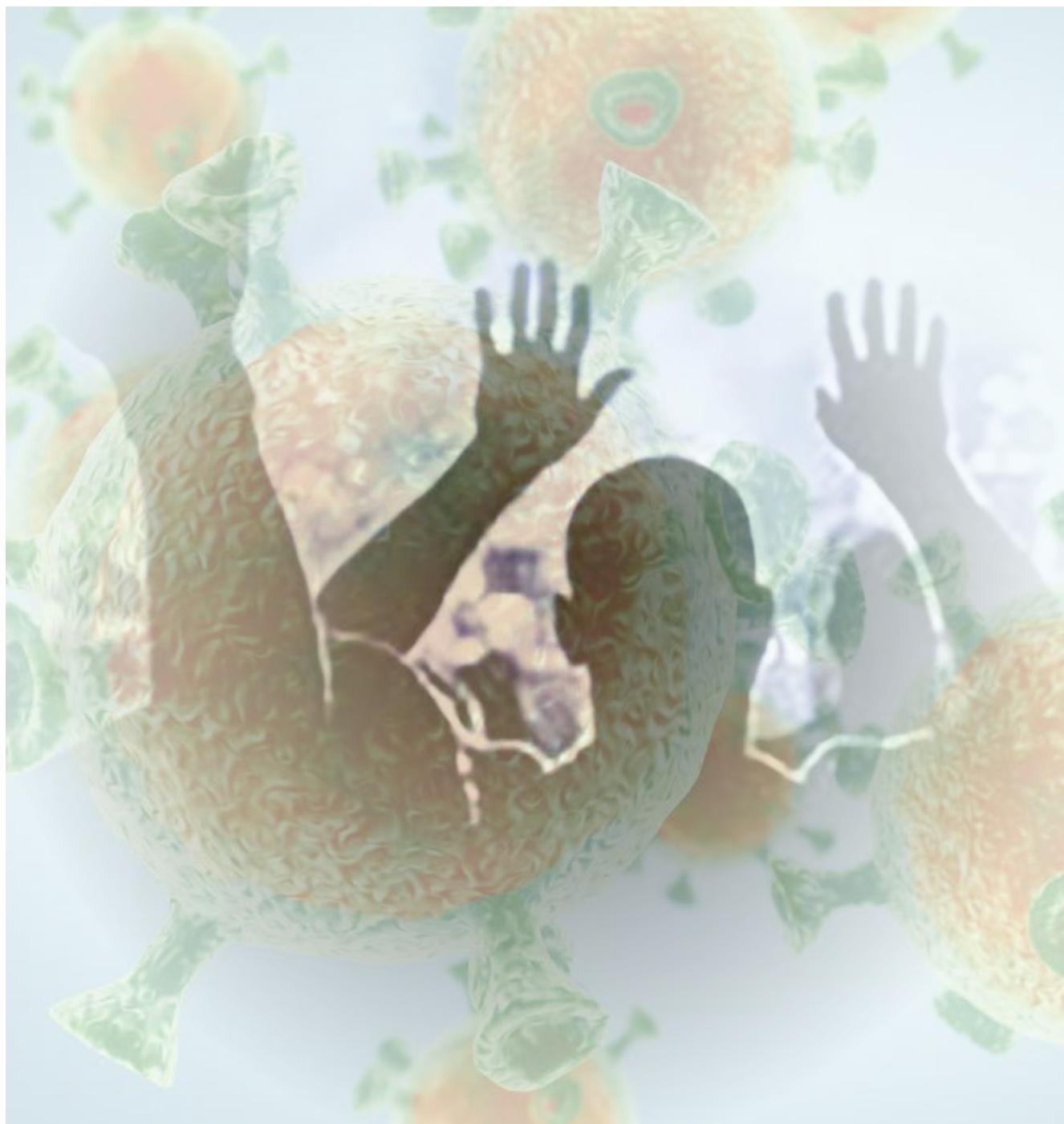


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Youth Conference 2019
4th-6th June, Kota Kinabalu



TAWAU METHODIST PREACHING CENTRE



Hand made baskets for fund raising



Mononod Swiftlet Farming Project



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Psalm 37



"A Church After
God's Own Heart"

- Every Methodist personally renewed in his/her first love for Jesus
- Every Methodist congregation revived as in the Book of Acts
- The Methodist Church to be refocused and reframed after the Word of God and the Holy Spirit

A call to a day of fasting, prayer, and acts of charity

from World Methodist Council

Let your steadfast love, O God, be upon us, even as we put our hope in you. Psalm 33:22 (NRSV)

The Wesleyan and Methodist family have been invited respond to a call for a day of fasting, and of prayer. This call has been taken up by Pope Francis in his weekday prayer of 3 March 2020, to an invitation from the Human Committee of Human Fraternity, and furthered by the World Council of Churches; amongst others.

John Wesley in suggesting fasting as a 'means of grace', fasting was not so much a question of whether Methodist's did so, but 'How do you fast?'. He commended a spirituality of fasting as much as a practice – to do so is to recognise the importance of loving God and of loving one's neighbour.

In words of Susanna Wesley:

Help me, Lord,

to remember that religion

is not to be

confined to the church or closet,

nor exercised only in prayer and meditation,

but that everywhere I am in your presence.

So may my every word and action have a moral content.

("Practising the presence of God" in *Prayers and Meditations of Susanna Wesley* by Michael McMullen. Methodist Publishing House, Peterborough: 2000.)

Fasting can be an experience of practising and being attentive to the presence of God. It can represent a struggle to feel God being present, and it reveals an acute awareness of God's presence like never before. We can discover a realisation or a reaffirmation that God is in all of 'this', in all the diverse experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic – life, death, sickness, healing, isolation, physical distancing, struggle, despair, loneliness, solitude, looking out for your neighbour, personal sacrifices, economic sacrifices, awareness of others whether they are too close or too far away. We attune ourselves to both our own experiences, the experiences of our family friends and colleagues, and the experiences of a world of people. This involves the whole self because God wants your whole self to participate in his mission in the world.

Therefore, fasting is a time for extending prayer, for yourself and others. As Wesley concludes in his seventh sermon in his series on the Sermon on the Mount (which is focused on fasting), the only thing to remain to be said is that of adding good deeds to our fast – giving alms and helping those in need.

Fasting and prayer, whether structured, literal, spiritual, or however we feel we can mark the time, is most of all an attentiveness to others – being alert and making ourselves aware of the obvious, the surprising, the unexpected, the longed for presence and moving of God, in a world and in peoples so terribly impacted by the pandemic of Covid-19. This is a calling for all people of faith and goodwill.

The Covid-19 Pandemic and the Prayer Language of Lamentation

We thank our Sovereign God for taking us **through** the “mortifying valley of the shadow of COVID-19” for more than 60 days of MCO and CMCO. We can be certain that no unwanted and feared earthly terrain, no matter how “unending” it seems, is the final destination for the people of God.

One of the key biblical lessons that we can learn when walking into such unwanted routes and terrain is the **prayer language of lament**. At least one third of the Psalms have to do with lamenting, whether personal, as a group or as a nation. In essence, these songs, prayers or expressions of lament are honest expressions of groaning and deep emotional expressions of sorrow for the desolation, excruciating pain and suffering currently experienced in an entrapped desperate situation.

We live in a fallen world in which the whole of creation is “groaning as in the pains of childbirth” for the time of redemption and “be liberated from its bondage to decay” [Romans 8:18-22]. Hence the Sovereign Maker of heaven and earth has endowed us with the biblical prayer language and practice of lamentation as an acceptable way to express our agony and survive our pain and suffering. The Sovereign God gives us the prayer language of lament – He not only permits it! Our weeping and even emotional “out of place” cries of doubt, accusations and despair – fall on His listening and loving ears. For He knows that in order for us to run towards Him and not away from Him, we must be able to pray authentically, and that cannot happen unless we can honestly express every thought and emotion.

But we must also notice the **important distinction between cries of “despair” and that of “lamentation”**. At first glance, they appear the same. The critical difference is that “despair” is grounded in helplessness and hopelessness, confined to no higher than earthly realities and reasoning - which can end with cynicism and even suicide. Biblical “lamentation” is rooted in an honest faith of **hope** in an unchanging and faithful God in spite of a terrible and horrible present. Laments turn toward God, whereas despair tempts the sufferer to run from God. Lament is a permanent solution to a passing problem – even though it seems to last forever! The final reference of biblical lamentation is the God of the cosmos. As a result, the final outcome is different.

There is **nothing magical** about the prayer of lamentation; it is not a silver bullet to our struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic. Biblical lamenting is a declaration of faith and trust in the unchanging, faithful, good and sovereign God even in

the midst of feeling overwhelmed in battling and living in life-threatening evil consequences of a fallen world, and the works of malevolent forces.

The biblical language of the lament prayer in **Psalm 13** first turns to God, marked by the cry – **“how long, O Lord?”** [v. 1] This is followed by an honest-to-God complaint [v. 2], that goes beyond anger – honestly identifying the misery, questions and frustrations – raging and gutting the soul. Then it moves beyond the denial and despair that unremitting sorrow can generate, to daring to hope in the promises of the unchanging, good and sovereign God as personal help is sought from Him [vv. 3-4]. Then it climaxes in an extremely important choice – the “destination” of the lament of the psalmist David– is choosing to trust in God [ESV v. 5 - ***But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation***].

As God’s people living in a season of lamentation of the COVID-19 pandemic and prolonged lockdowns of the Movement Control Order and the Conditional Movement Control Order, let us remember that **“to weep is human, but to lament is Christian”**. The destination and outcome of our tears goes beyond the earthly to the heavenly. When Christians lament, expressing our misery, questions and deep fears – we do so to the sovereign God Who lets us. Our cries and screams of pain, doubt and despair in an unprecedented season of earthshaking disruption and interruption that has brought a “new normal” to our way of life and livelihood, fall on the compassionate ears of our loving Father.

As a Methodist Family, we continue to pray for the various aspects of the pandemic, appreciating the heroic and sacrificial work of the care givers and service providers from several government and non-government institutions and agencies. Most of them will have to sacrifice the time of festivity with their families during this Hari Raya celebrations. Apart from the many medical and social relief projects implemented by many local Methodist churches, individuals and Annual Conferences – the Methodist Crisis Relief [MCR of CAC] has spearheaded and coordinated these food works in the name of Christ in Semenanjung, Sabah and Sarawak. The MCR has hitherto led the Methodist Church Family in spending no less than RM 1.4 mil clinical and non-clinical supplies to multiple hospitals and frontline agencies, as well as supplying daily essentials to individuals and families among those in need, notwithstanding race, religion and citizenship.

Without a doubt, the **COVID-19 pandemic has been a**

“gamechanger” in terms of changing the “means” but not “the end” of our church life and ministry. “The end” remains the same viz the unchangeable truth of Who God is, the eternal Good news of salvation in Christ, the unceasing work and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, of the infallibility of the Bible and all of the biblical revelations in which the life of the Church of God is rooted in creed and practice!

We must now, with God’s wisdom, have an open heart and a positive and expectant spirit – learn to creatively, innovatively and skilfully “do church” in the new normal as those who worship God in spirit and in truth [John 4:23-24] in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This era builds and expands the universal and powerful impact of digitalisation in new and unforeseen ways, with rapid and exponential progress in digital systems, computing power and in re-writing communication means and structures.

We thank the Lord that during the last two and a half months of MCO/CMCO lock down, the majority of our Annual Conferences reported that there has been more people attending online prayer meetings and virtual small group gatherings via ZOOM online application etc. Our online Sunday Worship Services have reached substantial new audience as well, including those who would normally be prohibited or cut off from hearing the Christian message of hope and transformation. This will also mean we need to ensure that our online materials and presentations are done “faultlessly”.

As God’s people, we continue to observe **physical distancing** but continue to be closely connected to God and

the fellowship of His people. For we are after all made to be relationally connected as social beings whose spiritual, emotional and mental well-being are dependent upon our guarding and maintaining as much “unseen but necessary” community as we can, in the midst of observing mandatory healthy physical distancing. Remaining in authentic community and not being isolated by staying connected using digital and technological means etc feed the compulsory human connection and bond we all need to thrive wholesomely daily. By God’s help, let us continue to find new and creative ways “to worship, fellowship, serve and witness” – whilst imperatively observing physical distancing, at least until the pandemic danger is officially declared to be over.

We thank our Sovereign God Who is taking us **through** “the mortifying valley of the shadow of COVID-19” even as our prayers of lament have been heard by the Great Shepherd of the sheep.

Let us remember with expectant faith and hope the words of the man who lived with the language of lamentation – who had lost “inexplicably” family, wealth, health and reputation within a relatively short period of time:

^{NIV} **Job 42:1** Then Job replied to the LORD: ² “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. . . . ⁵ My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.”

Grace and peace to all in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bishop Dr Ong Hwai Teik

Devotion

One Year at the Cross Devotional by Chris Tiegreen

Redemption’s Pain

The strangest truth of the gospel is that redemption comes through suffering.

(Milo Chapman)

IN WORD: It’s hard to imagine a God of love purposely frustrating His creation, but that’s what He did. If He hadn’t, sin would have seemed to have paid off. We would have continued in our rebellion, certain that the serpent was right: sin isn’t a big deal. The wages of sin would have been life and peace and prosperity. Or at least not costly enough to hinder our life and peace and prosperity. So God subjected us to futility and frustration—in His mercy.

From God’s point of view, the only way to bring a treasonous, hardened creation back to Himself was to ensure that the wages of sin were not worth the trouble. All of the pain the world has ever known exists to demonstrate a point: creation cannot exist apart from the Creator. We need His sustaining power, His forgiving love, and His expert wisdom. If God had not subjected us to futility, we would have found it quite easy to ignore Him. And since the whole purpose of creation was to love Him, not to ignore Him, we needed to know: a divide between God and His people is

devastating.

IN DEED: Have you ever thought of your troubles that way—as part of the fabric of this world because God loves you enough to let you suffer? That he cannot let you be content without Him, because then you would be . . . well, content without Him? Like it or not, your pain exists to drive you to the Healer, the Forgiver, the Redeemer. It has to be that way.

That means that when we read the headlines—those excruciating reports of the world’s tragedies—we can be assured that God has willingly allowed them. We can’t blame Him for evil, of course. He doesn’t author it. He simply lets the world go its own way so that it will eventually have enough sense to come back to Him.

Remember that when you read of suffering or even when you experience it yourself. Let the futility of this world drive you toward a God who redeems all futility. There’s glory in store for those who do.

The creation was subjected to frustration . . . in hope that [it] will be liberated from its bondage to decay.

Romans 8:20-21

以主之爱，供人所需—MCRD事工

受访者：李祖国 采访/整理：甘心

供图：MCRD



3月21日，MCRD捐赠物资给双溪毛糯医院（Sungai Buloh Hospital）。左起为医院负责人——古迪医生、卫理救援赈灾事工委（跨部）主席——李祖国弟兄、年会青年团契会长——蔡伟盛弟兄和卫理救援赈灾事工委干事——张加信弟兄。

祖国兄口述：

2014年12月26日，我们成立年会卫理救援赈灾事工（Methodist Crisis Relief & Development，简称“MCRD”），宗旨是在灾难发生时，为有需要者提供适时适当的人道援助（太25：35-40）。

当今地球出现的天灾是常态，MCRD是应时而生。各国每年都受水灾、风灾和地震侵袭；人类生存之道是要懂得应付天灾人祸，且能彼此协助。新冠肺炎病毒现在全球肆虐，我们计划买两万套防护衣给本国医护人员，预计要耗百万令吉。

很多人都问：“你们为什么要这样做？这不是政府的工作吗？我们（民间）所做的不过是杯水车薪，能帮上什么忙？”我很同意这些人的说法，大难当前，政府当然是最重要、最大、拥有最多资源的执法单位，有完整的机制，能有效抗灾和助人渡过难关；惟我国民间组织发挥守望相助的本质和义务，也能雪中送炭。

MCRD从多方渠道得知医护人员的需求，希望我们能提供，或代购防护衣。他们无法从政府和卫生部得到所需的物资。这趟病毒来势汹汹，我们一定要保护好医护人员，因他们是站在前线保护病患，为我们奋战，以控制疫情。近日，有个印裔犹太医找到我们，她说：“我的病人都是囚犯，他们的情况

很恶劣，而我现在怀有七个月的身孕，但我没有防护衣……”据知，很多医护人员和在行动管制令期间执行任务的公务员都在外面租屋或露宿，他们害怕自己会把病毒传给家人，有家归不得。

能持续在救援赈灾事工里出钱出力，需有从上而来的引领，单单靠人的意志是不能成就的。感谢主赐我怜悯之心。看到人家受难受苦，我实在不安，希望能做些什么来帮助他们。我相信，这是圣灵在我心里动工，而我愿意回应上帝的感动。

有人问我：“你公司有两三百个职员，这期间不能做生意，没收入了，你为什么还能赈灾？”我公司的确陷入困境，工厂不能生产，很多客户也无法缴款给我们……生计之事难以预料，但这不能阻碍我们以余力援助其他更无助的人。感谢主保守我平静，让我现阶段能专心投入人道救援之工。

我很感恩，MCRD团队里有一班很爱主的同工，都很专业和委身地处理好每个活动，我们会彼此鼓励和打气，尽力做得更好。我们就像发电机，劳力奔波，越走动时，就带来很多新的能力、感动、异象和视野，且造就彼此。

回顾MCRD抗疫救援事工

资料提供：吴姮霖、张加信

整理：甘心

3月18日，马来西亚开始落实行动管制令，民生大受影响。我国最弱势的一群，是“B40”群体（我国家庭收入最低的40%家庭）、外劳和难民，特别是没有证件的后两者首当其冲，也受病毒影响最甚。他们通常领日薪，只要一天没工作，就等于手停口停，更别提缴房租和给小孩买营养食品，十分堪怜。

MCRD发起的“你们的爱心，我们的希望”活动，要将所筹款项帮助受疫情影响的失业者和弱势群体，如难民中心/学校、外

劳、原住民部落，以及有特殊需要、慢性疾病患者和六十五岁以上的独居长者。

基于全国各州各领域求助的范围和需求量大，MCRD是三管齐下地行动：

一、找商家配合，帮忙打包和送物资给受患者。若是属于教会关怀的群体，负责人会请商家分配好食物包，由教会拿给事工伙伴的负责人，让后者分发；

二、MCRD藉教会找出亟需援助的群体，若跨州行动费时和费力，便请当地的事工伙伴立即关怀和跟进；

三、MCRD直接赠金，若对方符合评估标准。

MCRD最初送出营养餐，只因路障检查越来越严格，便改变计划，即分发粮食或汇款给负责人，让对方分派和购买所需物资。行动管制令有诸多限制，MCRD尽力守则的同时，积极完成目标，顺利施援。MCRD分发的食物包价值，是六十至一百令吉之间，另发价值二十令吉左右的卫生包，内有十个面罩、两块肥皂和两包洗洁精。

根据MCRD最新的文字记录，从3月19至4月27日，MCRD和事工伙伴共送出三千二百六十四份卫生包和三千三百二十四份食物包（尚未计入事工伙伴—MCRD Sarawak 和 Sabah 援助的数目）；此外，有一百二十户家庭获得MCRD给予的援助金。受惠者是本土的弱势群体、原住民，以及来自东南亚和中东的外劳与难民。

负责派送粮食的事工伙伴有中二教区的士毛月堂、近打教区的昆仑喇叭堂、中三教区的美佳堂、MCRD各地的协调员（东部、巴生区、南部和北部）；已有三十八个单位受惠，不排除日后会增加。

不止分发食物包，MCRD和各州事工伙伴也根据所在地的情境趋势，斟酌而为，提供熟食给医护人员和执行路障检查的警察、带难民的孩子看医生，或赠送现金、继续跟进，让受惠单位/个人稍微安心。

有间在孤儿院寄宿的八十多个缅甸难民学生被迫回家，家里断炊了，他们向学校求助……要顾及这些散居在各地贫民租屋区的难民家庭不易，要有人一一联络、安排、分配、载送和分派粮食才行！MCRD团队花了四天才送完。有些难民家庭已挨饿两天了，孩子们看到食物送来眼前，都雀跃万分！MCRD的资助有如及时雨，让寄居者得以维生。若跨州行动，也要有人愿意借出大卡车才行。



3月26日，缅甸难民学校（HAN International School）饥肠辘辘的学生收到粮食后，喜上眉梢。

非常时期有非常作为。得知双溪毛糯医院欲重启旧院舍，但严缺非医疗用品后，MCRD从联络商家、筹备物资和准备载货的七辆罗里不到三十六小时，就于3月21日，把非医疗物资送来这医院门口，包括十三架微波炉、四十台冰箱、一百张轮椅、三十二个白板、五十把立式风扇、二十台移动冷气、六十把天花板风扇和五台电视机，总共是三百二十件物品。院方大受感动！这是MCRD团队成员多方寻找供应商和商谈得到的结果。

年会在抗疫期间响应政府和医院的呼吁，进而为医护人员发动“一人捐赠一套防护衣”（一套六十令吉）的活动，目标是两万套。3月30日，MCRD捐赠物资给芙蓉端姑查化医院，包括七百零四套医疗防护衣（通称“PPE”）、七十个防护眼镜、七十个塑料围裙、一千个头套、一千个防护鞋套、七十个3M N95口罩和七十个面罩，共计五千五百零四个。

至4月22日，MCRD从中国购入二万套医疗防护服（PPE），包括隔离衣、脸罩、防护鞋套、头套和口罩等各种医疗用品，加上非医疗物资，共用了逾一百二十三万五千七百七十三令吉。这些医疗防护服和非医疗物资，已分批送给全马各地的二十七所医院、改造中心和民防部队（如下图所示）。



至此，名单上记录的受惠单位与数目不是凸出MCRD同工和志工做了多少、帮了多少人……而是提醒自己，身边仍有无数人吃不饱、没钱、无业、匮乏。故，MCRD会继续秉持事工成立的宗旨，亦期望和其他教会、社会组织成为事工伙伴，让更多人受惠。

“我知道你的行为，你略有一点力量，也曾遵守我的道……”（启3：8）回想起主基督藉使徒约翰写给七间教会的信息中，对非拉铁非教会（和士每拿教会）没有一句责备的话，实属难得。活在末世的现代信徒，有者受难受害，度日如年；也有者富裕，资源多，人脉广，具备成熟的神学素养，责任似也更大。倘若本土教会能如非拉铁非教会般身体力行，我想，末了能站在主前，虽难矣可吧。求主恩待。

请支持MCRD事工：

有意者可汇款给RHB银行户口号码：2121-5200-1015-14；
银行户名：CAC MCR Fund；

欲进一步了解，可联络此事工办公室：03-2072 501；
011-2906 5091 (HELEN)；011-2906 5092 (MICHAEL)；

或浏览面子书：<https://www.facebook.com/cacmcrd/>

Features

News from IMTF

Indigenous Ministries in Sabah and Sarawak – IMTF (2)



Group Photo

Sabah

The Orang Asal Ministry in Sabah is indeed growing through the Sabah Annual Conference (SAC). Currently the SAC has 10 BM churches and 2 kindergartens. 12 Pastors and many volunteer ministers in this BM Ministry.

Discipleship and Ministry

This ministry for the indigenous people of Sabah focuses on two key areas – discipleship and economic empowerment. To strengthen the area of discipleship and ministry, the BM Ministry of SAC along with the IMTF have conducted the Church Planters Institute (CPI). CPI is open to all church leaders and members who are keen in serving in the various indigenous churches in Sabah and Sarawak. The CPI trains the student in various key areas of Christian Education with the aim of equipping its students to make disciples amongst its peoples. In some remote places, graduates of the CPI would assist the itinerant pastor in the areas of teaching and

discipleship.

The SAC BM Ministry has to date conducted 5 CPI modules. 7 pastors and 2 ordinary members graduated with a certificate of completion from the CPI.

The SAC BM Ministry is also enlarging its church premises with the increasing ministries amongst the indigenous peoples of Sabah. In 2019 2 expansion projects were completed – the expansion of the Asiacity BM Ministry Church and the building of the Tawau Methodist Preaching Point.

I had the privilege in attending the BM Ministry Youth Conference in Kota Kinabalu in 2019. This was my first experience in meeting the various tribes of Indigenous peoples in Sabah. A total of 80 participants from all over Sabah gathered to worship our Lord, receive instructions and teaching from the Word of God and getting to know each other through fellowship.



CPI Module 5 and Graduation Ceremony
 Date: 19-21 March 2019
 (7 Pastors & 2 Students)



Rumah Pastor Mangkalias



Economic Empowerment

A key ministry amongst the indigenous peoples is empowering the peoples economically. In 2019, 3 projects were carried out namely the Kampung Mankalias Pig Project, the Mononod Swiftlet Farming and the Tawau Basket Fund Raising Ministry. This project includes helping out in the initial start-up of the project, teaching farming technical skills and also in marketing.

Sarawak

The SIAC has a rich 70 year history. Since their main area of ministry is focused amongst the Iban people, every ministry is amongst the Indigenous people of Sarawak. Over the past 70 years, churches have been built from Kapit to Kuching in the west and Miri in the east. Indeed the Gospel has brought much transformation to the Iban people and Sarawak in general.

Together with SCAC, BEM (Borneo Evangelical Mission) and the Korean Missionaries, SIAC aims to extend the gospel to all the longhouses in Sarawak. SIAC also conducts the Church Planters Institute to raise assistants to Pastors or what is better known as ‘Penyaup’. The ‘Penyaup’ will deputise in the teaching and worship ministries in the longhouses when the pastor is unavailable to be present.

Students of the CPI in SIAC have to go through 3 years of modules and 1 year of Post CPI module. The CPI through SIAC has been well attended by its members and over the past 5 years, many batches have graduated.

The SCAC has ventured into the Indigenous Ministries with the formation of BM ministries amongst its churches. As the ministry is vast many opportunities have opened up for the gospel.

Partnership with West Malaysian Annual Conference churches.

“The Harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few”. We praise God for CAC, TRAC and TAC as they have received this call and have sent in workers to complement the ministries of SAC, SIAC and SCAC amongst the indigenous peoples of East Malaysia. The involvement of the 3 ACs range from Christian Education, Missions to the longhouses, medical missions, skills training and even providing resources for Economic enrichment activities. Truly it is in the mission field where one is blessed to witness the whole Methodist church in Malaysia working together for God’s Kingdom.

By Mr Michael William



泗国会议员黄灵彪逐渐康复 感谢上帝唤醒医治

因感染新冠肺炎而陷入昏迷长达42天的泗里街区国会议员黄灵彪现已逐渐恢复健康，若情况良好可在近日内出院，他为此特别感谢上帝的拯救与医治。

他表示，“我昏迷了42天，很可能就再也醒不来；但上帝唤醒了，祂拯救了我的生命，让我完全地苏醒。既没有全身瘫痪，也没有半身瘫痪。医生告诉我，在我昏迷时，全身器官一天比一天虚弱，最后连我的肾脏都丧失了功能。这段期间，我进行了8次的洗肾；但在我清醒之后，上帝医治了我，让我的肾脏功能也恢复了正常。哈利路亚，感谢赞美主，上帝的大能何其伟大呀！”（下附英文原稿）



图：黄灵彪弟兄在医院和医护人员合影

I was in coma for 42 days. I would have been gone. God waked me up. He saved my life, I'm fully awake, not paralyzed or semi paralyzed.

According to Dr, the organs inside me were getting weaker and weaker when I was in coma. Finally the kidney stopped functioning. I was on haemodialysis for 8 times when I was still in coma. GOD healed it. My kidney gets back to normal. Hallelujah. That's the greatness of God.



图：2019年会友事工部在泗里街举行“祷告勇士训练会”时，为身为国会议员黄灵彪及其太太祷告。

Prayer

Quote from John Wesley

God's command to "pray without ceasing" is founded on the necessity we have of his grace to preserve the life of God in the soul, which can no more subsist one moment without it, than the body can without air.

Whether we think of; or speak to, God, whether we act or suffer for him, all is prayer, when we have no other object than his love, and the desire of pleasing him.

All that a Christian does, even in eating and sleeping, is prayer, when it is done in simplicity, according to the order of God, without either adding to or diminishing from it by his own choice.

Prayer continues in the desire of the heart, though the understanding be employed on outward things.

In souls filled with love, the desire to please God is a continual prayer.

As the furious hate which the devil bears us is termed the roaring of a lion, so our vehement love may be termed crying after God.



God only requires of his adult children, that their hearts be truly purified, and that they offer him continually the wishes and vows that naturally spring from perfect love. For these desires, being the genuine fruits of love, are the most perfect prayers that can spring from it.

From *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, as believed and taught by the Reverend Mr. John Wesley, from the year 1725, to the year 1777.

The First Methodist Iban Church In Borneo

H.B. Amstutz

The Mission to the Iban people begins to reap a harvest for the Kingdom

At the beginning of the century the Methodist Church sent the Rev. James M. Hoover to Sarawak, Borneo, to begin work among the Chinese Christians from Foochow, China, who had begun to settle there in 1901. Under his brilliant and practical leadership the Methodist Church established churches and schools in every new settlement that was opened, with the result that now, nearly fifty years later, our Church is firmly established with 6,000 members among the Chinese in the great Rejang River Valley area of that land.

My first visit to this land was in 1930, when I was invited by Mr. Hoover to hold a Pastor's School for his pastors. During that stay in Sibu, Sarawak, I had my first opportunity to visit the longhouse of an Iban (usually known as Dyak—the headhunter of Borneo) village. An old dirty Iban father presented his son to the writer and said "You white men have brought the Christian church and schools to the Chinese people in this country; can't you do the same for us?". Not until 1939 could that Macedonian Call be answered.

In 1939, the Division of Foreign Missions allotted support for a missionary family, and we secured from the Sarawak Government land for a Mission Station to minister to the Iban people. We chose Kapit, a village far up the Rejang River from Sibu, a village which served the Iban people from down-river as well as much further up-river, and there we built a substantial residence, an assistant's residence, and a boys' dormitory. The Rev. and Mrs. P. H. Schmucker were sent to open the work and in late 1940, the residences being completed, they moved in, together with Mr. and Mrs. Lucius Mamoera (Batak Christians whose forefathers only two generations ago were cannibals). They opened a school for boys, having spent the previous year in making contacts with friendly Penghulus (chieftains). About 15 boys came to the first school and all was going well when the Pacific War put an end to it. The Mamoeras remained at the station during the Japanese occupation and maintained the contact with the Iban people, and helped them to start a little shop of their own in the town where the Ibans might trade.

At the close of the Pacific War, Allied planes destroyed Kapit Town and our buildings were almost burned down with incendiary bombs and riddled with machine-gunning, and the furniture and school equipment looted. As the previous missionary family was unable to return to Kapit we had no one to send there at once, but in early 1948 another Batak couple was sent over from Sumatra to assist in the school that Mr. Mamoera had re-opened.

Finally, late in 1948, the Rev. and Mrs. Burr Baughman were free to go to Borneo because local banditry prevented them from carrying on their work among the Sakais in Malaya (the largest aboriginal group in our Malayan Hills, very primitive, and animists like the Ibans). Their first task was to visit and gain the confidence and friendship of the Iban chiefs and the people of their longhouses or villages, and to repair the Mission buildings and re-equip them. Cru-

sade funds made this rehabilitation possible and in a few months the Mission program again was being pushed forward.

The Baughmans resolved to make the school co-educational and, by persuading some of the Penghulus to send their own daughters, effected this plan. In the amazingly short time of eight months, Mr. Baughman was speaking easily in Iban, a language related to the Malay language in which he was already fluent, and with a portable projector set he was showing slides and film-strips in the longhouses.

On two occasions I had invited some of the chiefs to visit me in Singapore and three of them had a memorable visit in my home in October 1949 when Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, the Commissioner-General, also shared in their entertainment. It seemed by this time that these men were ready to declare themselves Christians and that we ought not hold back any longer in inviting them to be baptized. Thus on the day before Christmas, when four of the Penghulus, their families, and others were at the Mission Station in Kapit to celebrate Christmas with the school children, Mr. Baughman put the problem frankly before them. It was obvious that they had been thinking about it seriously for some time, realizing that the new way of life offered by the missionary and his assistants was something they must either sooner or later accept or refuse.

Finally, after asking many questions about what becoming a Christian would mean to their mores, their manner of dress and their superstitions, these four Penghulus decided that they and their families would become Christians. Others followed their example, and on Christmas Day, in a solemn Act of Worship, twenty-nine of these former headhunters were baptized, the first Ibans to become Methodist Christians in Borneo.

The missionary in deciding on this step was faced with many questions, for obviously these people still knew very little of what it meant to be a Christian. But he reasoned that the missionaries of the early Christian Church as they went into Gaul and Germany and the British Isles, found just as superstitious people and that one must make a beginning somewhere and sometime, giving them opportunity to grow in the Christian life as time went on. This assumption on his part has been well justified.

Since 1930 the annual Pastors' School has been held in Sibu, Sarawak, and this year it was decided to take the Chinese pastors and faculty to Kapit for the school period of a week so that they might see our Mission to the Iban people and meet some of them. Thus on Sunday, August 13, we were in our new Kapit church, just built with the help of Crusade funds, plus great personal sacrifice on the part of the local Chinese Christians, and it was my privilege to dedicate it that morning as the Kapit Methodist Church (James M. Hoover Memorial).

The Malaysia Message
Vol. 54 No. 10
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Psalm 37

PSALM 37 is a simple but powerful and practical manual for living the Christian life. Within its first 8 verses we can find valuable instructions for finding joy and not have negative thinking.

Psalm 37:1-8

- 1 *Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong;*
- 2 *for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.*
- 3 *Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.*
- 4 *Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.*
- 5 *Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this:*
- 6 *He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.*
- 7 *Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.*
- 8 *Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil.*

This Psalm gives us “what not to do” commands or behaviours which we must leave behind to enjoy God’s blessing and peace. We should not worry or be envious (verse 1). We should be grateful for what God gives us each day. We should not be angry or vengeful persons (verse 8).

But this Psalm also tells us positive actions to take to enjoy God’s plan to live joyfully.

1. Trust in the Lord (verse 3).

Whatever we do or are anxious about, trust God to lead us for He can do it or handle events better than we can.

2. Do good (verse 3).

In our Christian living we have to make choices. Know that God will honor you when you do the right thing.

3. Delight yourself in the Lord (verse 4).

Spend time every day reading His word, praying, talking and listening to God. Learn to sit quietly with God to enjoy His presence and to delight in Him.

4. Commit your way to the Lord (verse 5).

Trust all you do, every day, all your life, to God; he is able to handle it best.

5. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him (verse 7).

This does not mean that we do nothing but that we do all we can and we leave the rest to God to take care of everything according to His plan for us.

I would like to share about the first 3 verses in more detail. It gives us some good advice from David.

v1. Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong;

Story: There was a lady waiting for a flight at the airport. She bought a bag of biscuits and sat down to read a newspaper. As she was reading her newspaper she heard a rustling noise and looked up to see a man sitting next to her helping himself to the biscuits. Not wanting to make a scene, she leaned over and took one herself, hoping he would get the message. Then she heard more rustling. She couldn’t believe it.

The man was helping himself to another biscuit! There was only one left! She watched in disbelief as he broke the remaining biscuit in two, pushed half across to her, popped the other half in his mouth, and left. She was still furious when her flight was called. Imagine how she felt when she opened her handbag to get out her boarding pass - and found her unopened packet of biscuits!

The lady got all stressed out and angry when she saw what the man next to her was doing. She thought he was helping himself to her biscuits. Of course the fault was not with the man but with the woman herself. She was fretting, stressed out and angry over something which was a waste of time and embarrassing to her.

Fret – the English dictionary defines as “to cause to suffer emotional strain”.

The lady in the story was fretting, stressed out and angry over something which was a waste of time and embarrassing to her. Sometimes when we read the newspaper, Whatsapp messages or hear news about something that happened we get all worked up and angry without really knowing the full story or both sides of the story. For example, recently we read about the police breaking into a lawyer’s home and arresting her and making her spend a night in jail. When we read such things we get worked up emotionally and angry about the injustice we think is happening.

In the Psalm, David gives us advice about what to do or what not to do when people actually are doing evil, when morally corrupt people do bad things and seem to be getting away with it. They seem to flourish despite their evil deeds. Everything seems to go their way. How easy it is for us to get upset. It all seems so wrong, so unfair. Well, it is but David tells us to avoid two wrong reactions:

1. **We must not fret.** Why? Because getting fretful or angry does not help. It does not solve the problem or change the situation. For example, when people say bad things about us or do bad things to us, if we react in an angry, defensive, fleshly way, it very often only makes things worse. How easy it is to react in the heat of the moment and say or do or write things that we later regret. Things very easily become personal. We attack the person not the problem. This leads to misunderstanding and a breakdown in relationships. Things get messy. When we fret we fail to think objectively and calmly. We actually use up precious emotional energy for nothing.
2. **Secondly, we must not be envious.** Envy is like a cancer. It can kill – not the person who is the object of envy, but the person being envious. Proverbs 14:30 says, **“A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.”** Envy only hurts us. Despite this, we human beings often become envious of others.

Speaking to believers, Paul says, **“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”** (Philippians 2:3-4). If you are tempted to envy someone because of the position they hold, work hard to help them succeed, don’t try to undermine them. If you are tempted to envy those who get higher marks in exams or who do better at sport than you do or who seem more popular than you are, seek instead to bless them and encourage them. How sad that sometimes we get envious of others even when they do good things or when they succeed due to their talent or hard work.

Notice, however, that David urges us not to be **“...envious of those who do wrong.”** How strange that sometimes we even envy evil doers! Yes, we are tempted to envy the person who has made lots of money even when we know they made it through corrupt underhand ways. We

envy someone who seems popular and successful even though we know they compromised their values and morals to get to where they are. David says, do not “...**be envious of those who do wrong.**”

So now then, let us ask why we should not fret and why we should not be envious? David tells us exactly why, in

v2. He writes, “...for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.”

In Africa in the summer rainy season the bush is luscious and the grass grows tall. The lawns are all green and the plants and flowers flourish. But once the rains stop and the weather turns cold and dry, everything starts to wither and die. The grass in the bush turns brown. Within minutes bush fires can turn everything to dust and smoking ashes.

This of course is a metaphor, a picture, of what happens in life and why we should not envy those who do wrong. Outward prosperity or popularity may not last for long. When we look forward, with the eye of faith, there is no good reason to envy those who do wrong. The student who cheats, sooner or later, discovers he or she was not so smart after all. The one who seems to be having a lot of fun – partying, drinking, and sleeping around – ends up miserable, without true friends.

There are many sports stars, singers, pop stars, actors and actresses, media personalities, politicians, etc who once were household names, but who today are forgotten. They had the world at their feet but like a shooting star across the night sky they soon burnt out and disappeared from sight. Some turned to alcohol or drugs. Some died all alone & full of regret. We should not be tempted to envy them.

Worldly fame and success and power can be very hollow and it is often only temporary. Even if we enjoy long life – what about the next life? Just think of some of the dictators in history. They may stay in power for many decades and store up millions of dollars in Swiss bank accounts, but one day they will die. One day they will face God’s judgment. Do not envy them.

Those who know God and live for God in this life can look forward to an eternity of unspeakable joy. Those who reject God and His truth and His ways can only look forward to judgment & an eternity of regret and sorrow.

V 3a. Trust in the Lord and do good

David says, “**Trust in the LORD.**”

Story: While in a teambuilding training session, we were taught to learn Trust by standing straight and falling backwards for a friend to catch us as we fall. We cannot see behind us and would normally not allow ourselves to fall backwards. But if we know a friend is standing there ready to catch us, we put our Trust in our friend to catch us.

It is so easy to put our trust in material things (like money or investments), or in other people, or in our health, or even in ourselves (our talents, training and knowledge). But nothing and no one can compare with the Lord. We can lose our money. We can lose our health. Yes, it is wonderful to have people we can rely on for help, support, guidance or comfort and it is a huge blessing to have a spouse or friends we trust. However we can lose our spouse, we can lose our friends, and sadly, even trustworthy people can let us down. Our primary trust must be in the Lord. He never fails. He is always there. He is always faithful.

Learning to put your trust in the Lord is a little bit like this. You see what God has done for others. You realise His Word is true. It is reliable. You realise you can believe what He says. You can lean upon Him & commit yourself to Him. There is a great verse at the end of Psalm 84 which describes beautifully what it means to put one’s trust in the Lord. It says, “**O LORD of hosts, how blessed (happy and greatly favoured) is the person who trusts in You [leaning and believing on You, committing all & confidently looking to You, without fear or misgiving]!**”

Let us ask in what ways should we trust the Lord? First of all, we trust in Him for our salvation. As we have said many times before, salvation is a gift to be received by faith. God’s Word tells us that “...**whoever believes in Him [Jesus] shall not perish but have eternal life.**” (John 3:16) His Word tells us, “...**if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, & believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**” (Romans 10:9)

Secondly, we trust in the Lord to meet all our needs. He provides for us, protects us, guides us, and blesses us. Jesus tells His followers not to worry about things like clothing & food (i.e. our physical needs) but rather to “...**seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given you as well.**” (Matthew 6:33) When we put our trust in the Lord, when we lean upon Him, He meets all our needs. Even in times of difficulty or suffering, the Lord provides for us. He gives us strength and nourishment.

And thirdly: we trust in the Lord for the future. Daily we should read His word, talk to God and listen for his guidance as He leads us. He gives us the wisdom we need to make wise choices and He gives us the strength we need to follow in obedience.

David continues. He goes on, “...**and do good.**” “**Trust in the LORD and do good.**” We know that “*doing good*” does not earn us salvation. However, good deeds are the fruit that comes as a result of putting our trust in Jesus. Good deeds are evidence of the genuineness of our Christian faith. If a person has no good deeds, if there is no change in their life, one may question if their faith in Christ is real.

Let us look at the second half of verse 3:

3. Dwell in the land & enjoy safe pasture (v.3b)

David implies that if we do “**Trust in the Lord & do good**” then we will, “...**dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.**” In David’s day Israel was still a largely rural agriculture-based society. The ideal for most people would have been to live a peaceful life with secure tenure of land and good pasture for their animals. To put this in our present-day context we might say something like this – if we trust in the Lord and do good then we will, “*prosper, be secure and have all we need.*”

When we put God first in our lives, when we trust Him & obey Him, He does bless us. He provides. He guides. He fills our lives with good things and He blesses our families too.

When David wrote this Psalm he was an older man, for he says in v.25, “**I was young and now am old.**” The whole tone of what David writes shows he is writing with the wisdom that comes from experience. He has seen enough in life to know that following an evil path only leads to trouble and disaster. He has seen those who once seemed so prosperous and successful losing everything or fading into obscurity; and he has seen many godly people once despised and persecuted, being vindicated and blessed. David knows from personal experience that to “**trust in the Lord and do good**” brings peace and happiness. He knows that God’s Word is true.

David knew that putting one’s trust in the Lord was the only way to find true happiness and security. I encourage you to do what David recommends – do not fret because of those who do evil. Do not be envious of them, but rather put your trust in the Lord and do what is good. Then your life will be full of meaning and purpose and true blessing.

Quotes and selected sermon texts from Mairangi Bay Community Church and Elizabeth Peale Allen.

By Peter Cheah



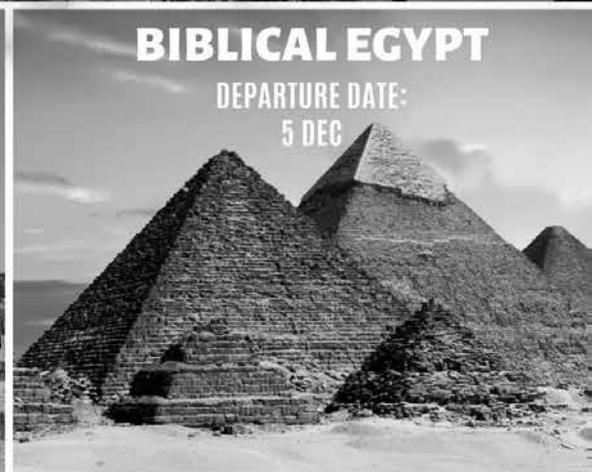
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All information above is current as of Feb 2020 and subject to change without notice

for the glory of God and the service of man