

March 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Over 3 years ago Jeyakanth was removed from the membership of Amyand Park Chapel. This sad and painful action was taken to rescue our much-loved friend from the calamitous course he continues to take.

Such matters are rarely publicised, however, considering the impact our discipline has had on the work in Sri Lanka, it has come to the attention of churches in the UK. We have therefore been approached by some seeking help and clarity. Sadly, in some quarters our discipline has been portrayed in a misleading way. Therefore, to avoid further misunderstandings we thought it wise to set out our reasons for Jeyakanth's discipline. We do this reluctantly but in the hope that our clarifications will bring much needed reassurance and help.

We have no wish to fuel division or to justify ourselves. We ask that you handle the following FAQs, and our 'public statement' if you have received it, prayerfully and with goodwill. We do not wish to ferment division or promote public debate.

Finally, our prayer and longing are that Christ would be exalted in the churches, to the glory of God.

His name is Wonderful,

Gerard Hemmings, Paul Fountain, Simon Doyle, David Malam, Jon Cassam  
(elders of Amyand Park Chapel)

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Amyand Park Chapel's discipline of Jeyakanth**

We would like to provide a clear set of responses to frequently asked questions that we, as elders of Amyand Park Chapel (APC), continue to receive with regards to our discipline of Jeyakanth. We issue these responses reluctantly, as we believe matters of church discipline are not matters for public discussion. However, this matter has been, and continues to be, publicised by others and we now believe it necessary to provide a clear set of responses.

To summarise the situation:

1. Jeyakanth became a member of APC on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and was removed from membership on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021.
2. During a period of his membership:
  - a. Jeyakanth repeatedly and consistently bore false witness to us as Elders.
  - b. He also circulated a report in the UK strongly condemning Kanna his fellow elder in Thampalagamam, without first discussing it with Kanna or their church.
3. Through this, we became aware that he was in a seriously backslidden state.
4. We applied Christ's medicine to rescue him over a period of 18 months: first, admonition; secondly, suspension from the membership of APC; and lastly, with great sadness, expulsion.
5. Since discipline was exercised, Jeyakanth has sought to distance himself from us by claiming he was not accountable to the church of which he was a member, but to the Council of Reference\*.
6. The Council of Reference has persistently undermined our exercise of discipline: firstly, during the discipline itself, by not encouraging Jeyakanth to address the issues; secondly, assuring him that there was nothing to repent of; and thirdly, publicly undermining us by attacking our discipline. In their Public Statement of Support of Jeyakanth issued in August 2022 they referred to our church '*giving a false narrative about Jeyakanth and aiding and abetting those who should know better*'.

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\* The Council of Reference is a group of Reformed Baptist pastors and elders set up in 2012 to respond to vexatious allegations made against Jeyakanth.

They added *'it is our considered opinion that our dear brother has been unfairly maligned'*. The Council of Reference even wrote to us, calling upon us as a church, to repent.

The claims the Council of Reference continue to make to exempt Jeyakanth from accountability to the church of which he was a member, are the subject of these FAQs. We bear the Council of Reference no ill will but are saddened by the position these men have taken.

We believe the issues at stake are more substantial and extensive than Jeyakanth's sins; they concern the authority of Christ's Word, the independence of the local church, and the legitimacy of a judgement that a gathered local church comes to carefully and prayerfully. The Lord binds himself to the decisions of the gathered church and we must have the highest of reasons for undermining this.

Others have sat in judgment upon the actions of our church when they have neither carried the responsibilities we have nor witnessed what we have witnessed.

### **Question 1**

#### ***Was Jeyakanth merely an 'associate member' of APC?***

**Jeyakanth was a member of the church which meets at APC. We have no 'associate membership' or any other form of membership or membership status.**

Our church rules and governing documents have no degrees or types of membership other than 'member'. When people have enquired whether we have 'associate membership', we have made it clear that we have no such type of membership and never have.

Our church rules define the process of becoming a member of APC, and Jeyakanth voluntarily followed this process to completion. Jeyakanth will have understood the nature of APC membership, since the process of becoming a member requires prospective members to have read and understood the rules. Also, prospective members must confirm that they have read and accept the rules for membership in their membership interview. It should be noted that these rules include the process for church discipline and therefore all new members give assent to this process. The church minutes record that

Jeyakanth became a member of APC on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015, and ceased to be a member, subject to the process of discipline, on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

When Jeyakanth became a member of APC, he was spending far more of his time in the UK than in Sri Lanka and attending APC regularly on Sundays and the midweek meetings so it was a very natural step to take. He also joined the church family holidays, was supported financially each month by APC, and furthermore APC supported his church work in Morden including the supply of preachers. Jemima was baptised at APC and she and Vani also became church members. Jeyakanth referred to Gerard as his pastor and sought his wisdom, counsel and pastoral care. Before the discipline, Jeyakanth said that he was accountable to the elders of APC.

Furthermore, during his time at APC, Jeyakanth would regularly meet with Paul and Gerard, indeed he would speak with Paul several times each week.

It is only since Jeyakanth was subject to discipline that there has been any suggestion that he was anything other than a member of APC.

As elders of APC, we were charged by the Lord Jesus Christ with the welfare of Jeyakanth's soul, as one under our care and as those who must give account for him on Judgment Day. This responsibility gave us the authority to act when we witnessed Jeyakanth going astray. The purpose of the discipline was not to punish, but to restore; not to destroy, but to heal.

The actions in disciplining Jeyakanth were consistent with our relationship to him as a church member.

## **Question 2**

***Was Jeyakanth disciplined for events that happened in Sri Lanka or the UK?***

**Jeyakanth was called to account for actions and attitudes which took place while he was here in the UK.**

Events in Sri Lanka do provide a broader context to those events in the UK that led to Jeyakanth's discipline, but they themselves were not the reason for that discipline. The specific reasons for Jeyakanth's discipline are outlined in the response to Question 4.

Our discipline was based on our own face-to-face dealings with Jeyakanth. We acted carefully and prayerfully, taking counsel together to be balanced and fair. We did not take any steps lightly or in haste.

### **Question 3**

***Did APC discipline Jeyakanth for not seeking to be reconciled with Kanna, his co-pastor in Thampalagamam?***

**No, Jeyakanth's failure to seek a reconciliation with Kanna was not a reason for the discipline (the response to Question 4 outlines the specific reasons for discipline).**

We were aware that the breakdown in the relationship between Jeyakanth and Kanna, his co-pastor in the Thampalagamam church, was causing significant damage to the Thampalagamam church and to a wider group of churches within the Lanka Evangelical Fellowship of Churches (LEFC).

Jeyakanth was fully aware of the impact this unresolved matter was having. Contrary to what is claimed by Jeyakanth and the Council of Reference, at no point prior to his discipline did Jeyakanth express to us any objection to seeking a reconciliation with Kanna, in fact quite the opposite. He agreed that a reconciliation was necessary and sought advice from Gerard on how to approach this. In response Gerard wrote a pastoral letter to Jeyakanth, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020. In this letter, Gerard advised him to follow the example of the Apostle Paul with the Corinthian church. Gerard wrote to Jeyakanth – *'...that as a loving father with a son, (he should) take the initiative with Kanna, go to Kanna alone, don't wait for him to come to you, and in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, restore the broken relationship...'* In the bonds of love and affection, he was encouraged to go to Kanna to bring about healing and reconciliation.

From the outset, Jeyakanth did not challenge this counsel. At times he spoke favourably of Kanna. For example, on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2020, Jeyakanth spoke to Gerard of handing over the leadership of the Thampalagamam church to Kanna and his fellow elders at the next church meeting.

On 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020 Jeyakanth said to Gerard he had told Kanna to be patient and that he wanted him to be a part of any future work, especially as Jeyakanth was going to step back from the work. Furthermore, Jeyakanth also spoke to Gerard of his hope that Kanna would lead a church plant. All of which indicated

the necessity, wisdom and reasonableness of a reconciliation. On that same day, Jeyakanth stated to Gerard that he wanted to win Kanna.

Naturally we had a pastoral concern for their reconciliation. However, neither the reason behind the breakdown of the relationship with Kanna, nor Jeyakanth's unwillingness to be reconciled with Kanna, were the reasons for the discipline. Our reasons were based on what took place at APC. We explain these reasons in the response to Question 4 below.

#### **Question 4**

***Was Jeyakanth's 'alleged dishonesty and deliberate failure to listen to the elders of APC' the only reasons Jeyakanth was disciplined?***

**There were three reasons for APC's disciplinary action, as outlined in a letter to the Council of Reference dated 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021. These three reasons are summarised below.**

**Firstly, he was consistently dishonest with the APC elders.**

Jeyakanth repeatedly led the APC elders to believe that he was gently, step-by-step, seeking a reconciliation with Kanna. However, only later did he admit at a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020 with Paul and David that he had not taken any such steps. He had been consistently lying.

**Secondly, he spread a report amongst us and other church leaders in the UK, attacking the integrity of Kanna, his co-pastor at Thampalagamam, without first raising the report with Kanna and later admitting to us the report was seriously flawed.**

In the same meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> July 2020, where Jeyakanth talked of handing over the leadership of the Thampalagamam church to Kanna (see response to Question 3), Jeyakanth gave Gerard a letter condemning Kanna. This letter described Kanna as *'proud, a lover of money, an autocrat, disobedient, divisive and insubordinate and one who leads people astray'*. Gerard counselled Jeyakanth that the details of this letter should first be raised with Kanna, and if found to be true, the matter should then be taken to the Thampalagamam church, as it would be a matter of church discipline (Matthew 18.15-19). However, this never happened.

Subsequently, Jeyakanth admitted to Simon that the report on Kanna was seriously flawed. Indeed, he distanced himself from it, denying any role in

writing, editing or translating it. However, he continued to distribute it to leaders of other churches in the UK.

Kanna was an elder in the Thampalagam church. Kanna was not under discipline in the church. Jeyakanth, a fellow elder, in publicly attacking Kanna, was slandering Kanna through distributing a report he himself admitted was flawed, Exodus 23.1 – *“You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness”* (ESV).

By making this report known to church leaders in the UK, Kanna was condemned before he was ever convicted; his reputation dirtied before he had been judged his local church, the highest court in the world.

**Thirdly, he spread false reports about the APC elders to the pastor of another UK church.**

During this period, we also received testimony from a pastor that Jeyakanth was slandering our characters and actions. He also sought to undermine the elders within APC by encouraging one of the members to distrust the elders and to leave the church.

Taken together these events led us to conclude that Jeyakanth was in a backslidden state.

We believe that our discipline was appropriate, proportionate and reasonable. The process took a period of 18 months of which the first 14 months were counsel and admonition. This was followed by suspension from the membership and 4 months later expulsion. The purpose throughout was to encourage Jeyakanth’s repentance and restoration. Sadly, Jeyakanth refused to respond. He refused to listen to the church of which he was a member. Indeed, his initial response upon hearing of his suspension was to avoid further accountability by seeking to resign his membership. This simply confirmed our concerns for his spiritual state. Having refused to listen to the church we were left with no alternative but to remove Jeyakanth from the membership.

We also took no offence at Jeyakanth’s attack on the elders. We were simply saddened. We had become aware that a dear friend was in a seriously backslidden state. We acted in obedience to Christ and love for Jeyakanth.

### **Question 5**

***Did APC refuse Jeyakanth's request to allow someone to help him respond to the accusations due to his poor English?***

**At no point did Jeyakanth make such a request.**

This is a bizarre accusation. Jeyakanth enjoyed the closest of friendships with Gerard and Paul. Furthermore, we have no recollection of Jeyakanth ever making such a request at any of the meetings we have ever attended together. He had been primarily residing in the UK since 2007, and spoke in English when visiting churches. He actively participated at APC prior to and during his membership, engaging with members in English for years. He had also taken a bible study at APC in English – an act that would require a grasp of technical language. He also provided translation from English to Tamil and Tamil to English on numerous occasions.

If Jeyakanth had made such a request, we would have supported it. But in all our dealings with Jeyakanth, no request was made, nor would we have expected it. Whenever English-speaking people visit Sri Lanka, Jeyakanth frequently acts as the translator. Furthermore, at every point we made sure Jeyakanth was fully aware of the situation and what was necessary to change course.

### **Question 6**

***Did APC fail to have Christ-like motives in disciplining Jeyakanth?***

**Our motive for disciplining was to restore and heal a backslidden brother, whose sinful state we had personally witnessed, in the manner that Christ prescribes.**

We have dearly loved Jeyakanth. He was a very close friend for many years. These events have broken our hearts. It was particularly difficult to see someone whom we considered a dear brother, a fellow labourer and with whom we had partnered in the work of the Kingdom both here and in Sri Lanka, fall so far. It was particularly painful to witness his rejection of the church's rescue mission.

Having personally witnessed his sinful behaviour it would have been dishonest and unfaithful to do nothing or to look the other way. To have taken matters less seriously because of his reputation would have been to show partiality and



prejudice, something that God's word forbids (1 Timothy 5.19-21; Leviticus 19.15). Out of love for Jeyakanth and obedience towards our Lord, we applied the Lord's remedy for those guilty of serious sin. It was ours to obey the Head of the Church and leave the consequences with Him.

We remain unclear as to what other motives we could possibly have had or what we were to gain from disciplining Jeyakanth. Prior to the discipline of Jeyakanth, Paul was the chairman of Care Sri Lanka, and Gerard was a trustee of Care Sri Lanka and a founding member of the Council of Reference. They subsequently resigned from these roles.

### **Question 7**

#### ***Why did APC reject Arputharaj's report after it vindicated Jeyakanth and condemned those in Sri Lanka who opposed him?***

Arputharaj's report was commissioned by Care Sri Lanka during COVID (in 2020) to verify or disprove accusations made against Jeyakanth concerning his conduct in Sri Lanka. The report was commissioned some months before Jeyakanth was suspended and did not address the matters for which he was disciplined. It purely focussed on events in Sri Lanka.

However, the Council of Reference continue to use Arputharaj's report as a testimony of Jeyakanth's good character and as evidence that we have misjudged him. In the Council of Reference's Public Statement of Support issued in August 2022, referring to the Arputharaj's report concerning events in Sri Lanka they stated: *'These serious allegations concerning Jeyakanth have been carefully investigated by a highly respected and longstanding Tamil Pastor, based in South India. The CoR agrees with his conclusion that the allegations are baseless and slanderous'*. However, our discipline was not concerned with Jeyakanth's conduct in Sri Lanka.

We have rejected the report more broadly because it is flawed in many ways. For example there are factual errors and the omission of pertinent evidence. Much more could be said but it is probably sufficient to highlight the following. The report's findings were the complete opposite of what Arputharaj had said verbally to elders of different churches in Sri Lanka, Germany and the UK. Even after the report was published Arputharaj reiterated to the same elders that Jeyakanth's behaviour was very sinful and that Kanna was a godly man. Yet when Arputharaj spoke with the Council of Reference he contradicted what he

had said to us about Jeyakanth. This gave the impression that we had been lying to the Council of Reference when relating to them what he had told us.

We are unclear as to why he did this, it may have been that he felt under pressure trying to please all parties.

In the light of this we do not believe that Arputharaj's report can justifiably be used to defend Jeyakanth.

### **Question 8**

***Is the account of APC's discipline by the Council of Reference in the Autumn 2024 edition of Lanka Link accurate?***

**No.**

*They write 'In April 2021 PJK's 'associate membership' with APC was suspended. His actual membership continues to be with the Thampalagamam Church. He was, according to the latest report, suspended on account of alleged dishonesty and a failure to listen to the APC elders who accused him of 'bearing a false report' concerning a fellow worker in his home church. Upon his return to Sri Lanka...the Pastor of APC called him and asked if he had done as instructed, namely, to apologise to his fellow worker for bearing a false report about him and to ask for his forgiveness. It was made clear that if he failed to do this he would be excommunicated by APC. PJK explained that since his return, his home church officers and others had confirmed that the report was not a false report and therefore he could not make the required apology.'*

Many of these points have already been addressed in the responses to Questions 1 to 7, however the following clarifications may prove helpful.

In the situation referred to, Jeyakanth went to Sri Lanka whilst under suspension from APC, with the church hoping for signs of repentance. Gerard said to him before he left that to show he was taking the suspension seriously and addressing the issues that had been raised, when he was in Sri Lanka two things needed to happen:

1. He should not take charge of the churches, as he was under discipline.
2. He should follow the counsel given to him after a lengthy meeting with Stuart Olyott and Gerard. This was a meeting agreed to by Jeyakanth and was appropriate as Jeyakanth looked up to Stuart and in the past had

trusted his advice. The counsel Stuart gave included following Christ's example in Philippians chapter 2, in Jeyakanth's dealings with Kanna.

When Gerard spoke to Jeyakanth whilst he was in Sri Lanka, it was clear that he had rejected both 1 and 2. This incident, along with his continuing insistence that he was not accountable to APC, but to the Council of Reference, further demonstrated his refusal to listen to the church.

Unfortunately, the Council of Reference published their account of events about the call that Gerard made to Jeyakanth, though they were not part of that phone call, or indeed directly involved in the events leading up to it. They said that Jeyakanth was disciplined for not following Gerard's pastoral advice. This was not true. However, they have also never discussed this call with Gerard and therefore have never heard his explanation.

Sadly, this is part of a consistent pattern. Despite us having removed Jeyakanth from the membership and now treating him as an unbeliever, Jeyakanth's supporters have, at almost every turn, chosen to believe his narrative while disbelieving ours. They have rejected the considered judgment of his local church. It is the members of APC who have witnessed the reasons for Jeyakanth's discipline, not they. This action is free from malice or spite and has been done in love in the hope of rescuing Jeyakanth. The APC family have found it heartbreaking to witness this dearly loved friend fall into such serious sin. The process leading to Jeyakanth's excommunication from APC took 18 months. It involved many hours of face-to-face conversations with every permutation of elders and more. We did not record these meetings to be later submitted as evidence to third parties. Furthermore, where evidence has been documented, Jeyakanth's supporters have sometimes not sought clarifications and at other times, simply ignored our explanations.

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We are thankful that the Lord has witnessed everything, and He will bring to light the things now hidden in the darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Our longing is, that as great sinners, we may all meet at the foot of that rugged cross and, catching the healing stream, offer up our hearts to Him who alone is worthy.