

11th East Asia Area Seminar 2019

The World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW), East Asia Area (EAA) has held its 11th seminar successfully from 27th – 30th March 2019 at Hong Kong's Ward Memorial Methodist Church. The theme: Here I am! Send me (Isaiah 6:8). There were 300 contingents from 9 countries: Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Philippines, and Taiwan. 44 were from Malaysia's CAC MW, SCAC, TAC, TRAC and SAC. Of this 44, 10 were from CAC MW, Chong Meng Foong (advisor), sister Jennifer Yap (president), sister Ching Pek Kiong, sister Teh Kok Fen, sister Tiew Guat Lee, sister Margaret Chan, sister Wong Lee Hal, sister Shannen Tan, brother Lee Peng Cheng(sister Chong's husband) and myself. By God's mercy 10 of us arrived safe and smoothly at Hong Kong International airport on 27th March. Sister Margaret Chan arrived one day earlier than us. We stayed in Cityview Hotel at Kow Loon throughout the seminar.

The seminar started with an opening worship at 3pm on the first day. Dr Sylvia Chew was the leader of the opening worship. Mrs Sing-Hong Ting NAUI, President of WFMUCW-EAA, gave a warm welcome speech after the parade of banners and the procession of officiating clergy and leaders. After scripture reading (Luke 10:25-37) by Mrs Mary Devadason from Malaysia, who is the vice president of WFMUCW-EAA; the HKMWA(Hong Kong Methodist Women Association) choir presented a beautiful anthem, Prayer of St Francis, under the led of conductor Ms Betty Kwong. The sermon was given by Rev Dr Sung-che LAM; title: "Go & Do Likewise". Dr Sung highlighted that maintaining a strong relationship with God is the source of our strength to serve the Lord. If your life does not manifest God's love, our service will not be fruitful. He quoted from the founder of Methodist Church Rev John Wesley: 'make all you can, save all you can, give all you can'; to bring out the spirit of ' do the best you can'. Dr Sung reminded us that the gospel of the Kingdom is able to change EVERYTHING. The core message of the parable of the good Samaritan in the Bible is to love thy neighbour. If you love God, you will love your neighbour, care for others without boundaries.

After the sermon, there was a responsive action. The HKMWA prepared a cardboard made "Tree of Life"; which is the logo of WFMUCW, on stage. There were 12 representatives from different units, area came forward one by one to paste a fruit shaped coloured card onto the green 'Tree of Life'. Each card symbolizes the different areas of WFMUCW ministries: evangelism, medical works, education, literature, children, youth, home & family life, rural projects, economic

justice, international friendship, temperance, world peace. Praise the Lord for we as God's beloved daughters from different corners of the world are given the opportunities to serve Him in the above areas! We had prayers of intercession led by Mrs Fhronux WU, Mrs Mataiva Robertson & Ms Leu Pupulu. The opening worship ended with benediction by Rev Dr Ping-Kwong LI. We had a group photo taken before dispersal when some of us went back to the hotel, some made use of the time to practise dance or songs for the gala dinner in the evening.

The gala dinner was at 6:30pm. HKMWA arranged buses to ferry all contingents to the Palace Wedding Banquet restaurant. With almost all contingents wearing their traditional costumes, the ambience of the gala diner was colourful, sparkling, joyous! Sisters from different countries with different language happily mingling with each other, taking photos with each other. There were cultural performances by different country's contingents. Sister Lee Hal and sister Margaret Chan together with other AC sisters from Malaysia performed the Dayak dance. We appreciated each other's effort in the performance either dance or songs, God has brought us together in Jesus Christ's love; we may look different in appearance, attire, speak different languages, but we are still ONE, united in God's love. The gala dinner ended at around 10pm.

There were 7 plenaries for the seminar. Day 2, 28th March 2019, we had 3 plenaries. There was a song by the Philippines unit, followed by a 15 minutes' morning devotion. The message was based on Exodus 1-2, the courageous women: i) the 2 midwives who risked their lives to save Israel's baby boys. ii) the mother who placed baby in a basket at river, in hope of a brighter future for the baby. iii) a sister's bravery let her reconnect Moses to own family. iv) the princess who dared to go against her father's order. v) the maid who walked into the water, brought the basket with the baby inside, out of water, and showed to the princess. After half an hour on morning devotion, we started to have plenary sessions.

Plenary 1 by Dr Francis Ching-wah YIP. The theme, As the Father has sent me, so I Send You. Scriptures: John 20:19-23, Luke 4: 14-21. Imagine own self in a hostile, violent, fear, anxiety, injustice situation, would you be able to serve the Lord? Jesus came steward during the turbulent time and said to His disciples, 'peace be with you'; and he breathed on them and said, 'receive the Holy Spirit'. The Spirit was sent to empower the disciples to continue Jesus' work. The great commission requires us to make disciples, not only just preaching. The good news to the poor entail not just saying good words but in actions like giving them food, helping them

out of anxiety, etc. Proclaim release to the captives. Who are the captives in our society? That includes those blinded by lies from cosmetic industries, the culture of maintaining high academic performance as the utmost important in life and others. Proclamation by Jesus includes deeds, not only sayings.

We had a half an hour tea break before plenary II. Plenary II was by Rev Prof Lung-kwong LO. The theme: To serve our Lord continuously with vision. Scriptures: 1 Samuel 2: 1-11, 3:1-2. Hannah with her bitterness, prayed by 'pouring out' her heart; signified whole person involvement. She prayed with a vision, not for her own glory but a son that would serve the Lord whole life. Eli, due to his status, reprimanded Hannah, accusing her as an indecent woman. Reflection on our life: beware of own status, when commenting or criticizing others. When sat at a high place, leaders are prone to become judgemental. Rev Prof Lung-kwong appealed for prayer support to all leaders, pastors, and make an effort to understand them, not just criticize them. Rev Prof Lung-kwong also reminded us just to serve the Lord, don't get distracted by others' comments. Follow Jesus continuously, with awareness to love and understanding to others.

Plenary III Chosen People, Called to Proclaim, by Mrs Alison JUDD, President of WFMUCW, from UK. Scriptures: 1 Peter 2: 9-10. There are 3 ways we can do proclamation: i) through worships ii) through relationships iii) through social action engagement.

Prayer is an essential part of worship and it sustains spiritually. We are urged to pray for one another. We have to maintain a healthy relationship with God in order to have a good relationship with others. Sharing faith with each other binds us together spiritually. Social engagements enable us to proclaim God's love through our works. Upon ending her message, Mrs Alison JUDD gave the date of 14th world assembly gathering, which is on 10th -15th August 2021 at Gothenburg, Sweden. Shall we, my fellow sister in Christ? Let's start planning for it! We had lunch after the session at ground floor of the Ward building.

After lunch, we were set for an outing arranged by HKMWA, to The Peak (Victoria Peak or Tai-pin-shan). It is a hill on the western part of Hong Kong Island. As its name called for, The Peak, it is the highest point on Hong Kong Island sitting at 552m/1811ft above sea level. We travelled by tour buses, 5 buses altogether; with a tour guide in each of the buses. The buses travelled winding, scenic route to the main viewing area on The Peak. The panoramic view from the summit was eye-catching. The skyscrapers, Victoria harbours, the surrounding islands were all

within sight. And the temperate climate made a cooling and enjoyable outing to the area. There are retail outlets which attracted many of us to buy souvenirs, handbags, apparel. Yes, sisters simply enjoyed shopping! After outing we had our dinner at a restaurant before returning to the church.

At 8pm, we had country sharing by Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia. Before sharing, Korean sisters presented a beautiful song: Let your light shines. The message brought by the song: You are the light of the world, NOT you are going to be the light of the world. And this is a very honourable status given by Jesus Christ. The country sharing brought to light the different environment, challenges; and the various ministries faced in different countries. Mrs Mary Devadason from TAC, Malaysia highlighted the project on Ulu Klang's Methodist Women Centre (MWC) in which the women and as well as children ministries will be carried out at the centre. After country sharing, we had night prayers and announcements before we called it a day.

Day 3, 29th March 2019. Today we had Ms Lauren Tan (ex-EAA President) from Singapore to share with us for morning devotion. Mrs Lauren Tan share John 4: 4-15, the living water. Water quenches thirst, cleanses, softens, supports (tree to bear fruits). Jesus Christ is the living water that never run dry, and is life giving, heart softening, support spiritual growth so that we can bear fruit.

Plenary IV by Rev Dr Heasun KIM from Korea. The theme: Here I am! Send me. But where are you sending me? Scriptures: Luke 1:37-56. Dr Heasun KIM's session was very lively, interactive; promoting discussion among sisters from time to time. One of the questions Dr Heasun KIM threw to us was, where do you think or where do you want God to send you? Prophet Isaiah was sent to his own people who abandoned God. Dr Heasun KIM emphasized, "You are sent to where you are right NOW!" Embrace the position you have now. If you keep complaining, you are living in a world of complaints. You live in a world of what comes out from your lips. Speak the truth out of love for God, not hatred of people. Let God be God, do not restrict God in a box. We had tea break after the session.

At 11am, there was an election of new EAA office bearers for year 2021-2026 in a room at level 4, Ward building. Meanwhile there were international market and creative space at the ground floor and first floor, with handicraft merchandize, ornaments, badges, T-shirts for sale. Praise the Lord, for the new office bearers are: President: Mrs Mary Davadson (TAC, Malaysia), vice President: Ms Chou Hui Min (Taiwan), Secretary: Ms Margaret Chan (CAC MW, Malaysia), treasurer: Ms Koh In

Kyung(Korea). Congratulations to God beloved Mrs Mary Davadson and sister Margaret Chan. May God continue to give you strength and joy of serving Him!

After lunch at 2pm we had plenary V by Prof Mabel Wu on the theme: why Christians sing in worship? Reasons? Prof Mabel Wu shared: We are instructed to sing by the Lord (Psalm 96). God inspired His prophets to teach people to sing. We sing to confess, to praise, to make known God's name. So it is firstly, God's commandment to sing in worship. Secondly, singing recapitulates what God had done for His people (Psalm 135). Thirdly, singing is a sign of unity. When we sing in one voice, same melody, rhythm, we are bonded in Christ as one body regardless rich, poor, adult, children, lame or healthy, young or old. Fourthly, singing strengthens and deepens our common faith in Christ (Colossians 3:6). Lastly, singing is the duty of all priests. We are baptized and we are the royal priests (1 Peter 2:9). Singing glorifies God. We sing in Christ, through Christ, with Christ, then only we can reflect the glory of Christ.

We had a tea break before plenary IV. Mrs Matilda Johson from Gambia shared with us the 'Engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)'. Our sister Margaret Chan was the chairperson of this plenary. The aims of SDG: eradicate poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation. Acts 2:44-46, share the resources that we have with the needy. And we need to restore relationship with God to achieve the above.

Plenary VII, 'Crisis in the Family', by Ms Joyce Lee who has served children and youth, elders, disabled persons and the deprived families in Hong Kong and Macau for 20 years. Crisis in the family can be poverty, disabilities, marital problem, violent, unwanted pregnancy, drug abuse and prostitution. Through social works, the issues can be resolved only partially most of the time. And it is a long, energy drenching process for the care giver or social worker. People need Jesus. We need God's unlimited love and His wisdom to involve in social works.

After the session, Malaysia unit together with Hong Kong, Taiwan Singapore Units had a short discussion on 2021 Chinese EAA in Malaysia. Tonight we had country sharing from the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Cambodia. Also, there was distribution of gifts and souvenirs by different countries' contingents to everyone. Ms Helen Ma from Japan led us for the night prayers and also made the announcements.

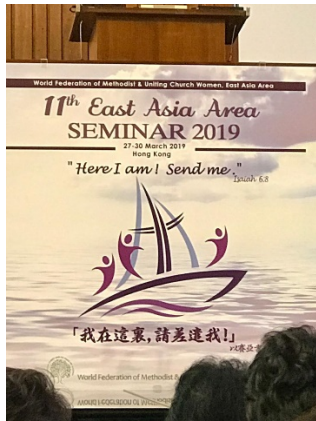
Day 4, 30th March 2019. Before the closing worship, we had an hour of action plans sharing by the President of each unit. Our neighbour Singapore unit has emphasized on young women ministry, helping the LGBT. Our Malaysia unit's action plans are Methodist Women Centre renovation, operation and maintenance, Orang Asli ministry, identify our young women with all available resources. Korea, Japan, Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Taiwan took turn to share their action plans. May God guide our hands, fill us with Holy Spirit, to carry out the plans in accordance to His will.

Then the Asia Young Women Leadership Development (AYWLD) participants came forward to voice out their vision on stage through song and pledge. All of us prayed for the young women, may they be the light of the world and shine for God.

The leader of closing worship was Mrs Dorothy Man. Kowloon Methodist Church choir presented a captivating song: Gloria (Mozart) under the led conductor Mrs Julie Watt. Yes, we want to uphold and glorify our Lord, blessing and honour be to God, for ever and ever more. The sermon was given by Rev Ralph Lee: Be Empowered! Bear Witness! We have to formulate our life to fit in God's calling for service, ready to serve; and not expecting God to fit in our own plan. God never stop calling us to reach out to the vulnerable. If we just attend seminar one after another without concrete strategy to reach out, we are just a 'club member'. Jesus said whoever wants to follow Him have to renounce self, take up the cross. Rev Ralph Lee used the youngest Noel Peace Prize winner Ms Malala Yousafzai (17 years old) from Pakistan as an example. She struggled hard against the suppression of women and children for the right to education. As a result, she was brutally attacked and defaced; she survived after several operations. Now Ms Malala continues her work for the right of girls to education. The closing worship ended with benediction by Rev Dr Ping-Kwong LI, followed by the procession out of banners, officiating clergy and leaders.

The EAA 2019 seminar has built a strong sisterhood among the East Asia area. Together we unite in one body of Christ, together we shine for our Lord Jesus Christ. Glory be to God.

CAC MW Secretary
Yip Sheau Ching
10th April, 2019



Tree of Life, with 12 fruits

2021-2026 New EAA Committee

