

January 2017

Focus on

Missions



Dan Ebert's Prayer Letter: December 1956

Greetings to you once again from the jungle-covered mountains of Palawan in the Philippines. Not long ago another page came off the calendar reminding us of the constant and rapid passing of time.

We are now entering the season when multitudes of people will celebrate the birth of Christ. Here in the jungle, as well as in the great cities of America, those who know Christ will thank God for His love and mercy toward a lost and sinful world.

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Up Coming Mission Trips

5 Feb - Rev Daniel Khoo to administer Holy Communion to Batam Churches

5 Mar - Rev Colin Wong to administer Holy Communion to Batam Churches

2 Apr - Rev Daniel Khoo to administer Holy Communion to Batam Churches

7 May - Rev Quek to administer Holy Communion to Batam Churches

4 Jun - Rev Charles Seet to administer Holy Communion to Batam Churches

3 Jul - Rev Colin Wong to administer Holy Communion to Batam Churches



As always, when we remember in a special way the peace and joy that comes from knowing Jesus, we must remember also those who have not that same peace and joy. Even as I write this letter, in through the windows of our nipa home comes the dismal sound of the jungle drums. For many days and nights now, we have gone to sleep and awakened to the terrible beating of these drums.

Just across the river from us lives a small group of Moro tribesmen. Almost this entire tribe follows the religion of Mohammed; and

Dan Ebert's Prayer Letter

unlike our Palawano people, the Moros are not open to the Gospel.

They live in small groups along the coast or interior along the rivers, and consider themselves far above the poor people of the Palawano Tribe. They have more clothes, food, livestock and better houses; but lack the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ that many of their poorer jungle neighbors have come to possess.



The drums we hear today are telling of a Moro wedding. The feast lasts for seven days of drinking, dancing, and sometimes fighting. Almost every event in the life of the people here is marked with the playing of drums, and the drinking of rice wine.

As the people accept the message of the Gospel, the jungle drums become silent and usually just collect dust as they hang unused on the wall of the chief's hut. In many villages this Christmas, the drums will be silent and the joyous sounds of God's children singing His praises will take their place instead.

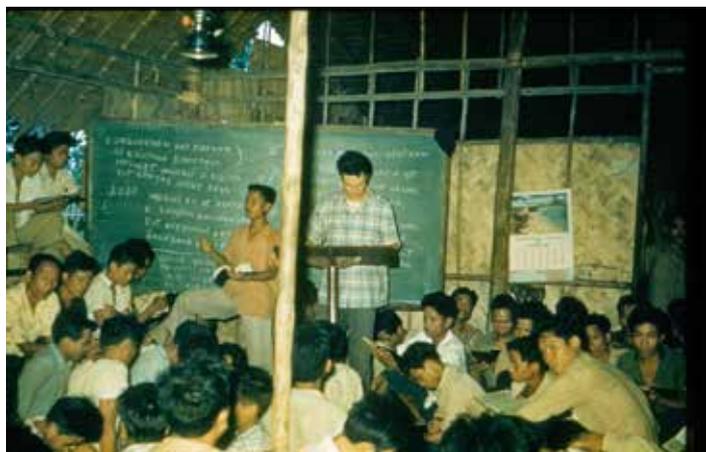


We know you will praise God along with us for the many silent jungle drums; and for those new believers who have grown to be more like Christ and for the open hearts of the Palawano Tribe's People in this area.



We trust that you will continue to remember the work in prayer, that more men and women may be reached with the Gospel of Christ. During that glorious night almost 2000 years ago, the songs of the angels announced the coming of Christ, bringing peace and joy to all men who would accept Him. Today in Palawan, the jungle drums announce that men and women are still in sin's bondage. Many people today still await the message of the glorious Gospel, and that they live and die in filth, disease, and sin, without hope, without Christ.

Here in Sabsaban we all anxiously await the coming of Christmas; and although it doesn't seem like Christmas time with the temperature in the 80's and 90's the children are patiently waiting for Christmas morning and all that it brings.



We praise the Lord for our safety and health as we live surrounded by danger and sickness. Only a few weeks ago Danny Boy was stung by a scorpion that had got into our kitchen. Miraculously the poison did not take effect, and it was no worse than a bee sting.

The Training Camp students also await the Christmas vacation, and will surely enjoy the rest from classes. We thank the Lord for His leading and guiding through the first part of this school year. Christmas will be a time of trying for some students as it will be their first Christmas away from home; but God is able and willing to supply strength and peace in times of trial and testing.

We are expecting our three missionaries from the south to arrive by Christmas time. We are looking forward to a real time of blessing and renewing of spiritual strength. Please remember the girls in prayer as they travel north to our place for a much needed rest, and time of spiritual fellowship.

We will close for now, praying God's richest blessing on all of you this Christmas season. We trust that there in America as you hear the church bells and Christmas Carols announcing another Christmas day, you will not forget the jungle drums crying out in the night of the many Palawanos still without Christ. Remember us and the Missionary training Camp in your prayers, as we endeavor to make the Christmas Story known to all men.

Yours for reaching the lost

Batam Mission Trip

Testimonies by the Ladies Sunday

School Class

2 October 2016. The day finally came. Instead of the usual routine of going to church with our families for Sunday worship, a group of us, members of the Ladies Sunday School and friends gathered at 6:45am at HarbourFront, ready to depart for our one-day trip to Batam. Our mission for that day was to teach the Sunday School and worship with the brethren at Sagulung Baru BP Church.

In fact, the excitement started many weeks ahead of the actual event. For some of us, it was more than 6 years since we last embarked on such a trip together. For some, it would be their maiden visit to our daughter church in Batam to participate in such a program. Everyone in the Sunday School class participated and helped with ideas, preparation of gifts and craft work, our song item, logistics and there was no lack of encouragement.

We arrived in good time and were warmly received by Sister Roska and her husband, Brother Choi. Along the way to the church, we had to navigate through the many narrow lanes between houses in the villages to get to the church. The housing settlement and population around the church has indeed expanded since we last visited, a sign that there is great need for God's work.



Batam Mission Trip

When we reached the church, the children were ready for Sunday School and had started singing, worshipping God. Our program for the day is aptly captured in the following acrostic poem

*God's appointment brought us here
A team of eleven and Pastor dear
Puppet in hand, voice out thrown
Pondering who should ascend Israel's throne
In David's heart was the love for God shown.*

*Singing the chorus "Into My Heart"
Ascertaining 1 Sam 16:7 won't from their
memory part
Going into quiz time, have they been attentive?
Up shot their hands, answers showed that they
were receptive
Bringing the lesson to their art and craft
A picture of a child with God in his heart*

We were so glad to be part of a team to bring God's Word to the children and worship with members of the Sagulung Baru BP Church. This has encouraged us in our faith and God willing, we have gladly started planning for our next mission trip. We hope that the reflections from the team will also encourage you in your walk with God.

Testimonies & Reflections:

We were there to teach at their Sunday school but on that day, there was much to learn from our fellow Christians at Sagulung Bahru Church in Batam. Everyone came in their Sunday best, taking the trouble to dress up for the Lord's Day. The children who came for Sunday School brought along their younger siblings, some as young as 2 – 3 years old. Everyone at Sunday School and Service sang heartily and melodiously. The adults too were most hospitable, laying out Indonesian snacks after Service for their visitors from Singapore. Their church building may be small but they have a big heart for God and His people. Most of all, we could not have taught Sunday School to the children if not for Sister Roska who was our chauffeur and interpreter for the day, switching effortlessly between English and Bahasa Indonesia. Pastor Charles Seet too gave his sermon in Bahasa Indonesia. I'm both humbled and inspired. Perhaps the next time we

visit, we can share the good news with them in a language they understand. (Ong Beng Lay)

It has been a while since we visited the church in Batam. It was a great joy to return with the sisters in our ladies Sunday School. I am very much encouraged by the humbling experience and God's love and grace for the people. All praises and glory to the Lord! (Evelyn Kew)



This was my first missionary trip and it was such an eye opener. I was especially touched to see so many young teens and adults in the church, and even more so, when I learned that they grew up from the children's ministry. It was truly God's grace and love that kept their faith strong as they grew up in a country steeped in Muslim faith. As I shared this with my children, they were also encouraged and hope to come along in our next missionary trip. To God be all the glory. (Sharon Koh)

I did not consider going on mission trips as an area of church ministry for me because I perceived that my strengths were unsuitable. This was the mindset – being overly influenced by emphasis on matching one's spiritual gift to areas of service. While this approach is not wrong, the Batam trip was a good reminder that the one thing that God wants from His children is our heart rather than our 'hardware'. Focusing on talent may feed on our pride and allow pride to get in the way of our motivation.

I saw how the Lord lightened our burden by putting teamwork on display during the trip. Once a decision was made to go ahead with the trip, the ladies, one by one, including those

whose children would be in the midst of exams, stepped forward and a strong spirit of team work was immediately evident. Everyone, even those who could not join us, just chipped in for the preparations. Everything went smoothly and Sister Roska's passionate presence during the Sunday School class enhanced the joy of learning the story, songs, verses and quizzes.

The truth is that God takes care of the results. I am an ordinary clay pot, a weak vessel for God to display His power. Struggling with my weaknesses is not a bad thing because it gets me and my pride out of the way and lets the power of God do the work. This requires a mindset shift that 2 Cor 4:7 speaks about: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

The other truth that came to mind is that God doesn't need me to accomplish His work. When I understand my dependency on God, I see that my own resources are so small and I relearn the virtue of being humble.

One final observation that comes as a surprise takeaway – I was struck by the fiery style of preaching, in fluent Bahasa Indonesia, by our beloved Pastor Charles at the worship service. Never before have I seen this side of Pastor. When asked whether it was because of the language, Pastor gave us his usual gentle sweet smile. I thank God for blessing Life Church with a godly 'secret weapon' that has yet to be unleashed its full power at the English service :) (Mabel Seah)



Horas! (this is a greeting used by the people of Batam)

With thanksgiving in my heart, I joined the Ladies' Sunday School on their mission trip to Batam. It was one that I had been waiting for since I joined the Ladies' Sunday School in 2012. While desiring to be a blessing to the Sunday School teachers and children, it was also an opportunity for me to witness God's work in another country. My heart was warmed to see what great things God has done in Batam.

- The enthusiasm of the children
The children sang and recited the memory verse loudly and enthusiastically. Even when Ibu Roska asked them to recite it for the umpteenth time, their enthusiasm never abated. There was no lack of volunteers to recite the memory verse.
- The discipline and joy of Christian service instilled in the children
After Sunday School, the boys started arranging the chairs for the worship service. They went about their task quietly and efficiently. It was not turned into play time. When we chipped in to help, we were stopped by the Sunday School teacher who told us "It is the boys' duty, let them do it."
- The challenges faced by the missionaries in Indonesia
Ibu Roska shared about the opposition they faced doing God's work. It was heart-warming to hear that when God closes a door, He opens another. (Lim Chiew Ping)



Batam Mission Trip

It has been so many years since I last joined a church mission trip. By the grace of God, I was given this opportunity and privilege to join the ladies' Sunday School class for this Batam trip. Everyone was excited and prepared eagerly for the trip.

Through this trip, I experienced God's grace and work with the families at Sagulung Baru. There were around 50 children who attended the Sunday School. The children were attentive and engrossed in the puppet show put up by sister Joanna. They volunteered and participated readily. The children's effervescent singing lightened up the atmosphere.

The congregation that day comprised mainly of youths and young adults. They were very welcoming and treated us to Indonesian kueh after the service. We were also favoured with a number by their youth choir, who sang with boldness and bright joy!

I felt very blessed by the entire experience and was very encouraged by Sister Roska and her husband who came from Medan specially to support us. Sister Roska's enthusiasm is still as infectious as ever. I was also blessed by the powerful message by Pastor Seet and was very touched by the sisters from Sister Sow Mun's class, who worked synergistically to prepare for this trip.

Words cannot describe the joy in my heart as I feel the work of the Lord in the lives of our brethren in Batam. All praise and glory to the Lord! (Lim Ping Ping Tina)

Thank God for the opportunity to serve with the ladies Sunday school in the one-day mission trip. God is good - He knows what we need and provided the Ventriloquist storyteller, pianist, leaders and helpers for craft work from our midst to facilitate the children's Sunday School class. Thank God for Sister Roska who did the translation and shared with us about God's Providence and her work in Sumatra. During the fellowship lunch, we had the opportunity to meet the three Batam missionaries, Efendi, Mikdal and Paola - it is good for us to know who they are so we can pray for them more meaningfully. (Karen Heng)

My passion of doing art and craft has been very great since I was a child. Although my strength is limited, I know the Lord is able to strengthen me with the little that I can do for Him. When I decided to go on this Mission Trip, my heart's desire was to serve the Lord with art and craft and bring joy to the children. I pray that the craft could bring out the meaning and

understanding of God's Word to the children after the story related to 1 Samuel 16:1-13 is shared. Indeed, it is a great joy to serve the Lord meaningfully. (Michelle Koo)

It is truly God's calling and no one can stop you from doing God's calling. One can be well prepared with a few months of planning but prayer is more important. The night before the trip, I prayed to make sure that I would commit everything to God and set my alarm for 5am so that I would not be late.

When I got to the MRT, I realised that due to the weekend, trains would only start later at 6.36am and I was supposed to be at the Harbour Front at 6.45am. The only thing that I could do was to pray very hard and trust that everything will be in accordance to God's plan. I finally arrived at 7.06am just in time for the group photo taking. I thanked God that I could make it on time. Through this experience, I learned that in everything that I want to do, I just need to commit it to God, and He will bless me



throughout the journey. Thank God for journey mercies.

The 2nd thing I learned is that there are great challenges when we are called to serve the Lord. Reaching out to Indonesia's children is not easy. They may come to church and know there is God but do not understand who he really is. They may know that Jesus is born on Christmas day and there will be presents when Christmas comes but do not have the knowledge about having God in their hearts. Therefore, we need to always repeat the invitation to salvation when we interact with them. There are also other hidden challenges in Indonesia with regard to God's work. Whilst we were listening to the sermon, I heard someone singing or chanting loudly at their house nearby, attempting to distract and drown the voice of our pastor.

I realised that we as Christians need to do more to support the work of God, such as to commit our pastors in prayer every day and as they minister in Batam every month. Going to Batam is hard work for our pastors as they are required to minister to more than one church during each trip. In comparison, I had felt completely drained after this 1-day trip, after visiting only one church and doing a small part of the programme. Pastor also looked out for each of us and made sure that we were safe and no one was left behind during the trip. I am thankful to be able to go for the trip. Indeed, God is with us to make the trip successful and that we cannot take anything for granted. (Joanna Chua)

Medical and Dental Mission Trip to Batam

13 Nov 2016

On the 13th of November, a group of eight Lifers went over to Batam for a one-day Medical-Dental Mission trip.



The team joined in the Sunday Worship Service at Tanjung Piayu BP Church, which is under the care of Brother Efendi. Dn (Dr) Clement Tan delivered God's Word from Acts 2:41-47, a timely encouragement to the brethren on "Why we should be members of the local Church". Sister Charmaine Low served as the pianist at the worship service.

The Clinics commenced immediately after the service and we thank God for allowing the team to administer their skills and demonstrate Christian love to a steady stream of patients. Despite the Dental team not being able to find the gauze brought over from Singapore, they were still able to administer dental care – thanks to the local brethren who very efficiently purchased and prepared the gauze for their use.

The team next travelled by car to Batu Aji BP Church, which is under the care of Sister Paola. The Clinics were held in the newly renovated Sanctuary hall that you might recall praying for and offering your financial support toward over the past year. Thank God for answering our prayers and for His gracious provision for the Church!

All in, around 80 patients (50 for eye and 30 for general ailments)

Medical and Dental Mission Trip to Batam

received medical treatment while 65 patients received dental treatment.

The Clinics ended and the team enjoyed a short time of fellowship and thanksgiving with the local brethren before proceeding to Batam Centre Ferry Terminal for the journey home. Whilst we encountered heavy road traffic on the way, we thank God for allowing us to make it just in time to board our ferry as the last few passengers!

Other thanksgivings during this trip were:

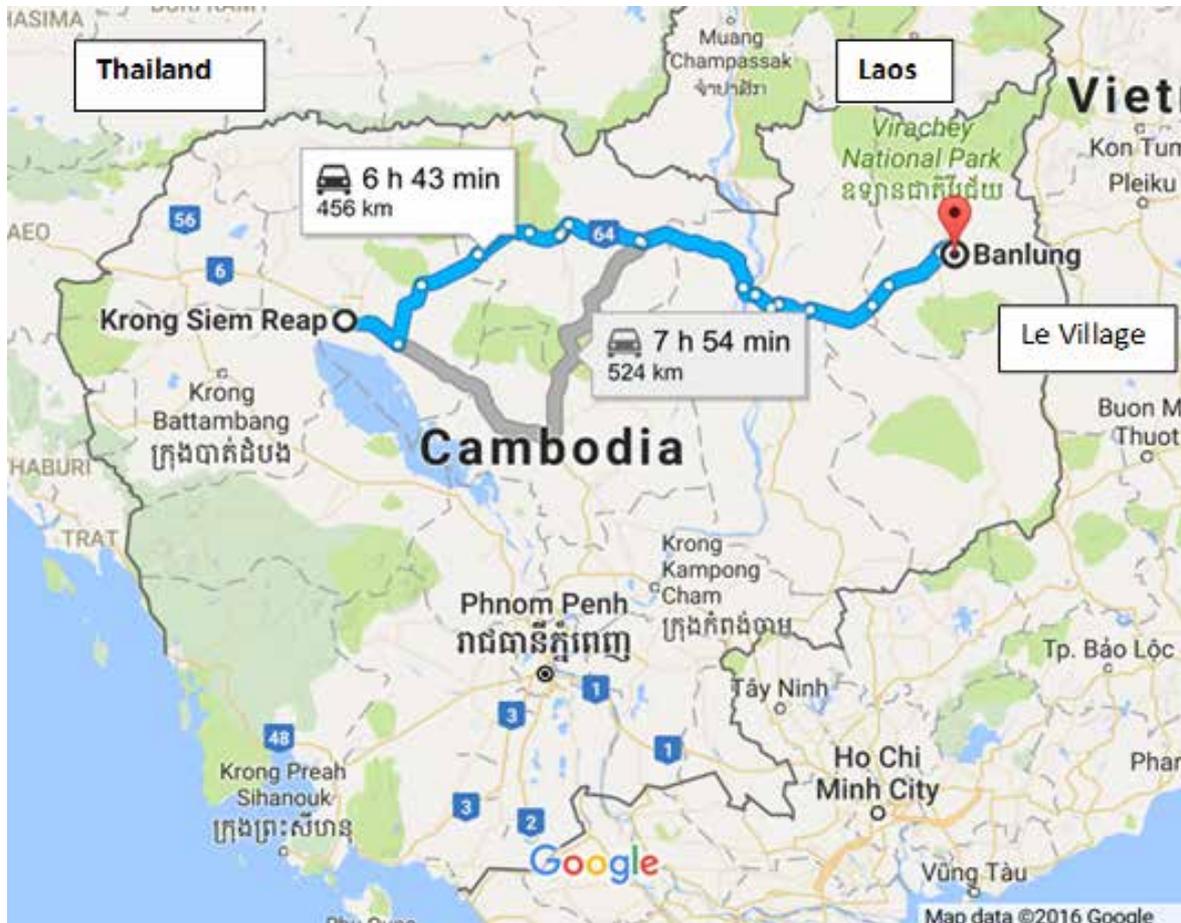
- 1) Safety in our travels, given the recent episodes of unrest in Batam and Jakarta
- 2) Provision of adequate helpers and translators
- 3) Good planning and smooth execution of plans
- 4) Strength for Ibu Roska to coordinate our trip after returning to Batam that morning

May we continue to pray for the following:

- 1) Good physical health and sanitary conditions for the locals
- 2) Spiritual growth of the brethren in Batam
- 3) For God to guide and strengthen Efendi, Paola and Mikdal in their work in Batam
- 4) Preservation of His people and Gospel ministry despite the religio-political unrest



Mission to Le Village, Province of Ratanakiri, Cambodia 17 to 23 December 2016



17 & 18 December 2016 Day 1 (Sat) & Day 2 (Sun)

Thank God for journey mercies as the team of 7 arrived in Siem Reap safely. We spent a night in Siem Reap before 5 of the team proceeded to Banlung, Ratanakiri the next day on a 7-hour overland route (see Map). Sisters Charlene and Alice remained in Siem Reap to minister to the First Bible-Presbyterian Church and its village churches.

The rest of us made our way to Ratanakiri and Brother Lim Pin gave a devotion and prayer on the importance of Christian unity in service. We arrived at the hotel in Banlung in the late afternoon and met Sister Pui Meng, our missionary at Ratanakiri.

19 December 2016 Day 3 (Mon)

On the way to Le Village, Sister Pui Meng conducted a devotion and prayer session from Psalm 19:7-8 on the power of the Word of God. Our 1st day at VBS has just started. Brother Lim Pin and Deacon Mark conducted a session for the adult worship with Deacon Mark exhorting the congregation with a message and a video on “Christmas: God’s Perfect Plan”. This was followed by a testimony from Sister Law Hoon.



Mission to Le Village, Cambodia



After lunch, the Children's Programme started at 12.30pm with around 85 children eagerly awaiting. Sister Helen began the singspiration session. She taught the children a new song "Countdown". The children had learnt a number of songs before our arrival and they sang them with gusto. The Bible story on "Jesus the Promised Savior is born" by Sister Meng Kean and the lessons learnt from the message were reinforced through

colouring artwork with coloured stars depicting the Christmas story. After the second singspiration session, Sister Law Hoon told the 2nd story of the day entitled "The Shepherds Worship Jesus". The gospel message of sin and redemption through Jesus Christ was emphasised and the children were also urged to spread the good news. The children enthusiastically coloured the picture of the shepherds on their way to find Baby Jesus. Each of the children also made an angel out of a paper plate. Prizes were given out for the best coloured pictures.

On the Youth side, Brother Lim Pin shared on "The Parable of the Sower" and conducted a skit. We were ably assisted by the interpreters Bern, Orn and Bunarit from the Kompong Som Bible School. In the evening devotion, Deacon Mark shared the importance of putting our heads, hearts and hands together in order to produce effective service for the Lord.

20 December 2016 Day 4 (Tue)

Sister Law Hoon shared on reasons for cultivating the fruits of the Spirit in the morning devotion. The day's programme started with Brother Lim Pin speaking on "Christian Giving" and a skit was done for the youth to apply the lessons learnt. This was followed by Sister Meng Kean giving her testimony.

In the children's programme, after the singspiration led by Sisters Meng Kean and Law Hoon, Sister Helen told the story of "Wise Men worshipped the Savior King". The children did colouring of camels following the stars and the craft was Camels on Pegs. After that, we did the gospel stars. Prizes



were given out to 10 of the best colouring entries. Sister Helen then explained the message of the different colours of the 'wordless book' gospel star.

In the afternoon, Brother Lim Pin shared a sermon on the "Meaning of Christmas" followed by a skit by the youths. The youths enjoyed all the skits very much. Everyone gathered for a group photo at the end of the afternoon session.



In the evening, Brother Lim Pin gave a devotion on trusting the Lord (Prov 3:5-6).

21 December 2016 Day 5 (Wed)

In the morning, Sister Meng Kean shared on the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom from Proverbs 9:1-4, 7-10. After that, we made home visitations to new converts named Klan Hleem, who is crippled by knee problems, Klan Yuan, who is suffering from Parkinson's disease, the Hley's family and a pastor from Kung Village. Deacon Mark and Brother Lim Pin encouraged and exhorted them with the word of God. We then made our way to visit a beautiful church and its pastor in the Kung village. The day ended with a visit to a lake and a waterfall with the youths who



Mission to Le Village, Cambodia

had helped out for the past 3 days, cooking for the participants and interpreting for the speakers. Sister Helen spoke on reasons for cultivating patience in the evening devotion.

22 & 23 December 2016 Day 6 (Thurs) & Day 7 (Fri)

We made our way back to Siem Reap and met up with Sisters Charlene and Alice who also had a fruitful time in Siem Reap. The next day we arrived safely in Singapore in the evening. Thank God for a wonderful mission trip and for enabling us to work well together. In all, we could see His hands guiding us and helping us and His voice directing us in the smooth execution of the mission programme.



Le Village



Pui Meng's house

The Church

— MISSIONS SEMINAR —

WHITE UNTO HARVEST

Venue: **Beulah Multi-Purpose Hall**
Date: **1 April 2017, Saturday**
Time: **3 - 5.45pm**
Dinner at 6pm

Please register at
<http://lifebpc.com/missions-seminar>

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. John 4:35