

PANDEMIC – CRISIS OR CATALYST FOR MISSIONS?

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Foreword

by Pastor Charles Seet (Pastor of Life B-P Church and Chairman, Missions Committee)

Ever since the Lord Jesus commissioned His first disciples to proclaim the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, the work of Missions has faced innumerable crises. But each time the proclamation of the Gospel was threatened, God’s kingdom advanced further and further. The Lord of the Harvest has always ensured that the work of Missions would not only overcome each crisis, but even be greatly helped through it.

According to Acts 8:1, “And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.” Three verses later, we see the glorious outcome of this crisis: “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.” (Acts 8:4) What a catalyst for Missions persecution has turned out to be!

In 1953, Communism brought about the expulsion of all Protestant missionaries from China. Despite this great crisis, the number of Christians in China has grown by leaps and bounds to over 38 million. And through the expelled missionaries who came to South-east Asia, the work of Missions in our part of the world has increased tremendously. Once again, we see the amazing work of the Lord Jesus in turning a crisis into a catalyst.

The work of Missions is now faced with a crisis of global proportions – the COVID-19 pandemic. The outlook for the advancement of the Gospel may seem quite bleak, especially with all the restrictive measures on travel and physical gatherings imposed to stop the virus from spreading. But let us be confident that with Christ at the helm, this great crisis will turn into yet another catalyst for Missions as He works in and through His people today. Who knows what amazing results we will witness as we live in these momentous times? May Jesus Christ be greatly praised and glorified!

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The Gospel in Every Home

by Ibu Roska Hombing Choi (Evangelist in Indonesia)

What is the meaning of a Christian ministry if Christ is not preached? What does it mean for Christ to be preached if people are still afraid?

A clearly preached gospel message will dispel the fear of death and hell. Christ completed the work of salvation on the Cross 2000 years ago. There He said, "It is finished"! (John 19:30)

Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15)

But how do we do that? Isn't the current pandemic still ruling the whole world?

We used to teach hundreds of children with God's Word in schools but the schools are now closed. We used to preach the gospel in churches in Batak Land on Sundays but now the churches are closed!

But our God never wastes time. Even the dark times of the Covid-19 pandemic has become a blessing for millions of people in Indonesia. People from all religious backgrounds and beliefs search for life! They search for the true God.

In fact, the Covid-19 pandemic has made it easier and faster to do the work of evangelism for two strong reasons:

Firstly, the mood of worrying about death due to the virus dominates every person in Indonesia. They seek peace and comfort in the midst of the death and suffering. They have come to the point where they feel they can perish because of Covid, but in reality they are perishing because of sin! They are looking for Someone who can help them, but who? We are ready with the answer from the One and true God.



Secondly, the rapidly evolving technological environment takes us to fly high, looking for those who are in fear of death. Together with technology, we can come directly to them with good news! They do not have to fear persecution from going to a physical church, because we can minister straight into their homes.

Praise God for the pandemic! Praise God for technology! With the Zoom app, we can minister both day and night in evangelistic ministry! With wisdom and abilities from God, we were able to overcome the technological barriers to understand how Zoom works. We also began to prepare materials to support the preaching of the Gospel of Christ so that anyone who enters the Zoom room can easily understand, believe and accept the Gospel of Christ. We worked hard to learn how to make videos, flyers, links, and we learned how to engage people in the Zoom room in a friendly and courteous manner.



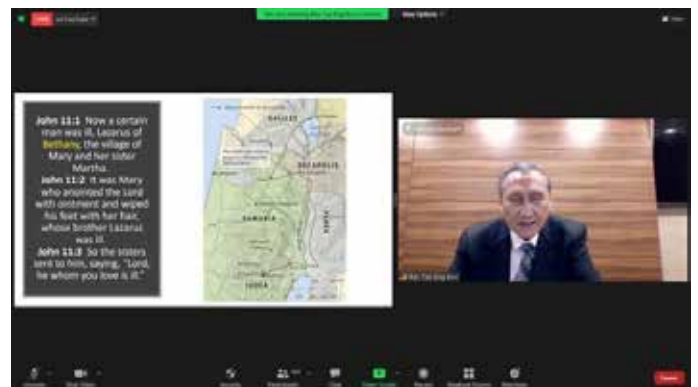
For all that, I thank God for the Holy Spirit! All of this happened because of the work of the Spirit of God! No matter how beautifully we prepare the brochures or flyers, without God moving the hearts of the strangers and friends to click the link to join, the Zoom room will remain empty! We sent thousands of invitations and invited friends and people who were looking for peace during the pandemic but without the role of the Holy Spirit who calls them in, the room will remain empty. No matter how well we prepare the videos and no matter how interesting the topics and themes can be, without the work of the Holy Spirit, everything will become a pile of files.

Therefore, we in the online ministry team spend time praying together every day. We have one prayer, that God will save as many people as possible who are stricken with fear, who are stricken with grief because of the loss of relatives due to Covid, who are beset by confusion due to the death of many people due to the Covid-19 attack. Our only weapon is The GOOD NEWS! The Gospel! The message that Jesus is the Saviour!

The Lord Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions..." (John 14:1-2)

It is also amazing that during this pandemic, millions from outside Christianity have come to Jesus. Now there is a "Gereja YouTube or YouTube Church", constituting of millions of newborn Christians. In this online church, they bravely share their living testimonies of how Jesus has saved them. Would this happen in Indonesia before the pandemic? I doubt it!

Praise God for the pandemic! Amen.



Thankfulness for Missions in Batam by Sis Paola Intanida Simbolon (Church Worker at Batu Aji B-P Church, Batam)

Thankfulness is a very appropriate attitude in the current situation, even though we are faced with the difficult situation of the Covid-19 outbreak. Sometimes we do not understand God's intention behind this pandemic.

Let us be thankful for life even though we often hear news of death due to Covid-19, thankful for health even though we hear that a lot of people are sick due to Covid-19, and thankful for sufficiency even though we hear that a lot of people are in need due to this pandemic. Everything that happens in this world, happens under God's control, and will not happen without God's permission.

One truth that we believe is that everything happens for the glory of God. We can learn from the stories in the Bible that God has done great things that humans could not comprehend. In the case of the plagues of Egypt, the purpose was for people to know who God is (Exodus 6:6, 7:5, 10:2). When God used the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites, it was not only to punish wickedness and bring the Israelites into Canaan, but also to let the world know that there is an almighty God of Israel (Deuteronomy 28:10). Rahab expressed that the people of Jericho trembled when they heard

the deeds of the God of Israel (Joshua 2:9-10). The Gibeonites also sought to save themselves because they heard the deeds of the great God of Israel (Joshua 9:9-10). In the book of Ezekiel, it is mentioned many times that when God punished and exiled the Israelites, it was so that "they may know that I am the LORD." (Ezekiel 7:27, 13:23, 20:26). Likewise, this pandemic teaches us that there is a God in charge of this world, a teaching needed by many arrogant people who rely on their intelligence and greatness and do not want to believe in God.

This pandemic has spread in all regions of the world, from big cities to remote villages including those in Indonesia. The Indonesian government has twice called for the closure of places of worship, and still prohibits holding services in large capacity in order to avoid crowds. This pandemic is like a test of faith for Christians: some are still eager to worship even under restrictions,

some are sad because they can't worship onsite because of their age and condition, but some are lazy and make this pandemic an excuse for not coming for worship.

This pandemic has made the internet a major need for education and worship, so that many people in villages who previously did not attach much importance to it, are now trying to use it. The Indonesian government is trying to provide good connectivity so that the internet can be used by the villagers. This is an opportunity for God's children to be creative in preaching God's Word and the Gospel. Many churches and theological schools hold seminars or worship together virtually via Zoom. There are also calls from missionary organisations to hold joint prayers via Zoom to pray for the world's situation today. There are also Christian communities that organize aid to help those in need.

My friends and I also participate in the alumni association, in which we often talk about the situation of the churches in Indonesia. Through mobile phones we can communicate to strengthen the weak and convey God's good news to those who want to hear. This pandemic brings affiliates that were once far from each other closer together. Previously, I never thought that there would be a fellowship attended by several people from all regions in Indonesia, now there is a fellowship attended by people from Papua, Kalimantan, Jakarta, Java and others. Whatever it is, we are only instruments for the glory of God. However, we must convey the gospel message while we have the opportunity. The pandemic is not an obstacle. Let's do our best for the glory of God's name.



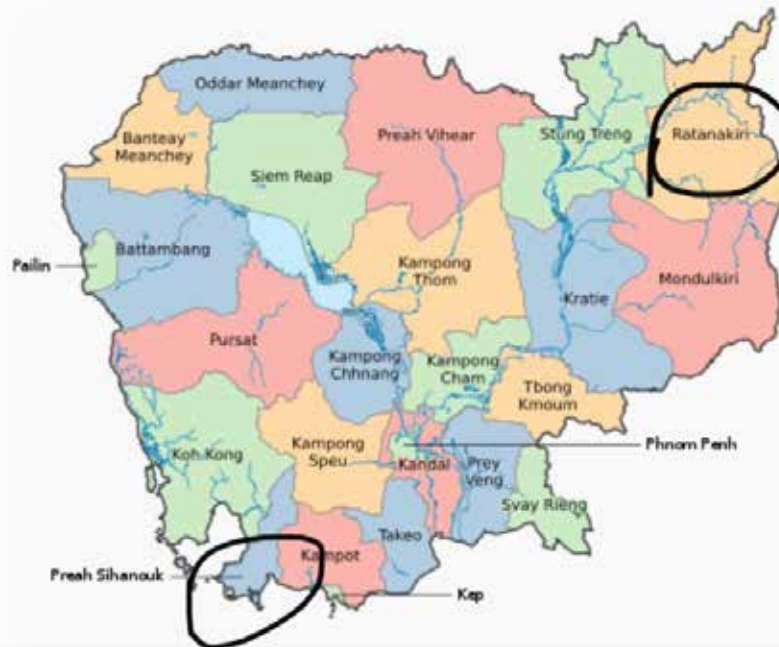
Worship service at Batu Aji B-P Church, Batam



Children's programme at Batu Aji B-P Church, Batam

Relocation from Le Village to Chengko by Sis Chan Pui Meng (Lifer and Full-Time Missionary of Life B-P Church)

I would like to share with you about how God led me to serve in Chengko Church from Le Village Church. Chengko Church is in Kampongsom, Sihanouk Province, south-west of Cambodia.



I thank God for giving me six wonderful years of serving Him in Le Village Church. I have come to love the place and the people, especially watching how those children had grown over the years. Some of them have become Sunday School teachers, English teachers, and song leaders. They had given me much joy and zeal in God's work. The Lord also enabled me to work well along with the local leaders for all those years.

I had a major spinal surgery some 14 years ago because of an injury. Two years ago, I realized that my back was giving me some warning signs due to frequent travelling between Ratanakiri and Phnom Penh and the rough terrain at Le Village. I began to commit to the Lord earnestly whether I should leave Le Village. I was also sharing about it with Sis Sreymoch, a Kampongsom Bible School (KBS) graduate. She told me to consider Chengko Church as there was then a need for someone to work with Pastor Sobin. Besides, the locality of Chengko Church is more favorable and conducive for my back problem than in Le Village Church.

In January 2020, when I was in Singapore for the Chinese New Year break, I consulted the orthopaedic surgeon as I had injured my back while travelling to Phnom Penh before my return to Singapore. After some investigations, I was told that I had spinal stenosis and a prolapsed disc. The medical report sobered me and I began to seek the Lord earnestly for relocation in His work if it is His will. Psalm 123:1-2 says,

“Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.”

In His amazing way of preparing the path for my departure from Le Village, God sent Bro Orn, a KBS graduate, to Le Village. In March 2020, Bro Orn was “married” into Le Village to one of our female church members. In Jarai culture, it is the norm for a man to settle into the home of his wife.



Pastor Sobin and his family.
Sis Sreymoch in white blouse

When I returned to Le Village in August 2020, Bro Orn was already serving with Bro Samnang, the pastor of the church. Two of our senior students had also been faithfully teaching the Sunday School during my absence. As I discussed with Bro Samnang and Bro Orn about my intention to leave Le Village, they accepted it well – trusting that God would lead them.

Some of you may ask, “Why do I relocate during this Covid-19 crisis?” We do not know how long the Covid-19 crisis would last. There are a few things that indicate it is the right time to relocate:

1. The Covid-19 situation in both Le Village and Chengko is quite stable. Thus far, neither of them is identified as a hotspot area.
2. This year’s rainy season, running from June to November, has brought much rain and bad damage to the road to Le Village. Travelling along this bumpy road poses a challenge and has a bad effect on my back.
3. Coincidentally, there is a house near the Chengko Church and Pastor Sobin’s house which is available for rent. It is God’s timely provision for me to move in at this time.
4. Bro Orn was willing and ready to take over what I have been doing.

Finally, but not the least, Philippians 4:6-7 speaks to me,

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Hudson Taylor wrote, “God’s work done in God’s way will never lack God’s supply.” We must trust God to keep the light burning in His church in Le Village.

Let me share with you about my last few days in Le Village.

Before I left Le Village Church for Chengko on 17 August 2021, the church and the students gave me farewell gatherings.

The church had a farewell gathering for me on Saturday evening, 14 August 2021. On Saturday morning, some of the students came to church to prepare Khmer traditional noodles, banana fritters and jelly for the evening gathering. Some ladies and teens lovingly also prepared pumpkin puddings, and coconut yam desert. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1)



Preparing the
Khmer Noodles

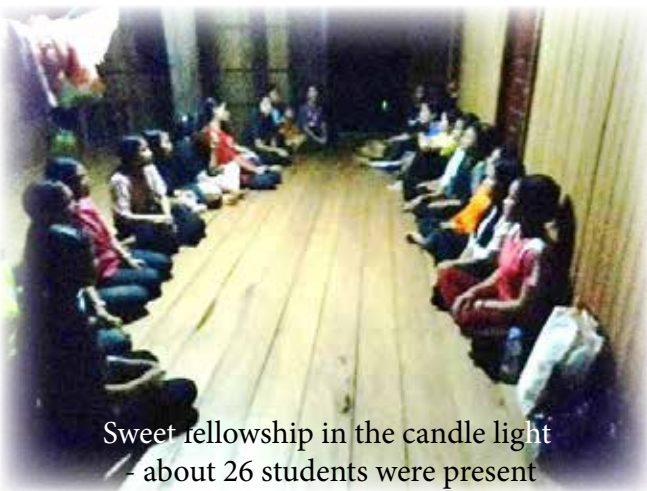


In the evening, the whole church turned out in full force – the senior ones, the young ones and the littles ones came to bid me farewell. Bro Samnang gave a message of thanksgiving to God for six fruitful years of co-laboring with me, followed by some brethren expressing their gratefulness to God for sending me to them. Thereafter, we had a heartwarming dinner together. I was touched by their sharing and expression of love through their cooking of lovely food for us to enjoy. We never had such variety before.



Dinner at a student's house (usually the house is poorly lit).

The second farewell gathering was with my students at a student's house on Sunday evening. They went to the forest to harvest one of my favorite wild plants to cook with pork and I cooked a big pot of chicken curry for them. We had so much fun preparing and cooking the food together.

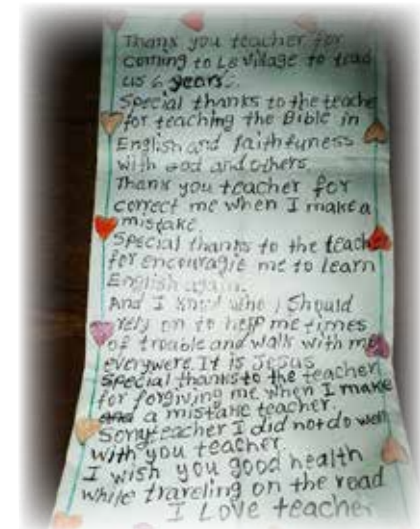


Sweet fellowship in the candle light - about 26 students were present

In the evening, we had our sumptuous dinner before we (about 25-30 of us) sat in a circle and listened to the Word of God. I encouraged them from Psalm 139:1-6,13-16, "You are wonderfully made." Then, one by one came forward to present their handmade thank you cards and gifts to me and shared how grateful they were and what they had learned. I was overwhelmed when I read their thank-you notes in English. Many also shared how Christ had transformed their lives since they put their trust in Him. The hand of God was at work in their lives. It was a heartwarming and touching moment when they shared with us in tears.

The Lord has given me much joy in teaching them. On the other hand, they had taught me how to love, be patient, gentle and kind. The privilege of watching them grow physically and spiritually in the Lord is the greatest reward in the Lord's vineyard. I shall miss them.

Some of their handwritten thank-you cards by (L-R) Sis Boon, Sis Serene and Sis Ren





Let us continue to pray for them that they will grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May I humbly covet your prayer for the work in Le Village Church and Chengko Church amid the pandemic.

*There is joy in serving Jesus
As I journey on my way
Joy that fills my heart with praises
Every hour and every day*

*There is joy in serving Jesus
Joy that triumphs over pain
Fills my heart with heaven's music
Till I join the glad refrain*



Dinner at Sis Pui Meng's house after worship service

Road to Chengko during the rainy season



Cambodia Missions during the COVID-19 Pandemic by Rev David Koo

(Missionary to Cambodia and President of Life University, Sihanoukville, Cambodia)

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many things to change in our world and Cambodia is no exception. In mid-March 2020, a school lockdown was imposed by the Ministry of Education. Official church services were also suspended. Initial expectations were that it would be over in a few days, weeks, or months, but it has now been over a year.

At first, I was bewildered, not knowing what to do, and I prayed for God's wisdom and guidance for what to do in the mission field during this time of crisis. After that our churches and school began meeting online. Even our school chapel services were conducted every morning online as usual. I also began teaching a subject to our college students called 'Introduction to Christianity' online to supplement their online Bible courses.

Although this online education is not difficult for students in the city centre, there are many difficulties for students in rural areas who do not have good internet access.

The world is now in the era of social media, and YouTube has become a great resource for broadcasting content. There is an incredible amount of video content from all over the world about people's daily lives, culture, education, and religion from all over the world. I am convinced that using YouTube as a tool for missions can have a positive impact on all areas of Cambodian missions.

Looking at the future of Cambodian missions, we do not know when the pandemic will end, or how we will continue life as normal with the coronavirus. Whether with or without coronavirus, we now know that YouTube can be a great tool for missions. So I decided to work towards building up our ministry through YouTube.

So then, what sort of content should we use for our channel? I have spent much time in prayer over this. We can use it to upload every Sunday worship service as a tool for spreading the gospel in Cambodia. It will show how Cambodian Christians follow God, Jesus, and how the Holy Spirit can work in an individual's life. I am convinced that sharing testimonies can play a large role in evangelism.

We can also include interviews with influential Christians who have had a large impact on society, including senators, lawyers, and doctors in this country. This would help change a misconception that



many Cambodians have, which is that Christianity is a religion that only the poor and uneducated people believe in. The testimonial program would be recorded in Khmer language, with the testimonies of missionaries in English and Korean. It can also be used to inspire other Christians around the world to open their heart to the call of overseas missions.

Furthermore, we have a goal to produce an engaging children's Sunday School program with animation.

Our YouTube channel would also provide an outlet for Cambodian Christians and church leaders to talk about their prayer needs so that believers from all over the world can support them in prayer.

To accomplish all of this successfully, I knew we need to invest in producing high-quality content. We were able to obtain one or two basic cameras, audio and lighting equipment which were fairly inexpensive. The YouTube broadcasting room was also decorated with a comfortable interior and soundproofing. We also trained a small crew from within our staff to film and edit this broadcast. In addition, for the teachers and lecturers, we conducted workshops to teach basic broadcasting techniques and train them to produce high-quality videos.



Also, to give thanks and glory to God that in the middle of the pandemic, God allowed Life University to receive official accreditation from the Ministry of Education for an online cyber university. This cyber university teaches students from all over Cambodia without having to come to campus. We can also preach the gospel through it, especially with a subject called Introduction to Christianity which all students must learn. We thank God that it's not just for people in Cambodia, but we are so blessed that it can be used to teach the gospel to Cambodian married migrants and workers in Korea.

Even when this pandemic ends, I have no doubt that God will produce fruitful results and many people will come to a saving knowledge through this Life Mission TV YouTube broadcast. We know that God makes all things work together for good. God is saving His chosen people even in this pandemic era by giving us these tools for missions appropriate for the times.



Advancing Missions in Cambodia by Rev Moses Hahn (Missionary to Cambodia, and Principal of Kampongsom Bible School)

We did not know Covid-19 would last so long. But it is not surprising because we live at very end of times. The ways to traditional missions are almost closed now – building churches, open door evangelism, gospel rallies, running Christian schools, medical missions to prison, etc. I believe that our Lord is the master of the work of missions. It is probable that He has made a decision to supersede this type of missions in which the gospel is preached to the whole world generally.

Through Covid-19, I believe that our Master wants us to further advance our mission work to gather grain into His barns. So we are obliged to change our strategy according to His will. Otherwise, we will suffer and bring forth no fruits. I want to focus this strategy for mission work into three categories.

Firstly, co-working among missionaries and churches, led by Holy Spirit. Nine years ago, I travelled to Myanmar to find an opportunity to do mission work there. During the survey trip, I felt the burden to print gospel tracts in Burmese and in Shan. I just prayed about doing it. On the final day of the trip, I met an American missionary in Lashio, and expressed my vision to him. He agreed with it. So he found good translators and translated the gospel tracts into two languages and sent the files to us. Grace Hahn arranged and printed them in Phnom Penh because the printing cost in Phnom Penh was much cheaper than in Yangon. The printing funds came from Korea and Singapore. Whenever we travelled to Myanmar, we delivered them to the missionaries or churches over there. This work could be done by five parties: American missionaries, Korean missionaries, Burmese theologians, a Korean church and a Singaporean church. Even though I did not know Burmese nor Shan, and did not stay in Myanmar, I could accomplish His mission work from a far distance by co-working with like-minded brethren. This experience gave me hint of the kind of future ministry that I should have in times of trials or pandemic.



Secondly, going rather to the “lost sheep”. (Matthew 10:5-6). More than 150 Bible students have graduated with a Diploma of Theology after 3 or 4 years of full-time study and probably hundreds of students with Certificates and as short-term study at KBS since 1998. But I found out that many of them have become unbelievers or nominal Christians. Now I would find them and visit them, have fellowship with them, encourage or warn them because His coming is near. I will also visit churches

that were established by KBS graduates more often, so that they will stand firm in times of tribulation. Now almost all Cambodians have heard the Gospel through preaching, evangelism, radio or TV, or gospel rallies generally. Until now our ministry was very broad, like scattering seeds to every land because the majority have never heard the Gospel. But from now on, I pray that the ministry will be more focused and more intensive, so that they can make decisions and bear fruits of repentance.



Thirdly, making Christian Communities. Before the Messiah came, there was a Qumran community near the Dead Sea that lived a holy life in the expectation of meeting the Messiah in their generation. When Sihanoukville was locked down, we found out how our community life could be helpful to one another. After that, I challenged the local pastors to make this kind of Christian Community, with brotherly bonds in Christ. KBS is also such a community; having around 40 persons of different nationalities, teachers, students, missionaries and workers. We are also praying towards making a bigger community in Thmorbang in Koh Kong province. We are practicing this community life now, and finding out ways to improve. The bonds we have will make us more resilient to keep the faith in times of tribulation.

The pandemic is surely a crisis to our existing ministry but it gives us the opportunity to mature and be ready for His Coming. Otherwise, we will remain in the same pattern of our way. So it is a catalyst to our faith and ministry. When I see this world engulfed by Covid-19, I think every day, "What is the remaining work for me? What should I do to prepare for that day?"

For news on the ministry of Rev Moses Hahn and Mrs Grace Hahn in Cambodia, please visit <https://mission-cambodia.tistory.com/>



Reflections on Missions in Thailand by Rev Nirand Tamee

(Pastor of Eternal Life Church, Chiangmai, Thailand)

The COVID-19 pandemic is like a massively destructive storm in our lives. It has affected our physical and spiritual lives, economy, transportation and many other areas. In Matthew 24:7, Jesus mentioned the signs of the last days. One of the signs is pestilence or diseases. Because of the COVID-19 virus, many people lost their jobs, their loved ones and their hope. This has led to depression and negative thinking about their lives or about the world, and to being sad, bored, etc.

There are several Bible verses to encourage us when we are facing depression. Deuteronomy 31:8 say “And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.” Our eternal Father is always with us and He goes before us, He would not forsake us, and we should listen to His instructions carefully and seek and follow Him every day. The Psalms assures us that

He is always with us, listens to our cries and delivers us from all our troubles: “The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” (Psalm 34:17-18) Not only that, He also binds our wounds and heals us in whatever circumstances we face, whether good or bad, and in the end we will see His glory.

Our Lord and Saviour has a very wonderful future plan for each one of us who trust in Him. We may think that the troubles from COVID-19 are so big that we cannot fight against it anymore, or that there is no more future hope. This leads to depression. Some people have even committed suicide.

Our Father has wonderful plans for our future, which is not for us to be troubled but for us to have peace: “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” (Jeremiah 29:11). We, the children of God, should not look only at the bad things but also the good things that He had shown us in His Holy Word. Remember the words that Jesus said, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33).

The storm comes and then it goes. It does not stay with us forever. After a while, bad situations will get better but we trust that He is with us always and all troubles will eventually be gone, replacing them with eternal peace.



Sharing from Vietnam by Pastor Vo Hoang Phong, Samuel

(Senior Pastor, The Evangelical Church of Vietnam at Da Nang)

Our world has indeed turned upside down because of the COVID-19 pandemic. No one can deny that this pandemic brings us to a global crisis: the number of dead people is increasing every day, everywhere. Travelling, business, education, the economy, and mission work around the world have been affected.

If churches want to serve God effectively despite this global crisis, here are three suggestions: relook, rethink, and even reset the traditional way mission work has been done in decades.



We Christians must relook our directions. Firstly, looking up to God to see that our God is still sitting upon His throne (Isaiah 6:1). Everything that happens in this world, including the COVID-19 pandemic, is to fulfil His prophecies (Luke 21:11). Secondly, looking into ourselves to see that we are but sinners (Romans 3:10,23) saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). Lastly, looking at our outreach to see that many sinners are drawing unto death (Proverbs 24:11). Jesus said: “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.” (Matthew 9:37).

We Christians must rethink God’s commandment to our mission. First of all, the good news must be preached to the uttermost parts of the world – that is the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8). Secondly, the gospel must be preached “in season, out of season” (2 Timothy 4:2). Thirdly, the gospel shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations – that is one of the signs of the end time (Matthew 24:14).

Last but not least, we Christians must reset the traditional way of doing mission work for local as well as overseas fields. First of all, for local fields, we can use modern technology to share a simple gospel with local people. For example, we can share one verse of the Word of God a day on our Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Messenger, and so on. Secondly, we can call a friend or relative to share our hope in Christ in this global pandemic. For overseas mission fields, we are indeed limited by travel restrictions. We, however, can support a remote mission by praying, financial support, even teaching some courses through Zoom or Google Meet. Of course, to do that we need some faithful co-ordinators in the country which we want to invest in God’s work.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic is indeed a global crisis. Despite the inconvenient situation, we can find effective ways to do our mission work as we relook our directions, rethink God’s commandment, and reset new approaches to do God’s work in the post-pandemic world.

Missions: Onward in a Pandemic by Sis Lilian Lee (Lifer and Missionary of Life B-P Church)

“For with God nothing shall be impossible”. Luke 1:37

Thank God that He is ever present and whatever the circumstances, He gives the wisdom to circumvent the obstacles, even those caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Missions continue to be a busy ministry at Life Church because the Great Commission is at the heart of our motivations. The Lord’s mandate, our pastors often remind us, is carried out by three actions: some will go, many can give, but all can pray.

Some Will Go

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, our church missionaries, Rev & Mrs Khoo returned to Taiwan, and Sis Chan Pui Meng to Cambodia. When I saw the length to which Sis Pui Meng struggled with the respective government authorities to return to Cambodia, I knew God would open a way for her. Praise the Lord for His faithfulness that she eventually re-joined the church at Le Village. Not only that, she has even recently relocated and started a new ministry in Chengko. God is good to help Rev Khoo work at transferring the ministry of the hearing impaired to the local church. May the Lord grant him good success in such great discipling work.

The pandemic, however, closed the door in some places for traditional mission work. The Lord uncovered new approaches for the church to explore this new landscape. In 2020, there was a hive of activity to get everyone to learn to use Zoom and YouTube. The online platform is the logical answer to help us overcome the lockdowns and the social distancing protocol.

The lockdown in Malaysia prevented me from moving to Kuala Lumpur to which the Lord has sent me to serve Him in Evangel Reformed Seminary (ERS). Even so, the Lord’s plans are not thwarted, for I am able to serve Him from my own home! Classes are online, and I give administrative support to the seminary through email and WhatsApp.



It seems I am not the only one to resort to digital solutions to press ahead with mission work in this pandemic. Here are a few examples:

1. Sister Roska conducts her webinars to reach out to the Batak people with the gospel.
2. Rev Colin Wong regularly runs workshops to edify the saints in Nepal and Myanmar.
3. Dn. Benedict Sim also has his weekly Zoom meetings with little children who attend the Life Children’s Club – local missions!
4. Rev Lee Hock Chin brought Exploring Christianity online. Evangel churches from KL, Tangkak and Malacca attended the programme in 2020, and Ebenezer BP Church, Melbourne in 2021.

Many Can Give

Lockdowns have caused economic setbacks for many. These provided mission opportunities as Life Church sent out relief to our mission churches in Indonesia and Thailand where many members had lost their jobs or livelihood.

It was also heartening to see the photos shared routinely in the Golden Age Fellowship chat group as some brethren pooled resources together to bless some churches in India. Rice, bags of potatoes, and onions were collected in the women’s baskets. Surely the Lord’s love is manifest at these collection points.



Food distribution to 37 needy families on 16/8/2021 in Manipur, India.

But All Can Pray

The Life Church Tuesday night prayer meeting also went online, and the number of Lifers who attend is encouragingly large. We anticipate the day when it will hit 200! The Lord's name be praised for many saw the need to pray during the pandemic. Clearly all our mission efforts were covered in much prayers by the saints!

The pandemic may stay for another two years or more. The church has to remain nimble and responsive to the situation as the Lord navigates us through the pandemic. Missions remain very much on His heart and He shall provide us the means to advance His Kingdom. All glory to God!

4Cs towards the Christian Saints by Bro Tan Tiong Chin (Lifer and Member of Missions Committee)

The situations that we are seeing and are happening now, especially with respect to the pandemic, makes us think back to the early days of the formation of the early church, where the churches were located in different locations, and certain churches were doing better than others and how churches were helping one another. This leads me to reflect on the reasons why we are doing what we are doing in the Missions Committee, which is about brotherly love; sharing the joy of fellow saints in foreign lands; extending of hospitality; praying for one another.

In such a crisis, we can see that we have been applying the “**4Cs towards the Christian Saints**”. What are these 4Cs?

Now these 4Cs have a common denominator, which is usually translated as fellowship in English. Yet in English, the word fellowship is not sufficient to explain what and why we are doing among ourselves, both the saints here and in the regions around. This common denominator is the Greek word “koinonia”, which is usually translated as “fellowship” but its meaning goes beyond “fellowship”. I would like to share the 4Cs of koinonia.

KOINONIA

Now, all of us who have come to believe, started with the “koinonia” with God before we can even have “koinonia” with fellow men.

For we read in 1 Jn 1:3, “*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have **fellowship** with us: and truly our **fellowship** is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*” From this verse we can see that fellowship (which is “koinonia”) here indicates that we need to have first a communion or partnership with God before we can have **communion** with fellow saints. And likewise, the saints too have communion with God. This communion or partnership is not our own doing, but by grace from God. And we thank God for redeeming each one of us. This communion is important, for it breaks and removes every social barrier of man. For that communion with God demonstrates that we are all equally sinners before God - sinners who have been saved.

Secondly, koinonia is about **commonality** in the Gospel, for we read in Phil. 1:4-5, “*Always in every*

*prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your **fellowship** in the gospel from the first day until now;”*

Here again we see the word “fellowship”, which is also “koinonia”. Therefore the communion we have with fellow men, crossing national boundaries can only happen under a common constitution, which has been defined for us through His Word, after we have received the Gospel. As Paul has declared, we are of One Body, and we have One Spirit, One Hope, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of All (Eph 4:4-6). The commonality or the oneness of His Word ensures that all of us regardless of where we are, will be able to work out the same will of God, in glorifying God.

Furthermore, we can see that all men who are touched and transformed through His Word will have that desire to communicate with one another. Again, the word used for communicate is koinonia. We can see this in Heb 13:16, “But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” We have to strive to know what is going on with our brethren. In our context, we extend our concern and care beyond our shores. And we can see at the church level that we have been demonstrating this, not only in prayers but also with our communication with our missionaries. Regularly, they sent reports to us, and we in turn communicate in our reports in prayers and bulletins.

And to further add, knowing the situations, we have also extended financial help. And again, this is koinonia. In Rom 15:26, we read “For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to

make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.” In this passage, Paul conveyed the idea of “koinonia” as the contribution or care of fellow brethren to the poor saints in Jerusalem. The Christians in Macedonia and Achaia, not only contributed financially but also showed their concern and care, and financial help was just one means of doing this.

To summarise the 4Cs of fellowship or “Koinonia”,

- Communion
- Commonality
- Communication
- Contribution/care

Which must be translated into every Christian life, living out continuously that we

- Be of one mind with other saints, as Christ is with the Father
- Be mindful of the needs of fellow saints
- Be full of charity towards other saints

Thus, with the understanding of koinonia, the word “fellowship” takes on a more deep-seated meaning, which must be demonstrated and we are to be aware of it 24/7 throughout our lives. Indeed, this pandemic that we are experiencing is actually a catalyst to demonstrate the extent of koinonia or fellowship of saints. But we also know that in any circumstance, there is always a catalyst for us to demonstrate Christian “koinonia”, for Paul declared in Ephesians 3:9, “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:” which is because of Christ.

Announcement

Offering for Missions: We thank God that Lifers are very generous in their offerings towards missions. In terms of support, the church gives priority to our fully-supported missionaries and we would like you to be aligned with the church’s position when giving towards missions. Rather than giving offerings that are designated to specific individuals or mission stations, you are encouraged to give to the Missions Fund and let the Missions Committee disburse them as it sees fit. Your understanding on this will facilitate an informed stewardship of resources for the Lord’s work in missions. If you wish to contribute financially to missionaries, please indicate “DO Missions” in the reference field in your e-Offering via the Life Church PayNow QR Code. May the Lord bless your cheerful giving.



Thanksgiving from Myanmar by Rev Thawng Nei Bil

(Pastor of Biblical Presbyterian Church and Head of Biblical
Institute of Theology, Yangon, Myanmar)

I would like to give thanks to Life B-P Church for helping our church members and people who are suffering from the third wave of Covid-19 pandemic. Every day thousands of people have been infected with the coronavirus, including pastors and families of Christians, and many people have died. There is a lack of Covid treatment centres in Yangon City. People have to treat themselves in their own homes. Many people are facing problems, such as the shortage of oxygen supplies, medical supplies and basic necessities of healthcare.

I thank God for the relief fund that you sent to us to buy five oxygen concentrators to supply oxygen. We also distributed some basic necessities to our members such as rice, eggs, oil and vegetables.

