

Sri Lanka Leaders' Retreat & TRPC 2nd Anniversary 斯里兰卡领袖退休会与三一归正长老教会二周年纪念

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From 14th April to 18th April 2011, Pastor Isaac, Bro. Bendick and I ministered to our brethren in Sri Lanka. There were two main objectives to be met in the course of these five days. We were to speak in the leaders' retreat conducted for the workers of Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Chapel (TRPC) and its outreaches. The retreat was held from 14th to 16th April 2011 at Bohowadhalawa, a hill station about 150km from Colombo. Situated in the central province of Sri Lanka and located at 1514m above sea level, it has very mild climate and a tranquil environment. It is also well-known for its tea estates. Apart from the Leaders' retreat, we were also present to celebrate with our Sri Lankan brethren of TRPC in their 2nd anniversary thanksgiving service on 17 April 2011.

The Leaders' retreat was attended by about 50 brethren from Colombo and its various mission outstations (Hatton, Jaffna and Trincomalee). At the Leaders' retreat, a workshop consisting of 4 messages was conducted by Pastor Isaac and Bro. Bendick. Over two messages entitled "Counsel for Ministers" and "Concerns of the Minister" respectively, Pastor Isaac discussed mainly on issues related to the roles of pastors and ministers of God. Expounding from the scriptures, he examined several essential qualities that ministers ought to possess in their ministries. For instance, Pastor Isaac contrasted spiritual to secular leadership. As mentioned in Mark 10:45 with our Lord Jesus as the Example, a church leader ought to minister as a servant rather than exercise lordship over others. As for Bro. Bendick, he approached the topic from two angles, namely the private and public life of a minister. The two messages covered issues related to self, family, finances, gender issues and interaction with fellow co-labourers and the congregation.

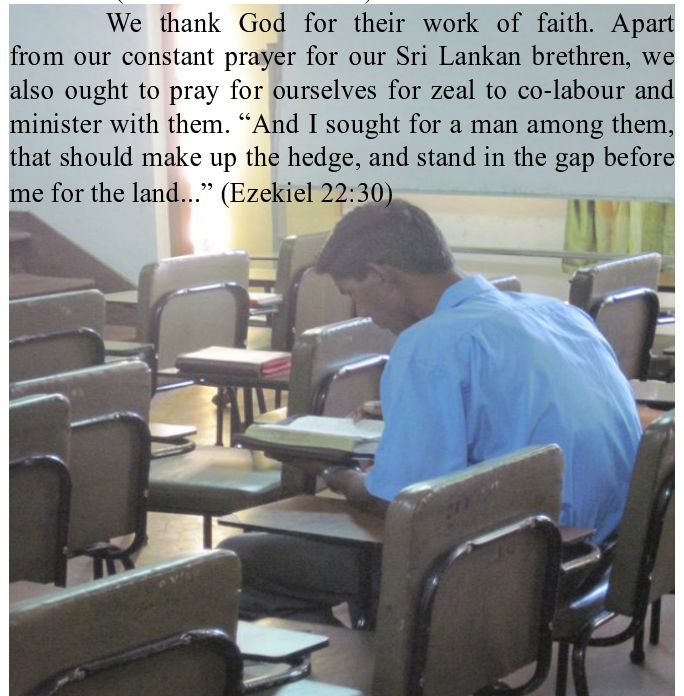
Apart from the workshop, a significant amount of time has also been set aside for prayer, reflection and future planning of the various ministries and outreaches of the church. We were present with the full-time ministers serving in Colombo, Hatton, Jaffna and Trincomalee as they shared on their problems, needs and future plans. Apart from raising the issue on the shortage of labourers in the mission stations, it is noted that the work in Trincomalee led by Mr. Vijendran and Mr. Thayananth has been particularly difficult especially after being affected by the floods earlier this year.

We headed back to Colombo on 16th April as we prepared ourselves for the Lord's Day worship and the TRPC 2nd Anniversary service on 17th April. Besides thanking God for His preservation over the past two years for TRPC, we also rejoiced with our brethren for the approval by the Sri Lankan authorities for the use of the name, "Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Chapel." This is something worth rejoicing due to the legal implications involved in the adoption of the name by the church. The anniversary thanksgiving service was attended by more than 70 guests, including friends, church members and parents of children attending the kindergarten. Pastor Isaac was the speaker and he expounded the Word taken from I Thessalonians 1.

As testified by Rev. Vijayenthiran and other local ministers, the work in Sri Lanka is difficult and it will remain so in the near future. Nevertheless, we thank God for their patience and perseverance despite the odds and trials they face.

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father ." (I Thessalonians 1:2-3)

We thank God for their work of faith. Apart from our constant prayer for our Sri Lankan brethren, we also ought to pray for ourselves for zeal to co-labour and minister with them. "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land..." (Ezekiel 22:30)



2011年4月14日至18日，王家贤牧师，民立弟兄和我到斯里兰卡去服事我们在那里的弟兄。我们希望在五天的时间达到两个目标。我们将在为三一归正长老教会（TRPC）和它们在各地事工工场的同工主办的领袖退休会讲道。这退休会是从14日到16日于一个离科伦坡150公里的山区工场Bohowadhalawa进行。这地方位于斯里兰卡中部，海拔1514米，是个天气温和的宁静环境。它也以茶园著称。领袖退休会之外，我们也与斯里兰卡TRPC的弟兄姐妹们一起庆祝他们于2011年4月17日的两周年感恩礼拜。

共有来自科伦坡以及各地差传事工工场（哈顿、贾夫纳和亭可马里）的50位弟兄参加这次的领袖退休会。在退休会里，王牧师和民立弟兄讲授了由四个信息组成的培训课程。王牧师的两个信息分别名为“给服事者的劝告”和“服事者的关怀”，主要是讨论牧师和服事同工所扮演的角色。他引用圣经经文，深入探讨了服事者在他们的事工中所应具备的许多必要条件。例如，牧师就对比了属灵与世俗领袖的不同。就如马可福音10:45告诉我们主耶稣是我们的榜样一样，一位教会的领袖应该以仆人的身份来服事人，而不是驾驭于他人之上。至于民立弟兄，他则从两个角度切入课题，即一位服事者的私人生活和他的公众生活。两则信息涉及了关于个人、家庭、财务、两性关系以及与同工和会众的交流与同工等课题。

培训班之外，我们也用了许多时间祷告、思考以及为教会的各项事工与布道进行筹划。我们会见了科伦坡、哈顿、贾夫纳和亭可马里的全职服事人员，他们

跟我们分享了他们碰到的问题以及他们的需要和未来的计划。除了各地工场同工短缺的问题之外，特别值得注意的是早期在年头受水灾影响的，由Vijendran和Thanyananth 所领导的亭可马里事工的艰巨。

我们在4月16日回到科伦坡，为着17日的主日崇拜和TRPC的二周年感恩礼拜作准备。除了感谢上帝在过去的两年里对TRPC的看顾保守之外，我们也为着斯里兰卡当局批准教会名字的正式登记而同我们的弟兄姐妹一同喜乐。这是值得我们喜乐的，因为教会的登记牵涉许多法律程序上的问题。周年感恩礼拜的来宾有70余人，包括了朋友，会友以及幼稚园孩子们的父母。王牧师从帖撒罗尼迦前书第一章证道。

正如Vijayenthiran牧师以及当地的其他牧师们可以见证的，斯里兰卡的工作是艰难的，相信近期也会仍然如此。无论如何，我们为着他们在面对苦难与试炼时的耐心与毅力感谢上帝。

“我们为你们众人常常感谢神，祷告的时候提到你们。在神我们的父面前，不住地記念你们因信心所作的工夫，因爱心所受的劳苦，因盼望我们主耶稣基督所存的忍耐。”（帖撒罗尼迦前书1:2-3）

我们为着他们的忠心服事感谢上帝。除了不断地为我们在斯里兰卡的弟兄们祷告之外，我们也应该为自己祷告，求上帝给我们有心志与他们一起同工、服事。“我在他们中间寻找一人重修墙垣，在我面前为这国站在破口防堵，使我不灭绝这国，却找不着一个...”（以西结书22:30）