

We Need His Presence

Almost fifty years on, the experience remains vivid. The scenes of the Holy Spirit working in our midst, the joy and liberty with which we sang the Scripture choruses, the sweetness of the Lord's presence as we worshipped and the people set free from bondages, are etched in my mind. The thought that came to me then and comes to me often now is, "That is what church as God intends it to be should look like."

That was the revival in the mid-1970s in the Klang Valley. Just a few years earlier, Christian spiritual revival took place in Ba'Kelalan in Sarawak one evening in 1973, when the Holy Spirit began to move in the quiet village of Ba'Kelalan, convicting hearts, restoring relationships and ultimately transforming their society.

Since then, there have been other pockets of renewal and revival in our land. Many were converted and many churches were planted across the denominations.

We desperately need a spiritual revival like that of the 1970s in Malaysia because many of God's leaders, workers and people are weary in spirit and have lost vitality to pursue Him.

Why do we need revival? Because we need Him!

Revival is the restoration of God's presence among His people. In Exodus 33, God told the Israelites to break camp at Mt. Sinai and head in the direction of Canaan. The Lord told Moses He would send His angel ahead of the people to lead them to the Promised Land, but His presence would not go with them because of their disobedience by worshipping the golden calf. So in Exodus 33, God threatened to remove His presence from His people.

Understanding that there is no real life apart from God's presence, Moses pleaded for God to return to His people. In verse 15, Moses said, "Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here."

God's presence is essential. We need Him, and we were never intended to do life or church without Him.

Revival is not only essential, it is also experiential. Revival is to be felt and experienced. When God is present, life is different. We can feel it, we can know it.

In Acts 3:19, Peter said, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

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New Members – Welcome to the Fellowship!

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1	Love & Mercy Church	Shah Alam, Selangor
2	The Victory fellowship Bhd	Kuala Lumpur
3	Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB) Melaka	Melaka Tengah
4	Tabernacle of Holiness Hutan Melintang	Hutan Melintang, Perak
5	Rehoboth Church Malaysia	Puchong, Selangor
6	Holy Glory Church	Chaah, Johor Bahru
7	Zhu En Baptist Church	Johor Bahru

Peter understood that only the presence of God alone could refresh and renew the hearts of His people. And we desperately need the refreshing that comes from His presence with us.

There are several reasons why we need God's Presence -

1. We need Him if we are ever going to recover a biblical sense of fear and awe.

In Rev 1:17 the apostle John said, "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last."

John fell on his face in the presence of God. He simply could not stand. More than a physical response, the bowing of our bodies reflects the yielding of our hearts to His rule in our lives.

Fear and awe of God is missing in our churches. But when God's people encounter His presence, there will once again be a wholesome fear and awe of the Lord.

2. We need Him if we are going to do real battle with sin in our lives.

Many believers are deeply entangled with all manner of sin and are losing the battle against sin and reaping its devastating consequences.

In Isaiah 6:1-5, the prophet had a life-defining encounter with the holy presence of God. The result was that he became intensely aware of his own sinfulness. Like turning up the dimmer lights in a darkened room, God's holiness will highlight all the impurities in our lives. Isaiah, on seeing so clearly his own sinfulness, wanted to deal with the sin in his life and so will we when we encounter the presence of God!

3. We need Him if our land is going to be healed.

In 2 Chronicles 7:14, God says that if His people are repentant, then He will "heal their land."

Our land is ailing and weak with many seemingly insurmountable challenges. We long for revival because we want to see our land healed. But revival does not begin with the unconverted turning to Christ; it begins with the people of God honestly dealing with sin and brokenness; it begins with a renewed commitment to God and His Word and a burning desire to please Him.

4. We need Him if we are going to love the world the way He does.

When Jesus walked this earth He had compassion on the masses of people without God. It was *natural* to Him to release others from spiritual darkness and disorientation. When He is present among us, our hearts will come into alignment with His heart. We will move from being judgmental about our nation to weeping over land.

5. We need Him if we are going to see more people giving their lives to Christ, trusting Him for salvation.

In the presence of God, resistance to the gospel melts away and lives are transformed.

6. We need Him if we are going to recover the hearts of students and young adults.

Many young adults and youth are not disciplined by Christian parents to walk with God. The church tries her best to do that. But sadly, youth are "graduating" from church soon after they graduate from high school. A high percentage of young people and young adults drop active involvement in church when they are in tertiary education or when they join the workforce. Only God's presence can turn this around.

7. We need Him if we are going to impact our nation for Christ.

The church must become more than a place for "hatching, matching, and dispatching" (i.e., baby dedications, weddings, and funerals). God's people must know His presence and power and joy in order to serve Him and reach out to the community to impact our nation for Christ.

8. We need Him if we want to see the supernatural happen in our midst.

The "tangible" presence of the Lord is often absent in our church services. Yes, we know He's in our midst but we long to see signs and wonders accompany the preaching of His Word. When we are more concerned about "filling" than "falling," then the supernatural will begin to be ushered in.

9. We need Him if we are to stand firm till He comes.

The last days are at hand. We see wars and rumours of war, occurrences of natural disasters intensifying, and diseases killing people in great numbers.

In order for His people to stand firm till He comes, we need a fresh encounter with His awesome presence and power.

But revival is not something we can *work up*. It is something we *pray down*. Let us restore our prayer meetings, seek His face and plead the Lord for His mighty presence to invade our churches, our homes, and our nation.

Yes, we need Him. Not so much renewal or revival, but Him.

Eu Hong Seng
NECF, Chairman.



We Need To Stay Strong

In times like these, when our world is unsteady and fragile, we need solid truth to overcome current challenges. People are hungry for something reliably true and truly hopeful as the present world has nothing to offer them. This is when the church needs to be strong and faithful in the coming year ahead.

This was the same advice that Paul gave to young Timothy, his spiritual son who had to endure the work in Ephesus when he said, ***“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”*** (2 Tim.2:1). It was a personal instruction that when things start to fall apart, Timothy is to be strong himself in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; a fundamental principle one must have before helping anybody.

Head knowledge truth by itself is of no value, unless people can see that it has changed you and made you different. The confidence that you gained enables you to speak out of the experience of having been transformed by the truth you believe, or else you will never be able to do anything to help someone who faces challenges at the hour of danger.

Likewise, the church needs strength and endurance to fulfill the calling God has given to her. She must constantly seek the unmerited gift of grace that comes from Him. She must consistently align her plans according to the purpose that the Lord has set for her.

No matter what circumstances that we anticipate to face, the church needs to be strong and take the lead as we enter the New Year. How she navigates through the situation is dependent on the Lord's guidance and protection, for we serve a kingdom that is unshakable.

My encouragement to every church, irrespective of locality, size or language, is to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Serve the community that the Lord has placed you and glorify Him with the gifts that He has blessed. Always desire to be acknowledged by our Saviour with these words - ***well done, good and faithful servant.***

Pastor Samuel Ang
Secretary General



WEA Singles Initiative Finds Global Partners

A significant segment of evangelical adults around the world are single or single again. “I don’t think the evangelical church has ever advanced an intentional national or global strategy targeting this massive and growing demographic,” says Mark McLeod, Singles Advocate for the WEA’s Decade of Disciple Making Initiative.

Mark and his Singles Advocacy team visited Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, and the Philippines earlier this year, holding seminars on a biblical theology of singleness and working with national evangelical leadership to “advance a paradigm that fully values, engages and empowers single and single-again persons.”

Our goal was to advance a paradigm that fully values, engages and empowers single and single-again evangelical persons. Our team members came from Nepal, India, Malaysia and Canada.

As a WEA Singles Initiative emerges, our initial and primary resource is focused on advancing a biblical theology of singleness, based on the book *Singleness in God’s Redemptive Story* by Barry Danylak (<https://seeglobal.net/books-articles/>).

Sri Lanka - March 20-23: The National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka invited Barry to present a Marriage, Singleness and Family seminar at the Assembly of God Bible College in Colombo, followed by a second presentation to about 70 local and regional pastors. Barry and Dr. Leela Manasseh (India) will be following up to help develop and advance further resources.

Nepal - April 20-30: Pastor Sher, General Secretary of the National Churches Fellowship of Nepal, hosted our team. We shared in several seminars in Kathmandu,

and met with national leadership including the Nepal Christian Society, Micah Nepal, the Bible Society of Nepal, and others. Their vision is to advance a biblical theology-of-singleness initiative throughout the Christian community there.

Malaysia - May 1-15: Our team was welcomed by the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship of Malaysia and their Women’s Commission, which recently held a very successful online singles seminar with 130 attendees.

We were also welcomed by the Council of Churches Malaysia, with an open invitation to present similar seminars through their Women’s Commission and churches. In addition, Barry and Thir Koirola (Peace and Reconciliation Network Asia) presented a three-hour seminar at the invitation of three seminaries.

Philippines - May 15-27: Barry, Thir and I met with Bishop Efraim Tendero (WEA Global Ambassador), Bishop Noel Pantoja (General Secretary, Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches), and leaders of several seminaries. Bishop Noel is making plans for the PCEC to host a two-week national Singles Philippines Initiative in May 2024. This will include seminars for seminaries and church leaders along with Sunday presentations to church congregations. Promise Keepers Philippines (which is also the PCEC Men’s Commission) is planning their annual event around this initiative and will include a focus on single men.



*Prepared by Mark McLeod,
WEA Singles Advocate*

Reflection on Visit to the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship of Malaysia's Office

The Global Generosity Network (GGN) is an initiative of the World Evangelical Alliance to advance stewardship, generosity and giving in the World Evangelical Alliance Family and wider global Christian community. National Evangelical Alliances and Fellowships are therefore our main contact points in countries and often the first people I try to meet when visiting a specific country.

I was privileged to have met with Rev Andy Chi and Pr Sam Ang of the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) of Malaysia during a visit to Malaysia on 10 November 2023. The aim was to understand how GGN can support the NECF to inspire stewardship, generosity and giving amongst evangelical Christians in Malaysia. Though the GGN is not a funding organisation, we are part of and connected to various initiatives that help Christians and churches manage their finances and other resources better, share more of their resources with others through generous living and give more of their money, time and talents to advance God's Kingdom.

I was very encouraged to hear that Christians in Malaysia are in general very generous as they give to churches, ministries and needs around them. It is interesting that Malaysia is ranked 31st on the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) World Giving Index with 55% of Malaysians indicating that they helped a stranger in the past month, 57% indicating that they donated money to charities but that only 26% of people volunteered their time in community organisations that would include churches. Evangelical Christians have an opportunity then to be a witness by living generously and share what God has given them with those in need. As Jesus says in Matthew 10:8: "Freely you have received; freely give," GGN is thus looking forward to working with NECF to catalyse such a culture of giving amongst Malaysian Christians.

Rev Chi and Pr Ang mentioned the financial challenges that some of the churches in Malaysia face. There are indeed good resources and initiatives that can



help Christians and churches improve their financial health. GGN can introduce these initiatives to Malaysian Christians and churches through NECF. As the representative body of evangelical churches in Malaysia, NECF could have a specific role to play in the financial discipleship of Christians and churches that will also improve the financial health of churches.

In reflection on my visit, despite the challenges faced in Malaysia, there are many churches, ministries and Christian organisations that are growing in the land. They are truly the salt and light of God's Kingdom in Malaysia. Just think about the impact of Christians and churches in Malaysia if they are even better stewards of the resources God has given them, share more of these resources with others and give more to advance God's Kingdom in Malaysia and the rest of the world. Such generosity could be really transformational in Malaysia! This is the passion and vision of GGN and for which the NECF could be a catalyst in Malaysia.

Rev Dr Sas Conradie

Coordinator Global Generosity Network

What Can I Do to Fight Exploitation?



I watched “Sound of Freedom”. What can I do to stop human trafficking?

Find a local organization to support with your finances, your prayers, and your time.

Human trafficking is real, but it rarely looks like the movies. Exploitation exists, not only in places far from home, but in our own communities. Here are some things you can do in your daily life, in your own community, to keep people safe and to fight exploitation.

Let’s start with one of the most powerful things you can do:

PRAY

Human trafficking and the industries that degrade, debase and enslave people are Satan’s playground.

- Pray for hope and help for men, women and children who are trapped!
- Pray for those working day after day for justice and freedom – and ask God to build His own heart for justice in you.
- Pray regularly, and pray knowledgeably: learn about the issue, and sign up for newsletters from organizations fighting trafficking.

LEARN

- Learn to recognize signs that exploitation is happening.
(<https://www.state.gov/identify-and-assist-a-trafficking-victim>)
or
(<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/en/human-trafficking/recognizing-signs>)
- Know who to call to report suspicious behavior. Add the local or national hotline number to your phone.
(Majlis Antipemerdagangan Orang dan Antipenyeludupan Migran (MAPO) Hotline 03-8000 8000)
- Google for information about exploitation and trafficking in your community or your state. Who else is concerned about the situation? Make note of the journalists, authorities, and agencies working with survivors. Reach out to learn more.

- Get training. Check with local organizations and online sources to deepen your understanding of the issues and to strengthen your ability to respond.

SERVE

Invite a local anti-trafficking ministry to share with your church, school, Bible study or home group. Find out what they need! Ask how you can help. Many anti-trafficking organizations rely on volunteers to handle tasks from bookkeeping to legal support, or to help make a shelter feel cozy and welcoming. Help raise funds: explore peer-to-peer fundraising, create awareness events, or host ministry evenings.

DETOX

Taking a closer look at human trafficking forces us to examine our own lives to see how we might be complicit in exploiting people. Demand for sexual services and cheap products creates trafficking and exploitation. It’s as simple as that.

Check your consumption: low prices can mean that someone else is paying the price for your purchase, working long hours for low wages or under slave-like conditions. Learn more about slavery-prone industries. Even better, buying goods from a freedom business helps people live free from exploitation.

Check your tech! Is there slavery in the supply chains for these products? Are the children in your life using it safely? Turn on parental controls and have a conversation about the dangers. The European Freedom Network offers a free resource for parents.

Not everyone will be called to leave their job to pursue justice, but there is a role for everyone in God’s work of freedom! Commit some time and prayer to discover yours.



Jennifer Roemhildt Tunehag
is the Director of Global Church Engagement World Freedom Network, a global initiative of the World Evangelical Alliance. The World Freedom Network harnesses the strength of Christian communities to combat modern slavery.



Four Important Affirmations in the New Landscape

COVID-19 pandemic has brought various changes in every aspect of our lives. The churches are of no exceptions. Despite these changes, we are to continuously reflect the glory of God and truly impact the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Bible shows us that the early church had to constantly adapt to changes as well. They were under many pressures, especially during Emperor Nero's reign. Amidst all these, they were faithfully holding on to their convictions.

Learning from two epistles, 1 Peter and Colossians, here are 4 important affirmations to be our foundations as we move on to the new landscape.

1. Our Identity: God's Chosen People

"To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance." (1 Peter 1: 1-2)

Apostle Peter began his letter by reminding the church of their significant identity as God's elect. At that time, the Christians were scattered and targeted because they were seen as a threat under Emperor Nero's reign. Although they were in "a new landscape" with various changes and even persecutions, Peter emphasized that the significant aspect does not lie in numbers or size, but in our identity. This is an important message for us in Asia today, because Christians are minorities in many countries. We should be strongly grounded in our identity as God's chosen people despite our circumstances and the challenges we face.

We often fall into the trap of defining a church in terms of buildings, numbers, or programs. But the Bible says what defines us is the fact that we have been chosen by God, by God's foreknowledge, through

the sanctifying work of the Spirit. We should not be confused and only think about increased programs, activities and size that are of less significance. In the context of changing landscape, with many uncertainties even maybe persecutions ahead of us, we are to once again emphasize the fact of who we are and give our churches strong grounding on our identity.

2. Our Calling: To Be Holy

"As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Peter 1: 14-16)

The second important thing to hold on to is our calling, which is to be holy because God is holy. As God's children, we should reflect His character. This is the missing piece in a lot of our churches today. We are fumbled because we have emphasized the fact of being born again as though it's a badge. We have promoted everybody into active ministry but forget to emphasize on the importance of character. In Matthew 23:15, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, "You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are."

The role of the church is to produce disciples who are changed in their character to be Christlike. As we move on to a new landscape, it is very important to emphasize the character formation of our people instead of just increased activities, programs or outreach events.

3. Our Purpose: Witnessing to the World

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9)

Thirdly, we should hold on to our purpose, which is to witness to the world how God has brought us from darkness into His wonderful light. During the coronavirus lockdown, many churches have adapted very well, moving from real services to virtual ones. But the problem is, many churches tend to just focus on providing good services for their congregations. Outreach efforts to people in need have been curtailed and churches have become very inner-oriented. As we move on to the new landscape, we must not forget our purpose. We are not supposed to withdraw and just



focus on ourselves. Churches should look for ways in which we can declare praises to God through our own testimonies of transitioning from darkness to light.

4. The Supremacy of Jesus Christ

Lastly, we must hold on to the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Paul emphasized this aspect of “Christ above all” in his epistle to the Colossians.

Jesus is the Representation of God

“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” (Col. 1:15)

Churches have to hold on to the supremacy of Jesus Christ as God himself. There is only one revelation of God in human history, which is Jesus Christ. There is no other way to God other than through the One who came from God, who is God. There is no other name by which we have salvation other than the name of Jesus Christ. As we move on to the new landscape, there may be a lot of pressures to talk about other things, including the Kingdom of God. However, we must remember that the Kingdom of God is essentially the Kingdom of the Son, who is God. We cannot forget this uniqueness of Jesus and His supremacy.

Jesus is the Creator God

“For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” (Col. 1:16-17)

Everything has been created by, for and through Jesus. This includes all structures: thrones, rulers, authorities, and powers. They are all under Jesus’ supremacy. We must hold on to this fact. In the new landscape, we may be persecuted or we may have worldly leaders who act ruthlessly as if nothing is going to stop them. But we are not to give up. We are here to say that at the end of the day, this world and all that is in it belongs to Jesus.

Jesus is Supreme over the church

“And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.” (Col 1:18)

Sometimes, we may falsely believe that we are the ones who own the church. But the Bible says Jesus is the head of the church and He is supreme over the church. The church belongs to Jesus. In Saul’s encounter with Jesus on his road to Damascus, Jesus asked “Saul, why

do you persecute me?” Saul was persecuting Jesus because he was persecuting churches. When someone touches the Church, we must remember it is Jesus who they are dealing with.

For in Jesus, the Fullness of God dwelt

“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” (Col. 1:19-20)

Jesus is supreme because by His death, the death of someone in whom the fullness of God dwelt, He has now been made to be the reconciler of all things to God. There is no other way by which we can be reconciled to God other than through Christ. To truly impact the world, we have to take Christ, the Reconciler, to the world.

Jesus is the Source of all wisdom and knowledge

“(Christ) in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.” (Col. 2:3-4)

Jesus Christ is the source and the complete expression of wisdom and knowledge. We should not be deceived by the world’s fine sounding arguments. Everything that we need is in Him.

We are not going to win Asia for Christ by our clever strategies. Yes, strategies are important. But the way we will win Asia for Christ is by upholding the supremacy of Christ. With this, we do not go as people who are defeated but as people who have authority. Jesus is the head of every power and authority (Col. 2:10). He has also disarmed all powers and authorities and triumphed over them on the cross (Col. 2:15). As long as the church of Jesus Christ continues to be firm in its relationship with Christ, as long as we remain connected to Christ, we will always reflect Him through our words and deeds, and bring hope to the world.



Rev. C. B. Samuel

(India)
Theological Advisor for EFICOR and
Micah Global

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Malaysia Day Celebration

The **60th Malaysia Day Celebration on 15 Sept 2023** was a significant event for the Malaysian Church as it saw a combined effort by the 3 main Christian governing bodies namely NECF, Council of Churches Malaysia (CCM) and the Catholic Church. This event was conducted in English.

This event which lasted close to two hours was held at Wisma Eagles, FGT Subang Jaya and was attended by 435 people. A grand flag parade with a special dance performance was presented before the singing of the National anthem. This was followed by a spirit-filled worship, and the timely exhortation given by Bishop Ong Sek Leang, NECF Vice-Chairman who pointed out the need for the prophetic anointing for the Church to confront and address the issues that are affecting us today, hence, calling the Church to Proclaim the Gospel in the light of the urgency of the times.

Bishop T Jeyakumar, who represented CCM, and Archbishop Julian Leow, who represented Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur for the Catholic Church, prayed for the Church and the Nation earnestly with prayers of repentance and thanksgiving. Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng, NECF Chairman closed the prayer session by praying in response to the urgency of the times. The meeting ended with a congregational declaration made for Malaysia led by Rev Elisha Satvinder, NECF Hon. Secretary.



Tamil Youth Gathering

While the main event was held in Wisma Eagles, the NECF Tamil Commission held their gathering at Charis Word Centre Puchong that same evening which was organized by the youths instead. About 300 youths from the different states attended this event.

The celebration atmosphere was electric when the youth stood and joined in a rousing rendition of the national anthem, singing at the top of their voices, celebrating both their faith and their identity as Malaysians.

Rev. Dennis Raj, President of the Tamil Annual Conference (TAC) Methodist, stressed the value of young people to be involved in spiritual matters because of the urgency of the times. He also emphasized that we are all Malaysians, regardless of our religious backgrounds.

Many among the Tamil groups agreed that the event was a testament to the power of the faith of the Tamil young people in Malaysia. The event had succeeded in inspiring and motivating all who were present to keep praying and interceding for the nation and the church.



Chinese Churches Gathering

The following morning on September 16, the NECF Chinese Commission held their gathering at New Life Restoration Church with more than 150 people in attendance. Rev Philip Koon and Rev Dr Kok Chin Ming led the congregation to pray for the Church and the Nation respectively, while Rev Chomy Ching made the declaration for Malaysia.

Pastor Grace Lee, who represented the Chinese Commission, shared from 1 King 9-11 where using the life of Solomon as an example, showed how when his was at the prime of his leadership lost his focus and fell into temptation that led to his ultimate failure. She then challenged the congregation to reflect on their current situation so that they would not merely seek success, but remember God's grace and be focused on doing His will which entails spreading the Gospel to the end of the world. She also led the congregation to recall how the annual event of NECF 40-Day Fast & Prayer first started, and the journey the Chinese Commission went through since its formation in 2004.



Bahasa Churches Gathering

The final Malaysia Day gathering was organized by the NECF Bahasa Commission (BM) and held at SIB KL on the evening of September 16. The night event attracted a huge crowd of 925 people, representing 23 churches and 30 BM pastors.

The event opened with a series of dance performance presented by the joint effort of SIB KL and Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) dance team celebrating the diversity, unity and uniqueness of the nation. Rev Sam Surendran, the Chairman of BM Commission NECF, shared his message from Acts 1:6-8 where he addressed our response to the Urgency of the Times and why we need to be His witnesses by spreading His message, embodying His love and contributing to the flourishing of His Kingdom on earth.

In his speech Pr Nick Resien, the Executive Secretary of BM Commission, thanked Pr Jonathan and the SIB team for helping to make the event possible. He shared with the congregation the main issues and current challenges faced by Malaysian churches today. He encouraged all to advocate for a Malaysia where everyone has their religious rights, and the Church would be concerned and be relevant with issues of social justice and humanitarian activities, and be involved in interfaith dialogues. He also challenged the church to embrace technology and communication to reach out to the younger generation, not forgetting that the youth are to be engaged to secure our future.

A short video of the introduction of NECF and the formation of Malaysia was broadcast before Rev Rion and Pr Jack Peru took over to lead the congregation to pray for the Church and the Nation. The event ended with the declaration and closing prayer by Pr Peter Ukong.



Tamil Commission Pastors' Kids Camp

NECF organized the Tamil Pastors' Kids camp at Scripture Union/Fellowship of Evangelical Students (SU/FES) Campsite, Tapah, Perak from 30th August to 1st September 2023. The camp was attended by over 50 Pastors' Kids from several Tamil churches.

The first day of the camp was dedicated to getting to know each other and participating in various icebreaking activities. This was followed by Workshops and activities by Datuk Seri Windsor Paul and experienced pastors that focused on helping the Pastors' Kids to build a strong foundation in their faith and develop their spiritual and emotional maturity.

The participants were empowered to embrace their unique identities as children of pastors, equipping them with the necessary tools to navigate the challenges and responsibilities that come with their roles.

The second day of the camp started off with a worship service and sharing on the "Responsibility as a Pastor's Kid". This was followed by a time of discussion and reflection, as well as some fun activities. The evening ended with a special time of prayer and intercession followed by a campfire and remembering our National Day on 31st August 2023.



The third day of the camp was a time of retreat where the children and teenagers were encouraged to take time to reflect on their spiritual lives and to pray for God's guidance. The day ended with a special gathering where the children and teenagers shared their testimonies and experiences during the camp.

At the end of the camp, the pastors' kids expressed gratitude for the wonderful experiences, and many of them expressed a desire to attend similar camps and activities in the future. Seen in that light, the camp can be considered a success and NECF looks forward to organizing more such camps in the future to nurture the faith and strengthen the Pastors' Kids.



Relief For Nepal Earthquake Victims

A 6.4 magnitude earthquake hit Nepal in the late hours of Friday November 3rd and tremors were also felt in Delhi, nearly 500 km from the epicenter which is 42 km south of Jumla. Jajarkot and Rukum were the two districts worst hit by the earthquake. The earthquake that struck remote parts of western Nepal had claimed 153 lives and injured more than 338 people so far, according to the local authorities. Almost half of those reported killed and injured were children. The earthquake took place while people were sleeping at night. An estimated 200,000 people, including over 80,000 children were affected. Most homes had been damaged, along with schools, health centres and other infrastructure.

In response, NECF released RM70,000 from its Disaster Relief Fund to purchase blankets and tents for the earthquake victims in view of the coming winter season. Here are the pictures of blankets and tents being distributed in Nepal.



National Crisis Relief Network Meeting

The National Crisis Relief Network held their annual meeting at the Full Gospel Church Johor Bahru from the 11th to 13th of October. A total of 22 persons from 10 different relief and Christian NGOs attended the meeting.

Organizations that attended the meeting are as follows:

- a) National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF)
- b) Crisis Relief Services And Training (CREST)
- c) Holistic Care Relief Network (7979)
- d) Malaysia Care
- e) Full Gospel Church Johor Bahru
- f) Pusat Kebajikan Kalvari Johor
- g) Pertubuhan Kabajikan Wawasan Johor Bahru
- h) Fish And Loaves Berhad
- i) Caritas MJDOHD Johor
- j) Family Healing Centre Johor

Originally the meeting was scheduled in March but had to be postponed to October due to the February/March floods in Johor. The last meeting was held at St Martin Anglican Church Kota Bahru from the 9th to 13th October 2022.

The group met with several objectives in mind. Firstly, connect with our Johor partners and strengthen our national network in the country; Secondly to update one another with the work that has been done since our meeting in 2022 in Kota Bahru, and finally to prepare and plan for the next flood response.

During the opening session, Pastor Samuel Ang welcomed all the participants and shared about some of the challenges faced by the nation including the issue of vaping. Then Pastor Sonny Lim shared how their

flood relief work in Johor Bahru started in 2006 and progressed since then. The session closed after Brother Athens reported on their flood response at Cha'ah, Johor.

The following morning, NECF, CREST, 7979 and Malaysia Care shared their side of the story of how they responded to the Cha'ah flood. Though they initially faced difficulties to access into Cha'ah, they managed to eventually enter and help the residence by providing cleaning assistance, salvaging electrical items, supplying household items and conducting counselling and 'psychotherapy' programmes for the adult and children. In this regard, the Malaysian Care 'Bumble Bee' was a huge blessing to the children.

After the reports, Pastor Sonny Lim shared on the 'Essentials of Partnership.' Starting with the prayer of Jesus for unity, and then God's comment regarding the power of unity during the construction of the Tower of Babel, he proceeded to illustrate the need to be connected in heart and not just in work for lasting partnership through the lives of Orpah and Ruth.

The group met again in the evening and during the session they were given a talk by Pastor Lydia Goh on the Importance of Trauma Counselling as an Essential Follow-Up for disaster victims.

At the final session of the following morning, a report was presented on all the available disaster response equipment (assets) such as boats, waterjets, generators, oxygen concentrators, filters and 4WD vehicles owned by the partners of the network. It was pointed out that the asset mapping was incomplete as the human asset was excluded.

Following the report, NECF suggested that a meeting with the key churches in the Klang Valley be held soon after this meeting to prepare them for immediate response to the coming monsoon flood season. It was also suggested that a meeting be held with the pastors and leaders of the Cha'ah Churches for the purpose of setting up of a Local Coordinating Centre as soon as possible. Finally the date for 2024 network meeting was set on October 8 to 10 to be held in NECF office.

NECF Youth Commission Survey Of Church Youth Ministry In Malaysia Report

A survey was conducted regarding the Church Youth Ministry in the country. This survey was intended to understand the youth ministry scene amongst churches in Malaysia in order to assess the kind of support NECF Youth Commission can offer. It also serves to stir its respondents in the area of discipleship and evangelism within the youth ministry where respondents have a chance to self-assess and mobilizes resources towards effective youth ministry.

BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

Although the survey received 158 respondents altogether, only 118 completed over 50% of the whole survey. 25% of the survey included up to only the first page of the survey questionnaire, leaving the rest of the survey blank. Therefore, all non-background results are calculated based on the completed surveys only.

GEOGRAPHY: There is a concentration of **respondents in the central, making up 2/3 of the total respondents.** But the rest of the respondents (67 respondents) are fairly distributed through the rest of the country, mainly from Penang, Perak, Johor, and Sarawak. However, there are **no respondents from Terengganu or Perlis.**

DENOMINATION: Although about 20% of the respondents did not share the nature of their church organization, it can be concluded that over **60% of respondent churches are from Independent / Charismatic / Assemblies of God.**

YOUTH MINISTRY DYNAMICS

ACTIVE YOUTH MINISTRY: It is encouraging to see that **90% of respondents indicated existing youth ministries in their churches.** This is positive feedback that many churches are actively reaching out to youth and investing in the next generation. The survey shows that only 11 respondents shared that they do not have a youth ministry in their churches mostly due to lack of young people.

YOUTH SIZE: From those that indicated an existing youth ministry, **73% indicated that they have 25 or less youth in their youth ministry,** while only 10 respondents indicated a youth group size of more than 100 youth. Interestingly, geography is not the biggest contributing factor towards the size of a youth group. Although there is general truth and sense that the larger youth groups will be found in the cities like KL and Selangor while the smaller youth groups are probably from outside the city, it is not absolute.

FIRST GENERATION CHRISTIAN: The survey also seeks to discover the ratio of first-generation Christians in the youth group to second or third generation Christians. It shows that 72% of youth groups have less than a quarter of first-generation Christians in their youth group, and **only 7% of youth groups having a healthy half or more first-generation Christians in their group.** It is interesting to note that all the youth groups with high number of first-generation Christians, are from rather small youth group sizes, but from different places all over Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH MINISTRY: The survey also indicated that the **majority of youth are introduced into the youth ministry through the church's children ministry (70%) as well as being brought by peers (65%).**

YOUTH MINISTRY CHALLENGES

YOUTH PASTORS AND WORKERS: At an earlier section of the survey, it is surmised that **only 31% of the respondent churches have a fulltime youth pastor or youth worker** dedicated to the youth ministry. A few out of that even have more than 1 youth pastor or worker in their church. **A huge 60% of respondent churches have youth ministries led by lay leaders** - whether youths themselves, young adults, volunteers, or deacons from the church. Nine respondents indicated having youth groups led by the Senior or main pastor themselves.



COMPETTING ACTIVITIES: The highest voted challenge of the youth ministry, as indicated by respondents in the survey, is that youths today have too many other activities that clash with youth ministry activities. Youths are often caught between having to choose and eventually prioritizing education, other curricular activities, and even family activities over church or spiritual activities.

THREE CATEGORIES: The bulk of the response points to 'people' challenges where the source of these challenge stems in the people themselves. This can be divided into 3 categories:

- a. Youths who are unable to come for youth ministry - many feedback indicates clashing activities, no transport, and a lack of support from parents themselves towards the youth ministry. This can be said to be deeply rooted in discipleship and a low understanding of the importance of spirituality in a child's life.
- b. A lack of human resource in terms of youth worker, leader and support for the youth work. Several of the

feedback also indicates a lack of manpower for the ministry as well as leadership structural challenges that hinders the work from thriving.

- c. The lack of youths themselves within the church itself, having had some leaving to other churches or for other reasons.

All these challenges have led many respondents to indicate the desire to give focus to discipleship of youth within the youth group as well as the raising of leaders and building the youth ministry in this coming 2023-2024. It is observed that many of the challenges mentioned became more apparent and the ministry weakened by the pandemic and severe isolation.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

It is interesting that 39% of respondent churches indicate that they have never joined an event outside their own church nor utilize an external resource for the ministry. This a surprisingly high number given the availability of resources, para church organizations, denomination programmes that already exists to support and help simplify the work of reaching youths.

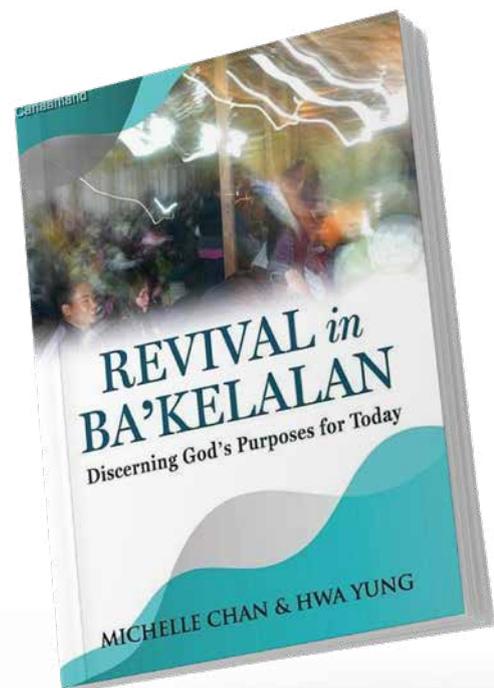
Revival In Ba'kelalan

The story of how the message of Christ delivered the Lun Bawang in Sarawak from becoming extinct as a people back in the 1930s was first told in Shirley Lee's book *Drunk Before Dawn* (1979). God has continued to work His gracious and wonderful purposes among them through various revivals, culminating in the fourth, which was reported in the *New Straits Times* in December 1985. Today the Lun Bawang are one of the strongest components of the Borneo Evangelical Mission church in Sarawak. But, for some inexplicable reason, the full story of the revivals has never been adequately told despite numerous attempts made.

In November 2023, the churches in Ba'kelalan celebrated the 50th anniversary of the 1973 revival. It began with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the churches there on the evening of 10 November. That was the second night of the visit of a team from Bario, where revival had broken out some weeks earlier. This book tells the story of what happened in 1973-74 and again in 1984-86, during which times God manifested His awesome power and glory to His people. And it leaves us with the question of what God may be saying through all these wonderful things to the church in Malaysia. The Ba'kelalan story invites us to discern His purposes together.

From the Foreword by President Bina Agong, BEM/SIB Sarawak:

"I experienced the 1973-74 revival when I was six years old. During the 1984-86 revival, I was already in my late teens and had the wonderful privilege of being



personally involved and an eyewitness of some of the miraculous occurrence. All of this impacted me deeply and resulted in me offering myself to God as a full-time minister. As a first-hand witness, I am able to testify that what Michelle Chan and Hwa Yung have written are valid and accurate. This book will go a long way to strengthen the faith of readers who know God and are seeking to grow deeper in their faith and understanding of God's awesome power and glory."

Book available at Canaanland Bookstore



Merry Christmas

NECF Council & Staff
Wish All Readers
A Blessed Christmas &
A Fruitful New Year



NECF MALAYSIA

DNA OF A LEADER

The DNA of a Leader is a leadership development curriculum with the main goal to impact the strength of the Church by strengthening the health of its leaders. We believe this happens when leaders are privately healthy and publicly fruitful.

SPEAKER PASTOR AL TOLEDO

Pastor Al Toledo, Lead Pastor of Chicago Tabernacle, with his wife Chrissy, pioneered the multi-ethnic, vibrant church in 2002. Al, who spent his early years in New York City preparing for a promising career as a professional baseball player, gave his life to Jesus while on a baseball field at the age of 17. His Major League journey ended shortly after being drafted by the Chicago White Sox, as God started to direct Pastor Al along a path towards the ministry. He left baseball and began attending a church a short distance from the apartment he grew up in, The Brooklyn Tabernacle. It was there where he would meet Chrissy, the daughter of Lead Pastor Jim Cymbala and his wife Carol.

Pastor Toledo served in various ministries and shortly thereafter responded to the call to full-time Christian service. This led Pastor Al to Omaha, Nebraska, where he pastored a thriving Assemblies of God church. He later returned with Chrissy to The Brooklyn Tabernacle to support the growing work before, finally, moving to Chicago.

Pastor Al lives with a fervent desire to see people become all God has called them to be. An expression of this desire is the DNA of a Leader, a leadership training launched in 2012 to staff and lay leaders at Chicago Tabernacle, emanating from his over 25 years of ministry experience. Since then, DNA has been taught globally, in multiple seminars, and in various cities.

Al and Chrissy have three children – Susie, Annie and Tommy – and four grandchildren – Wesley, James, Roman and Joel.

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KINGDOM THAT CANNOT BE SHAKEN

Hebrews 12:26-29