

Your Monthly Newsletter

WINDOW TO BGST JULY

2021



FOLLOWING GOD INTO THE FUTURE

BY DR LAI PAK WAH

IT'S JULY 2021. Everything feels like *déjà vu*.

Again, we are emerging from a 'lockdown' and easing of restrictions. Again, we are mostly working from home. Again, churches are caught wondering whether to continue online or with physical worship services.

This being said, things have actually evolved over the past year. The economic fallout we feared did materialize in many quarters of our economy – in the retail stores, F&B outlets, and travel agencies, for example. On the geopolitical front, relationships have worsened among countries, particularly between US and China. While vaccines were developed and rolled out in record time, new COVID-19 variants have also emerged. There seems to

be no end to this pandemic. All these are taking place in the midst of digital disruptions that seem to be occurring in every industry, including theological education!

Yet, not all news is bad. Many churches have discovered that their online worship services are serving people not only locally but overseas. More importantly, many of these newcomers would never have joined a worship service if it remained physical! This has motivated many churches to transform themselves to become decentralized hybrid churches – smaller micro-churches or groups connected together through digital means, so as to better serve their existing communities and these newcomers.

Having robbed us of our church programmes, the pandemic is also forcing both churches and Christians to ask fundamental questions about our faith. What did our programmatic or activist church lifestyles amount to? What really matters for Christian living? Have we been caught up with our earthly comforts so much that we have forgotten our heavenly goals?

Since July last year, BGST has also been asking, "What does this new norm mean for the school's future?" "Do we need to reinvent ourselves to better serve our students?" "How do we choose between the good and the better, when faced with a myriad of options?"

First and foremost, our fundamentals don't change. We are still called to love Christ and our neighbour. Everything we do must help our students, churches and ourselves move closer to this goal. Yet, at the same time, the Christian life is not formulaic, whereby as long as we are faithful to Christ and obey His Spirit's guidance, He will lead us to prosperity and success, whether this is in our businesses, careers or ministries.

To be sure, God's people have enjoyed success because of their faithfulness – Abraham, David and Solomon, for example. At the same time, many have also suffered *because* of their obedience to Christ. One figure who comes to mind is the Apostle Paul. When he speaks of suffering

producing perseverance, character and hope (Rom 5:3), he speaks out of personal experience. Once, the afflictions he suffered in Asia were so bad, he despaired of life itself (2 Cor 1:8). On another occasion, he experienced a "thorn in the flesh" that troubled him so much he had nothing to lean on but Christ's promise, "my grace is sufficient for you" (2 Cor 12:9). It seems then that all our experiences, whether success or struggles, are the means of encountering Christ's love, to deepen our experience of our Lord. Ignatius of Loyola puts this poignantly,

All the things in this world are gifts of God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily. As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God insofar as they help us develop as loving persons. ... We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God.

Over the last year, the BGST team has discerned much as to how the school may transform itself so as to better equip God's people, especially the laity. We have thought hard and prayed earnestly as to the areas we should focus on, as opposed to those which are done better by other theological colleges.



In the new academic year, several of these new initiatives will be launched. While we hope that these initiatives will be successful, we also recognise what Scripture and our spiritual forefathers have taught us earlier. The ministry of BGST is *also the means* God uses to help everyone in the school, from the Principal to the administrative officer, to experience Christ's love; to sanctify us of our idols, our false sense of securities, and our misplaced expectations... to face our dark side, so that we be transformed anew into the image of Christ.

Yes, this means that troubles or conflicts may arise. Difficulties will also occur. I confess, like so many of us, that I like stories of triumph over adversity only when they

happen to others. But not to me. Yet, if we are true to Christ's teachings, we must have the spiritual freedom, as Ignatius outlined above, to embrace whatever we encounter as we follow God's leading and will. This will not be easy.

So, as the new academic year begins, on behalf of the BGST team, we seek your prayers for grace, love, and perseverance, whenever we encounter adversities in our ministry ahead, whenever we encounter our dark sides. Pray for spiritual freedom, so that we do not hold on stubbornly to our own expectations or our goals, but be attentive to what God is teaching us, through both our successes and failures. Amen.

WHEN GOD CHANGES YOUR DIRECTION

FROM ENJOYINGTHEJOURNEY.ORG



Written by Dr Scott Pauley

This article is taken from
enjoyingthejourney.org/when-god-changes-your-direction/

Sometimes the straightest line between A and B is not the route God chooses for us. His ways and thoughts truly are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:8-9). At times we chart the course and set off toward the destination, only to see God unexpectedly change our direction. If you have been there you know what I am talking about. At these times life can be more than a little disorienting.

Here are some things to remember when God changes your direction:

God has not changed.

Thousands of years ago the prophet Malachi recorded God's words, "I am the LORD, I change not" (Malachi 3:8). A.B. Simpson had it right when he wrote, "All may change, but Jesus never – glory to His name!" The Lord Jesus Christ said He would be the same "yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8). Go back to what you know for sure...and who you know for sure. He is always good. He is always faithful. He is always right. He will always finish what He started.



The destination has not changed.

Wait a minute!

If the direction changes, doesn't the destination change? It depends on which destination you are talking about. We have goals in mind and objectives that very often were not set by God. The goal of the Christian life is the knowledge and glory of God. That destination has not changed. You are still on your way to heaven and you are still headed toward the same agenda here on earth – God's glory.

God is changing you.

When the Lord takes us on a divinely ordered detour there is always a purpose. Some excess baggage to remove. Some precious truth to pick up. Or perhaps just a private meeting with Him somewhere off the beaten path. It is why Abraham didn't always take the simplest route, why Moses had to go to the backside of the desert, why the children of Israel went in circles for forty years, why David had to run to a cave, and God's prophets were often on the move. When God changes our direction He is very often trying to change us.

So stop wondering about God's choice and worrying about your future. The Lord already has it planned out. You just keep following and stay on the lookout for His messages to you. He is in charge of this trip and we are just along for the ride.

2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BGST.EDU.SG/EVENTS

14 July

DEDICATION
SERVICE

"DISCERNING THE NEW" A BGST DEDICATION SERVICE FOR AY2021-22

Time: 8:00pm SGT (GMT +8 HRS)

Open Zoom Link

Meeting ID: 810 3710 7292 | Passcode: 007917

23 July

VIRTUAL
PUBLIC
LECTURE

"MAKING ROOM: EXTENDING CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY TO OUR NEIGHBOURS"

A THEOLOGY FOR LIFE PUBLIC LECTURE

Speaker: Dr Christine Pohl

Time: 7:30pm SGT (GMT +8 HRS)

Register at bit.ly/bgstpl3

We regret that Dr Christine Pohl cannot join us 'live' due to a medical emergency. Instead, we will watch a video of a talk she gave on hospitality. Rev Ivan Tan, who studied the ethics of hospitality with Dr Pohl at Asbury Theological Seminary, will join the panel for discussion on the topic and respond to questions.

26 July

CONVOCATION

BGST'S 30TH CONVOCATION

Zion Bishan Bible-Presbyterian Church

Time: 7:30pm - 8:30pm SGT (GMT +8 HRS)

Join Us

FOR A BGST DEDICATION
SERVICE FOR AY2021-22

DISCERNING THE NEW



WED, 14 JULY 2021 • 8:00 PM • LIVE ON ZOOM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BGST OPERATING HOURS

From Monday 5 July 2021, BGST office hours will be from 9 am - 5 pm.

Gift Vouchers

With the start of a new Academic Year, do consider gifting the precious gift of Theological Education through the BGST vouchers, up for sale now.

Valid till 30 June 2022

Available in \$200, \$100, \$50, and \$20

To purchase, email yap_foon_lyn@bgst.edu.sg



july-aug

FACULTY SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

DR TAN SENG KONG



23-24
JUL

PRINSEP STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

YA teaching on "Reformed Theology and Presbyterianism"

DR KWA KIEM KIOK



11
JUL

CHARIS METHODIST CHURCH

Missions from Isaiah 6

8
AUG

LIVING HOPE METHODIST CHURCH

Righteousness Exalts a Nation

MR QUEK TZE-MING



8
AUG

ZION BISHAN BP CHURCH

The Council and Another Journey
(Acts 15:1-16:5)

15
AUG

ZION BISHAN BP CHURCH

Entering European Union (Acts 16:6-17:15)

DR LAI PAK WAH



24
JUL

MT CARMEL BP CHURCH

Apologetics Sermon

22
AUG

MT CARMEL BP CHURCH

TBC (Mandarin)

31
JUL

MT CARMEL BP CHURCH

Apologetics Sermon

july-aug

FACULTY SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

MR LEOW WEN PIN



18,25
JUL

YIO CHU KANG CHAPEL

Youth Workshop on Inclusion

7
AUG

SENG KANG METHODIST CHURCH

Leadership Workshop on Inclusion

1,8
AUG

3:16 CHURCH

Sermon on Inclusion

15
AUG

GRACE METHODIST CHURCH

Sermon on Inclusion

21
AUG

SINGAPORE LIFE CHURCH

Sermon on 2 Tim 4: 1-5

DR PHILIP
SATTERTHWAITE



1
AUG

PRINSEP STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The burnt offering (Lev 1)

8
AUG

PRINSEP STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Clean and unclean (Lev 2)

15
AUG

PRINSEP STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Day of Atonement (Lev 16)

22
AUG

PRINSEP STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

What does Holiness look like? (Lev 19)

29
AUG

PRINSEP STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Sabbatical years and the year of Jubilee (Lev 25)



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training the whole people of God!

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2021

WINDOW TO BGST



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