported by Thessa Lagapa

The 17th Combined Youth Conference (CYC) was held from 22 to 25 June 2021 (Tues to Fri), 9.30am to 4.30pm. It was first announced to be a physical conference with Calvary Pandan BPC as the venue. However, due to COVID-19 heightened measures, CYC 2021 was moved to the online platform of Zoom, where participants attended from the comforts of their homes. This also allowed two youths from Myanmar to join. A total of 65 participants signed up and daily attendance fluctuated between 55 and 58.

Our main speaker, Bro Samuel Joseph, carefully prepared seven messages and spoke on the theme “Living for Life Above.” Our theme verse was taken from Colossians 3:1-5. The message topics were:

1. Christ Our Life (Col 3:1-4)
2. Mortifying Sin (Col 3:5-7)
3. Putting Off Vice (Col 3:8-11)
4. Putting On Virtue (Col 3:12-14)
5. Life in the Church (Col 3:15-17)
6. Life in the Family (Col 3:18-21)
7. Life in the Society (Col 3:22-4:1)

As Christian youths, most of us are busy with the temporal things of earth around us. We forget to look *above* and live for that which is eternal. “Living for Life Above” is like an alarm waking us up from our spiritual lethargy. The messages were not just gentle pleas but urgent calls for us to make sure we are living up to who we say we are.

“If ye then be risen with Christ” -- If you really say you are a Christian, then *“seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”* COVID-19 has been a big wake-up call from the Lord for us to reflect on ourselves, whether our priorities have been aligned with God’s Word. If we are still stubbornly ignoring God, our speaker made sure to remind us again and again to set *“your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”* Why should we do this? Why do we need to live for life *above*? Can that not be done in heaven itself? The reason lies here: *“For ye are dead,*

and your life is hid with Christ in God.” We may still be on earth, but we ought to live knowing that we are citizens of heaven, not of this sin-sick world. We are pilgrims passing through. *“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”* Christ is now the centre of our lives, and we must live to please and obey Him. And in order not to have anything block us from doing that, we ought to *“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”* And this is to be a daily fight against sin so that going through this sanctification process, we are made to be more like Christ and to be better witnesses.

Each day, after two messages in the mornings (with a break in between), discussions followed in break-out rooms. The questions were meditative, challenging us to be honest with ourselves and our true spiritual state. It was not only a time where we prayerfully made resolutions in our hearts, but through our sharing, we also strengthened one another, realising that we are not alone in our Christian walk here on earth.

As we could not have physical fellowship, some of the discussion groups remained in their break-out rooms (after the discussion time) to fellowship and to get to know participants from the other churches. Some groups even had lunch together in their break-out rooms. Indeed, all these were blessed and wonderful times.

The afternoons were filled as well. We had two workshops conducted by fresh graduates of the Far Eastern Bible College. On Tuesday afternoon, Bro David Chew conducted a workshop on “Biblical Guidelines for Worship Music,” and Bro Cornelius Koshy brought us through “Biblical Responses to LGBTQ+ Issues” on Thursday afternoon, and answering our questions pertaining to this topic at the end of each session. Both were pertinent topics for the youths of today which needed to be addressed. Peer pressure and “societal norms” are real. That is why convictions based on the Bible and made early in life will guide and protect the us from the enemy’s attacks.

Despite the physical distance, fun and games were still made possible on Wednesday afternoon enabling us to get to know one another and to build godly bonds with likeminded brethren.

The last session of the Conference was dedicated to a Q&A session on the theme messages. Questions were submitted anonymously and Bro Samuel Joseph answered each question with much care and wisdom from God. The questions showed the struggles of the youths in their personal lives, and it was a good time to seek answers from God's Word.

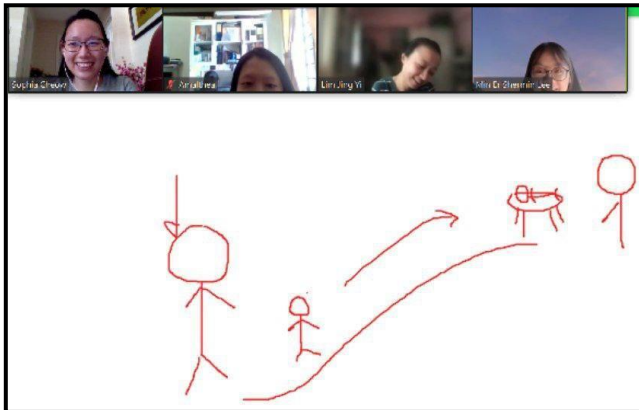
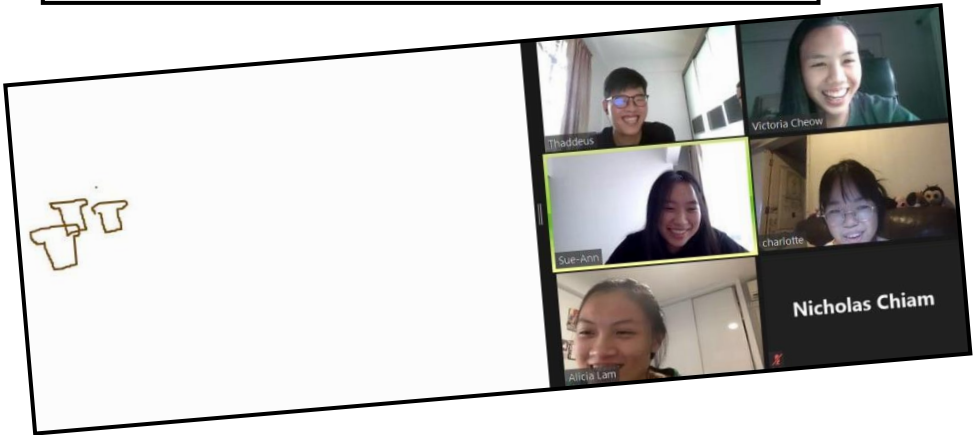
We praise God for the committee members who tirelessly planned this Conference regardless of the unpredictable changes of restrictions; for the three speakers who faithfully and passionately brought God's Word to us; for all participants who dedicated their time to listen to God's Word for the benefit of their spiritual growth; for the modern technology that allowed us to carry on with this Conference; and most of all, for our Heavenly Father to whom all glory and honour should be given. We look forward to Combined Youth Conference 2022!

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Games time! Lighter moments during the Conference!







CYC 2021 Participants at the Q&A Session on 25 June 2021

