



# WINDOW TO BGST NEWSLETTER

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AUGUST 2020

# LESSONS @55



Fifty-five is a milestone for Singaporeans - this is the year when we can get our CPF, the year we can reap the fruits of our labour, as it were. Singapore at 55 has also arrived at an important milestone. However, it is not the year when she can relax and enjoy what she has become; from the muddy backwaters of Temasek to a fledgling country thrust into nationhood, to a modern country many are proud to call Home, an envy of others from around the world. Instead, it is a time when she has to remake herself and not sit on her laurels, a time to reflect and see how we can make better the 'best' that we already have!

As Christian citizens, what is our role and our part to play in the continual building of Singapore? How do we journey together in this next phase of the Singaporean story and what kind of stories do we have to tell (and want to tell) our children, and our children's children? How do we bring about Shalom in the City - our City?

BGST too is in the midst of re-inventing itself... not that we throw away our past, but we endeavour to remain current for the people whom we serve at present, and to have a place

firmly in the future. In short, we are ***Biblically Faithful, Boldly Relevant.***



God bless us in the way ahead!



# REFLECTION ON THE GENERAL ELECTION 2020

BY NG ZHIWEN

## Wow.... What a watershed Election it had been!

For a moment we ignored the fact that we were undergoing the crisis of our time, and plunged ourselves into campaigning season.

This election was meant to pave the way for leadership succession. Besides the 4G PAP leadership, the Opposition (especially the Workers' Party) fielded many fresh young faces. As it turned out, we found ourselves with a team of unexpected 'giant-killers' in parliament, and an only-slightly modified Cabinet. I will remember this election for how it led to the creation of the first Leader of Opposition in Parliament.

I will also remember it for how nasty the campaigning was, 'fought' out, as it were, in the wild, wild west of social media. We had much more access to information (many snazzy ones at that) on all sides compared to previous elections. But I believe social

media had also raised the level of trolling, vigilantism, mud-slinging, and just bringing out of the worst of humanity. Many wounds have been opened up.

As expected, the newly formed Government has spoken out for national unity and for reconciliation.

But we the Church also have a significant part to play: **How can we serve the healing of the nation?**

We must start with ourselves. Maybe many of us need a time of reflection, confession and repentance:

*Have I hated my neighbour, especially one who is a brother or sister in Christ?*

*Have I dishonoured my Lord during the hustings, not least on social media?*

*Have my political engagements been borne out of unsettled wounds and roots of bitterness?*



*How shall I speak of the results, and how shall I speak of the new Government?*

*Have I prayed for the welfare of my Member in Parliament - even if he or she was not the candidate I voted for?*

Some of us Christians may have held closely to our political affiliation, but we must remain clearly and firmly anchored on our Christian citizenship identity. I know good Jesus followers who are ardent supporters of either side of the political fence, but we have got to keep our head.

We do not put our trust in political systems, parties or personalities. Neither are we obliged by our faith to align one way or the other all the time. Our charge is to honour the authorities (Romans 13:1-8; 1 Peter 2:17), and yet maintain the prophetic distance needed to be able to confront them.

Consider young Daniel's advice to the mad and powerful king Nebuchadnezzar: *"Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practising righteousness, hand your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity."* (Daniel 4:27)

These were not trifling words of counsel, from someone in the system and yet not of it.

Don't forget also Daniel's broader prophetic message behind his call to social ethics: *"till you know that **the Most High rules the***

***kingdom of men** and gives it to whom he will."* (Daniel 4:25)

That's bold - declaring that human authorities are under Divine Sovereign rule.

That's unapologetically Christian. That's allegiance to the Kingdom of God.

And we must not confuse this with the oft-cited *"mixing of church and state"*.

Remember Jesus' words to Pilate: *"My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."* (John 18:36)

People were clamouring for Jesus to be a political revolutionary: Are you the King of the Jews? Overthrow the Romans! It's time for Regime change!

He flatly refused to fit their expectations.

*My kingdom is not of this world.*

When He returns, then the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord (Rev. 11:15) - but not yet.

Meantime, Jesus expects us His followers to be representatives and witnesses of this greater inaugurated-but-yet-to-fully-come kingdom, of which they are citizens.

*Our kingdom is not of this world.*

And to prove it, He showed *how* He would inaugurate His kingdom, not by clash of swords but by being slain on a Cross. It's an upside-down, out of this world approach to politics.

You want power? Be the servant. Be the last. Wash one another's feet. Down is the way up. Empty yourself.

And then you may get a seat at the head table.

Jesus eschewed ambition and aloofness.

We the Body of Christ have got to model this.

And I really have to close with this: we must model the way of King Jesus for the next generation.

I do not have actual figures, but I have a strong suspicion that at GE2020, voting patterns and preferences significantly differed across generations.

I would not be surprised if young people are much more attracted to issues of justice, race, diversity and of freedom – quite distinct from bread-and-butter matters and any call for a ‘strong mandate’. I am concerned that the older generation can be quite clueless about how the younger generation thinks, and much less about how to engage them, crisis or no crisis.

Herein lies a charge for the Church: To teach the next generation how to make sense of the topics of passion of their day through the lens of Scripture and not by the sway of our culture. We have all the resources we need to do so, for justice matters greatly to our Lord. I gather this not just from famous

passages like Amos 5:24 – “*Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream*” – but also from this assuring yet profound word of wisdom:

*Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the LORD understand it completely.*

(Proverbs 28:5)

But here’s a greater challenge: Will we bring in young faces into church leadership?

Will we let more of them be empowered to champion the way of the kingdom among their generation?

Can we show how one generation can step aside, if only to make space for the younger generation to arise and serve in alongside together?

There is so much at stake here, and GE2020 has revealed a glimpse of it.

This is necessary for the healing of the generations.

*Into your hands we commit ourselves, O Lord.*

*Adapted and edited from Zhiwen's original article which first appeared in Salt and Light*



### **Zhiwen Ng (MCS 2016)**

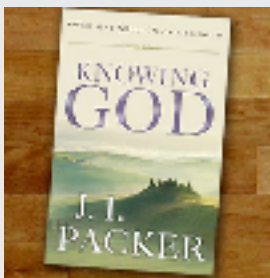
Zhiwen is an executive at Singapore Centre for Global Missions, overseeing home missions for his local church, and an all-round connector.

# REMEMBERING PACKER

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On 17 July 2020, Dr James Innell Packer, went home to the Lord. He was 93 years old. Many BGST faculty – full-time and adjunct – studied under him at Regent College, Vancouver.



The bookshelves of most evangelical Christians of my generation would have held J. I. Packer's best-selling classic, "Knowing God".

In the Foreword, he appropriates John Mackay's illustration of persons sitting on a front balcony of a house watching travellers go by on the road below. Their journey is a picture of Christian life. The 'balconers' and travellers may be thinking over that same journey, yet their problems differ. The 'balconers' are basically onlookers, and their problems are theoretical. In comparison, the travellers face problems which, though having theoretical angles, are essentially practical – "problems of the 'which-way-to-go' and 'how-to-make-it' type, problems which call not merely for comprehension but for decision and action too." While Dr Packer says his "Knowing God" is a book for travellers, I would say his overall theological perspective and teaching priorities as being oriented for balconers too.

That certainly was my experience when I studied systematic theology with him. "Packer by name, packer by trade," was what he used to say, packing and organising theological concepts into clearly structured morsels of soul nourishment. Like his beloved Puritans, his teaching was never only theoretical, but pushed towards the 'which-way-to-go' and 'how-to-make-it' type of questions.

For Dr Packer, the Trinity was not just a mathematical conundrum, but a disclosure of divine love to me. The atonement was not just a theory, but how sinners like me can be reconciled to God. The inerrancy of scripture was not just something to be defended, but an expression of God's trustworthy character.

This traveller owes an immense debt to a fellow, elder, traveller, who has now been welcomed home by the One he spent his life honouring, loving and trusting. If you haven't already read "Knowing God", why not pick up a copy and begin the journey with him? And if you have, perhaps it's time for re-visit?

*Fondly remembered by:*

**Quek Tze Ming**  
Lecturer, NT Studies  
Director, Post-Graduate Programmes  
BGST

# 2020

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### CONFERENCE

10-15  
AUG

"THE FAITHFUL SCIENTIST: EXPLORATIONS  
IN CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE"

Speakers: Prof Ard Louis, Prof Russell  
Cowburn, Prof Robert White  
7:30pm-10:00pm

**[bit.ly/thefaithfulscientist](https://bit.ly/thefaithfulscientist)**

*10 AUG is a free public lecture, livestream at  
**[bit.ly/BGSTYouTube](https://bit.ly/BGSTYouTube)***

### GOURMET MEAL & TALK (MON)

24  
AUG

"HUMAN FLOURISHING: NOURISHMENT  
THROUGH THE ARTS"

Speakers: Dr Lai Pak Wah, Mr Mark Suredhran,  
Mrs Constance Fourie  
8:00pm-9:00pm

**Order your specially curated set meals at  
[online.flippingbook.com/view/412772/](https://online.flippingbook.com/view/412772/)**

### SEPTET SERVICE (EVERY 4TH FRI)

28  
AUG

"LITURGY IN SEVEN ACTS"  
12:30pm-1:00pm

#### **Join Us on Zoom**

Meeting ID: 823 1892 4126  
Password: 782730



# BGST

## NEW MEMBERS

**BGST welcomes the following who have graciously accepted our invitation to be on the BGST Functional Committees:**



**Dr Ho Boon Tiong**

*Programmes & Services Committee*

Dr Ho worships at Bedok Methodist Church and serves as the Local Church Executive Committee (LCEC) Chairperson and the Chairperson of the Discipleship Group Ministry. At work, he is a much sought-after speaker, trainer and consultant. In ministry, Boon Tiong is passionate about discipleship and church leadership.



**Ms Chia Yong Yong**

*Governance & Nominations Committee*

Ms Chia is a lawyer by training. She is a member of Zion-Bishan BP Church and she had been on the Board of Deacons till 2013. She was a Nominated Member of Parliament from 2014 - 2018, an advocate for disabled persons and Legal Advisor and company secretary to Very Special Arts. She is very active in Serving People with Disabilities (SPD) as President and SG Enable as Board Member.



# FREE

## RESOURCE



**UNDER THE WINGS OF GOD:  
LESSONS FROM RUTH IN TROUBLED TIMES**  
BGST'S FREE TEACHING SERIES ON THE BOOK OF RUTH.

[ACCESS HERE](#)

## Contemplating Covid-19 Resources



[BROWSE OUR COLLECTION](#)

# IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

## BGST BEGINS A NEW SEMESTER

The BGST office will be open from 10 am to 4 pm from Mondays to Fridays and Saturdays 9 am to 1 pm. Visits after hours are by appointment only.

The library is also open during office hours but do contact Daisy at [simd@bgst.edu.sg](mailto:simd@bgst.edu.sg) if you need to use the reference section after hours or arrange for book drops.

Live classes will be held on Monday and Wednesday nights and Saturday mornings. All other classes will be held via zoom for the first session and the class will then decide the format for subsequent sessions.

## LIBRARY CHARGES FOR NEW AY2020/21

Library charges for the new Academic Year 2020/21 will be priced at \$130. This will allow access to the physical collection, OverDrive and DTL. This charge is compulsory for all Programme Students but is optional for all other students. For inquiries, please contact Daisy at [simd@bgst.edu.sg](mailto:simd@bgst.edu.sg)

## ATTENTION - LIBRARY MEMBERS!

We will now be charging \$50 per annum for the use of the Library (physical collection only). This will apply when the new AY2020/21 starts. Regarding your deposit of \$100 currently held with us, please choose one option from the following and inform Daisy at [simd@bgst.edu.sg](mailto:simd@bgst.edu.sg):

1. State if you would prefer to have the \$100 deposit returned to you. We will return the money via PayNow or bank transfer
2. Convert the \$100 deposit into 2 years' Library Membership
3. Donate the \$100 deposit to BGST.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you!

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THE DTL

For current DTL users who want to have access to DTL after 30th June, you will need to pay \$130 for a 1 year subscription as the current password will be changed. A new password will be given upon receipt of payment.

PayNow is the most preferred mode of payment. Send payment details to Daisy at [simd@bgst.edu.sg](mailto:simd@bgst.edu.sg).



## THE BOOK CORNER IS CLOSED

We are clearing stocks. If you would like any of the books, you can, for a minimum of \$50 donation. We will provide a bag and you can fill it up with any of the items we have available. Season extended due to the 2 month closure during Circuit Breaker.

**All brand new!**  
**Hurry! While stocks last!**





## FACULTY SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS (AUG-SEP)



**DR KWA KIEM  
KIOK**

9 Aug	Missions Sunday	Agape Methodist Church
23 Aug	Exodus 1:8-2:10	Living Hope Methodist Church
13 Sep	James 3:13-18	Singapore Life Church



**MR LEOW WEN  
PIN**

All Sundays in August	Adult Sunday School Series on Ruth	Singapore Life Church
6 Sep	2 Tim 4:1-5	Chapel of Christ our Hope (Sunday Service)
28 Sep	The Ekklesia of God	Continua



**MR QUEK  
TZE-MING**

19-20 Sep	Judgment on the Beasts (Rev 19:11-21)	The Bible Church Services
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**Help BGST grow to achieve  
its vision of training the  
whole people of God!**

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## BIBLICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

[www.bgst.edu.sg](http://www.bgst.edu.sg)

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