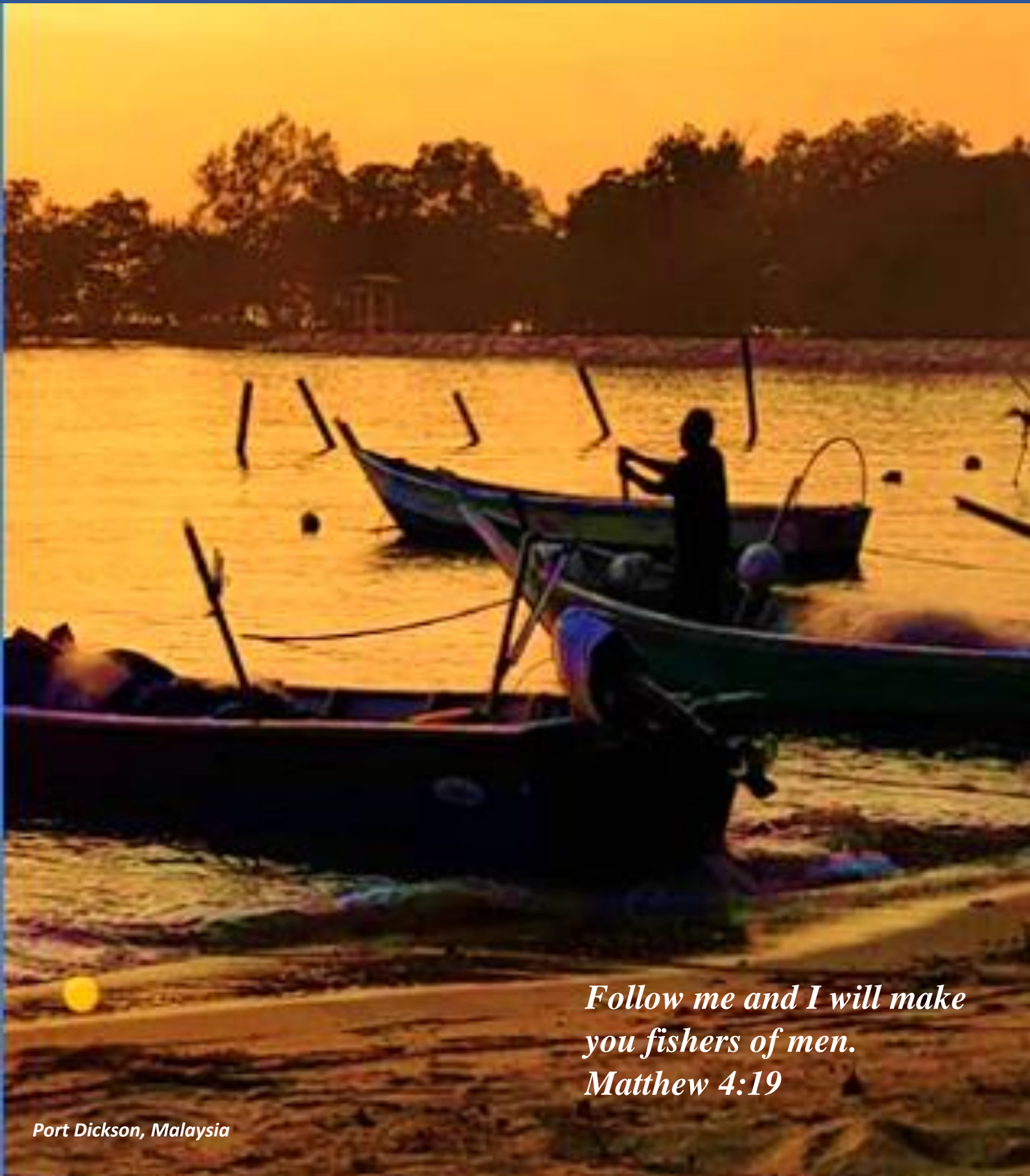




Christian Brethren Secretariat Malaysia

# 2020 diakonia

ONE LORD, ONE MISSION, ONE HEART



*Follow me and I will make  
you fishers of men.  
Matthew 4:19*

Port Dickson, Malaysia

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# The Chairman's Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings from the CBSM Trustees in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

This year, 2020 is indeed a very eventful and challenging year. Mankind is attacked by a deadly virus, called Coronavirus Covid-19 and it turned the world upside down.

People fear for their lives and fear of losing their livelihood. Industries collapsed and governments spent 100's of billions of dollars to help their citizens and industries to survive this pandemic period.

Now, it is more than 6 months since it started and there is no light at the end of the tunnel. There is still no vaccine available commercially against the virus. Some say it will take the next 2 to 3 years before the pandemic ends. Nobody knows what will happen or when it will end!

As God's children, are we also fearful for our lives and our livelihood?

His Word assured us in Psalm 46:1 that God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. In fact, God is closer to us in times of trouble than during ordinary times. God doesn't play hide-and-seek with us. He does not withhold His presence even though we feel that He does. He is always with us.

Only God knows and is in control and I believe He has allowed COVID-19 to happen for a purpose.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us Malaysians were living such comfortable lives, having good jobs and income, travelling and having holidays regularly. Sometimes we lose focus in our walk with God. We are so busy with our lives that we do not have time for God. Maybe He wants to slow us down.

In the busyness of our lives, we may have stopped listening to His voice and allowed the cares of this world to plug our spiritual ears, or we may have neglected His Word.

He wants us to be still before Him. During the MCO, we have so much time in hands and it can give us the opportunity to listen again to the *still small voice* and to see the provisions that He has made for us by faith.

In this trying time, let us remind ourselves WHO IS THE GOD WE HAVE BELIEVED IN AND HAVE TRUSTED AND WHOM WE HAVE TAKEN HIM AS OUR SAVIOUR AND LORD.

We can fall back on God's character and His attributes.

**He is Creator God** who made the world and everything in it. He is the Lord of heaven and earth.

He is the Sovereign God, who existed even before the world was formed.

He is the everlasting God who has no beginning and no end.

**He is OMNIPOTENT** - the all-powerful God,  
**He is OMNISCIENT** - the all-knowing God and  
**He is OMNIPRESENT** – the ever-present God.

**God's Word and His promises.**

And He is the only One who is worthy of our trust. Because unlike men, He never lies and never fails to fulfill His promises. He has the power to bring to pass what He plans and purposes to do.

*God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Numbers 23:19*

God's Word said we are precious to Him.

**God's Gift of Eternal Hope.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ left His home in heaven to come down to earth to live among us, so that we can seek Him and come to know Him in truth. It is in the true God that we live and move and have our being. He is not only our Creator but also giver of life to us. He will sustain us to the very end of our life.

*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. John 14:2*

As God's children, we have an eternal hope of spending eternal with Him.

In conclusion, let us not be fearful of Covid-19 but have our complete trust in our God to take us through this pandemic.

We pray that the articles in the Diakonia about the work and ministry of our assemblies and agencies in Malaysia and abroad will edify and encourage you in your walk and service for your Lord and Master.

We also wish to thank the Editorial Board for the publication of Diakonia 2020.

In His Service,  
Lee Kha Kooi  
Chairman, CBSM Trust

## Editorial Note

It was obvious that a one-man show in putting the annual issue of the Diakonia, as was the case for the past three issues, will no longer be sustainable. The 2019 issue did not make it due to the unexpected increase in work commitments of the past-Editor. For this, the past-Editor offers his sincere apologies.

The solution around this is to have a team where the workload can be shared. Hence it was with much relief and joy that Indranee Liew Siew Mei (Island Glades Gospel Centre), Samuel Chandy (Seremban Gospel Chapel), Cheah Lay Lin (Burmah Road Gospel Hall) and Dr. Yoong Lee Yeen (Bandar Sunway Gospel Centre) came onboard to be part of the Editorial team.

The team brings together a wealth of experience and ideas. Indranee is a Cambridge trained English teacher and examiner with a special interest in mental health and special education, Samuel Chandy is a business and investment entrepreneur and is currently leading his very own Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) managing various communities' mission in the ASEAN region, Cheah Lay Lin is a qualified counsellor and Dr. Yoong (Yeen) is a medical doctor now studying for her post-graduate degree in public health.

Coming from different parts of the country, we had a few meetings through video conferencing and also face to face and many hours of lively discussion. How much more interesting it is when there is a diversity of views and ideas.

Apart from the regular sections of the Diakonia, we now include an international section with contributors from overseas.

With our heads down to get this issue up, penning this editorial provided the occasion to pause, to remind ourselves why we are doing this. If there is a passage that gives us a purpose for the Diakonia, it would be this piece of scripture:

*"4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."* Ephesians 4

We are urged to live **lives worthy of his calling**. We hope you can find the encouragement to do so in the stories and of people and lives of assemblies.

We also hope that in your reading, you can find the opportunity **to bear one another in love** as the Lord burdens you with the needs of His people who are striving for the Lord in the respective ministries.

The articles in this and past issues of the Diakonia, provide all the opportunity to read of believers with different perspectives of the outworking of their faith. May the Lord help us to **maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of love** through these different perspectives.

There is indeed **ONE Body** with many parts and the part of the Body we belong to is the Brethren Assembly. There is only **ONE Spirit** that indwells all of us but a diversity in the manner in which he works. And as reminded through Ephesians 4, there is only **One Lord**, the Lord Jesus Christ whom we all serve, whose Father is the **Father of all, over all, through all and in all**.

We hope the articles can put flesh to these thoughts through the good works of saints who faithfully serve and stir us in our Christian walk.

In Nov 2017, during the great flood in Bukit Mertajam, our little assembly in the epicenter of the flood zone, was used as a command center for flood relief operations. Over 120 volunteers from all over the country converged into our little shop lot hall. A volunteer from a larger denomination, with tongue in cheek said he was surprised that we could manage this influx of volunteers, manage the operational needs and receive a sizable financial support from the Brethren church all over the country. Then he went on to say he thought the Brethren church was already dead.

One of the great joys for me in doing the Diakonia is to see the work of Spirit in various assemblies in so many ways. The assemblies are far from dead as is evident from the many encouraging writeups in this issue. Less visible perhaps as many of our assemblies are few in numbers. I view us as the "weaker parts" of the body that are indispensable and the less honorable part that are treated with honor (1 Corinthians 12:22-24).

Happy reading and hope you will find the encouragement as "assembly members" for your faith in this issue.

We continue to look for new team members in the Editorial team with different skills and experience to add to the colour of the Diakonia. Contact any of us if you are interested.



In His Service

### **The Editorial Team**

Yoong Lee Yeen (Bandar Sunway Gospel Center)  
Indranee Liew Siew Mei (Island Glade Gospel Center)  
Samuel Chandy (Seremban Gospel Chapel),  
Cheah Lay Lin (Burmah Road Gospel Hall)  
Khong Yoon Loong (Bukit Mertajam Gospel Center)



# From the General Secretary's Desk

Stephen Lew had been General Secretary of CBSM for some 7 years until 2018 when he requested to be relieved due to his other commitments. We wish to thank Stephen for the many years he faithfully and diligently served as General Secretary and trustee. During his absence in 2019, Michael Fun, Chris Tay and Peter Tan, jointly filled the role that Stephen vacated. The General Secretary position was vacant for a year when I felt the Lord's call to take up the role. Several brothers nudged me along and I sensed it was the Lord's leading. And so, at the November 2019 Assembly Leadership Conference (ALC), my assumption of the role of General Secretary together with the 2019 – 2021 CBSM trustees was announced. I'm glad 15 of the previous trustees remained on board (pun intended!). They will serve for another two years until the next ALC in 2021.

The 2019 – 2021 trustees are:

1. Lee Kha Kooi (Sungai Ara Gospel Hall) - Chairman
2. Teo Pek Bing (Sungai Nibong Hall) – General Secretary
3. Dr. Khong Yoon Loong (Bkt. Mertajam Gospel Centre)
4. Cheah Huck Leong (Bidor Gospel Centre)
5. Stephen Yam (Kampar Gospel Hall)
6. Chris Tay (Bandar Puchong Gospel Centre) - Treasurer
7. Michael Fun (Bandar Sunway Gospel Centre)
8. Michael Choo (Bangsar Gospel Centre)
9. Peter Tan (Agape Chapel)
10. Shanmugam Ramasamy (Melawati Gospel Centre)
11. Jimmy Chok (Gospel Hall Kuala Lumpur)
12. Terence Chong (Seremban Gospel Chapel)
13. Rodney Tan (Melaka Gospel Chapel)
14. Dr. Stephen Chang (Southern Cross Gospel Chapel)
15. Chiew Sai Kee (Temerloh Gospel Chapel)

In spite of the MCO (Movement Control Order), the trustees managed to hold 3 meetings so far, a face-to-face meeting on 22 Feb (before MCO), and subsequently 2 more meetings via Zoom. Interestingly, the Zoom meetings had full attendance which we never have been able to achieve previously with physical meetings! Do pray for us, the trustees, as we seek to serve the assemblies in Malaysia to be more effective for the Lord.

## Covid-19 Movement Control Order (MCO) – relating to the Government

With the enforcement of the MCO, all church meetings were cancelled/postponed. When the government announced the second phase Conditional MCO, churches had to apply for approval to resume physical meetings. Churches had to apply through registered denomination bodies. CBSM recognizes that the assemblies are not registered in any way due to our adhering to the scriptural teaching that each local assembly is only accountable to the Lord. To assist with the assemblies' application, CBSM registered with NECF (National Evangelical Christian Fellowship), a government recognized entity for evangelical churches. By so doing, assemblies could apply for opening their meetings through NECF using CBSM's

membership. Before we could use this benefit, the government rescinded the need to apply for approval.

NECF is also limiting CBSM's membership for this purpose only. For other purposes relating to the government, each assembly still has to join NECF individually.

Nevertheless, CBSM continues to pursue the different avenues whereby the assemblies can be collectively recognized by the government, and at the same time being true to scriptural principles.

## Assembly Leadership Conference (ALC) 2019

Since 2017, the Assembly Leaders Conference had been renamed to Assembly Leadership Conference in the hope that many younger ones will feel more comfortable to attend. The Malaysian modesty is still very much alive. ALC 2019 was held at Excelsior Hotel Ipoh from 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019 with 116 participants. The theme, ***"You are my Witness: Engaging the Community"***, was a follow up from 2017 ALC, ***"You are my Witness: Challenges facing the Malaysian Assemblies"***. The goal was to share how different assemblies and ministries share the gospel by engaging with the community in different ways. Apart for the 2 plenary speakers, the opening keynote was by David Yap of Yio Chu Kang Chapel Singapore, and closing challenge by Dexter Ng of Shah Alam Gospel Centre. Over the next three days, we had workshops and sharing on engagement experiences.

Among the topics in the workshops and sharing were:

1. Engaging the Marketplace
2. Engaging the Foreign Community
3. Engaging the community during Disasters
4. Engagement with OA
5. Engaging with Migrant Workers
6. Engaging the community via Education
7. Engaging the community using Sports

Most of the sharing was recorded and if any would like to listen to them may request access from CBSM.

At the conference, books by Alexander Strauch on ***Biblical Eldership*** and the accompanying Study Guides were given free to participants who requested for them. Some had to be delivered after the conference.

As usual, there was an elders' meeting where we shared updates and made decisions together. That was where the 2021-2022 trustees and Legacy fund was announced.

## Legacy Fund

At ALC 2019, we announced the opening of the CBSM Legacy fund. Assemblies & Agencies may apply for the fund to be used on mission projects up to RM50K, subject to conditions we announced at ALC. So far, we have had 2 applications. Pray for the Trustees as we act as stewards of this fund.

## CBSM Prayer Newsletter

The monthly Prayer Newsletter has been revived following a year of absence. It is an opportunity for assemblies and ministries to share items of need and thanksgiving. It also serves as a place where latest news among the assemblies. Elders are encouraged to provide items to be included. You may email to [cbsm0709@gmail.com](mailto:cbsm0709@gmail.com) or Whatsapp to me (Teo Pek Bing: 012-425 3938)

## CBSM website

The CBSM website has been revamped with a more contemporary appearance, and updated information. We plan to keep it as current as possible so that it can be a reference for assemblies. The website address is: <https://www.cbsm.com.my>

## Nepal Mission Project

### a) Mission Through Education

After much prayers and deliberation, we have decided not to pursue the Mission Through Education project in Nepal due to the overbearing conditions put on us by the Ministry of Education in Nepal. Nani, a young lady from Nepal who was meant to be part of this project has graduated from her Early Childhood studies in Methodist College and returned home. We have provided her with some financial relief while she applies for other employment. Similarly, for Indra Kumari who had been doing preparatory work for the pre-school. We thank our brother Yap Kok Keong, who spent much time and effort in this project. He and his wife were also fostering and tutoring Nani during her studies at Methodist College.

### b) Kathmandu Mission Centre (KMC)

The oversight of the work in KMC by Amar Tamang will be transitioned over to Bandar Sunway Gospel Centre (BSGC) and Melawati Gospel Centre (MGC), both of which have been actively involved in the work for some years. CBSM will continue to support these 2 assemblies in the Nepal Mission until they are fully able. This has been CBSM's intent that assemblies/churches champion missions, and not CBSM. CBSM is not a mission's organization but we took on the Nepal missions pending availability of assemblies to take up the work. Other assemblies are welcome to partner with BSGC and MGC, of which the 2 assemblies are desirous to do so. Any who wish to give to the work can still remit to *Christian Brethren Secretariat Malaysia*, Public Bank account no. 3172570809, informing CBSM of the transaction via email [cbsm0709@gmail.com](mailto:cbsm0709@gmail.com) or Whatsapp to me (012-425 3938) directly.

The assembly at KMC has been meeting at the current premises for 10 years with the rental has been increasing frequently. They have now been asked to **vacate** the premises in 2021 (assumed to be January 2021). **Pray for the guidance and wisdom for Amar, Bandar Sunway Gospel Centre, Melawati Gospel Centre and CBSM** as they explore alternatives and makes decision on the alternative premises. Initial searches indicate prices which are 30% - 300% higher. The location of the new premise needs to be near the current location as most of the believers and connections are in the current area.

Pray for Amar as he leads the assembly at KMC and 2 other outreach areas.

## Opening of Bank Accounts

Under a special arrangement worked out with the Public Bank, CBSM has successfully assisted over a hundred requests from assemblies and agencies to open current and fixed deposit accounts with the bank. We continue to receive more requests.

## PITH 2021 (Partners in the Harvest)

Malaysia was chosen to be the venue for PITH 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has to be postponed to 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021. In the meantime, the committee is organizing a series of Talk Shows over Zoom leading up to the conference. The first two were held on 1<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Aug 2020, featuring interviews with CBSM General Secretary and two Philippine brothers (Romel and Ey) respectively. You may follow and keep updated at PITH Facebook page,

<https://www.facebook.com/PartnersInTheHarvestConference>.

Pray for the committee which is headed by Peter Tan of Agape Chapel.

Teo Pek Bing  
CBSM General Secretary



# FROM AROUND THE ASSEMBLIES

## Temerloh Gospel Chapel

Chiew Sai Kee

### 1. A Brief History

Temerloh Gospel Centre was started by a group of medical doctors in the early sixties and went on to officially become Temerloh Gospel Chapel (TGC) in February 1968 when the church building was opened. By the Lord's abundant grace, we are now 52 years old. Besides reaching out to the community in Temerloh and in nearby places, TGC has served the needs of many believers who were posted to Temerloh to work, most of whom have grown in their faith over the years that they were with us before leaving for elsewhere. TGC has both planted seeds and made new believers among the younger generation through her Sunday School Ministry and Youth Ministry. Many of them are now adults and are still faithfully serving in the bigger towns. We are also thankful to the Lord for those who didn't receive Christ while they were with us, but the seeds sown have germinated and some of them are believers now.

### 2. Her Leadership and membership

TGC is led by an Oversight comprising of Elders and Deacons. At the moment we have two serving Elders. We do not have a full-time worker now. Everyone serves, as led by the Lord in the assembly's ministries. We have about 45 believers in fellowship with us at TGC, mostly Chinese by race. About 85% are above fifty years of age.

### 3. Her Ministries

Our regular meetings include the Lord's Communion Service on Sundays, Teens Grow in Christ (TGIC) youth meetings, the Sunday School, Bible Study and Prayer meetings and the SPM Bible Knowledge classes.

We also have a Sports Ministry (Captain Ball) and have been regularly sending teams to the annual COPA IBA tournament. Our annual Family Camps, regular evangelistic programmes, involvement in a school CF and youth camps are some of TGC's ongoing ministries.

We have an outreach work among many OA churches since the early eighties and this work presently come under the umbrella of the PMOAM. There are other churches who are adopting some of these OA churches and comes regularly to minister to them.

### 4. Her challenges

By God's grace, we have many ministries that the Lord is still entrusting to us, though we are a small assembly and though statistics shows clearly that we are an aging church. This is a pressing situation with many assemblies in smaller towns, as we all know it. Our numbers at the Sunday School and Youth ministries are dwindling. Nevertheless, the church is pressing on ahead and it's a joy to see believers still serving faithfully. We trust that the Lord will provide the workers in years to come and it's our fervent prayer that TGC remains the point of faithful witness of the Gospel and of the Lord's imminent return, in accordance with His will and timing



**Seated, from left to right:** Tan Yin Yen (Deaconess), Tay Bee Lian (Deaconess)  
Chong Yueh Siow (Deaconess)  
**Standing, from left to right:** Albert Yong Saw Kong (Deacon),  
Lai Kong Guan (Deacon), Chiew Sai Kee (Elder), Dr Liew Ah Fook (Elder)  
Charles Ng Hon Yen (Deacon)



## Kledang Community Chapel

Steven Low



Kledang Community Chapel (KCC) celebrated its 24th Church & Thanksgiving Anniversary on 1st January, 2020. We are always thankful for the leading and sovereignty of our gracious and merciful God. The contribution, provision and participation of supporters and the church members continues to be invaluable; for all of these we are very grateful, and humbled. We also wish to thank our fellow Assemblies who had come along side with us; your friendship, partnership, encouragement and exhortations are much appreciated.

Churches are not without problems, and KCC had gone through some very trying and difficult times. But after much prayer God intervened and worked to restore and revive the life of the ailing church. Incidentally, our Chinese Ministry also suffered much difficult circumstances many years ago. But today, slowly but surely, both of our Assemblies are now thriving. Our Chinese department is located on the ground floor of a rented shop down the road and remains under the same church leadership. We are so glad to be working well together. The church will always be under attack, but God is still on His glorious throne. When we lean on Him and cry to Him, He responds in ways we cannot even ask or imagine.

When the very existence of our church was threatened, God stirred up the tenacity, loyalty and generosity of the faithful church members to accomplish His purpose. He also sent new members that were so ready to exercise their love and gifting. In His grace and mercies, the past few years saw membership and ministries back on track again! An average of 60 members meet regularly for Breaking of Bread every Sunday, excluding the occasional visitors.

Apart from the weekly Breaking of Bread, the Sunday School is held after the church breakfast fellowship, together with the Youth Meeting. We are thankful for the number of children and youths that had increased of late. Twenty-eight of the KCC youths and their friends attended the Penang Annual Bible Camp in December 2019. Table-Talk is also held after the Sunday breakfast. It is an adult session with about 20 participants seated around the long tables where faith and life issues, or salient topics are discussed. It is thrilling to see men and women contributing to the lively discourse. Sometimes the invited speakers graciously stay back to answer questions about their sermons, or further explain their topics.



Milkshake is the weekly class held on Monday nights from 8-9.30pm, with a weekly attendance of about 30 participants, and a number are from Elim Gospel Hall. Topics taught range from Apologetics, Basic Doctrines, Discipleship, Church Growth to Bible Books, Perception and Tools. On alternate Tuesdays, dedicated, compassionate and gifted members gather at the church in the afternoon to prepare food to feed the less fortunate in our area. This Open Doors ministry is a partnership with Vineyard Keepers (a drug and alcohol rehab ministry) and Elim Gospel Hall (who provides for the other alternate Tuesdays). About 45-50 persons are fed from 5-6.00pm on Tuesdays. Prayer Meetings, Care & Share Groups are on alternate Thursdays. The Ladies Meeting is usually on the last Saturdays of the month. The J.O.Y. (Just Old Youths) Club is our seniors meeting twice a year for a time of fun and fellowship. One-day trips are organised by the Ladies Fellowship and the J.O.Y. Club as an opportunity to invite unbelievers to spend a day with us, as part of our evangelism endeavour to build bridges for outreach.

The annual Children's Holiday Club during the School Holidays is a much-anticipated event. It draws much of the church (young and old) to prepare, participate and present wonderful lessons to young children so they may learn about God and His love for them. We are always thankful for the dedication and labour of love of all the teachers and helpers.





*Children's Holiday Club*

We are reminded of the Great Commission always. Major Outreach Events are regularly held, sometimes as a joint-effort with Elim Gospel Hall. To be more accessible we recently added a ramp for wheelchairs and also a platform elevator to enable the less mobile to be part of our fellowship.

The COVID-19 pandemic may dictate a new normal for how our church would do ministry. The activities we are used to may take on different forms. But seeking God's kingdom and fulfilling the Great Commission will always remain our priorities.

In all our activities we are more concerned for who and what we are, rather than just what we regularly do. Our character should supersede our competence. It is our constant prayer and hope that our church reflects **Jesus** Christ as we live as His ambassadors and witnesses for God's glory. We appreciate your prayers with and for us.



*Combine Christmas Outreach with Elim Gospel Hall*

## Gospel Chapel Community Centre (GCCC), Seremban

*Terence Chong*

The Seremban Gospel Chapel Community Centre (GCCC) is an initiative by the Seremban Gospel Chapel, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan to develop a multipurpose facility which can be used as a Church as well as a community centre for the community of Rasah Jaya, Seremban.

The facility consists of:

- a 180 pax multi-purpose hall complete with a stage & baptismal chamber
- One medium classroom (20 pax)
- Two small classrooms (10 pax)
- Two discussion rooms (4 pax)
- Teen & Senior Citizen Cafe Lounge
- Outdoor recreation space

The construction of the centre which began in May, 2017 is now essentially completed. We had received all the required approvals from the local authorities to occupy the facility. The total cost of the construction was in the tune of approximately RM 2 Million and to date more than RM 1.5 Million had been raised. The GCCC center opened on January 2, 2020 with the beginning of the new school term. Student Learning and Support Programme (SLS) is a programme started in 2016 for primary and secondary students. The SLS programme has expanded which now include a preschool programme registered as (Pusat Perkembangan Minda MDC) in 2019.

With God's grace, the SLS is now conducted in the new building of GCCC with a total of 40 students, with 18 primary students and 5 secondary students directly under our support. These 23 students are from 10 families of single parents' homes, from divorced parents or families with health issues or financial difficulties. Meanwhile, there are 16 children in the MDC programme.

Each day, our full-time worker, Sister Wong Qian Rou will assist in administration of MDC in the morning. All teachers and workers will have devotion time from 12.00 to 12.30 noon lead by Sister Qian Rou and our GCCC's caretaker, Brother Lee Kai Chee. Soon after, we will pick up the students from their respective schools and provide them with tuition and homework coaching until 6pm. Secondary students will stay for tuition in the evenings every Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. They will have devotion time from 7.00 to 7.30pm. Since February 2020, we have also started our Sunday School programme every Saturday morning to teach the students about God's word. This programme is run by two interns from Malaysia Bible Seminary (MBS) and two dedicated sisters.

Brother Lee Kai Chee oversees workers in all cleaning and repairing works. Other than that, he also takes care of the safety aspects of the daily works at the GCCC, picks up and

sends students to our centre. Sister Qian Rou supervises and manages the teaching of students in the afternoon. This ministry is led by Pastor James Wong.

We pray that more teachers will join our team as the numbers of students have increased. We also need prayers for the maintenance of GCCC so that the center can be fully utilized. Most importantly, pray for the ministry of Pastor James and his family and the team of GCCC. We pray that the families of the students that we reach out to will get to know Christ through our ministry.

To raise funding for our SLS Ministry, we have our yearly charity bazaar on the 1st of May each year to raise required funds. But due to the spread of COVID-19 this year, the charity bazaar was postponed to another date in the second half of this year. The targeted amount for 2020 Rasah students' outreach work is RM50,000. In addition to that, Deaconess Vivien Lim and team, together with Pastor James have been faithfully visiting the families in the nearby flats in Rasah and Rahang areas, connecting with the community.

To conclude, the continued partnership of the saints in the following areas would be greatly appreciated:

- Prayer for the community in Rasah Jaya that they will be receptive to the truth of the Gospel embodied in the lives of the believers serving at the Community Centre.
- Partnership in ministries that can leverage the facilities at the Community Centre.
- Financial assistance for the Community Centre. Bank Account details as follows:  
**Account Holder: Seremban Gospel Chapel**  
**Bank: Public Bank Account #: 3202820218**



*Gospel Chapel Community Center (GCCC)*



*Dedication prayer for the Elders, Pastors & Teachers managing the Gospel Chapel Community centre (GCCC)*



*Students Learning Support Ministry – tuition & day-care center started operating on 2 January 2020 with 43 students.*



## Bukit Mertajam Gospel Centre

Raymond Goh, Jennifer Leong, Sharon Raju

We are a small assembly of over 30 plus believers worshipping in the working-class suburb of Sri Rambai in Bukit Mertajam. While oddly placed as an English assembly in predominantly Chinese speaking area, we nonetheless find opportunities in partnership with the Chinese assembly to minister to the community in various ways. Over the years, those who grew up in BMGC have largely left Bukit Mertajam for larger cities. Due to the 2017 flood, we built strong connections with the community and this provided us an opportunity to reach out.

In Dec 2019, we organized a Christmas Musical night together with the Bukit Mertajam Baptist Chinese Church and was attended by about 400 people including the ADUN of Bukit Mertajam YB Chong Eng. We had many items including a Cantata by the brothers and sisters from Sg. Nibong Gospel Hall and an Orang Asli group from the Baptist church.



### Student Haven

Opened from 10 am to 6 pm, the SH is a safe environment for students waiting for their transport home or while waiting for their extra-curricular activities. We provide computers, study tables, shower facilities and a small lounge area for them to relax. We also provide basic snacks if they needed them. This

work started 2 years ago when we observed that many of them were hanging out in the neighboring coffeeshop or hanging out on the five-foot way. We also provide special activities like coaching session on specific subjects, birthdays, outings and special programs during the holidays like electronics.

As time progressed, more and more students dropped in and at some busy days, we have over 40 students over the morning and afternoon session and hit a peak of about 50 odd students in 2019. Since the MCO, the numbers have dropped significantly and we have also shortened the opening hours from 2 to 6 pm. As we lack young people, the full-time staff of Scripture Union sometimes come and assist and they came in force for a camp we organized at their Tapah campsite.

### Tuition Ministry

The TM was an ongoing work form 10 years ago for primary and secondary school students. The Tuition Ministry is an important tool in engaging with members of the Community living in and around Taman Sri Rambai where our church is located. Apart from providing tuition, we also organized games and outings for the students. Through these interactions, we were able to invite family members of the students to our Annual Parents Day and Christmas celebrations as well as to our Gospel meetings. One of the uncles of two of our former tuition students (a brother and sister) accepted the Lord into his life about one and a half years ago and recently the grandmother had also accepted the Lord. As we faithfully sow the seed of the Gospel, God will give us the harvest in His time.

As resource dwindled for work with these age group, the work went in abeyance for a period and was resurrected after the flood. During the flood, we came to know people in the community and we continued to reach out to housewives, retired teachers and young working adults in the Community who wanted to improve their conversational skills in either English or Mandarin. We now run this once a week on a Wednesday afternoon. This opened up another opportunity to invite them to our Ladies' Meeting, Gospel Meetings and Christmas.

### English Explorer

This is a "rebranded" Outreach program in lieu of Sunday School. Previously, it is called the English Hour. Due to community being very religious (mainly Taoists and Buddhists), we avoided the term *Sunday School*. We intersperse Bible Stories with English lessons. Recently, due to the MCO, we have transferred this work online and have reasonable receptions. At the moment, we are about 20 plus students who join this program online on Sunday afternoons.

### Special needs work

A couple with an autistic child came up with the idea to connect families with autistic children. Initially, they organized talks which were well attended and recently, they organized outings to Bukit Mertajam Hill with the children and their families and also did a cooking session with simple recipes that the special needs children could follow.



## Balik Pulau Gospel Centre

Teo Pek Bing

2019 was an eventful year. One of our Balik Pulau young mother had a newborn! The Adult English tuition that started with just two mothers had grown to a bubbly class of 8 students, mostly mothers and grandmothers. They had food get-togethers and were all too eager to present items at our gospel dinners.



We started Gospel Dinners for various occasions throughout the year. We began with Chinese New Year Dinner on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2019. We were delightfully surprised at the number of the parents, grandparents, uncles, aunties who came. There were some 26 adults and 42 children (not including church members and helpers)! Sungai Nibong Gospel Hall members attended to help by bringing food and interacting with the unbelievers. Our brother, Aaron, led the meeting with a simple explanation (in Mandarin and English) on how Chinese Christians continue to be Chinese and still celebrate Chinese New Year.



Encouraged by this success, we planned a series of gospel dinners throughout the year. The next being the Parents' Day

dinner on 30<sup>th</sup> June in conjunction with Fathers' and Mothers' day. This time, to allow us more time to meet and talk to the parents and guardians, we decided to cater the food. Island Glades Gospel Center youths provided the assistance of leading the meeting and physical help. The short bilingual message was about how God wanted children to honour and obey parents. Again, a soft approach to the gospel. We do not want the families, who are primarily traditional Chinese background, to fear the gospel message. Again, we had a good turnout. Praise the Lord!

In November, we had an early Christmas Gospel dinner. This



time, the students presented the items! Even the adults' English class presented a song item! And they were so eager that they immediately asked if there is going to be another occasion for them to sing! The children presented songs, story and the prodigal son skit.

This year, we had planned on having a Science Camp for all the English Club kids. The teens will have a stay-over as prelude to the year-end camp. We got all the apparatus and materials but alas, the MCO (Movement Control Order) kicked in and we had to put it off. Our once-a-month Lord's Supper was also put on hold. We are sure the Lord knows what He is doing.



During the MCO, sister Ee Ling continued her English tuition online. It was a challenge to keep the students attention. The adult class also went online, assisted by sister Fang Fang. When the RMCO came into effect, we managed to re-start the adults

English class but not without a lot of preparation. Floor markings had to be done, thermometers and sanitizers had to be purchased. We are still working on how to re-start the English Club such we comply with the SOP (Standard Operating Procedures). Likely to be in stages. Pray with us.

At the start of the RMCO (Recovery Movement Control Order), we managed to visit some of the kids. They have grown shy of us and it saddens to see what the MCO had affected the kids. Nevertheless, we continue to pray for them and do what we can to encourage them.

## Kepala Batas Gospel Centre

*Raju Kasimani*

Kepala Batas Gospel Centre is an extension work of Bukit Mertajam Gospel Centre. This assembly is located the furthest north amongst all the brethren assemblies on the west coast. The work in Kepala Batas started in 1996 as a small Bible study group. In 2016, KBGC was blessed to welcome Brother Martin Anbalagan and his wife Sister Anna Moorthy from Batu Gajah Gospel Hall into the assembly. Indeed, their presence was timely. They started the Kids' Club ministry on Saturday afternoons for children around the Kepala Batas and Butterworth area. Brother Martin was also appointed as one of the elders for Kepala Batas Gospel Centre.

Truly, over the years, God has blessed his little assembly in the north and it has grown to about nine families who have been meeting weekly to break bread.

At present, due to the MCO restrictions, the members have been gathering virtually for the breaking of bread service. The Lord has been gracious and He has blessed the assembly with the opportunity to break bread with fellow believers from Kampar, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and India.

The members used to have weekly Bible studies in the homes of believers. Again, due to the restrictions placed due to Covid-19, we had been unable to do so. However, technology once again was of great benefit. The members have been able to gather for weekly virtual Bible Studies on Tuesdays and prayer meetings on Fridays. These virtual sessions have also afforded us the opportunity to communicate and have fellowship with believers from various parts of the country as well as from Singapore.

KBGC also has been organizing the Tamil Easter Conference annually. The conference is held in the mornings to accommodate those who wish to attend the Penang Easter Conference that is held in the evenings. This year, the Tamil Easter Conference 2020 was the twelfth conference to be held. Due to the pandemic, the Conference was moved to a virtual platform. The speakers were Brother Joseph & Vivek from Tamil Nadu and Bro Ramalingam. There were about 60 – 80 people who logged on for the conference.

Continue to pray for the children's work and gospel outreach work that is being done here and that more doors could possibly be opened. Do pray that the leaders of the assembly and the believers would continue to seek God's wisdom and guidance in doing His work here.





## Bandar Sunway Gospel Centre

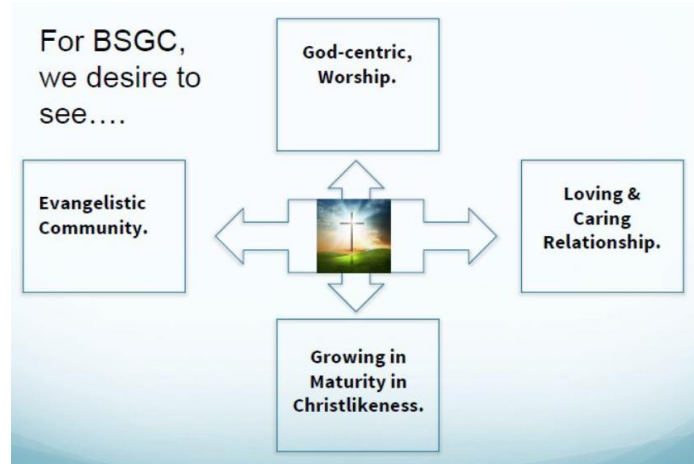
Jesse Chooi

**“To honour God by leading people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.”**

Bandar Sunway Gospel Centre (BSGC) is located in Bandar Sunway, a thriving neighbourhood in Petaling Jaya, Selangor. The township is home to the popular shopping mall Sunway Pyramid, the Sunway Lagoon theme park as well as a number of universities including Monash University Malaysia, Sunway University and Taylor’s University.

BSGC began its first service (a prayer meeting) way back in 1991 in a family home in Sunway. As more and more people joined, BSGC moved to a number of larger premises over the years. We finally moved into our present permanent premises at 57-1 Jalan PJS 9/1A in August 2003. Today, our assembly has approximately 150 regular members comprising both the young and young-at-heart. BSGC is led by three elders – Chai Cheng Sheng, Mow Kam Yeen and Michael Fun.

God has placed in our hearts a few core ministries to work in – Children, Youth, Nepalese and Orang Asli (OA). BSGC’s calling is summarized in the following diagram:



## Children’s Ministry

BSGC’s Children Ministry includes weekly Sunday School classes as well as the Vacation Bible School (VBS), one of the events in BSGC’s annual calendar. Usually held during the school holidays, the VBS programme is where children – age 4-12 years old – explore the Bible through stories, activities, songs and games. The event is a platform to develop leaders with members who serve as VBS Directors, and is also a time when the church members come together to contribute and serve according to their own gifts throughout the preparations for and during the VBS itself.



## Youth Ministry

From the seeds planted through the Sunday School and annual VBS, the children who grew into their teen years transitioned to the Youth fellowship. Taking into account the nearby colleges and universities around Bandar Sunway as well, BSGC focused more resources on Youth work. From annual COPA IBA tournaments to 3HC and RBS, the youth ministry continues to grow. We are thankful that God has blessed us with two full-time youth workers to lead the ministry into the future – Chai Tze Kwang serves actively in Scripture Union; and Alicia Yong serves primarily in BSGC. The Youth Ministry is in full swing every weekend with Friday night Bible studies (physical and virtual), Saturday activities and Sunday group fellowships. Apart from these, we also meet regularly with youth groups from neighbouring assemblies such as Bandar Puchong Gospel Centre and Subang Jaya Gospel Centre.



## Nepalese Ministry

BSGC nurtures a weekly Nepalese fellowship on Thursdays, and also actively supports church-building work in Nepal in collaboration with Melawati Gospel Centre. Brother Tan Boon Hong leads the Nepalese Ministry in our assembly. He has also travelled regularly to Nepal to minister to and fellowship with the believers there until the outbreak of COVID-19. However, thanks





to modern communication technology, we are constantly in touch with the leaders in Nepal and continue to render all necessary help, with God's enabling power.

## Orang Asli Ministry

Brother Mow Kam Yeen leads the work in the OA Ministry, which is supported by various members involved in teaching and preaching. BSGC is currently involved in the SIOA (Sidang Injil OA) churches, specifically Batu 5, Tapah Road. By God's grace, the believers in Batu 5 have shown very encouraging spiritual growth due to a strong hunger for God's Word. We look forward to working closely with other assemblies to further the OA work under the auspices of PMOA.



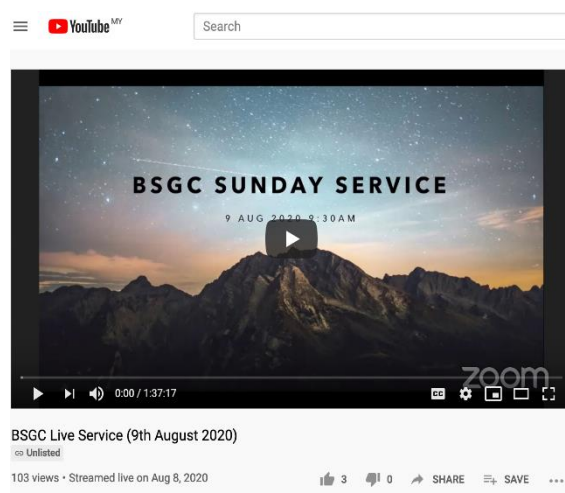
## Christmas Outreach

In recent years, BSGC has hosted a Christmas Open House as a way to reach out to the local community around the church. In true Malaysian spirit, there is always lots of food as well as plenty of music, children's activities and goodie bags. In His goodness, God has brought many new acquaintances and friends into our circle through this initiative.

*"...I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.<sup>23</sup> I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings." 1 Cor 9:22-23*



During the national Movement Control Order (MCO) from March to June 2020 due to COVID-19, BSGC premises were closed. Members continued to worship from home where the heads of household led family worship every Sunday with weekly devotional materials. God continued to bless BSGC during that difficult time as the Youth and Children ministries continued online and participation remained strong and consistent.



BSGC reopened its doors on 5 July 2020, adhering to official SOPs, and started live online streaming of the worship service for members who are unable to physically attend church.

We look forward to our Lord's leading as we continue to journey through 2020, and into the new decade, trusting in His goodness and wisdom for all things.

*"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28.*

*"Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13-14*

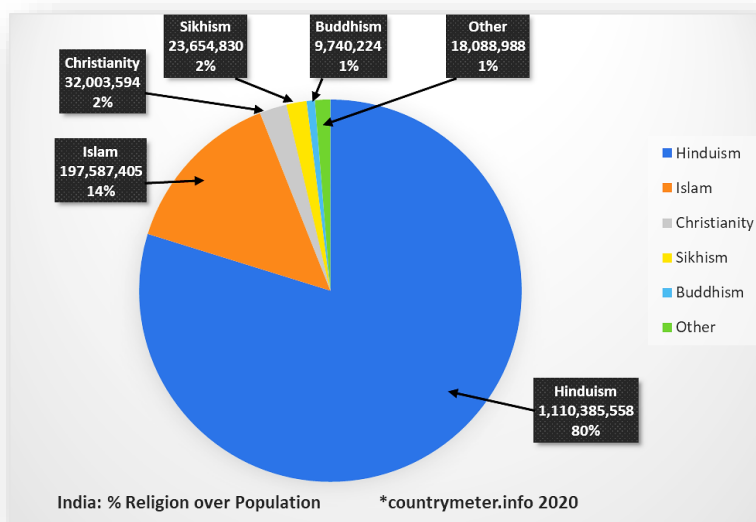
## FROM ABROAD

### The Assemblies in India

Shibu K Mathew

#### India: Some Facts & Figures

- Total population of 1.39 billion people
- The major religions are Hinduism (80%) and Islam (14%). Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism comprise between 0.5% to 2% of the total population



Anthony Norris Groves (February 1795 – May 1853), was a dentist, missionary, and author. He was an English Protestant missionary and the "father of faith missions". He launched the first Protestant mission to Arabic-speaking Muslims, and settled in Baghdad, now the capital of Iraq,

and later in southern India. His ideas influenced a circle of friends who became leaders in the Plymouth Brethren. In 1836, he started the Brethren work in India. Similarly, other foreign missionaries initiated the work in different parts of India. An indigenous Brethren movement was started in Kerala in 1899, as a result of revival and reformation movement among the Syrian St. Thomas Christians. Later this movement got connected with foreign Brethren missionaries. Believers and missionaries from Kerala assemblies went to other parts of India and planted assemblies.

Today, there are estimated to be around 4,200 assemblies across India with 285,000 adult attendees and out of that around 200,000 baptised believers. According to Prayer Handbook 2019, currently there are 2,500 full-time workers are serving across India and 350 are cross-cultural missionaries. Few missionaries are also serving outside of India.

Over 87% of the assemblies in India are based in South India. Most assemblies are in Andhra state, then Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The remaining 13% of assemblies are scattered across India. The main languages used in the assemblies are Telugu, Malayalam, Tamil and Hindi. In the cities, some assemblies are bilingual. Over 150 organisations or institutions are engaged in social or evangelistic activities. These organisations have played a

vital role in assembly growth. Indians living in many overseas countries and expatriates supports the major part of ministry needs in India. The Steward Association manages the properties of the assemblies. Several Indian funding agencies supports the commended full-time workers and missionaries.

P. C. John (1875 — 1943) was an evangelist and Bible teacher from the Indian State of Kerala. Raised among the Saint Thomas Christians, he joined the Plymouth Brethren as an adult, and is regarded today as one of the pioneers of the Kerala Brethren.



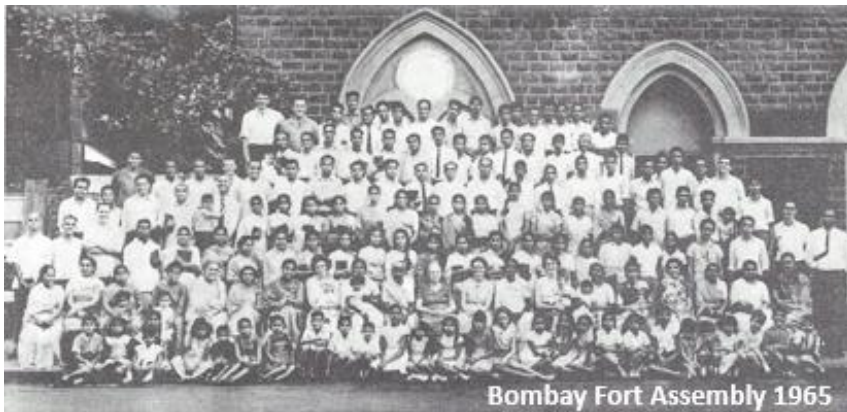
Some of key challenges faced by the Brethren Assemblies are:

- 1) India is transforming from a secular country to a Hindu nation.
- 2) Public proclamation of the gospel is restricted in many parts of the country. Anti-conversion laws are enacted in eight states. Persecution of Christians is increasing.
- 3) India is diverse with many languages and cultures. More than 400 main languages and many dialects are spoken across India. The major language is Hindi, spoken in Northern India. The number of assemblies worshipping in Hindi is extremely small compared to the population.
- 4) India is a growing economic power, yet 30-40% of the population lives under poverty. The disparity between the rich and poor is growing. Pray for more compassionate ministries.

5) India has the most unreached people groups in the world. According to Joshua Project currently there are a total of 2,718 People Groups and 2,445 (90%) are unreached People Groups.

Pray for more cross-cultural missionaries, from assemblies to other remaining Indian states and other parts of the world.

6) Pray for a revival in assemblies.



# Brethren Times

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Tag archive for 'Mavelikara'

By B T J On Tuesday, May 13th, 2014 0 Comments

### Events: Varenickal Convention & VBS, Kerala, India

Varenickal: I. VARENICKAL CONVENTION, MAVELIKARA Place: Near the Brethren Assembly Hall, Varenickal Date: 2014 May 14 to 17 (Wednesday to Saturday) Time: 6.30 pm -9 pm Speakers Bro. Chandapilla Philip, Kottayam Dr. More...

By B T J On Sunday, December 29th, 2013 0 Comments

### Commendation of Evangelist: Dharmaraj Gangadharan, Kerala, India

Mavelikara, Kerala, India "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." (Heb. 13:8) Brethren Assembly, Varenickal, Varenickal P.O., Mavelikara, Alappuzha Dist. Kerala, India COMMENDATION More...

By B T J On Wednesday, December 25th, 2013 0 Comments

### Baptism & Commendation meeting, Kerala, India

The following is a summary of the letter from Varenickal Brethren

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- > Music Night Nellikunnu, April 29
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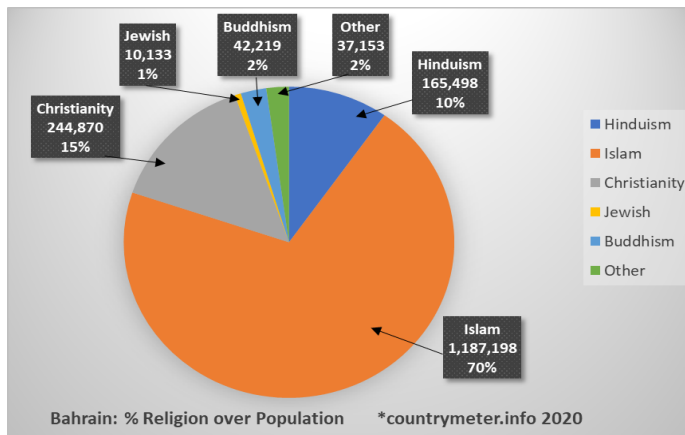
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## The Assemblies in Bahrain

Jijo Angamal



### Bahrain: Some Facts & Figures

As of 2020 government census shows that total population stands at 1.68 million people. Major religions are Islam (70%) followed by Christianity (15%), Buddhism, Jewish, and others are minorities between 1% to 2% of the total population

### History of Bahrain

The Kingdom of Bahrain is known as the "Pearl of Arabian Gulf". Bahrain, which means 'two seas' - the salt and sweet, consists of 33 islands with a total land area in excess of 700sq.kms. The country has a fascinating blend of eastern and western cultures. High-rise buildings vie for space with more traditional dwellings and ancient traditions and historical sites mix with modern developments and cosmopolitan living. Bahrain's population consists of a significant percentage of expatriates from all over the world. Locals and expatriates live together and interact in a rare bond of fraternity. Bahrain has a rich history of well over 5000 years and is often referred to as the Garden of Eden and described as "paradise" in the Epic of Gilgamesh.

Prior to the discovery of oil, Bahrain was one of the richest areas in the gulf. Oil, which was first discovered in 1932, has transformed the economy and the past many decades have witnessed an accelerated progress in the economy and development. The establishment of Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO), the first oil refinery in the gulf opened up the doors for the influx of the expatriate population into Bahrain. Expatriates including Malayalees began to coming to Bahrain from the 30s.

The history of the Bahrain Brethren Assemblies is in fact the history of the prime brethren assembly in the gulf. Bahrain is the smallest country (in terms of land size) in the Middle East, not only where the population is less, but the progress and the developments were seen to be slow. A land very apt for the term 'desert' was selected for the beginning of a four-member assembly gathering in the forties. The spiritual contributions, of those who lines in this historical city, over the past six decades were numerable. The assemblies are the results of the endless prayers and efforts of the pioneers of Christ from this region.

Brother Solomon David from Punalur, Kerala, India was the first brother to come to Bahrain in the year 1943. Later, Bros. T.G Samuel, K.A. George and T.G. George arrived and the first assembly testimony was established in Bahrain in November 1948. Interestingly, it happened to be the first Brethren assembly in the entire gulf. Little did these men of faith at their time know that God had greater plans about their move to Bahrain. They were chosen as the living stones that God chipped off from Kerala to build His Church in Bahrain. These brothers can be called the Fathers of the Bahrain Brethren, if not, the gulf Assemblies. Praise and Glory be to His Name.



*Solomon David (S. S. David)*



*K.A. George*



*T.G. Samuel*



*T.G. George*

The earliest Christian institutions established in Bahrain were the American Mission Hospital 1906 (National Evangelical Church), St. Christopher Church in 1953 and the Sacred Heart Church. It is reasonable to assume that there were Christians and churches in Bahrain in as early as the first century. In fact, excavations have shown that Christian settlements did exist sporadically all over Arabia. In Bahrain the Arabian Mission's first missionaries arrived, bringing with them their medicine, their knowledge, their compassion and faith. In 1893, Rev. Samuel Zwemer who was both a Christian minister and medical care giver, began the medical service in Bahrain, which was the humble beginning of the first mission hospital, American Mission Hospital. They were able to build a church to worship and to spread the faith by establishing the **Christian** testimony.

### Spiritual beginnings

Due to the lack of any spiritual fellowships, Brother Solomon David who reached Bahrain in 1943 joined the American Mission in Manama. On Sundays, he attended the National Evangelical Church in the hospital compounds. Later Brother Solomon David met Brother A.E. Mathew from Kumbanad, another believer, who came to the Lord from a Marthoma background. Brother Mathew was spiritually zealous and was a good prayer partner and Bible study mate for Bro S. David. In the following years, Bros. K.A George, T.G Thomas and T.G. George came to Bahrain and become the best spiritual company to Brother Solomon David. Then these four brethren who came from the Kerala

Brethren Assembly fellowship prayerfully prepared themselves to start a worship meeting.



*An early photograph taken in 1960 with K.A. George, T.G. George, Samuel John, P.A. Ninan and T. Johnson.*

The first worship meeting took place at the residence of Brother Solomon David. Brother T.G. George gave thanks for the bread and Brother Solomon David for the wine. They had their first worship after which Brother Solomon David ministered from the Word. Although it constituted only four members, the satisfaction and spiritual happiness was great for their long cherished dream had become a reality! The gathering of Brethren members later continued with full co-operation of all those who reached Bahrain in the latter years was shifted to the residence of Brother K.A. George.



*Bahrain Brethren assembly in the year 1955*

There wasn't any special name for this new gathering of believers. But in the latter years as the strength increased and as fellowship had been shown to Indian ministries, was named 'Bahrain Brethren Assembly'. The Assembly continued in this fashion for many years, growing in numbers. Till 1970 the growth of the Assembly was small. In the following years brothers like K.A. George (Vallya Johny), Samuel John (Koch Johny) and P.J. James (Jimmy) took extra initiative to bring many brothers to this Island. Their compassion and love to the brethren and their needs were much of blessing to the growth of the Bahrain Assemblies.

Presently there are Six Brethren assemblies in Bahrain. They are:

1. Believers' Brethren Assembly (Majlis)
2. Brethren Assembly, Ghafool
3. Manama Brethren Assembly
4. Believers' Brethren Assembly, Salemabad
5. Ebenezer Brethren Assembly
6. Bethel Brethren Assembly



*Bahrain Brethren Assembly in the early years*

### Some Key Activities at these Assemblies

**Prayer meetings** are held every Tuesdays from 7.30pm to 8.30pm, praying together in small groups. The prayer items are collected from the letters received and information gathered from the Assembly members. A systematic prayer list will be used for the group prayers. The prayer meeting ends with a 15 minutes devotion time.

**Choir practices** are also held every Tuesdays immediately after the prayer meetings. The choir will practice two numbers that will sung for the gospel meetings on every first Fridays.

**Bible study** is held every Thursdays from 7.30pm to 9.00pm. This is a very special meeting with a time for testimonies in the former part and a systematic Bible study in the latter.

**Cottage meeting (Cell Group)** is held on every second Thursdays. These cottage meetings will take place in the homes of the believers. The members are divided into four groups with four group leaders, and the meetings taking place in four different houses at the same time.

**Children's Bible School** takes place every Fridays from 9.30am to 10.45am. There are 26 classes for the children from age 3 onwards and the strength is around 200 and 36 dedicated teachers. This is the only Sunday School in Bahrain, which is made possible with the wholehearted co-operation of all the Brethren Assemblies.

**Brothers meetings** comprise mainly the youth, takes place from 11.00am to 1.00pm while the **Sisters meetings** is held every second and last Fridays of each month from 3.00pm to 5.00pm.

**Gospel meetings** takes place every Fridays from 7.30pm to 9.00pm.

**Outreach ministries:** Apart from the Assembly meetings, there are gospel outreach meetings conducted in small classes at different venues like Mameer, Riffa, Salmabad, Segaya, Muharaq, Isa town, Tubli, etc. These meetings are held in Malayalam, English, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Urdu, etc. The Salmaniya Hospital visit is a very effective hospital ministry. They collect additional funds through voluntary





*BBA in the year 1990. The name 'BBA, Majlis' was taken after the assembly gathering started in Majlis. The assembly membership of around 360, including children is a great matter of thanks giving to the Lord.*

contribution and systematically distribute and monitor the evangelistic work very closely in an effective manner. These classes were times of regeneration for the number of people from different walks of life and background. Many were baptized and added to the Assembly. The Believers' Brethren Assembly, Salmabad is the product of the outreach ministry.

**Vision for India (VFI):** The Assembly is not only active in the local outreach ministry, but also is a source of encouragement to the Indian gospel missions. The special

project VFI plays a significant role by being a source of assistance to the many mission fields of India.



*First BBA Choir in action in 1978 with Samuel John (Kochu Johny), P.J. Antony, Baby Mathew, Herold Fraser, Joy David.*

## Looking Ahead

The past is a prologue and the present is a story in progress. The future thus remains an uncharted territory filled with many possibilities, with souls waiting to be plucked out and assemblies to be enlarged and added. In the decades of its existence, the Brethren Assemblies have been a witness to many changes and as it looks ahead into the

future, there is hope for many more blessings to come. History has demonstrated this to be true and revealed an unassailable fact that The God of our fathers is the same yesterday, today and forever. This alone is our security and confidence and the foundation upon which we will build our future.

This land is the land of opportunities. This land is the land of souls. Let's seek after them as we continue to be a witness for Him. Every one of us ought to be in the Father's business of soul winning. We are saved to save others. God desires that each of us be active in bringing the lost to Him. **Jesus** said, "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Mt 18:14; 1 Tim 2:3-5). Let us be fully involved in the building of the church, even in Bahrain, till He comes to take the church unto Himself.

How important it is to realize at this hour that we have "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all!" (Eph 4:6). Nothing else will help us to keep the unity among us (v3). "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1Cor 15: 58). **A Church that does not evangelize will fossilize! The world at its worst needs the Church at its best!**



*Children's Bible School*

For further information, please contact:  
 Brother Jijo Angamaly.  
 Believers Brethren Assembly,  
 Kingdom of Bahrain.  
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## The Assemblies in the UK

Anonymous

### History

There is often a misunderstanding about the Christian movement known as 'Brethren' in the United Kingdom, due to the many different segments that formed from the original movement. According to Ironside (2014, p. 3), "there was a very definite action of the Holy Spirit in exercising many widely separated believers simultaneously along similar lines, eventually bringing them into one outward fellowship. As early as 1812 - 1820, it has been proven that letters passed between a group of Christians in New York City, seeking a simpler and more Scriptural fellowship than they were enjoying, even while another group of believers in Great Britain were also dissatisfied with existing conditions. Some from among these companies were eventually identified with the Brethren, but the true beginning of the movement seems to have been in Dublin, Ireland in 1825."

The founders of the initial movement in Dublin are namely - Edward Cronin, Edward Wilson, H. Hutchinson, William Stokes, J. Parnell, Lord Congleton, J. G. Ballet and John N. Darby. Edward Cronin was the first to affect the others on his convictions. He was greatly disturbed by the many divisions of Protestantism and found that while trying to settle in Dublin, he could not agree with the churches there who urged him to take membership at their churches before being allowed to partake of communion. It was from this that the first Brethren assembly was formed.

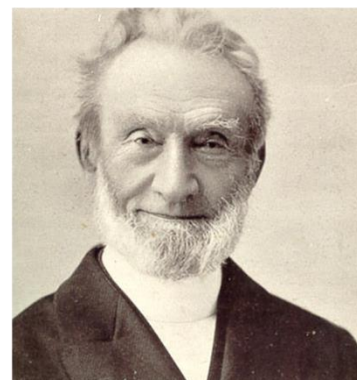
Beginning from 1837, this movement then spread across France, Switzerland, Germany and Holland, led by God through John Darby. George Müller was a co-pastor of an independent church in Bristol, England in the early 1830s and he was a prominent man used of God to spread the teaching across Britain. At the same time, an independent work of the Spirit of God broke out in the southern part of India where a number of British army officers met together for prayer and study of the Word. Many of these



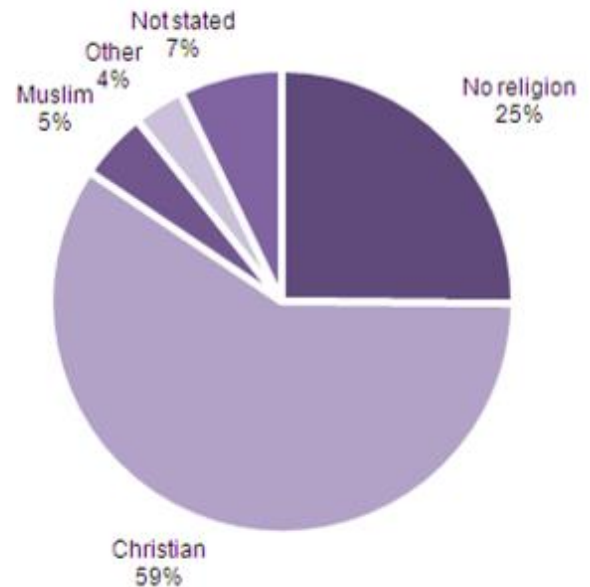
**John Nelson Darby**, an Anglo-Irish Bible teacher, one of the influential figures among the original Plymouth Brethren and the founder of the Exclusive/Closed Brethren.



**Edward Cronin**, one of the founders of the Brethren movement in the 1820s



**George Müller**, the man who founded the Open Brethren movement in 1848



men began preaching in their designated locations and the work spread there.

The movement then split in about 1848 into two branches: (1) those associated with J. N. Darby which came to be known as "Exclusive/Closed Brethren", and (2) the "Open Brethren associated primarily with Bristol philanthropist, George Müller. We will continue to learn more about the Open Brethren movement as catalysed by George Müller

### Evangelism & Missions

For 150 years, the Open Brethren in the United Kingdom have had extensive influence on evangelism through involvement of individuals in inter-denominational activities (such as Billy Graham missions) and para-church bodies. Each individual assembly also has the autonomy to perform missions on their own accord, and as such, we have no concrete figures representing the mission work being done as a whole from the Open Brethren Church of UK.



Brethren churches work with Partnership UK, a charitable company registered in England and Wales, for mission and charity work. Other partners of the Brethren church include the **Christian** Brethren Archive and the Brethren Archivists Historians Network who organises biannual



conferences to encourage the study of Brethren history. They are also associated with the Church Support Network (CSN) who links groups which serve God from within the worldwide **Christian** Brethren movement. In the UK, they make significant contributions to evangelical life. Additionally, the Brethren Assembly in the UK is affiliated with the Church Growth Trust that helps independent churches to grow by holding and renting church buildings, helping with proposals for developing them and supporting church planting.

### Challenges

In the UK, its common with many other Christian denominations, there has been a significant decline in numbers in the last 50 years. Added to this, in the current climate of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Brethren Assemblies along with all religious groups face the obstacle of reaching their congregation without face-to-face weekly meetings and moving into an online setting. In the meantime, a group of Christian technologists are responding to the challenge of providing useful



information to those facing difficulties managing local church responses by putting together an index of digital communication tools.

Additionally, Brethren Assemblies in the UK are still proceeding with missions and



donations, giving to frontline workers, as well as keeping regular church attenders in mind by connecting through the classic, heartfelt, snail mail. However, we trust that God will preserve and uphold each and every Brethren assembly until the world is healed.



## KAPASAN - Philippines

Jesmar S. Espiritu

KAPASAN is a family of disciples who believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. We live in joyful salvation through faith in Christ who died at the Cross to cleanse us from sins and give us eternal life. Founded in the Word of God, we believe that there is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to our call— *one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all* (Ephesians 4:4-6). As people that God called out of the world into His kingdom and service, we actively respond in fulfilling our greatest commission in seeking to win others through the Gospel.



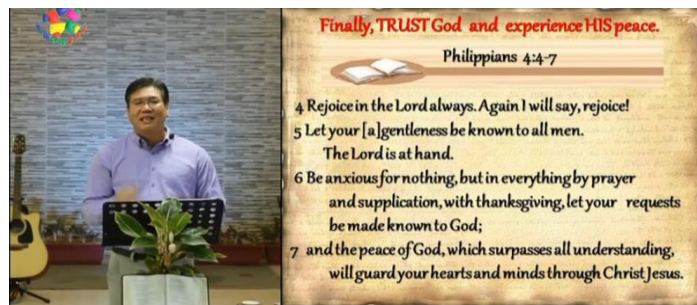
THE ELDERS & DEACONS OF KAPASAN WITH THEIR FAMILIES

### Believers' Life during COVID-19

We were just recovering from the onslaught of the Taal Volcano eruption on January 12, 2020, and as we pooled our resources together, we were very grateful to CBSM who answered our call for help and sent assistance to disaster victims immediately.

And then comes COVID-19 which put most countries on Lockdown, and Philippines was no exception. The last few months were the most trying times for us and for the whole world as well. Work & transportation were at a standstill. The Lockdown tested all our systems and our community's strength. We were not prepared for this. The question was... how will we cope? Most of the church members lost their jobs, especially those working on contract jobs. By God's grace, we were able to provide assistance to church members and the community as well. We glorify God because the three Churches (KAPASAN) helped each other to provide for the flock.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the believers in various ways, including the cancellation of worship services and church fellowship, but this does not mean our church is closed, because WE are the CHURCH! Everyone was caught by surprise as the sudden pandemic exploded worldwide! In these trying times, Covid-19 did not stop us from worshipping online through Livestream. Though physically distant, we remain spiritually close.



This is the time that we Christians should arise and be the "Salt & Light" to the community. We used Live Streaming to reach even the Filipinos abroad. This pandemic taught us to pray fervently even as people are asking for prayers. Many prayer requests poured in from viewers we did not know, showing that people were reaching out to God. It was an eye opener that life is precious. Protocols were formulated, the phrase "NEW NORMAL" was coined. We have had to learn to adjust to the New Normal.

As we learned these very valuable lessons through the pandemic, we acknowledge that our ability to cope with this pandemic experience can be grasped as a personal opportunity to learn and grow, even as it provides an opportunity for the church to minister in completely new and creative ways. After all, God is creative in his love. We are in a situation where we are all having to figure out how to respond instead of react, how make the best out of the situation. Instead of panicking, we should practice love and compassion. While Covid-19 may impact our lives and emotions differently, our prayer & hope is that we remember we are in this together in Christ.



The Young Professionals & Women's Fellowship meets on Tuesdays, Thursdays & Sundays through Zoom meetings.



1<sup>st</sup> Women's Fellowship after the lockdown limited to 10 persons per meeting.





Meeting with KAPASAN leaders through Zoom

## KAPASAN Compassionate Ministry



In the days & weeks that followed KAPASAN continuously assisted Church members, the community & the front liners.



Rizal Provincial Hospital & Binangonan Lakeview Hospital, Binangonan, Rizal

# FEATURES

## Survey on LGBTQ

The Diakonia Editorial Team

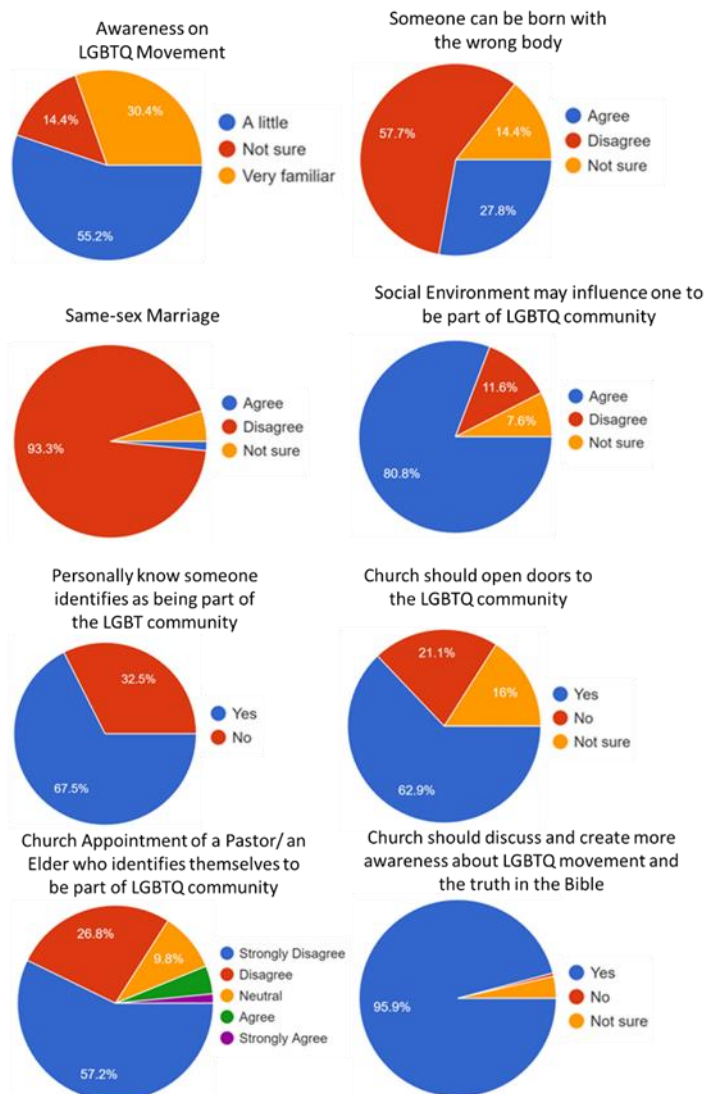
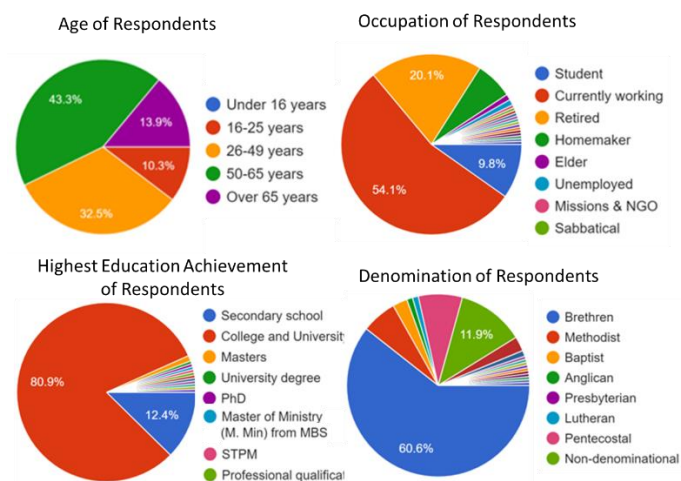
Over the last couple of decades, the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and queer/questioning) community has gained some prominence and globally they have their own movements. Studies have been conducted in various countries and the percentage of the population with LGBTQ tendencies ranges from 2 to just over 4 %.

It appears the assemblies have largely avoided issues related to sexuality in general and more so on LGBTQ. But yet, this is an issue that now increasingly confronts the wider church. We have conducted a survey to see where we and other churches stand with regards to this matter.

How do we treat people from the LGBTQ community? Should they be allowed to fellowship in our assemblies? Can or should we associate with them? Can they take positions of leadership in our assemblies? These are tough and sensitive questions. At some point we may have to face up to them so we believe it would be a mistake to sweep these sorts of questions under the carpet.

We understand there will be differing views among believers as there are even among the editorial team. Nonetheless, we shall rely on the leading of His Word and Spirit and His Grace as we navigate through this largely uncharted territory for many. We hope by raising this issue, leaders and members might start some serious thinking about it and hopefully prepare us for the future when it reaches your assembly's doorstep, if it has not already arrived.

We present the data from our survey as they are below and make no attempt at interpreting them.



We will be first to admit the survey can be done better but then we are not professional pollsters. Nonetheless, we hope the information you now have will give you reasons to prayerfully reflect on this issue and seek His leading in how we approach this.



Ravi Zacharias was asked a question in a forum on this issue and you can see his answer in the video in this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/y3p99qnh>



## A Christian's Thoughts regarding the LGBTQ+ situation

*Anonymous*

My favourite book is THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS by John Bunyan and sometime ago, I dreamed that the pilgrim, Christian, was having a conversation with the Lord Jesus. It went like this:

Christian (C): Lord, what do you think about the LGBTQ people?

Jesus: Are you talking about the people who are practicing LGBTQ behaviours or are you talking about the behaviours themselves?

C: Can we discuss the people first?

Jesus: I love the LGBTQ people, the same way as I love the rest of humankind for all have sinned and missed the mark God created them to meet. It was to pay for their sins as well as the rest of humankind that I came to die on the cross 2000 years ago, so that whoever is willing to trust me, I can offer him or her God's forgiveness and make him or her fit for heaven.

C: So, you don't see any difference between the LGBTQ people and the and others who are straight?

Jesus: None at all, for all have sinned and are in need of God's saving grace.

C: Do you think our churches should allow people who are LGBTQ to attend our churches?

Jesus: Would you allow gangsters, prostitutes and drug addicts to attend your church?

C: ERR...

Jesus: I know that many of my churches today welcome only the respectable, upper and middle class of society — if drug addicts and prostitutes who are seeking God don't feel welcomed, why do you want to talk about opening your church to people with LGBTQ?

C: (Blushing)

C: Lord, suppose a church member has a friend who is a member of the LGBTQ group — what rules or regulations do we need to impose on him or her before he/she is allowed to attend church?

Jesus: Do you remember how I treated tax-collectors like Zacchaeus and prostitutes like Mary Magdalene? What rules or regulations did I impose on them?

C: None, but when they were 'born again' they left their sinful ways and followed you with a new way of life

Jesus: Do you remember what is the good news I told my disciples to preach?

C: That everyone should repent i.e. stop living in their sinful ways, make a U-turn, believe in Jesus Christ and be baptised and receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2)

C: Are you saying that if someone of the LGBTQ lifestyle were to believe in you, they need to stop living that lifestyle?

Jesus: LGBTQ includes a lot of behaviours as well as identities - let's look firstly at behaviours which God clearly says 'NO' to.

Jesus: What does God say in his Scriptures?

C: I read verses like:

"Do not have sexual relationship with a man as one does with a woman, for that is detestable. — Leviticus 18:22

"...because of these, God gave them over to shameful lusts, even their women exchanged natural sexual relations with unnatural ones, in the same way, men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another, man committing shameful acts with other men and receive in themselves the penalty for their due error — Romans 1:26,27

Jesus: The Scripture is quite clear that God does not tolerate such behaviours.

C: Are you saying that it is not compatible for an LGBTQ person to continue with his/her lifestyle if he/she decides to follow you?

Jesus: Do you remember what I say to the woman caught in adultery?

C: You told her to "Go and sin no more."

Jesus: Did any of my disciples continue their old way of sinful living after they left all to follow me?

C: None. But some of the LGBTQ shared experiences of having been 'born that way' - e.g. a boy who feels he's actually a girl in a boy's body and others 'a boy in a girl's body'. They didn't have a choice.

Jesus: Do you remember me saying in Matthew 19:12 for there are eunuchs that are born that way... You see creation has been distorted as a result of the fall of man — one of the things I have come to put right (Romans 8:22)

Jesus: However it is not true that they do not have a choice - a person may be born being attracted to someone of the same gender, but he or she can still choose not to live the homosexual lifestyle although this may not be easy

C: Can someone who has undergone a sex reassignment operation be accepted by you?

Jesus: God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that WHOEVER believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Every sin of man or woman can be forgiven them except the sin against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31)

— by a fan of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress



**John Bunyan (1628 –1688) was an English writer and Puritan preacher who wrote the theological fiction *The Pilgrim's Progress* which tells the story of Christian, who journeyed from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City.**

Adapted from original image under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license.  
Attribution: Robin Drayton

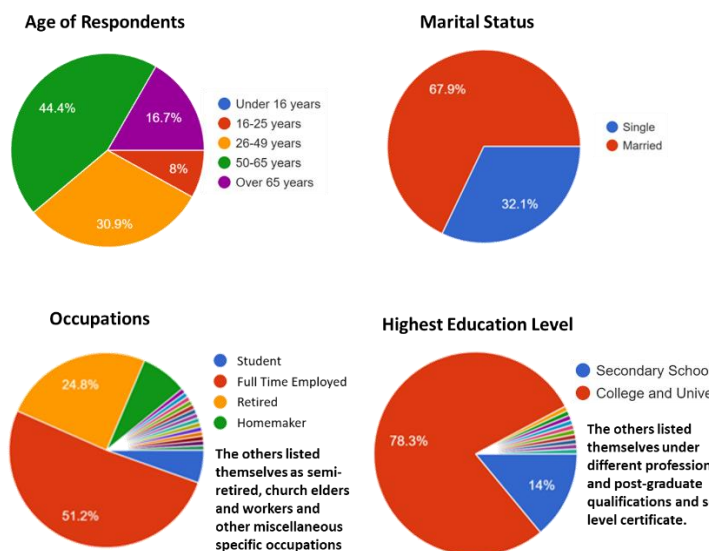
# Why Do People Stay or Leave the Assembly

The Diakonia Editorial Team

This survey collected information from a total of 164 respondents from our assemblies. The aim of the survey is to identify the reasons that may cause a person to leave or stay at a Brethren Assembly.

The responses are summarized below.

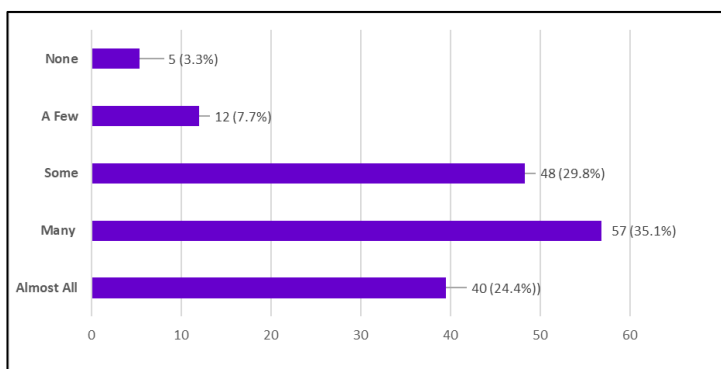
## Background of respondents



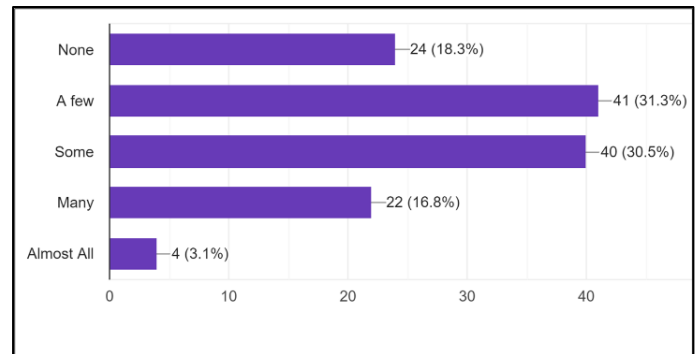
## Responses – Why do people leave the assembly

For this section, the respondents indicate whether they feel None, A Few, Some, Many or Almost All of the people left for the reasons indicated in the questions

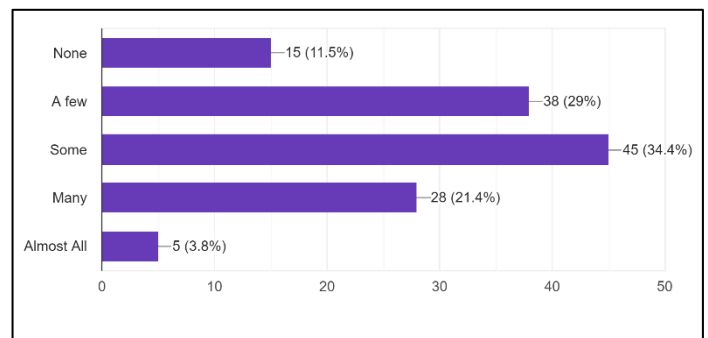
### 1. They don't feel connected to the assembly



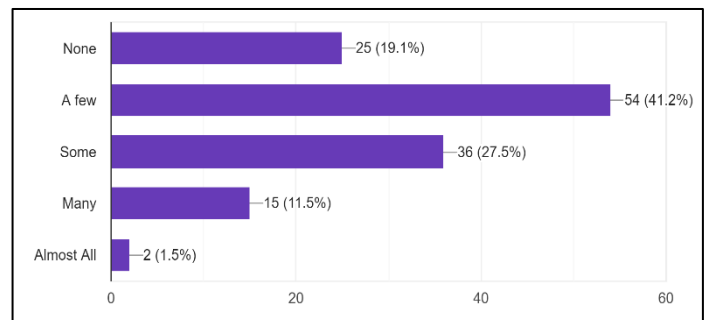
### 2. They don't understand the mission of the Assembly



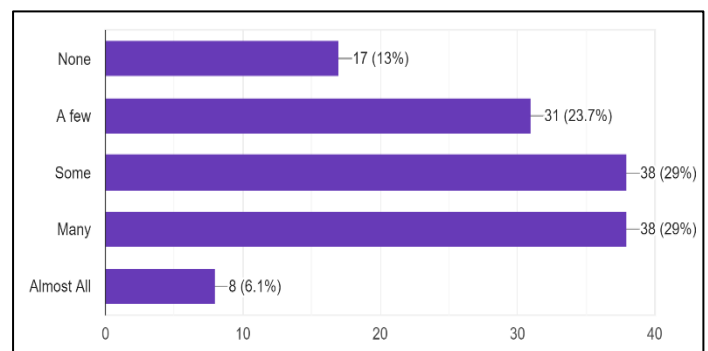
### 3. They feel the sermons aren't relevant.



### 4. They disagree with the doctrine being taught.

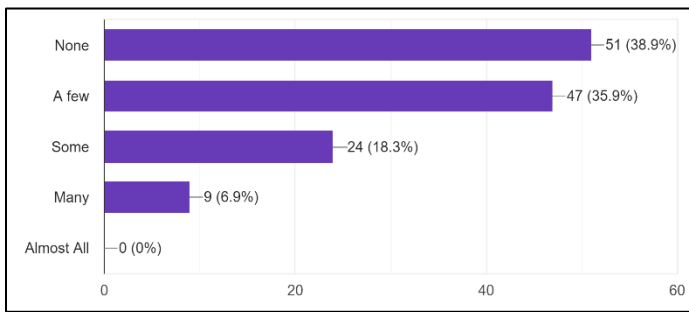


### 5. They have experienced a major need, or seen others with needs, and felt that nobody noticed or cared.

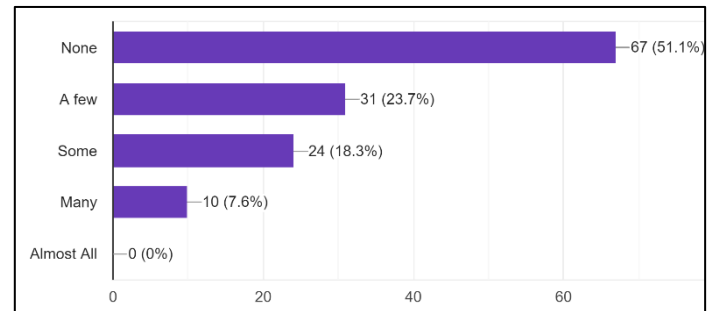




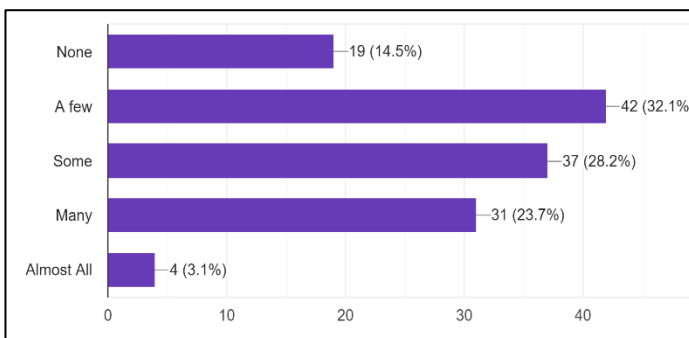
**6. They don't know or don't agree with the way the Assembly is spending the money for the various ministries.**



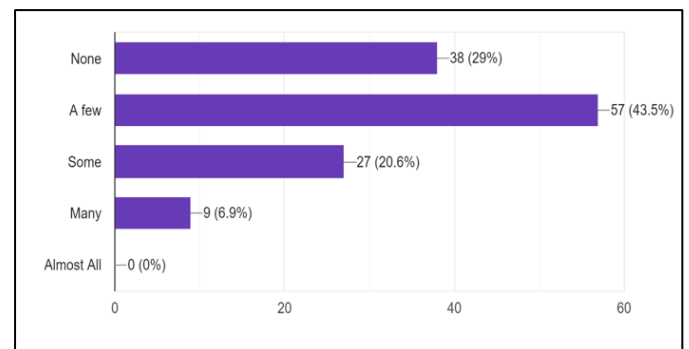
**10. They feel the Assembly is more interested in politics of the church leaderships**



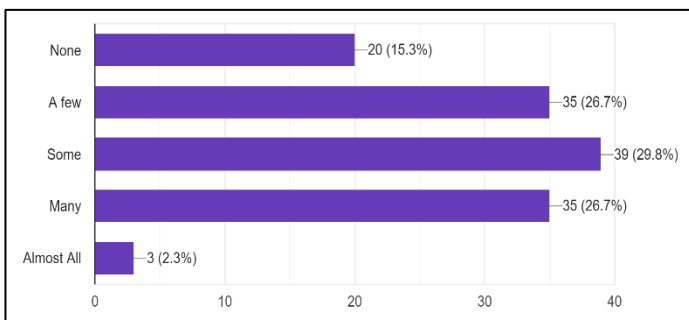
**7. They don't feel engaged in the Assembly's ministries**



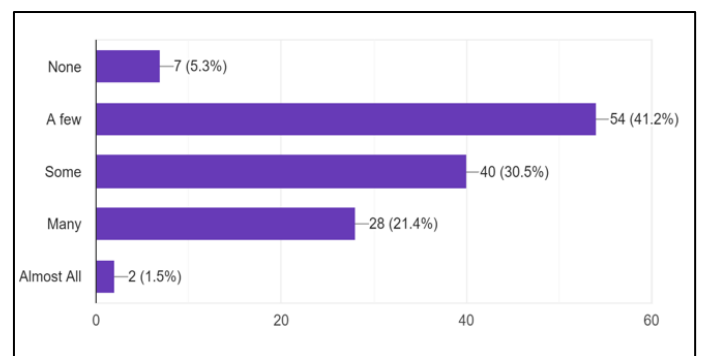
**11. They live too far away**



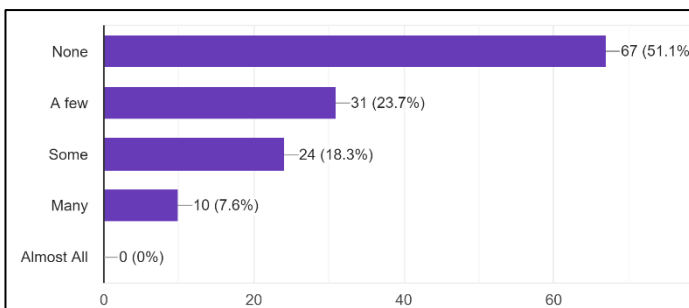
**8. They do not feel welcomed**



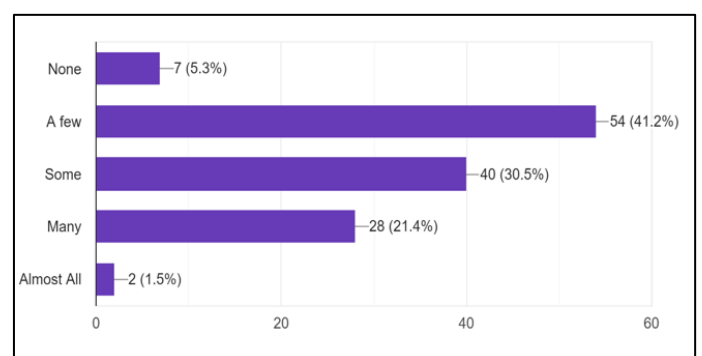
**12. They shifted to another location**



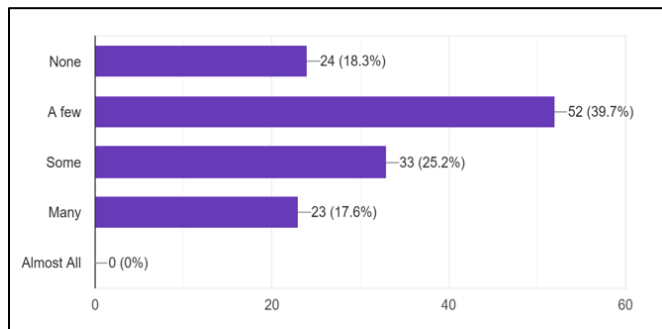
**9. They feel the Assembly is more interested in secular matters and politics.**



**13. They have limited opportunity to serve**



14. They have difference of opinion of how the church should be run.



The editorial team analysed the verbatim responses provided for in the survey and summarized the responses in the categories given below.

#	Details	People	%	Remarks
1	Church Leadership	27	42%	Not caring, infighting, False Doctrines, Carnality
2	Church Congregation	21	32%	Not caring, infighting, spiteful, not friendly
3	Worship & Sermon Style	14	22%	Boring, not spiritually uplifting, outdated worship style
4	Spiritual mentoring & Discipleship	3	5%	
Total		65		

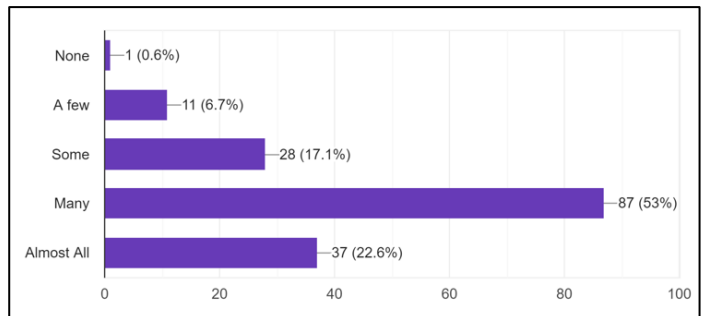
The details of the verbatim responses can be found in this link : <https://qr.go.page.link/Dw8gD> or you can scan the QR code below



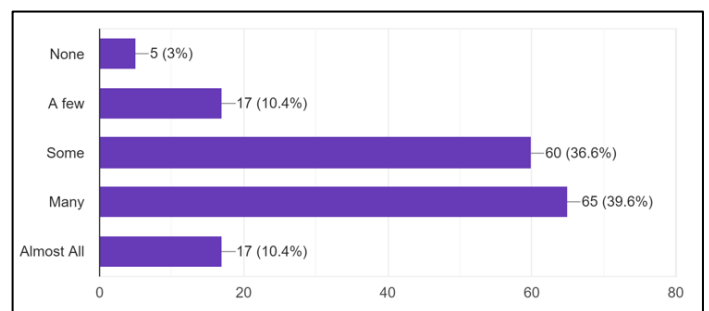
## Reasons why people remain in the Assembly

The second part of the survey asked respondents to note their observations on why people continue to stay at an Assembly.

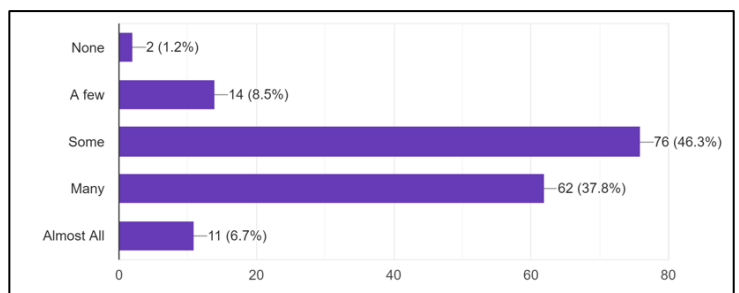
### 1. They feel very connected to the Assembly



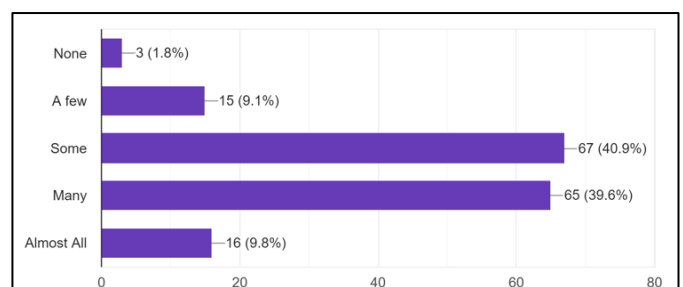
### 2. That they understand the Assembly's mission



### 3. They feel the sermons are very relevant for them.

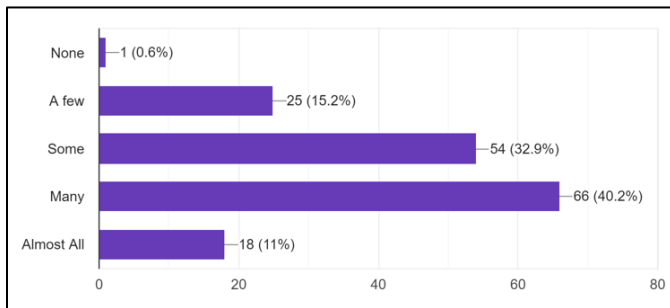


### 4. They feel connected because of the doctrines being taught

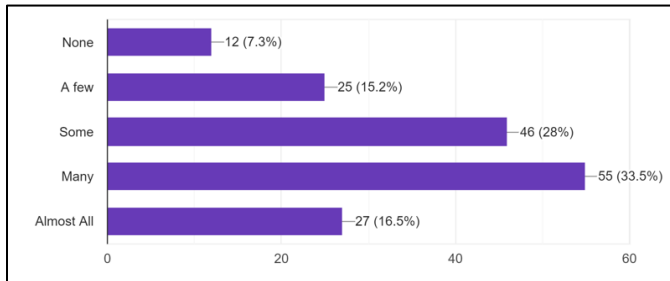




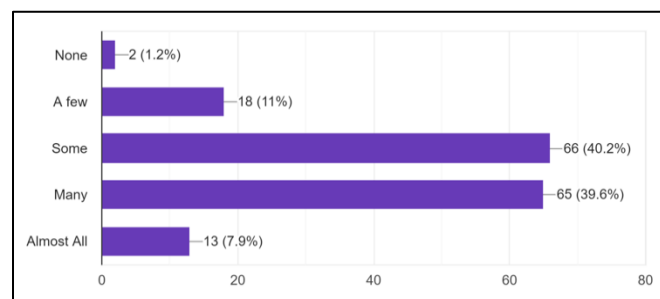
5. They have experienced a major need, or seen others with needs, and the Church leadership or members had assisted them



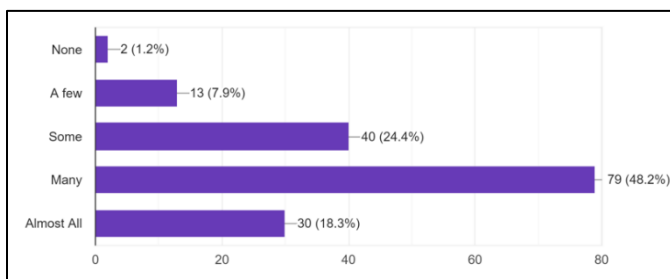
6. They were made aware how the Assembly is spending the money for the various ministries



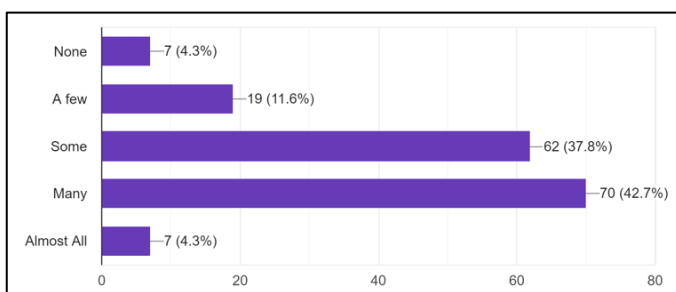
7. They feel engaged in the Assembly's ministries



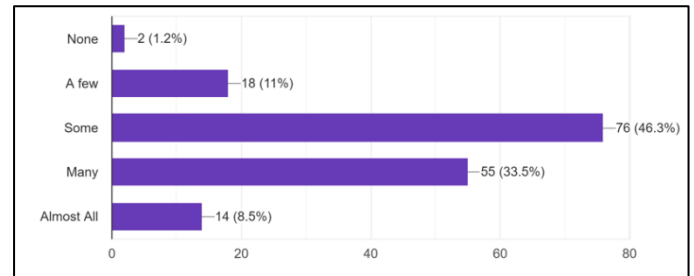
8. They feel welcome and connected



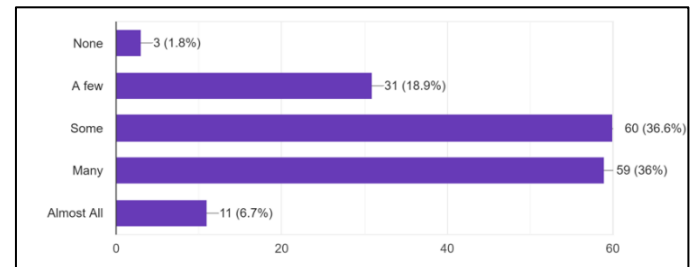
9. That they live near to the Assembly



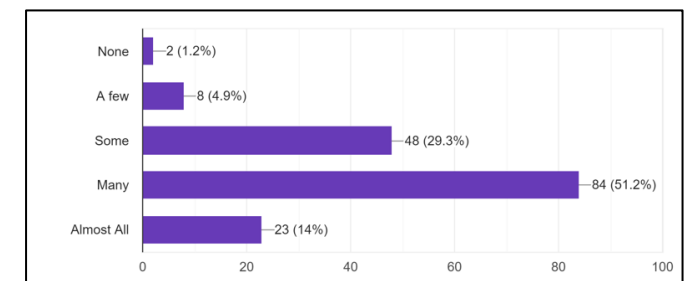
10. That they have the opportunity to serve in the Assembly



11. They are connected and engaged with the church leadership



12. They have grown up in the Assembly and is part of the social circle



Another survey was done on the similar topic by the Assembly Care Ministries, USA, some years back and this can be found in this link:

[shorturl.at/pARTX](https://shorturl.at/pARTX)

Verbatim responses can be found in the link below or you can scan the QR code:

<https://qr.go.page.link/5NPss>



## The Gospel thru a Robotics Enrichment Program

Har Voong Pang

***But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. Phil 3:13B-14***

***But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. Phil 3:13B-14***

One thing that the Apostle Paul did was to forget what was behind in the past, including the greatest successes and failures, and to push forward toward what is ahead in Christ Jesus. He was confident in considering everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus his Lord. The word knowing is used in the Bible to include a deep relational aspect.

*‘But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord’*  
Phil 3:7-8a

Paul was so confident of his Jewish heritage and made three missionary journeys throughout the ancient world, planting churches, preaching the gospel, encouraging the churches and inspiring countless throughout history. He also authored 13 books in the New Testament but Paul’s one goal in life was to personally know and intimately relate with Jesus Christ.

A most exciting event for me this year was teaching Robotics and computer coding to children while including truths from the Bible. The kids were thrilled to build their first ever robot! It was most exciting when they were having fun while learning. On top of that, the children were told a Biblical truth in every class.

In the midst of having fun and learning, the one goal of the class is that each child may know Christ personally. Our calling is more than teaching technical skills, imparting self-confidence and encouraging creativity in the children. It is that they may know or experience the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a reality.

Praise God for the Holy Spirit who was working on the children’s lives during the classes. On the final day of the class, the good news of Jesus Christ was shared with the children. Most of the children responded to the invitation and prayed to accept Christ as savior.

### The Holy Spirit touched a child



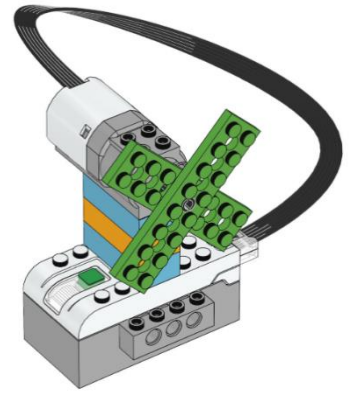
The Holy Spirit provided an interesting fruit from this class. A child of different ethnicity and religion asked me who Jesus is. This was after the child heard the story of

Jesus calming the storm that demonstrated He is powerful and that Jesus is God. This caught the attention of the child who requested to watch a video on Jesus as God where even the storm and wind obeyed Him. Praise God for the Holy Spirit who

touched the soul of this one child showing her that Jesus is a powerful God.

### Learning one aspect of God

The lesson for this class was building a robotic cooling fan and writing a code to turn the fan to generate wind for a cooling effect. Students were taught to write a program to increase the speed of the fan to maximum, and then to stop suddenly. This is like the story of Jesus rebuking the strong wind that completely calmed immediately.



This robotic cooling fan was also used as an object lesson for the children by asking if we can see the wind or smell the wind. Every kid answered "No!" unreservedly. And when asked if we can feel the wind, every kid answered "Yes!" immediately as everyone was able to feel the cooling effect of the wind.

After that the kids were told that God is like the wind and we asked them the same questions i.e. "Can we see God?" The kids answered "No" just as before. "Can we smell God?" All the kids laughed and answered confidently "No". Then I asked "Can we feel God?" All the children answered "Yes" as they can definitely feel God in their heart.

### God’s wisdom is impressive

Last month, I attended an assembly leaders conference where a display of the Robotics curriculum was set up. One young assembly leader approached me with a specific question of how to incorporate Biblical lessons into the curriculum.

I shared the above example and explained an aspect of God in the New Testament where the same Greek word, pneuma, is used for wind as well as the Holy Spirit (John 3:8). This explanation caused the young man’s eyes to grow big. Obviously, the wisdom of the Holy Spirit is impressive where God’s nature can be taught to children using the technology that God created.

***Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.***

***1 Tim 4:12***

There were two youths playing computer games in the office so I conscripted them to help with our computer technology enrichment program. Initially they were reluctant to leave their electronic games but they were quickly drawn towards the interesting and meaningful work of serving the children with the Father’s love.

We worked together for a couple of hours. During this time, there was great excitement with ‘Aha’ moments as they were amazed by the wonders of technological advancement today



and using technology creatively for some meaningful work. Their parents were proud too.

In the holy scriptures, Paul's instructions to young Timothy is not to let anyone look down on them just because they are young. These two young people can produce better quality technological work within a shorter time than myself. Our responsibility is to instruct and encourage our youths to be Christ-like for the glory of our Lord.



Praise the Lord for the opportunity to innovate children's ministry with cutting-edge technology like robotics and computer coding enrichment programs. It was a very satisfying experience to see the kids' wonder and excitement as they built their first robots. The laughter and joy on their faces and in their eyes made my day. As the kids had fun learning the latest computer technology that will impact their future, they also experienced truth and love from God that will impact their eternity. Glory to God for showering such divine blessings on each child.

Unfortunately, the program came to a halt as all classes for children were cancelled due to COVID-19. When the lockdown started, I expected it to be temporary. I began to write the curriculum for my Biblical robotics enrichment program and enjoyed a rewarding time. But as COVID-19 got worse and became a worldwide pandemic, the lockdown was extended and I felt a strong disappointment.



*Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments. Deuteronomy 7:9*

But we know that the Lord is God and he is the faithful God who keeps His covenant of love to generations of those who love him and keep his commandments. The Holy Spirit broke my perception to share His love online. I would have totally rejected the idea of ministering online before this. As the Holy Spirit brought a breakthrough in me, I felt the freedom to do so.

One day, I was inspired during my discussion with a business owner about teaching computer technology for children. She mentioned that the good thing about going online is we can do this anywhere in the world. The Holy Spirit used these words to open my mind to the potential of reaching the world with God's love, even during worldwide travel restrictions. Oh Lord, we pray for Your wisdom and glory for moving ministry online to minister to the world.

Praise the Lord for by His grace we were able to start some online ministries, for both children and adults during the lockdown and recovery period. Grateful to God for both successes and failures, although we experienced great favour from God through the online ministries.

### **Glory to God in the highest!**



### **Praise Report for Robotics Enrichment Program 2019/2020**

Praise the Lord for the robotics enrichment program where around two hundred kids were blessed with fun and joy in learning cutting-edge computer technology. At the same time, Bible stories, truths and the good news of Jesus Christ were imparted. The Holy Spirit worked in the young lives and about fifty kids accepted the invitation to pray to accept Jesus Christ as Savior.

We also thank God for the vision of assembly elders and leaders in bringing younger generations back to the assembly through computer technology. Their support and covering for this ministry are exceptional. The Holy Spirit has also impressed the support and participation of ministry leaders from five different assemblies in this program.

May we continue to praise God for every volunteer, both local and international, who are tremendously helpful and who connect so well with the children. Some friendships with children were established instantly.

Let's rejoice and worship the Lord together for the great things done in all our lives!

## Assembly Mission Work in Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia

Tan Kian Huat and Akiko

Trained as an aerospace engineer, Tan Kian Huat was commended by Bethesda Hall (Ang Mo Kio, Singapore) in 2009 to full-time Christian mission work. He served as an elder of Bethesda Hall from 1992 to 2017, involved in pastoral care, visitations, marriage counselling, preaching and teaching. He led many mission teams to visit several Asian countries. In 2009, he helped to establish Sangkhim Canaan School in Cambodia. Today there are more than 700 students and 50 staff in the school. In 2017, together with his wife, Akiko, he relocated to reside in Kampong Chhnang where they helped to start Sangkhim Church and Bethany Mission House. They focus on evangelism & discipleship to the local community and leadership development in the new assembly.

### Country Background

About 40 years ago, the Pol Pot Regime killed more than 2 million Cambodians. All the educated people, doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, and their children were brutally slaughtered. Almost everyone we meet has lost some family members during the genocide. In 1997, civil wars caused by political unrest had further impoverished Cambodia, dragging it down to become one of the poorest countries in the world. There are insufficient professionals in medicine, engineering and education. Most Cambodians do not trust their own Cambodian doctors who are not well trained or qualified. The public hospitals are poorly equipped while low hygiene standards are low. The country's infrastructure is backward. There are frequent power and water disruptions, especially during the dry season. Living in Cambodia is hard for foreigners coming from developed countries.

The population has more than doubled over the past 20 years to 16 million people. Less than 2% are Evangelical Christians. Most people are deeply rooted in traditional beliefs like the rituals in the monastery, participation in the monkhood, reincarnation and ancestor worship. It is difficult for them to understand salvation by grace through faith. Young believers (students and adults) often face persecution from their parents and relatives. Cambodia is one of the unreached nations!

### The Beginning

Kian Huat first visited Cambodia in December 1999 as a consultant to help Cambodian Mine Action Centre, the organization responsible for removing six million unexploded bombs and land mines left buried in Cambodian soil over three decades of wars. This has taken a severe toll on the Cambodians with some 40,000 amputees caused by land mine explosions. The consultancy project lasted more than a year. He met Kim Han Sik, a commended missionary from South Korean assembly, who started the assembly work in Phnom Penh.

Since then, many teams from Singapore assemblies visited to help the work in Phnom Penh and also later in Kampong Chhnang. Some came to conduct training, run bible camps, paint murals, teach guitar, share farming techniques, teach a class, etc.

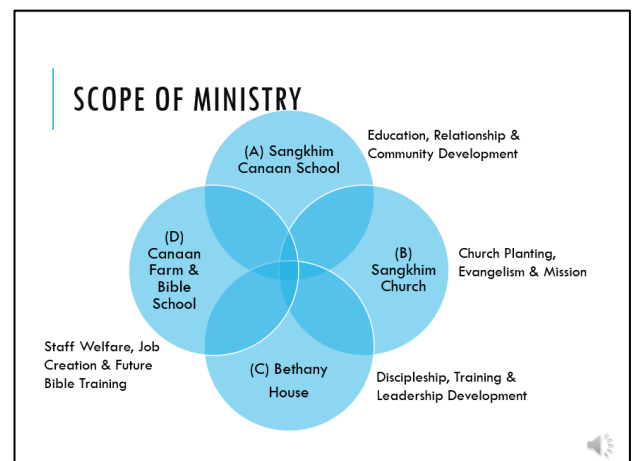
It is exciting to see many souls reached and saved in Kampong Chhnang.



### Scope of the Mission Work

The scope of the mission work in Kampong Chhnang comprises of four areas of ministry:

- Sangkhim Canaan School – focusing on education and developing a relationship with the community.
- Sangkhim Church – focusing on evangelism, discipleship, and mission to the community.
- Bethany Mission House – focusing on missionary support, discipleship and developing leadership for the future.
- Canaan Farm and Bible School – focusing on jobs creation to benefit believers and Bible training to support mission work.



The primary focus of this work is discipleship rather than evangelism. We aim to equip Cambodian disciples to do the work of evangelism. The Cambodians are the best people to share the gospel with fellow Cambodians. Missionaries are here



to teach and equip the locals. After the initial start-up phase, we enlisted Cambodian brothers and sisters to become co-workers. Eventually, they have to take over so that there will be no need for foreign missionaries. They must be true disciples who are making disciples for Christ. Hence, we have adopted this mission statement:

*To reach and teach Cambodians that they may obey the Great Commission of making disciples that make disciples for Christ.*



## Sangkhim Canaan School

With support from many brothers and sisters from Singapore and other countries, Sangkhim Canaan School was started in 2009. We first rented a building to operate Kindergarten classes with Youmi Kim as the first principal. She is the daughter of Kim Han Sik and was commended by two assemblies in the USA. After 2 years, the school moved into the new campus built on the 5.4-hectare farmland. Hort Hor, a Cambodian believer, took over as School Principal in 2012.

Over the past 11 years, the school grew by adding a new grade level every year. Today SCS has students in Nursery, kindergarten, primary, secondary, and high school. SCS will add Grade 11 and 12 in the coming years. Eventually, SCS will see an enrolment of 1,200 students and 70 staff. This **Christian** School provides many opportunities for evangelism and discipleship. Working on a self-sustaining model, today the school's operations are financially supported by the school fees. We will need to raise funds for facilities expansions. There is a need to build two more blocks for classrooms, workshops, and science laboratories within the next 2 years.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, all schools in Cambodia are closed from March. Some parents also stopped paying the monthly school fee. However, the school continues to pay the staff 75% of their salary. This arrangement helps to support their livelihood, notwithstanding that most of the private schools in Cambodia had layoff their team. We hope that when the new academic year commences in October 2020, the fees and salaries can revert to normal.

During the COVID lockdown, the staff are working doubly hard, creating e-learning materials, and learning packs to help the students in distant learning. Since many students do not have Internet access, they pick up the learning packs from the school every week. As the lockdown prolong, we began to explore

making multi-media lessons and send to the students' smartphone. We created chat groups for each class and subjects for better communication. Some older students have their studies via zoom with their teachers. At the request of parents and students who have difficulties learning on their own, we created small groups to meet in the school open space. Since March, the Ministry of Education had closed all schools, but SCS continues to assist students learning. We hope the school can reopen in October.

To lift the staff morale, they have weekly staff devotion and daily morning prayers. During pandemic fear, our security and comforts are in the Lord. Even though about half the staff are non-believers, they appreciate the biblical values and worldview that we subscribed to. Several had placed their faith in Christ after joining the school.

Student outreach come in many creative forms like prayers and singing at the morning assembly and weekly **Christian** Education lesson in the class. The students also attend a weekly chapel session. Students are encouraged to participate in the bible camps and vacation bible school organised by Sangkhim Church. From a survey conducted on Primary 5 and 6 students, more than half acknowledge **Jesus** as their Saviour. They have a clear understanding of the gospel. Most of them believe secretly in their heart for fear of parental objection. As they progress to the higher grade and begin to be more open of their faith, they start to face with strong opposition. Many people hold firmly to their belief system from the syncretism of indigenous animistic beliefs mixed with Buddhism and Hinduism. The new **Christian** will face objections from grandparents, uncles, and aunties, besides their own parents. Some parents transferred them out of SCS. They like the school values but not the **Christian** Faith. Several are sternly told not to join the activities organised by Sangkhim Church.



## Sangkhim Church

Sangkhim Church was started in September 2017 when Kian Huat met with some staff regularly for prayers and bible study. The Lord impressed on his heart to plant an assembly in the school campus. We need a strong local Assembly to support the school in evangelism.

We also hope that Sangkhim Church will produce good leaders who can lead Sangkhim Canaan School, replacing the school board with Cambodian nationals. Now, the school board members are believers from three assemblies in Singapore. We believe that this mission work in Kampong Chhnang should be

led entirely by Cambodian Christians. We are preparing the leaders of Sangkhim Church to lead the school and continue with evangelism and discipleship ministries.

On 17 December 2017, Sangkhim Church started her first meeting in the newly completed chapel and started breaking of bread on 17 June 2018. The first baptism was conducted in June 2018. Hort Hor, the principal of Sangkhim Canaan School, was among the first batch which was baptised. Over the past 3 years, we have conducted 6 baptism services. The Lord added precious souls to the Church. Today we have 46 baptised members. After COVID-19, we hope to see more believers taking the step of baptism. The typical Sunday meetings also see many youths and children attending Sunday school.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, the weekly breaking of bread meeting was held in three locations viz, the school, a believer's house, and Bethany House. Since August 2020, we started to meet discreetly, once a month, for combined breaking of bread in the chapel since the local authority had no plan to reopen churches. We also changed the weekly youth meeting to Wednesday morning instead of the usual Saturday meetings.

Across the centuries, Christians could worship even when prevented from meeting in a physical location because we gather to Christ instead of a building. Like all churches worldwide, we found ways to be the Church without being physically together. The believers continue to be light and salt, where the Lord places us.

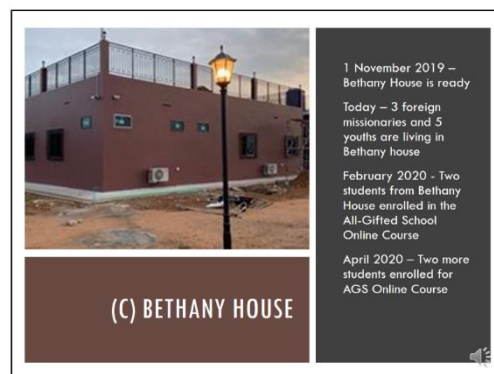
Sangkhim Church has three Cambodian commended workers. They are Boret Chheng, Maradysambath and a sister Mouryngim Kuoy. They are involved in teaching and outreach, giving pastoral care to the members as they work alongside the three foreign missionaries, Kian Huat, Akiko, and Annie Khoo.

In August 2018, Annie Khoo, commended by Island Glades Gospel Center (Penang), joined the team. Fluent in Khmer and with many years of mission work, she connects effectively with students, school staff, and parents. Many are helped spiritually. During the COVID lockdown, she conducted personal bible study to help many new believers grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

During a typical year, Sangkhim Church conducts Children Camp, BASIC Camp and Youth Camp. We usually have teams coming from overseas to help us. After COVID, we are looking forward to welcoming groups from Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia when the camps resume. Through these camps, youth meetings and Sunday School, we are reaching many students of Sangkhim Canaan School. Through the students, we have direct links with their family members and neighbours. Hence Sangkhim Church is seeing more than 3,000 souls swimming into our net. Pray that the Lord of the Harvest will send out more fishers of men.

## Bethany Mission House

Bethany House was completed in November 2019. This mission house, like Sangkhim Church, is a faith ministry. The work is independent of Sangkhim Canaan School and is financially supported by offerings from the Lord's people.

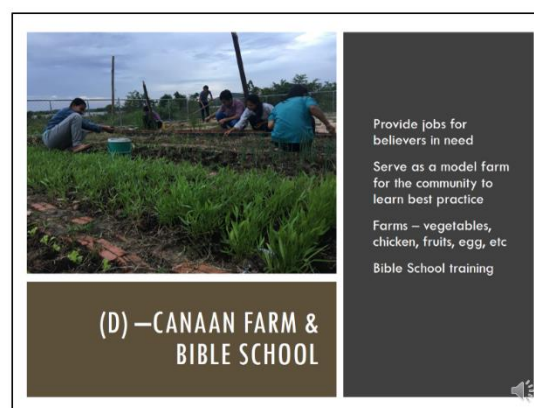


Besides providing accommodation and physical support for foreign missionaries, Bethany House ministry also focuses on discipleship and training to nurture potential young people. There are rooms for 12 Cambodian students. After many prayers and observations, we invited 5 students to live in Bethany House. They are “adopted” into the Bethany Family to experience practical discipleship training through living with missionaries. We also coach them in their studies so that they do well academically and spiritually.

Four students in Bethany House are doing All-Gifted School (AGS) Online courses. They meet their American tutors via teleconferencing every week. This program will lead to a US-accredited High School diploma recognised by universities overseas. After 3 to 4 years in Bethany House, we will look for sponsors and scholarships to support them to study in Singapore or the USA. We hope they will return to teach in Sangkhim Canaan school and to help in Sangkhim Church. They may be the future leaders of the assembly and the school.

Bethany House is a haven of rest for foreign missionaries. It makes it possible for a new arrival to settle down quickly so that they can focus on ministry instead of being bogged down by the need for safe accommodation and meal preparation. Pray that the Lord will send us more new students and missionaries.

## Canaan Farm and Bible School



We are developing farming projects on the 2 hectares plot. This is to create jobs for the people we are trying to reach. Many believers and members of Sangkhim Church need employment. In mission, we need to provide bread and bible together, like the Lord feeding the 5,000 and teaching them the Sermon on the Mount.



Oftentimes when we visit people after an accident or illness, they become more receptive to the gospel. The new opening to connect with them leads to providing practical help. In the past, we provided jobs as helpers in the school canteen, cleaners in school, assistant teachers, a gardener in the farm, etc. It is so heart-warming to see these people and their family coming to assembly meetings after receiving practical support for their livelihood. As the Lord enables, we will start vegetable and chicken farming soon. To do well, we need faithful workers to manage these projects. Once we identify them, we will invest in their life so that they will remain with us.


Recently we built a Cambodian-style house next to Bethany House for a brother and his family with two children. Sundeth is the chef of Manna House, the school canteen. His wife Chanthon, is the HR Manager of SCS. Together they are influencing other Cambodians. We plan to build 3 more houses for such families who will be leaders in the farm projects and bible school ministry.

Akiko is managing Manna House operations with 8 workers under our payroll. They prepare healthy and economical food for the staff and students. With good lunch available, the students need not go home for lunch and then return to school for the afternoon session. During the COVID-19 lockdown, we continued to pay them 75% of their salary even though there were no sales. Manna House provided free lunch for all staff during this period to encourage them who work hard every day.

Bible School is the next phase of development over the next two years. Boret Chheng was teaching in a Baptist Bible School in Kampong Speu before he moved to join the team in Kampong Chhnang. He is earmarked to lead the bible school project. If the Lord opens the way, we hope to send him for further training with an assembly related bible school. This will further equip him in English and enable him to gain a deeper understanding of NT principles and practices. The students will come for a 10-month live-in training like the Australia GLO Cross-Connect Course. Soon, we must commence building more dorms and classrooms at the second level of Bethany House for the bible school.



## Camps 2019



Official religion is Buddhism - 98% of the population


Evangelical Christianity – 2%


**Common beliefs**

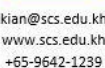
- Wat (Buddhist monastery)
- Sangha (monkhood)
- Reincarnation
- Ancestor worship
- Accumulation of merit to get to heaven

Christian often faces persecutions

### CHALLENGES OF THE MINISTRY







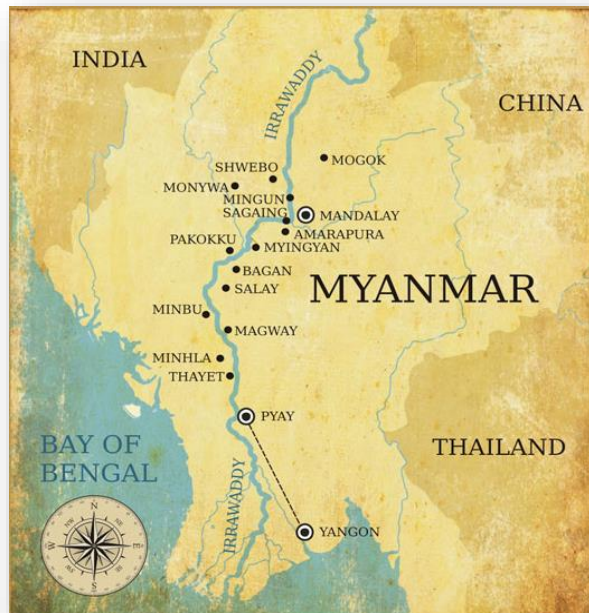
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## Mynammar Church Planting

Loh Ah Asiau & Steve Soo



### Preliminary Ground Survey

Brother Loh Ah Asiau and Sis. Fee Chin set foot in Yangon and Mandalay in Myanmar for the first time in April 2004. Ah Asiau taught at the Christian Training Centre started and operated by Brother Philip Nang and Brother Ling Kee. At the same time, Ah Asiau was also exploring the possibility of starting some ministries in Myanmar. At first, they were attracted by the ministry in Mandalay and Philip Nang also promised to help but unfortunately, nothing came of it.

We supported Philip Nang's church planting in Pinpadan (near the border of Yangon), and helped them to buy a piece of land and built a bamboo house for church meetings and fellowship. Due to some issues, we stopped all support including biblical teaching at his seminary, after a few years.

### Pyapon Church Planting

There was an extremely destructive and deadly tropical cyclone that caused the worst natural disaster in the recorded history of Myanmar in early May 2008 in the Irrawaddy Delta. MMM (Malaysian Myanmar Ministry started by Kajang Life Chapel in 2015) and other churches in Malaysia raised a total sum of USD 12,255 in financial aid. The financial aid was then sent to the Committee handling the disaster/crisis in Yangon by Brother Loh Ah Asiau and Brother Ling Kee on 15 June 2008.

During the meeting in Yangon, Brother Loh Ah Asiau reminded and emphasized to the rest that other than supplying material needs to the cyclone victims, we should also look into their spiritual needs. The word of God must be proclaimed so that the Kingdom of God can be expanded in that land. The committee members responded enthusiastically to this call. Brother Ling Kee called on the church leaders in Yangon to take up this

challenge. Finally, three Assemblies in Yangon responded to the call to plant a church in the Irrawaddy Delta.



On 16th June 2020, the relief committee together with Brother Khup Do, and other full-time workers met up, mainly to discuss and plan about the details and vision of church planting. The leaders of three local churches, Dagong Christian Church, Canaan Gospel Church and Dagong Believer Church jointly established "Irrawaddy Church Development Committee".

Within one week, our team went to visit the Irrawaddy Delta. We visited two villages, and understood their needs. Finally, we chose to set our feet in Pyapon. Pyapon is a town located in Pyapon District in the Ayeyarwady Division of Myanmar, Irrawaddy Delta. Pyapon is considered to be located in a very strategic place closest to those two villages. God also listened to our prayers and prepared brother Khup Do who has been trained in the Bible seminary and has past experience working in urban and rural areas. Kajang Life Chapel began to support the whole ministry.



MMM started with the construction of the church, but stopped two years later and handed it over to GOWW. Since then, Kajang Life Chapel began to supervise the entire construction until it was completed. The new building has become the center of the church ministry in that area.

Under the guidance of God, the church is growing with new believers. Among them, two young sisters devoted themselves to study at the South East Asia Bible College in Yangon, Myanmar. After graduation, they returned to Pyapon and served in their hometown as full-time teachers in the preschool. We have been supporting them since then. Apart from Sunday worship, the most active ministries are the youth and children ministries.



By the grace of God, this ministry is about to enter its twelfth year, and the church is considered independent. By February 2020, we only support the two teachers who are involved full-time in the preschool ministry.



## Mandalay Church Planting

In the beginning of 2014, we interviewed and selected two of the graduates from South East Asia Bible College (SEABC), brother Khai Lay and brother Tin Htay to be our workers. Both of them have also completed the master's program. Brother Tin Htay is a Buddhist Background Believer (BBB), while brother Khai Lay is a Chin, from a minority group in the North. Brother Tin Htay is also a college graduate. Although his father was a monk, brother Tin Htay has a great burden and heart to win the souls of the largest ethnic group in Myanmar for the Lord. We



encouraged Yangon Canaan Gospel Church to be involved with the view of beginning a church planting movement in Myanmar.

Brother Tin Htay works very hard and aggressively to preach the gospel. He is very popular and has been widely invited by churches and organizations in Myanmar to preach. This is not healthy for the newly-planted church at Mandalay. We thought of many ways to supervise him and emphasize to him that he must focus on Mandalay Gospel Chapel (MGC).



Finally, we decided to manage this ministry directly without the assistance of SEABC and Canaan Gospel Church. Praise the Lord, in year 2015, God prepared a brother, Samuel, to help us. He is Chin, the son of a church planter. Samuel graduated from Indian Theological Seminary. He is also very burdened with the development of the Brethren Movement in Myanmar. Samuel has officially become our supervisor and key contact person since January 2017. With his physical help and arrangements, we are able to participate in a few teaching and training sessions in northern Myanmar. We also trained Samuel to plant churches using our KLC model:

**1. Contact > 2. Pre-Evangelism, 3. Prepare the Ground & Follow-up > 4. Gospel > 5. Nurture> 6. Disciple Making > 7. Leadership Training > 8. Church > 10. Spinning Out**



Once again, praise the Lord. In nearly six years, eleven persons in Mandalay accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. MGC is still growing and actively approaching the neighbours around that area. Due to MCO, brother Tin Htay has been conducting home gatherings at three different believers' houses every Sunday.





## Monywa Church Planting

There are two main reasons and visions that led us to plant a church in Monywa. First, the first fruit of MGC was Brother Tin Htay's eldest brother, Brother Myin Htay, who comes from Kyauk Myat village. Brother Myin Htay with a family of four, accepted Jesus and they were also the first batch of baptized believers.

After returning to their village, the family faced opposition and persecution from the villagers. The village chief is a monk and threatened to cut off water and electricity supply if they did not give up Christianity. Thank God, Brother Myin Htay and the families prayed and looked up to the Lord, and they replied: "We will not abandon Christ!" After that incident, several family members believed and accepted Jesus Christ.

We visited the village several times. It takes about three hours to reach there from Mandalay. Along the journey, we always pass through a city, named Monywa, the fourth largest city in Myanmar. Due to the long distance, it is impossible for brother Myin Htay and families to travel all the way to and from Kyauk Myat village for Sunday worship in Mandalay every week.

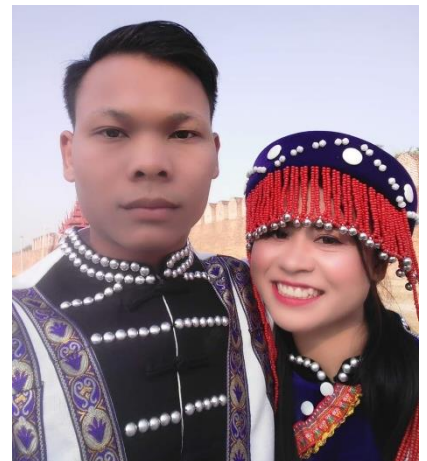


Therefore, we suggested and arranged for brother Tin Htay to go back to the village every two months to break bread with them.

The second reason why we started the ministry in Monywa is because of our new full-time worker, brother Mok Khai, who is a Buddhist Background Believer. He quit secondary school to work as a construction worker (truck driver) when he was young. He went to the temple to learn to be a monk after knowing that people do have life after death.

One day, he was attracted and excited when he heard someone (brother Tin Htay) preaching about Jesus. Knowing that this was another way to go heaven, he began to call on the name of Jesus. Not long after, brother Mok Khai met with a serious accident at the construction area. The accident was very serious, but God saved his life. Later, brother Tin Htay visited him again and showed him the true way of salvation from the Bible. He accepted Jesus and since then has dedicated himself to the Lord.

Brother Mok Khai was so eager for God's words that he immediately went to Yangon to participate in a three-month discipleship training programme. After that, he went to the Brethren Theological Seminary in North Myanmar for three years and graduated in February 2019. During those three years, he often returned to MGC and received the pastoral care and support of the church, and brother Tin Htay also gave him guidance and opportunities to practice his biblical studies through serving. Brother Mok Khai has taken our training course and he is very clear about our church planting model. He married a seminary student from SEABC in the beginning of 2020, and both of them also wanted to start a church in Monywa. This ministry was begun in March 2020.



## Conclusion

Thank God for opening and leading the way all these years for us to be involved in the ministries in Myanmar, a strongly staunch Buddhist country. Until now, we are still not able to apply for visas to stay longer, mainly because we refused to give bribes. As a Malaysian, we can get a 28-day Myanmar Tourist Visa online. With this approach, we can still enter Myanmar frequently to do His work. Pray for God's guidance and mercy as we continue to expand His Kingdom in this country.



## A WORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN Mr. Jimmy Chok

### Facing an uncertain future: Chin refugees in Malaysia

Such is the headline nowadays! Since 2004, when MMM came into being, the situation has become much more challenging for the Myanmar Chin brothers and sisters in Malaysia.

Their hope in UNHCR for finding them a new home in some 3<sup>rd</sup> country has dwindled over the years. At the time of writing, I just heard from the grapevine that the “Livelihood Unit in UNHCR has been closed down”.

In MMM, we are called to pray, think and pursue after God’s Heart and Will in such a situation. During PITH held at PJ Gospel Hall some years ago, this calling “at our doorstep” was shared and emphasized. It is heartening to see several Assemblies have directly or indirectly plunged into the Ministry, building fellowship with Myanmar brothers and sisters in the continued joint effort of sowing the Good Seed (Matt. 13:24).

As the challenges of the Ministry loom before us, our hearts strive toward greater faith, that God’s Will for His Kingdom comes to earth amongst His people, so that the world, however dark, will have “the Light” to behold (Luke 11:33).

This Prayer Letter seeks to report and share, as well as seek God’s Hand in the mobilization of His Workers and other resources into the field of Diaspora Mission!

## Myanmar Christian Assemblies in Malaysia (MCAM)

Other than these congregations, there are several small groups in Ipoh, Cameron Highlands and Johor Baru, which our Myanmar coordinator worker visits periodically to minister The Word of God and deliver messages of encouragement.

The group which had met under the name of “Evangelical Baptist Church” in Gospel Hall Kuala Lumpur for over 10 years, has been moved at end-2019 to a location closer to members’ residents in Pandan Indah area.

There was also a Myanmar group meeting in Bandar Puchong Gospel Centre for a number of years, until they moved out to a nearby location due to larger capacity required. Contacts are still maintained in The Lord.

Location	Families	Single	Total	Fellowship with Local Assemblies
1 MCAM Kepong	29	27	130	
2 MCAM Subang Jaya	32	30	147	Subang Gospel Centre
3 MCAM Cheras Mahkota	17	17	68	
4 Tahdo Christian Fellowship, Kepong	6	30	40	
5 MCAM Seremban	36	36	148	Gospel Hall Seremban
6 MCAM Hebron, Pudu	25	11	104	Cheras Gospel Centre
7 MCAM Rawang	38	32	70	
Total	183	183	707	

Over the last 15 years, several hundred brothers and sisters in our ministry fellowship have been resettled under UNHCR, mainly in USA and Australia.

The Covid-19 pandemic has tremendously impacted refugees’ lives. Two lots of humanitarian livelihood relief have been distributed to needy families from various Myanmar congregations.

During the height of pandemic, the Movement Control Order (MCO) from March to June 2020, all Myanmar Assembly members lost their income from daily wages. Since June when the MCO was partially lifted, coffee shops and eateries have gradually re-opened, allowing many Myanmar brothers and sisters to return to work. To-date, about 80% of MCAM members have returned to work. We sincerely hope the economy will recover and livelihood will not be a problem for all refugees.

## Myanmar Coordinator Worker

The first Worker, brother Ling Kee, who came from Myanmar to kick off the work in 2004, was resettled in 2015 to USA through UNHCR, together with his family.

Brother Ki Aung Thang took over the role until he and his family were in turn resettled to Australia via UNHCR in early 2020. Since then, just before the pandemic MCO, brother Amos who was leading the congregation in Subang Jaya has taken over the role and relocated himself and his wife, Sennu, to Kepong.

Thank God for sending His Worker into the field in a timely manner. The past and present Workers are all English speaking and can effectively coordinate the Ministry with the MMM team and local Assemblies coming into fellowship with the Myanmar congregations.

Thank God for the Assemblies’ contributions that enable MMM to provide around RM15,000 per annum towards partially supporting this Myanmar worker as well as periodical short term part-time workers. This fund is currently combined with the congregational offering at MCAM, Kepong, that manages disbursement.

## Myanmar Refugee Children Schools

Upon reminiscing, the lack of education for children was one of the main reasons that caused the Myanmar Chin people to leave their homeland of generations and become refugees to seek a better homeland.

The system of “Monastic schools in Myanmar”, {[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monastic\\_schools\\_in\\_Myanmar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monastic_schools_in_Myanmar)} is unacceptable to the Myanmar Chin who has lived by the Christian Faith for many generations.

“Chin Student Organisation|Hope for the Future” (<https://www.csomalaysia.org/>), (CSO), is the concerted effort of the Myanmar Chin refugees in Malaysia to educate their children. However, there have been situations when certain Chin community schools encountered financial difficulties so since 2009, MMM was called to serve Myanmar refugee schools.

Currently, MMM is in partnership with SHELTER - Home for Children in running two Myanmar refugee children schools, i.e.:

“Shelter School 2” in Bandar Puchong, next to Bandar Puchong Gospel Centre, and “Shelter School 5” located at C-05-01, Jalan Teratai 1/2F, Taman Bukit Teratai, Ampang.

Both schools have around 80 registered students at the beginning of 2020.

School 5 also has the partnership of Pastor Daniel of The Korean Church in KL and was also named “Han International School”. Since 2015, Pastor Daniel has mobilized considerable funds from the Korean community in Ampang, KL, as well as sponsors in Korea for the running of the school.

Pastor Daniel has also been instrumental in the establishment of a café in early 2018 on the ground floor of the school block. The ultimate intention of the Café is to provide skills training for the students upstairs. This is the D C T Café serving popular Korean food (D T C stands for “Dream Comes True”!):

Possibly due to the location of the Café at the far edge of the Taman Bukit Teratai suburb in the Ampang area where accessibility is not convenient for the general public, its clientele is mainly limited to supportive fellow Christians



During the ongoing onslaught of the pandemic, even though MMM has been addressing family livelihood needs, the refugee schools are also facing hardship.

Our Ministry Partner SHELTER, just as churches in general, is facing reduced contribution of funds and if this situation persists, the running of the schools will be drastically impacted.

For School 2, MMM contributes RM1800 while SHELTER contributes RM4,900 per month.

For School 5, SHELTER provides RM400 for skills training and food from its store.

Pastor Daniel of the Korean Church, the other Ministry Partner, is also facing unprecedented challenges:

Support from Korean Churches are not arriving on time and teachers' wages are owing since August 2020;

Korean Pastors and volunteers from Korea who come periodically to teach and manage sessions, cannot come and Pastor Daniel is left very much alone;

The school van driver left suddenly and Pastor Daniel was forced to drive it even though he has a back problem caused by an accident a few years ago. His difficulty was compounded by the van having a manual gear shift. SHELTER provided help by paying RM1500 to hire a new driver.

Due to fear of the pandemic, local volunteer teachers have virtually stopped coming to help.

With our very limited resources which are likely to further reduce in the coming months, the question of funding prioritization arises as the refugees will be forced to choose between food on the table, roof over the head and education for the children! The former is to live decently and healthily, while the latter is to invest in the future of the next generation.

Many believe that the full adverse impact of the pandemic upon Malaysia's economy is yet to rear its head. It will be very bad if there is a second imposition of MCO!

Nevertheless, particularly in School 5, we are racing against time to provide more skills training which are crucial for the children, no matter where they go in the future.

In any case, the needs of the fellow believers that MMM seek to meet are basic and obvious. They cannot be met by a handful of Assemblies (less than 20% currently), instead, mobilization of most, if not all Assemblies, is needed urgently!

## Resettlement

The UNHCR says there are three likely scenarios facing the Chin in Malaysia. “Solutions could include resettlement, local integration or the possibility of voluntary return to Myanmar,”

Voluntary return is not an option for most of the Chin and many are hoping to join the thousands already accepted for permanent resettlement in a third country.”

It is now close to 20 years since the Myanmar brothers and sisters in Christ appeared in our midst. Facing an uncertain future, plus the added challenges of the pandemic mean more difficulties may be in store! As part of the Church community, we have to pray and seek for the response required of us!

In recent years, the question of “Diaspora Mission” has been emphasised. Since 2015, “National Diaspora Symposium” has been organised to network, learn and mobilise the Church Community to respond to the mission call of the time! (<https://ecb.org.my/2019/03/14/national-diaspora-symposium-2019-event/>)

This development has also been shared within the Assemblies. May there be hope that the overall response from the Assemblies will be much more enthusiastic, lest we are found lacking in the purpose of The Church of the time in which we live and are called to serve!



## Understanding Grief

Cheah Lay Lin

Grief is defined as the normal and natural reaction to change or loss of any kind. It is the response to a change in, or end of, any familiar pattern of behaviour. (The Grief Recovery Handbook, J. James and Russel Friedman, 2009)

As we go through life, we may experience at least forty three types of losses. Beside the tangible losses like death of loved ones, retirement, child leaving home and injury, there are intangible losses like loss of trust, loss of approval, loss of safety and loss of control of one's body.

Grief is also mixed emotions. For example, after divorce, one may feel relieved that the constant fights and animosity with the ex spouse are finally over but at the same time there may be struggles with "What if....?"

Graduation signifies a move to a new unknown and leaves behind memories of many shared experiences with friends. One may feel sad to leave school yet excited about moving forward.

At death of a loved one, the caregiver may feel a deep sense of relief that the stress of hospital visits, medical emergencies and the daily grind of caregiving and constant anxiety about the outcome of each treatment have ended but the vacuum that exists now and the loss of identity are nonetheless distressing.

The Covid 19 pandemic has not only caused loss of lives and financial security but a loss of lifestyle - the way we express our faith, carry out cultural practices like funerals and weddings, leisure activities and the way we socialise with family and friends. The world is experiencing grief.

The Bible is replete with examples of characters who suffer grief and indeed the Lord Jesus himself is described as "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." At the tomb of a dear friend, Jesus wept, displaying his human nature openly.

Naomi's world crumbled after the loss of her husband and two sons and on returning to Bethlehem, she called herself "Bitter". Job cursed the day he was born when he lost his children, his immense wealth and health. Joseph wept as he revealed his identity to his brothers who had betrayed him. It was perhaps the loss of his childhood and family and worse still, the intangible loss of trust in his own flesh and blood that broke like a burst dam that day, even after twenty years!

### Grief Misunderstood

Often people rush too quickly to replace a loss without dealing with the pain of grief. This often results in complications as the grief is unresolved. You find someone new and expect her to give you the same experience as the person you have lost.

Another mistake is to bury your pain through unhealthy ways like alcohol, drugs, overindulgence in food or even exercise. No doubt there is some value in distracting yourself occasionally but completely ignoring your true feelings will not help recovery.

For the Christian, imposing expectations to be joyful and calm after a loss is not only very harmful but paints a picture of false spirituality.

### Comforting the Griever

*"When hints of sadness creep into our soul, we must not flee into happy or distracting thoughts. Pondering sadness until it becomes overwhelming can lead us to a deep change in the direction of our being from self-preservation to grateful worship."*  
– Larry Crabb

The pain of grief is real and we need to allow someone who has just experienced loss to go through that dark place and not try to push them to bounce back to normal. When we are there as the silent presence, honouring the pain, not dismissing it, we are comforting the griever. Keep the preaching for another time.

### Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

It is interesting to see how the Lord comforted his sad disciples as they were on the way to Emmaus after the Crucifixion.

*He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast.* Luke 24:17.

The Lord Jesus allowed them to pour out their despair and confusion. He took the time to listen patiently. As the Body of Christ, can we walk alongside those who are grieving? Sure Heaven is beautiful but the ones left behind have to struggle to continue living without the deceased. They have to rebuild their life with new roles, responsibilities, identities and find meaning again. When we offer a helping hand to do new tasks which are difficult and go alongside the griever, we show true compassion and genuine care that will help to heal the pain of loss.

### Catastrophic Loss

In his book 'A Grace Disguised', Gerald Sittser described his experience of grief after his wife, mother and daughter died in a car accident. "I remember the realization sweeping over me that I would soon plunge into a darkness from which I might never again emerge as a sane, normal, believing man." His loss was so devastating that his faith was shaken to the core but questions are only normal for they reveal the depth of trust in the Saviour. We must allow them.

A Christian sister who had lost her husband and three sons in a tragic accident said to me, "I know God is real but I still need people to show me He cares!" The experience of grief can help the soul develop a new grasp of the sovereignty of God. This lesson is the hardest to swallow especially in catastrophes.

### Is there a Balm in Gilead?

The church of the compassionate Christ, should be a haven for the grieving world. The sorrowful and despairing surely should

find a listening ear, a shoulder to cry on so that they can find strength to move on. Are we equipped to comfort our own or are they left to flounder due to our misunderstanding of grief?

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPNWTq7IISo>

*Cheah Lay Lin is a Registered and Licensed Counsellor. Served in Seremban Gospel Chapel for over 30 years in various ministries including Sunday School, Ladies Bible Study, Grief Support and Counselling Ministry. Currently based in Penang and volunteers at DHome, Association for Mental Health Awareness as a visiting Counsellor. She now attends Burmah Road Gospel Hall*

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## Malaysian Missionary Services Trust

Lee Kim Seong

*“Remembering the Lord’s commended workers... from our local assemblies”*

**Malaysia Missionary Services Trust**, better known as **MMS Trust**, was set up with the purpose of looking into the welfare of Assembly Commended Workers, in particular those who have been commended by their home assemblies to serve in Assembly connected ministries locally and cross culturally. The Trust recognizes and respects that commending assemblies act as the first and primary provider of care and support to the worker commended by them. MMS Trust, as an assembly agency acting on behalf of all assemblies in the country, acts to further add support and encouragement to the assemblies in the commendation of workers to the Lord’s work. More details on MMS Trust’s objectives and activities can be found in CBSM’s website. Do look us up at:

<https://www.cbsm.com.my/site/malaysia-missionaries-services/>

MMS Trust’s regular financial commitments to the commended workers include an annual fellowship gift of RM52,400 paid to 67 commended workers and their families. This amount/number vary slightly over the years. In addition to this, RM28,000.00 was utilised as gifts to assist workers in their resettlement back in the country after their ministries ceased or were completed. Together with a few other love gifts, insurance premiums incurred for OA workers (RM4,514) and an administration expense (RM3,600), the Trust made total payments of RM90,038 in 2019. However, the 2019 income (comprising contributions from local assemblies, a few individuals & FD interest) was only RM67,673. Due to an operating deficit,

the Trust had to draw upon their fixed deposits to offset the 2019 deficit.

The above represents some of MMS Trust’s regular financial commitments. On top of this, educational loans are given to the children of commended workers upon application. Among other proposals, there is a current plan to help the OA commended brethren with an annual ‘starting the school term’ financial assistance. We never know when one of the Lord’s workers will need emergency financial or medical assistance. The rising cost of living has made all these even more urgent. In partnership with the commending assembly, MMS Trust would like to respond, ably and responsibly, to these requests for assistance when the need arises.

To be in a better position to fulfil all of MMS Trust’s objectives and carry out our activities, the financial position of the Trust needs to be more stable and robust to better meet regular financial commitments and also during times of urgency and unforeseen need. We would like to call upon all assemblies, in your regular efforts to support all the Lord’s mission organisations and workers, to participate also in the support of commended workers from the local assemblies.

Please set aside an annual gift for MMS Trust; make known the objectives and activities of MMS Trust to the brothers & sisters in your assembly; and personally, in your legacy, consider putting MMS Trust as a beneficiary. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the MMS Trust team (see website for contact list) for more details and information on how you can better support our local commended workers or email us at [mmstrust1@gmail.com](mailto:mmstrust1@gmail.com)

Over the years the generosity of God’s people has made mission work possible. Through prayer and giving, this continues today. The generosity and support of God’s people enables the Assembly Commended Workers to carry out a fantastic work for our Lord. Our God has proven through the years that He will supply. Many believers, making even the smallest of donations, enable MMS TRUST to meet its objective. Thank you!

## MMS Trust Board Members

Chairman: Ong Hock Chye  
Secretary: Raymond Hoh  
Treasurer: Chris Tay

Members:  
Stephen Lew  
Lee Kim Seong  
Chun Sam Tuck  
Lim Wee Leong  
Charles Ng

# YOUTHS

## Future Jobs

YL Khong

Not too long ago, I had a conversation with a **Christian** brother mentioning that I might step down from my current semi-retirement position running a science discovery center and finally properly retire. His response was that I can now consider committing myself to doing the Lord's work more fully, which is better. I replied that I am doing the Lord's work now, in my secular position. It sets me thinking that perhaps in the minds of believers, there is greater value in "Christian work" as opposed to "secular work".

For a long while, I was also under the same notion. This notion of giving all to serve the Lord is a superior form of work compared to regular secular work. Over the years, I came to realize that wherever the Lord has placed anybody in any vocation, it is a service unto him and channels where his Name can be glorified when that individual excels in what he does. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."*

How we carry ourselves at our workplace, through integrity and application of professional skills are good works that can be seen. If these are connected with the fact that we are Christians, they will make the passage of the Gospel to those who do not know Christ a little smoother. I remember a colleague asking me once in a crisis situation how I can remain so calm. I vaguely recall replying that "My God is bigger than the crisis we are facing now".

In Colossians 3:22-24, Paul wrote

*"<sup>22</sup> Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, <sup>24</sup> since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."*

It is clear that this Colossian passage was written in the context of "secular work" as opposed to "spiritual work". I have read this passage many times. But I missed out something critical in this Colossian passage. What I missed was, there is *an inheritance from the Lord as a reward*, when we do our secular work as working for the Lord and not for human masters. I see in the passage that even in our secular work we are serving the Lord Jesus and will be rewarded!

I have been blessed greatly in my somewhat chequered career that straddled both academia and high technology manufacturing. Along the way, I hired hundreds of engineers, technicians and administrative staff. And the blessing by way of diverse skills, finances, network, opportunities acquired in my secular life have also been useful for the work of the Lord in many ways.

The acumen acquired in my "secular work" which were applied in my "spiritual work" brought about further enhancement to those acumen when they were reapplied in my "secular work". It's like *Sharpening the Saw*, to those of you familiar with Stephen Covey's *7 Habits*.

So, where I am going with all this, especially for those starting off or in their mid-career?

I like to attempt some crystal ball gazing, as to what would be useful for you to shine as light so men may see your good works and glorify our Father; this means the type of skills and personal attributes that future jobs would require. These considerations are made through integrating my past experiences and extrapolating them into the future. The problem with this is, my past has probably scant semblance to your future. So, read on with a grain of salt!

Some things do not change, whether in the past or future - the personal attributes of integrity and truthfulness, commitment and discipline, timeliness of delivery and trustworthiness, quality of work, good communication, pleasant personality will be valued by your colleagues, bosses or other stakeholders. I believe this is akin to the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) that we are meant to develop and exhibit as followers of Christ. I will let you meditate on how the fruit of the Spirit is connected to the desirable personal attributes mentioned above.

However, while the personal attributes are timeless, the competencies required for jobs of the future will change. We can better shine for Him and therefore glorify Him if we can have a better handle on these competencies. What may some of these competencies be?

I think one of the more important skill for future jobs has to do with how we manage and handle information. In previous times, information useful for the job are held by the "old hands", that gained hard-earned information through years of experience and pass them on to their underlings. Today, the Internet is an amazing repository of information. If you can judiciously mine it, can help you work more efficiently and effectively.

So, what does this skill of handling information entail? It entails the ability to effectively gather relevant information, process them i.e. put them together and apply them in the context of the work you are doing. You should also be able



to efficiently archive and retrieve and disseminate them. Let me dissect these in turn.

Firstly, the skill of effectively gathering information. Searching for information on the Internet requires a bit of skill. To be skillful in this, you must use search terms that can lead you to the information you want quickly. This means more than just putting in the keywords. For e.g. judicious use of quotation marks to search by phrase and Boolean operators will bring you to the information you want faster.

Generating original information of course comes from practice of a skill or brought about by imagination. This cannot be found on the Internet. So, the more diligent you are in the practice of a skill and the imagining of a solution rather than try to copy from somewhere, the more creative the information you can come up with. Here, you may need to wean yourself off the copy and paste mentality.

Once you have the pieces of information, you need to process them. You should be able to weed out the true from the false and the relevant from the irrelevant. The Internet is self-regulating. Just as we verify scripture with scriptures, we can use the Internet to verify information we obtain from it. Once assured of the trustworthiness of the information, we can then proceed to use them in decision making or for action. If the information is numerical, you could plot them as graph or apply statistical analysis to it.

The process of systematically archiving useful information is important. Being indisciplined in this regard, I fumble when it is time for me to retrieve the information and lose valuable time. Sometimes I have to go through the information acquisition process all over again and waste even more precious time while my stakeholders wait impatiently for me.

Nowadays in a modern work and business environment, speedy telecommunications and the power of computers have increased the pace and complexity of tasks. The increased interdependencies of tasks between individuals and teams means the ability to quickly and properly disseminate information is important. Many times, we will be dependent on others to complete their portion of tasks before we can proceed with ours. Frustration of others will mount in an organization when status and completion of tasks are not disseminated to them. When critical information is not disseminated, the trust level drops and the credibility of an individual who was negligent in disseminating the information is affected.

You may probably have realized I am describing the skill set of knowledge management. Accompanying this are of course the tools – the application softwares, the devices

and a strong general knowledge on subject matter relevant to your profession.

Behind my office desk one afternoon, I was observing a 60 plus year old and a 20 plus year old as they go about their work. I see how much more velocity the 20 plus year old is in closing tasks and also more consistent in delivering quality work. It was apparent, the ease in the way the younger colleague handle the IT tools was the differentiator in outcome. With the tools, she was able to manage and generate knowledge/information more efficiently. I realize she was performing using the skill sets that is required for jobs of the future. The ease at which she can pick out information on matters related to her job and be innovative in solving problems from information she could gather was indeed impressive.

Thirty years ago, when I started my career, I remember a brother saying that he will not touch a computer with a ten foot pole. Now, at the end of both our careers, he uses at least 3 computers each working day – a work computer, a personal laptop and a handphone. I think this is typical for most workers today. There is no escaping the tools of information management. The ubiquitous nature of these devices for transaction of information should be evident to all, how information is the most precious commodity today.

For a Christian to shine for Christ in the future jobs and even in our service for the Lord, the skill of information or knowledge management I believe will indeed be key in doing well, in whatever one undertakes to do.

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## Career Choices

*Indranee Liew Siew Mei*

### What does the Bible say about work?

1. God created work when He tasked Adam with the responsibility of managing the Garden of Eden.

GENESIS 2:15

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

2. God has a plan for your life.

JEREMIAH 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

3. A Christian employee has a different attitude towards work as we view God as our employer. We are also required to have a great work ethic.

COLOSSIANS 3:23

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters

4. When Christians' attitude is to work for the Lord in their secular jobs, they are a living witness to other people.

MATTHEW 13: 15 - 16

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

## CAREER CHOICES

Choosing a career depends on an understanding of you personality, skills, strengths and values. Self-reflection is a vital step towards choosing a career.

### What natural aptitudes or skills do you have?

Download a free skills assessment at

<https://www.careerkey.org/focus/identify-job-skills/make-my-job-skills-list>

to identify your skills.

### Which Holland personality type matches you?

John Holland's Theory of Career Choice is widely used by career counsellors to identify an individual's personality and related jobs that will provide job satisfaction.

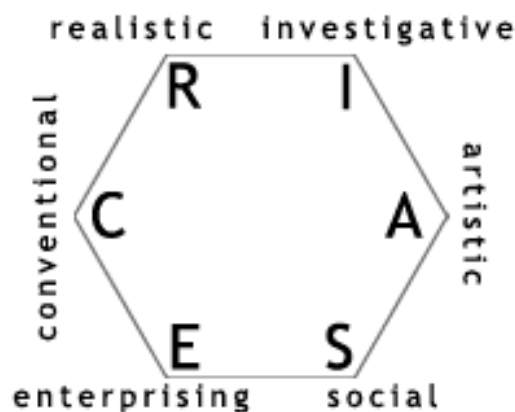
## Holland Code or RIASEC test

Dr John Holland, an academic psychologist, devised the Holland codes to classify people according to their interests so that they can be matched with appropriate careers. His theory is also known as the RIASEC system.

There are six broad areas into which all careers are categorised which are matched to people's personalities and interests. Holland codes help you match what you like to do with appropriate careers. To figure out which careers will suit you, you must first identify your own interest profile by taking a Holland assessment at

<https://openpsychometrics.org/tests/RIASEC/>

RIASEC is an acronym for Holland's 6 interest areas.



### REALISTIC (Interest Area: BUILDING)

Building jobs involve the use of tools, machines, or physical skill. Builders like working with their hands and bodies, working with plants and animals, and working outdoors.

### INVESTIGATIVE (Interest Area: THINKING)

Thinking jobs involve theory, research, and intellectual inquiry. Thinkers like working with ideas and concepts, and enjoy science, technology, and academia.

### ARTISTIC (Interest Area: CREATING)

Creating jobs involve art, design, language, and self-expression. Creators like working in unstructured environments and producing something unique.

### SOCIAL (Interest Area: HELPING)

Helping jobs involve assisting, teaching, coaching, and serving other people. Helpers like working in cooperative environments to improve the lives of others.

### ENTERPRISING (Interest Area: PERSUADING)

Persuading jobs involve leading, motivating, and influencing others. Persuaders like working in positions of power to make decisions and carry out projects.

### CONVENTIONAL (Interest Area: ORGANISING)

Organizing jobs involve managing data, information, and processes. Organizers like to work in structured environments to complete tasks with precision and accuracy.

### What do I do after obtaining my RAISEC score?

After completing the Holland test, you can use the results to obtain information on suitable careers based on your RAISEC scores.

Conducting research on the careers that attract you and arranging for internships in these jobs will enable you to experience real working environments and help you to narrow your career choices.

### How do I prepare for tertiary education?

Once you know what you want, check with local universities on the entrance requirements for the course you want to pursue. Do ensure that your choice of SPM/IGCSE and STPM/'A' level subjects fulfil the entrance requirements. Ideally, parents and teenagers should discuss career options before the teens enter Form 4 (SPM) or Year 10 (IGCSE) as many science based careers require Additional Maths and 3 pure Science subjects.

### What about tuition fees?

Financial support also has great an impact on choice of tertiary education as the fees can range from RM35,000 to RM750,000 depending on the course, so parents of young children are strongly recommended to invest in education insurance plans to facilitate the children's education. Bank loans are available where repayments commence after graduation. Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional or PTPTN loans are available where family income does not exceed RM3,000 monthly. PTPTN rewards academic achievement with loan reductions to promote academic excellence.

### Trust in God's guidance.

Pray for God's leading. Explore different career options by talking to church members about their jobs. Check whether you can intern at their office for one or two weeks.

#### PROVERBS 16:3

Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.

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## Strength in Numbers

*Ivan Lim Eu Wen, The Life Chapel*

"I don't need anyone else to help me. My walk with God is only between Him and I. I don't need accountability partners. I can do this all by myself."

Before RBS 2020, I had this prideful mindset that I didn't need assistance from anyone for my walk with God. I thought that this 'personal' relationship with God was meant to be, well, personal. I thought I only needed to share my burdens with God. This in turn led to me thinking that others wouldn't need my help in their spiritual lives as well. Last year, God sent people to nudge me towards the right way. A school teacher mentioned in passing the importance of accountability, speakers emphasized it, even my best friend asked to be accountability partners with me. All these fell on deaf ears, and I recall grunting unintelligibly and half-heartedly in reply to my friend. Needless to say, my spiritual life was a roller coaster. There were highs after camps and rallies where I would be on fire for God, which inevitably led to lows where God didn't exist in my life. Despite going to church every week without fail and serving actively in the Youth Fellowship, my spiritual life was just inconsistent and erratic.

Then came RBS 2020. My experience in RBS was full of new biblical lessons, strong reminders, and also unforgettable moments with my brothers and sisters in Christ. God gently walked with me and guided me through the quiet times and daily classes, revealing a little more of himself and a little more of my weaknesses each day. Without the distraction of a phone or computer, my mind was clearer, sharper, and more focused as I spent time with God and opened my ears and heart to what He wanted to teach me. Gradually, this, coupled with the grace of God, my eyes were opened and I was finally able to see the error of my ways.

It is so important to be living in and as a community. We weren't just created to be in a community but we need community. In 1 Thessalonians 5:14, Paul urged the church in Thessalonica to warn the idle, to encourage the disheartened. Paul did not tell the church to be encouraged and simply not be idle. This is because we all have blind spots, and we are unaware of our sin unless some outside perspective points it out to us. This can be seen in 2 Samuel 12 in the exchange between David and Nathan. Up until RBS, I had always taken accountability for granted. I was prideful enough to think that I was strong and could walk this spiritual journey all by myself, despite backsliding again and again, on top of all the reminders God had sent me. How mistaken I was. We need community to watch each other's backs and point out blind spots. We need community to be encouraged in





walking this tough road. We need community to share each other's burdens.

Since then, I have opened up and have people who share my burdens, accountability partners who I could pray with and friends I can trust. As a result, I feel less weighed down and I could face this tough spiritual journey with renewed vigour because I know when I fall, my brothers and sisters will have my back. And I, too, will have their back. None of us individually can run this race alone. An eye itself cannot run, the leg by itself cannot see where to run. Therefore, let us run together, spurring one another on in faith, praying with one another, fixing our eyes on Jesus.

Although I attended church regularly, I never had the true experience of living as a community until after RBS. I am grateful for what God has done for me and I definitely won't take accountability for granted again. I am really looking forward to striving on, not alone as I had always done, but as a community.



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## RBS 2020 FLAVOURS

Colin Kirton

In the movie *Forrest Gump*, the title character says that now-iconic line, "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get." Having run the annual Residential Bible School (RBS) in Cameron Highlands for 20 years now, I can say RBS is very much like Forrest's definition of life. We never know what's going on in the lives of students until we get to know them over the course of the six weeks we spend together. Nor do we or the students know beforehand how God plans to journey with them during that time, and what he intends to do in their lives. The "flavours" may differ for each person but each is just as sweet.

**Jadon Marcus** of Grace Chapel Luyang in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, signed up somewhat hesitantly for RBS 2020 as he was the only attendee from east Malaysia and didn't know anyone else beforehand. From the get-go, he was challenged about the shallowness of his faith.

"One of the sessions that really struck me was the 'back to basics' class by Rudi Cheow on Day 2. I couldn't even answer some of the simple questions about my faith. That really got me asking myself, 'How can I call myself a **Christian** if I am unable to answer simple questions about my faith?' I was shocked to realise how little I knew despite being a Christian for so long. I knew I needed to start taking my faith seriously."

Through the course of RBS, Jadon began to see God working in his life to build and strengthen his understanding of his faith. "I saw how God worked not only in me, but also in my friends – how much we have grown spiritually and how we have built each other up. Each one of my friends, the staff and the people I met in this school and on my mission trip to the *orang asli* work in Temerloh has impacted me and taught me something, be it in their sharing, their testimonies or even their actions. Likewise, I want to use my life to be a blessing to others because of how God has blessed me."

For **Dorcas Yeoh** of Permai Chinese Methodist Church, it was another story. "In all honesty, before RBS, I was pretty lost and was backsliding a little even though I was still serving in church and was even the CF president for my college. Serving God and going to church became a routine for me. I didn't feel any joy in serving. I was going through



Dorcas Yeoh

a very dry season where it felt like God wasn't even in the picture anymore. I came to RBS seeking for rest because I was so tired and drained."

During the school, the Holy Spirit convicted Dorcas that these things, together with her academic and cocurricular success, good as they were, had become idols in her life that would never satisfy. Through the morning Scripture meditations and the memory verses assigned, God spoke very clearly through his Word and challenged her deeply to release the idols she so desperately clung to, and to find her rest and satisfaction in him alone.

"I've learnt to renew my strength in God, trust in his plans and to find rest in him. Even though I don't like others controlling my life, I've learnt to let go, to know that God's will is far better than mine and I should let him take the wheel. I am excited to embark on this new restored relationship with God."

**Oliver Chee** of Shah Alam Gospel Centre came to RBS 2020 as a fearful, faithless believer, lacking self-esteem and afraid to step out of his comfort zone. But he left a different man!

"In week 2, I felt God was telling me to step out of my comfort zone. One of the classes that really struck me was on sharing your faith. It really challenged me to have a sense of urgency to share." Oliver was convicted about friends with whom he had never bothered to share the gospel due to his fears.

"One of the activities in RBS was to share the gospel to strangers in the town of Brinchang. To my surprise, at the end of the day, my partner and I actually connected with quite a number of people. We spoke to a fortune teller, a guy that believes in all religions but did not believe in the afterlife, a guy who believes in Gnosticism, and others, but all people that really need to know about the gospel. I really stepped out of my comfort zone that day, and saw God leading me through the Holy Spirit."

Oliver was also shocked when he was chosen by the staff to be a mission team leader for the team going to Seremban Gospel Chapel. With encouragement from the staff and dependence on the Lord to equip and lead him, Oliver rose to the occasion in spite of some initial hesitant steps, and saw God work in him and through him and his team.

"Throughout RBS, I found God telling me that he will use my two fish and five loaves to do things that I never thought I could, and that I should seek him whenever I am weak. One of the verses I memorised at RBS is Isaiah 40:31, where it says that 'those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint.' I now believe God has made me for a purpose to do his will. And by surrendering all my fears, burdens, worries and doubts, the God I serve will lead me, because he is faithful and almighty."



Oliver Chee



Iain Lim

**Iain Lim** of The Life Chapel brought with him to RBS a sense of discouragement and disillusionment from things he had seen done in the name of the **Christian** faith – leaders embroiled in financial mismanagement and sex scandals; false teachings and even apostasy; as well as **Christian**s who didn't walk the talk.

"I have to admit, I had not been a very good role model myself either. I guess I was kinda scared to be a bad ambassador of Christ that I ended up distancing myself from **Christian** community and not getting involved in serving as I should have. I thought that at least I wouldn't give a bad impression of **Christian**ity to people. But I really missed the point. God doesn't want us to be hermits. He wants us to go and make disciples of all nations, and that is something I have to work on."

Iain also began to realise that he was lagging in the discipleship aspect of his faith as he had spent so much time focusing on apologetics in order to justify still believing in Christianity. Through the classes, discussions, testimonies shared by staff and students, conversations, as well as taking active steps of faith and seeing God answer prayers, Iain was also challenged, encouraged and inspired.

"My RBS experience has been a very personal journey with God. Confucius said, 'The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.' But our principal Colin Kirton adds, 'The direction of your single step often determines the direction of your journey of a thousand miles.' God is pointing me towards the right direction, so that I may reach the right destination.

"All the jigsaw pieces are starting to come together to form a bigger picture. And while some pieces are still lacking, I know that I am getting there, and I hope that soon, I will be able to truthfully say that I have put God first, denied myself, taken up my cross and followed **Jesus**."

## Ever Present, Ever Faithful God

*Jason Chew*

Never again. Not after all that I've learnt. I just can't. God has been very real, just as how He has always been. All this time, I never realized just how blind I've been.

My walk with God has had its ups and downs. Growing up in a Christian home, I'd attend church weekly, as well as Sunday School and Youth Fellowship as I grew older. At 15, I attended 3HC, which was a milestone in my journey with God. There, I experienced my first taste of how close a relationship we could have with our amazing, heavenly Father, who wants to have that closeness and intimacy with us. Not just as Father, but Lord in whom we gladly obey and submit to. The 14 days there made a great impact, explaining how God deserved first place in my life.

Coming back from 3HC, I was glad to see the changes in me, as I allowed the Holy Spirit to work within me, slowly but surely conforming to the image of Christ. I started serving in church and in school. It was a blessing to continue to be reminded to keep God in the picture during the weekdays as I studied in a Methodist school, because there would be Christian events through the week and throughout the year. Serving God in school has really helped me be able to stay close to Him. There were the highs and the lows through it all and I was yet to discover that it was walking alongside God during the mundane days of life that made this relationship so special, and not just the occasional "spiritual highs". Along the way, I would eventually realize that it is possible to get so used to something like serving God that it would no longer have the same weight that it should possess.

RBS 2020. A painful yet wondrous event with its plethora of memories made, lessons learnt and experiences shared.

I went with eagerness and excitement, together with a slight uncertainty, but decided to look forward instead of back. Reading through my journal entries, I recall the thoughts and feelings I had regarding my walk with God at the start of RBS. With a sense of readiness in my heart, I desired to have a deeper longing and love for God, to also have a memorable experience. I was expectant for God to mould me and to use me.

Being allocated sufficient time and space to be alone with God in His presence each day without the distraction of the phone was really great. As I quietened myself down and read His Word and chewed on it, I was constantly surprised at how alive it was. I marvelled at how the Holy Spirit worked through communal sharings, where many of us have felt and obeyed the prompting to share.

We were required to do a book report during RBS, and these 4 words caught my eye: "Don't Waste Your Life" by John Piper. It made me question how I was living my life. As I read it, I was astounded by the rich truths which were introduced, and at the center of it, the theme, the main purpose of life: For us to glorify God and be most satisfied in Him. Amazingly, I saw those truths coming to life during our classes and lessons, connecting them to how they either pointed to and added to or taught how to live them out practically.

Throughout RBS, I've had the opportunity to give God my undivided attention, and I've been immensely satisfied and

blessed by who He is. I've also witnessed Him being real through His Word, felt His Spirit, and also heard of the many testimonies of Him being in action in the lives of others as well. The more I know Him, His character, the more I know I can trust in Him, and how evident and real He is.

As the lyrics in the hymn 'Come Thou Fount' go: "Prone to wander, Lord I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love," I have been guided to reflect on how my relationship with God used to be. I think of all the times I'd wander away from His loving side. There's this analogy. God and you in a car. Where would God sit? Often we would like to be the one driving, to steer the car in the direction we want to go, until we make a wrong turn and need God to help us out. Is God the passenger, when He should be the one who drives? Isn't He the one who knows the path to take, each turn; when to step on the brakes, and when to accelerate, all while we joyfully, obediently submit to His lead?

Well to me, there have been times when God did take the wheel, and there have been many times where I would let God take the backseat instead. RBS has allowed me to really reevaluate myself, my life, my priorities and helped me to grasp tightly to the reasons why God deserves my life, my all. To let the knowledge in my head take its place in my heart and be practiced through my hands.

I'm determined not to wander away from His side anymore, after all that we have learnt in RBS and from the years leading up to it, I cannot just return from it and forget all that, forget how God has been so real.

So I strive to put God in His rightful place in my life. Each day I walk with Him, trying to let Him be in charge, to shape me. I still fear I may wander too far away, and I do struggle and fall. But God is faithful, and I will continue to choose Him first. For what life is worth living if it's not a life lived for Him?







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