



Every year in July, around three hundred young leaders from twenty-one TRAC churches would meet for a time of connecting, learning and praying. This is probably the largest gathering of TRAC leaders besides the Annual Conference in November.

This meeting is affectionately known as 'YMLC' although no one can actually pronounce the four consonants put together. Many people think it is a conference for youths and youth leaders, and others may think it is a mid-year meeting for young leaders before the older one at the end of the year.

Neither is true.

Firstly, no one pronounces 'YMLC' as a word - it is simply the Y-M-L-C, an abbreviation for the Young Methodist Leaders' Conference. Secondly, the YMLC is organized for leaders of any ministry (not just youth ministries) aged between 19 and 35 in the 21 TRAC churches. Lastly, delegates to the YMLC need not necessarily be delegates to the Annual Conference.

This year's theme was *A Revival of Holiness*, with the intention of discovering our Methodist roots.

Rev Dr Chiang Ming Shun brought to life interesting stories of the Wesleyan revival in 18th century;

Rev Malcolm Tan shared how the Methodist tradition helps be faithful disciples of Christ; and

Rev Anthony Lee explained the engine of Methodism, the 'Class Meetings', which was the driving force behind the 18th century revival and how it remains applicable today. A 'class' in Wesley's time is synonymous to today's Small Group ministry.

I was not sure how young leaders would feel about a three-day conference examining historical events of the 18th century historical events, and so I spoke to a few delegates to find out.

Most Surprising Discovery

Many delegates I spoke to were pleasantly surprised to learn of the Rev. John Wesley's love life and how human he was. They knew of him as an 'untouchable' spiritual giant, yet they discovered that Wesley was like any young person today - constantly struggling with spiritual and life issues, and even making mistakes along the way. This gave them hope that their struggles were not in vain. Many shared with me that they felt God's assurance of love and were encouraged to press on in seeking God, even a 'heart-warming' encounter with God.

Most Impactful Moment

And the Holy Spirit did indeed move at the Conference. Besides the lively corporate worship and the time of pausing for personal devotion, the participants were prompted to pray for each other one, even delegates they had just met. However, it was the unseen activities outside the curriculum time that spoke volume of the power of the Holy Spirit.

I spoke to 20-year-old Joshua who was struggling to keep his church small group intact. Several members of his small group were non-committal and frivolous, sometimes petty even, and at odds with each other. He was crying to God for help before coming to the Conference. After the final plenary on the 'class meeting' at the Conference, members of his small group who were also at the Conference were so touched by the Spirit that they wanted to (in Joshua's own words) "do a class meeting now!" It was a breakthrough that night. There were confession, repentance and reconciliation. Joshua's small group had an awakening and the fire was still burning as I checked on Joshua three months after the Conference.

