

Emergence of the Pyjamas Church

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By Rev. Dr. Eu Hong Seng

In Ephesians 3:20 the apostle Paul says that God is “able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.”

Both our nation and the Church today need men and women who can do great exploits, and can “do exceedingly abundantly” for the kingdom of God.

The good news is we have a God who is able to do exceedingly abundantly.

The bad news is we are still in the middle of this unprecedented Covid-19 crisis. More than a million have died worldwide due to Covid-19. And there is no sign that the pandemic is going to end soon. Some governments are talking of the fourth and fifth waves. New variants are lurking round the corner with no end in sight to the slew of SOPs.

But there is more bad news. The church is sometimes called, unflatteringly, “the sleeping giant”. But I fear it has now become “the pyjamas church.”

Many today are attending online services in their pyjamas with their audio and video off. Believers are even

attending membership classes with their audio and video switched off. Imagine this, a new generation of church members is emerging where their shepherds have never seen the faces of their sheep nor heard their voices?

This pandemic, though disastrous and catastrophic, is going to be very mild compared to the seals, trumpets and bowls judgment of the last days. Indeed, this pandemic has been touted by many as just a practice run.

The scripture above reminds me to have faith in a big God. He is able. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly. But so many believers say they have faith yet DO NOTHING about their faith.

It is so senseless to say He is able while we, the Church, do not want to allow Him to work through us. The next generations are witnessing this contradictory paralytic fear of the virus and the casual fear of God in His House. One day, our children and our children's children will ask us – why we were unwilling to return for worship but are unashamedly found in shopping malls and restaurants, besides planning for holidays with the crowd.

It is as if God parted the Red Sea - but no Israelites are found crossing it because the people of God have *not yet woken up*. Or, they are on *wrong* side of the Red Sea complaining about their sufferings. Or, they want to remain comfortable, content with a virtual crossing on Zoom, instead of physically crossing over.

Yes, God is able to do exceedingly abundantly but this sounds hollow if we refuse to rise up, to become disciples, to serve, to work hard, to have the passion to save souls, to live holy lives, to always be praying for our local church and country.

This pandemic has helped me understand more fully the parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins. The foolish took their lamps but not “any extra oil with them” [Matt 25:2 Amp Bible]. To be fair, all “got drowsy and began to sleep” [Matt 25:5 NASB95] when the bridegroom lingered and was slow in coming. This is prophetic of our church.

At midnight, with the arrival of the bridegroom, the foolish presumptuously demanded to the wise, “give us some of your oil” [Matt 25:8a NJKV].

Yes, the sleeping giant has awakened but only to become the pyjamas church!

We refuse to freshen up and lie on our couches, comforted that no one sees us in our PJs. We may raise one hand to worship, whilst with the other hand, we stroke our pet dog, cat or even spouse? This season has been most revealing: That many refuse to fill their lamps with oil. This can be seen in the many who have to be begged to not neglect the assembling of ourselves.

The pyjamas church is a church in rebellion. We are overly casual, we do not wash up. We have breakfast whilst worshipping, we lie down whilst singing, we cook when we should be listening to the sermon. And it seems that the only good thing the government did for us was to halt worship services with their SOPs. Now that services can be held onsite, we do not want to dress up for church services.

This reluctance to return is compounded by the spoilt mentality - “Give me...” is our favourite cry. We impudently demand that others do for us what we refuse to do for ourselves. We act as if Christian love is owed to us. For too long we treat the local church like some babysitting department funded by our parents and others.

It is not as though we have not been warned that the door will finally shut. And one day, with this similar spoilt mentality, we will demand like the foolish virgins, “...open the door for us!” [Matt 25:11 NIV84].

It is laughable to think we can do great exploits for God when we cannot even show up in church.

The church is meant to be an army of trained soldiers, alert and prepared, a force to be reckoned with. Jesus said, “I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” (Matt 16:18 NKJV)

In the attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, the imperial Japanese Navy was able to inflict so much destruction without suffering significant losses of their own. The sailors, marines, and soldiers stationed at Pearl Harbour and around Oahu were blissfully unaware of what was hurtling toward them. The United States military was caught totally unprepared for attack.

Aircraft were not in short supply but they were parked wingtip to wingtip. Most were not fully fuelled or equipped with ammunition. Though several American planes did get off the ground, more than 180 were destroyed before they could prepare for a counterattack. And another 159 were too badly damaged to fly.¹

At the time of the attack, the United States was not in an active conflict, so weapons and other equipment were not ready 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

With no thoughts about an impending war, the men and women of Pearl Harbour started their Sunday as usual - sleepy, lazy, enjoying breakfast. The general attitude was one of routine. They had no reason to prepare their anti-aircraft guns or even to be onboard their ships. Sadly, the attitude was “it’s Europe’s war”, not ours.

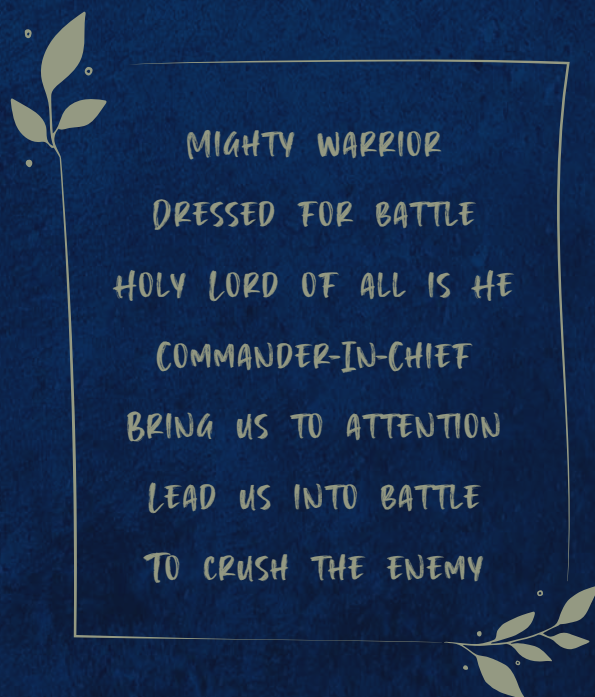
Irreparable damage was done by the enemy on that fateful day.

That, too, would be the outcome for the sleepy church. Till you and I are trained, prepared and alert, we can never be a people who are able to withstand the devil, able to build the Church of Jesus Christ, able to plant churches, able to save souls. Able to study the Word of God diligently, have the stamina to serve God wholeheartedly, attend prayer meetings faithfully, withstand the temptation of the world intentionally and live godly lives consistently.

He can move mountains, change lives, work incredible miracles but until we get up and move ourselves, nobody is going to believe in our God.

The natural state reflects the spiritual state. YES, He is able. But this able God wants to make *us* able.

There is this song -



The Commander-in-chief summons us today. Atten-t-i-o-n!

¹ Unprepared for Attack: December 7, 1941 by Mark Loproto



There is Hope in This Nation

The Annual Christmas Hi-Tea Reception of the Christian Federation of Malaysia (CFM) was held on 25 December 2021 at Full Gospel Tabernacle, Subang Jaya (FGT Subang). The National Evangelical Christian Fellowship of Malaysia (NECF Malaysia), a CFM component member played host to the event.

Also in attendance were Deputy Youth and Sports Minister, Senator Datuk Seri Ti Lian Ker together with politicians, diplomats, religious and community leaders. About 120 graced the function in compliance with the SOP.

NECF chairman Rev. Dr Eu Hong Seng in his speech as the event host highlighted the challenges faced through the period of the past two years. It started with the Covid19 Pandemic and ended with the Tropical Depression 29 cyclone that hit certain areas in the country, resulting in the worst floods in possibly the last 50 years.

Yet in spite of the challenges faced, he acknowledged the service and sacrifice

of the front-liners from the health service and security personnel who served with much dedication to combat and restore the health of those affected. In relation to the flood, he applauded the many who “showed up for each other” – the many who went out to search for and to rescue the many thousands who were trapped by the flood waters.

He was equally impressed by the many temples, churches, gurdwaras, mosques and NGOs who facilitated shelters and served as distribution centres to help the victims of the flood. To him, this signifies the “*victory of the common people*” in helping one another when there is a crisis.

Quoting from **John 3:16**, he emphasized that the Bible continues to offer hope, joy, love and peace in the midst of the pandemic. The way Malaysians have risen up to “show up for each other” regardless of ethnicity, culture, language and religion is indeed a reminder that there is hope in this nation.



Lastly, he expressed with much hope that the Honourable Prime Minister and his government of the day to continue to enact even more *Keluarga Malaysia* policies and programmes that benefit the rakyat and to ensure the common good of everyone in Malaysia.

The guest of honour Senator Datuk Seri Ti Lian Ker in respond reiterated the fact that there is hope for this nation. Malaysia being a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country is indeed unique whereby every person of diverse backgrounds can play a part in bringing the change. Reflecting on his own journey up to the present as an appointed minister, he shared that every

citizen has the opportunity to succeed and be of importance to the country as long as they are dedicated to the good of their fellow Malaysians.

A simple prayer to bless the afternoon's Hi-Tea was then delivered by Archbishop Rev Julian Leow, whereby in his prayer he remembers the many who have suffered from the floods and reminded those present that Christmas is a season where all are humbled by the birth of Jesus who through Him, we are saved and redeemed. He then blessed the Hi-Tea and an array of lovely dishes were then served buffet style to all the guests present.



How the Churches helped during the December Flood

On December 18, torrential rain caused Taman Sri Muda, Shah Alam to be flooded. CREST in partnership with other NGOs responded on the following day by deploying three boats distributing food and rescuing stranded flood victims on rooftops. CREST would like to thank NECF for the boat donated to them which was used during the rescue operations.



HISTEAM (7979) whose office located at Kota Kemuning was only 10minutes away where the flood occurred. They immediately mobilized 2 boats with engines for emergency relief work led by teams on ground zero. They also got connected with Elder Dexter of Shah Alam Gospel Centre (SAGC) whose church was among those affected by the flood waters. When the water receded, they assisted SAGC with the cleaning of their church and thereafter using it as command base to launch relief operations.

The Shal Alam Gospel Church (SAGC) members did rescue work, distribution of food packs and lending out power banks for phone use. Post Flood, they distributed food aid, cleaned and washed houses and cleared damaged furniture and appliances, towed damaged cars to workshops and help the flood victims fill claims form for financial assistance from the government.

They also visited members and their neighbors to assess damages and needs; engaged electricians for checking wiring and changing sockets, plugs and fans; identify paintwork and timber repairs of homes; distributed simple basic needs like fridges, washing machines, utensils, mattresses, food packs, household goods; and back to school kits for students. Altogether there were 570 volunteers from all Christian denominations that came alongside SAGC in this ministry. This initiative also drew church members from 21 Brethren assemblies. All in they helped to clean about 70 houses, 5 business premises and a school.



The flood aid distribution initiated by the young people of the Good Tidings Assembly (GTA) began on 20th December. The following week, they cancelled their Christmas service and sent out several teams to clean-up the homes of their affected members. Funds were raised from their members and their friends to purchase food essentials, electrical appliances, mattresses, pillows, bed sheets, blankets etc. Lastly, cash donations were given out to subsidized repair works for those whose cars were damaged.

NECF TAMIL COMMISSION

Many homes of the Tamil pastors and members in the Klang and Sri Muda areas were badly hit by the floods. Besides being flooded, they also lost everything they owned. NECF then released RM15,000 to the Tamil Commission to help these families. 50 pastors and various families received cash aid of RM300. The Tamil Commission also connected them to several other organizations that rendered additional assistance to them. Families that received the cash aid were very grateful for the assistance. The Tamil Commission also visited and offered prayer and encouragement to the affected pastors both in Klang and Sri Muda.

We would like to express our appreciation to others like Asia Crisis Response Alliance (ACRA), FGAKL, SIBKL who were also involved in providing aid to those affected by the flood. Truly the demonstration of the Christian love and care has made a milestone for the church of Jesus Christ.

CFM State Representatives in MCCBCHST Branches

States	NECF rep	CCM rep	Catholic Church rep
PERLIS	Pr. Kuilan Suppiah (based in Alor Setar)	Rev. Eisu Das (Sg. Petani, Kedah)	Mr. Joseph Emmanuel
KEDAH	Pr. Kuilan Suppiah	Rev. E Kunabalan	Mr. Peter Lee
KELANTAN	Pr. Henderson Wee	Rev. Lim Khet Keang	Mr. Joseph Wang
TERENGGANU	Pr. Michael Lou Yin Teng	Rev. Stephen Chan	Rev. Fr. Stanislaus Soosamariam (in KT)
PENANG	Pr. Liew Yean Huat	Rev. Ronald Yap Quan Nyian	Mr. Arokiadass Anthonysamy
PERAK	Rev. Daniel Velloo	Rev. Lee Chin Kiang	Rev Fr. Joseph Stephen
PAHANG	Elder Wee Hoe Chong	Rev. Bernard Yogaray Lazar	Mr. Frederick Lim
SELANGOR	Rev. Daniel Loh	Cor Episcopa Fr. Philip Thomas	Mr. Ho Kin Meng
WP KL	Pr. Looi Kok Kim	Cor Episcopa Fr. Philip Thomas	Rev. Fr Christopher Soosaipillai
N. SEMBILAN	Pr. Gan Kim Swee	Rev. Fraser A/L Isaas Devadason	Rev. Fr. Xavier Andrew
MELAKA	Pr. Ronnie Chiu Loo Nee	Rev. Samy Dass s/o Suyapragasam	Ms. Doris Tan
JOHOR	Pr. Tay Wah Seng (Observer: Rev. Dr. M.G. George)	Ven. Edward M. John	Revd Fr Edward Rayappan
SABAH (no MCCBCHST in Sabah)			Revd Datuk Jerry Dusing (President SCC); Bishop Dr Hii Kong Hock (Hon. Secretary, SCC).
SARAWAK (no MCCBCHST in Sabah)			AB Dr. Simon Poh (Chairman, ACS); Head Elder Ambrose Linang (Hon. Sec-Gen, ACS)