

Christian Perspective on the General Elections

Rev Dr Leonard Wee
Asian Institute of Calvin Studies

Once again, the tiny island of Singapore would soon be electing its leaders to govern the nation for the next 5 years. The 2020 General Elections has been announced, and Singaporeans would be casting their votes for these parliamentary leaders on 10 July 2020, our Polling Day. It is without doubt a most important event in our country—the well-being of Singapore is dependent on the quality of its leadership at all levels and in all segments of our society, beginning with the top, notwithstanding the fact that all blessings ultimately come from God.

Christians are reminded from Scripture that all civil authorities, including those in the government, are appointed by God. The apostle Paul says in Romans 13:1, “For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.” The point to note here is that even the secular authorities are set in place by the will of God. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon (c. 605–562 B.C.), echoes this when he says, “The Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men” (Daniel 4:17). Nebuchadnezzar was a pagan king and, according to the Bible, even he acknowledged that God gave him the right to rule.

The representative nature of our parliamentary system coheres especially well with our Reformed tradition of electing leaders, whether ecclesial or political. In fact, it has been argued by some that the modern parliamentary model (with its system of representative leadership) was patterned after the form of church governance that arose from the Reformed tradition, of which the Presbyterian Church is a part. In such a framework, the will of God for leaders is expressed through the collective votes of the people.

During this unusual time when we cannot come together for worship, we can still be part of a worshipping community. We invite you to join us at our pre-recorded worship service at this website <https://www.cplink.org.sg/>. We hope you can also connect with our Life Groups. Please contact one of our Pastoral Staff if you like to join a Life Group. We are still meeting and connecting through various digital platforms.

Welcome!

We want to grow in Christlikeness through devotion and delight in God, nurturing devotion and delight in God, nurturing relationships and intentionally multiplying disciplinarians.

This is true of the church; it is also true of the secular society, since civil authorities are ordained by God. For this reason, it is a Christian duty for followers of Jesus, as well as a civic responsibility, to vote conscientiously for those who are standing for elections, whichever political party they belong to. Their prayerful vote becomes God's instrument for the selection of leaders, albeit in a non-ecclesial context.

Furthermore, the well-known scholar on John Calvin's teachings, John T. McNeill, once wrote that since governments make decisions that affect the Christian community, Christians are to be concerned for the affairs of civil government. It is true that John Calvin, following the teachings of Augustine in *The City of God*, sees a clear distinction between church and state. It is the mission of the church to carry out the prerogatives of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the duty of civil authorities to govern justly and wisely, so that there is peace and order in society. Church and politics operate in different spheres, and this demarcation must be recognised. One implication here is that the church should avoid being identified with any political party.

However, it is also true that John Calvin believes in the sovereignty of God in all dimensions of human life, and was himself immensely active in social and political issues. It can even be said that his theology was partially forged out of his social and political engagement. My identity as a Christian and my role as a citizen are interrelated. As citizens of the nation, the church and its members have a compelling prerogative to contribute to the well-being of their society or country. The lowest denominator for them is, to the best of their godly discernment, to elect political leaders who would serve well.

Therefore, as fellow Singaporeans and residents, let us unite in prayer for the upcoming General Elections, that God would put in place the kind of leaders who would serve the people conscientiously—those who can lead with wisdom and a clear conscience, and who would place the well-being of the country above personal or even party interests. Those who cast their votes to nominate these leaders should do so with God-centred wisdom. Each one must decide which candidate can better serve his/her constituency and the country at large.

In this regard, allow me to offer a few points to assist us in this endeavour, when we pray for the nation and decide on our choice of leaders. There are a few questions that we need to ask:

1. Is the candidate sincere in serving the people and would put their interests above his/her own as a Member of Parliament?
2. Is the candidate righteous and would uphold values that are morally and ethically sound? For the Christian, the Bible is the basis of our moral vision, and there is no need for us to apologise for that. While we are not looking for leaders who are favourably biased towards the Christian faith (on the contrary, we hope that they would be fair to all people, regardless of race or religion), Christians have the right and duty to vote according to their standards of morality and conscience.

3. Is the candidate a compassionate shepherd (just as King Cyrus is called a shepherd, Isaiah 44:28) who will fend for the poor, the weak, the elderly, the helpless and those with special needs in our society? We are compelled by the love of Christ for our neighbours to work for the common good of all humanity, and this includes our choice of leaders who will be given the power to make a difference, whichever party they belong to.
4. Does the candidate have the moral courage to uphold what is right, just and truthful? Such leaders are much needed in our increasingly corrupt world. Without moral courage, leaders will never build strong societies.

This list of qualities is by no means exhaustive. We have not discussed the competencies of candidates, their communication and interpersonal skills, intellect, viewpoints, and so on. These would also contribute to the overall effectiveness of a leader. What we have sought to do, rather, is to highlight the fundamental qualities that lead to good and caring leadership.

Admittedly, we only get to hear or read about many of the candidates through the news and other mass media close to the elections. We do not have the luxury of observing their character or competence over any length of time. This is where careful discernment in understanding whatever is said or heard becomes especially important in making our decisions. The responsibility is on us to follow the news and be aware that there are bias and influences in each media. We should pray for fairness and opportunity for the different voices to be heard, in the spirit of the parliamentary system.

Finally, when we come to the point where all is said and done, and the elections are over and the choices have been made, let us not forget that we remain as one nation. If the sovereignty of God extends to the leaders who are chosen through the collective votes of the people, notwithstanding in a secular context, we should also be acquiesced in the knowledge that the will of God has been made evident. The apostle Paul, after telling the Christians in Rome that governments are instituted by God (Romans 13:1), goes on to tell them to pay their taxes, and to respect their authority (Romans 13:7). The only time when the Christian would disobey the civil authorities is when these rulers set themselves up in opposition to God, as mentioned in the book of Revelation (Revelation 13:7-8; 20:4).

May the Lord bless his people as we carry out our civil responsibilities for the good of the nation, in response to his injunction to be salt and light to the world. Amen.

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Colossians 4: 5-6

CPC Mission Offering for HOPE VILLAGE PREY VENG (HVPV) Cambodia July 2020

The global pandemic has crippled the global economies; especially amongst the poorest mainly due to unemployment. In Cambodia, thousands of sole breadwinners lost their jobs in the cities, factories and those working overseas are forced to return to their home towns. Most of them are daily low wage earners and without any job now, they are unable to continue to provide for their families.

Most families depend on remittance sent by their working parents or older siblings to provide the daily necessities but now these survival sources are cut off. The problem is compounded when more of the unemployed return to their home towns. No income means no food on the table, so many young children are forced to leave school to help and find work to support the family. Though education in Cambodia is free, but the families can no longer afford to pay for the children's uniform, stationery, shoes, books and study materials to continue with their education.

HVPV is also not spared by the effects of the pandemic. Currently there are 111 children living in HVPV, of which 17 are without sponsorships. There are 3 key areas that are needed to provide for the children in HVPV, namely, Health, Maintenance and Education. In order to sustain the children till the end of year, a total sum of S\$13,510 is required, details as follows:

- ◆ **Health** – require S\$3,503 to keep the children healthy with health supplements and basic medical supplies;
- ◆ **Maintenance** – require S\$4,491 to upkeep the orphanage with clean water supply, uninterrupted electric power, kitchen hygiene, undergarments and food supplies;
- ◆ **Education** – require S\$5,516 on stationery, books and study material in order for the children to continue their education.

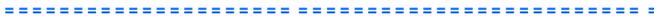
The following table indicates the funds required for each key area and the respective priorities that HVPV needs.

Needs by Priority	Health	Maintenance	Education	Total (by Priority)
High	\$ 2,624	\$ 1,208	\$ 3,490	\$ 7,323
Medium	\$ 734	\$ 725	\$ 1,948	\$ 3,408
Low	\$ 145	\$ 2,557	\$ 78	\$ 2,780
Total Needs	\$ 3,503	\$ 4,491	\$ 5,516	\$ 13,510

In the past years, CPC has the privilege to send a short-term mission team to visit the children and provide support to them each year. We thank the Lord for this mission work that the church has been doing for the children in **HVPV Cambodia**. However, the mission trip is suspended due to COVID 19 this year but this will not stop us from showing our care and concerns for the children. We seek brothers and sisters in CPC to demonstrate your love by giving an offering to them in July 2020 Mission Collection to support the children at HVPV Cambodia. All offerings collected will be channelled to OHF Singapore whom will then provide to HVPV to support for the children in HVPV.



~ **Thomas Tan** ~
Cambodia Mission



*** Please use the new QR code and updated UEN no. for Mission collection as shown below:**

For Mission Collection

Mission Collection in July for :

HOPE VILLAGE PREY VENG (HVPV) Cambodia



Please indicate **"HVPV"** at the Bill Reference section

Account name: **Covenant Presbyterian Church-MC**
UEN no: **T12SS0164DMIC**



ANNOUNCEMENTS

✝ **CPC Prayer Meeting** (Fresh Fire) next Fri, **10 Jul @ 8pm.**
Meeting ID : 298 108 8560
Password: 2768768

✝ In light of the COVID-19 situation, the Government authorities have given Churches and charity organisations permission to defer their ACM till a later date. We will keep you informed of the new date for the ACM.

TITHING



Please key in your tithing number at the reference section. If you are unsure of or do not a tithing number, you may drop us an email at the church website, under "Request" tab and we will get back to you.

INTERNET TRANSFER

DBS Current Account: 025-905375-8
Account name: Covenant Presbyterian Church - Tith
UEN no. **T12SS0164DTTH**

OFFERING



Please key in only the alphabet at the reference section as follows :

*"E" for English Service
"C" for Chinese Service
"SL" for Sri Lankan Service*

INTERNET TRANSFER

DBS Current Account: 033-016873-0
Account name: Covenant Presbyterian Church
UEN no. **T12SS0164D**



110 Race Course Road,
Covenant House S(218578)
Tel : 6293 4394 Fax : 6293 4981
Email: members@cplink.org.sg
Website: http://cplink.org.sg
Church Manager : Hazel Lau
Admin/Accts.Ex: Salinas J. Hope

Pastoral Staff

Rev Keith Lai
Rev Abel Lee
Rev Henry Wong
Rev Christina Ong
Ps Lai Mui Fong
Pr Chin Yoke Fen
Pr Lionel Neo
Ps Susantha

Sri Lankan Service

Rev Christina Ong / Ps Susantha

Chinese Service

Rev Abel Lee / Pr Chin Yoke Fen

CareWorks Community Services

Rev Henry Wong

Gladiolus Place

Michelle Tan

Ministry Team Leaders

Creche

Kong Soh Lian

Children

Pr Lionel Neo

Youth and Young Adult (YaYA)

Rev Abel Lee (ad interim)

James Wong (ad interim)

Audrey Wong

Young Working Adult & Young Married

Rev Henry Wong

Adults & Seniors

Rev Keith Lai/ Ps Lai Mui Fong

Hospitality

Jenny Ho

Worship

Ryan Kong

Missions

Ho Chung Tat

Prayer

Rev Henry Wong

Freedom & Wholeness

Alfred & Jenny Koay

GB / BB

Pr Lionel Neo

Chinese Seniors Alpha Course

Pr Chin Yoke Fen

Day Alone with the Lord

Ps Lai Mui Fong