Love Thy Neighbour

40-Day Fast & Prayer 2009
A Shining Light to the Nations

NOTE:

This prayer booklet is to be used together with your Bible.

All prayer points serve as guidance only.

May the Holy Spirit lead you throughout the 40-Day Fast & Prayer.

"And he answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself'."

(Luke 10:27, ESV)

CONTENT

Introductory Words — Rev. Eu Hong Seng 4
Reflection from a Church Leader — Tan Kong Beng
Editor's Message
The Malays8
The Chinese9
The Indians
The Migrants
The Indigenous Minority People
Preparation of Hearts
A Shining Light to the Nations — Sam Ang
Week 1: Days 1–4 Coming Together to Love our Neighbours
A Shining Light to the Nations — Rev. Elisha Satvinder
Week 2: Days 5—11 Living to Love our Neighbours
A Shining Light to the Nations — Baru Bian
Week 3: Days 12–18 Home for the Homeless: Bringing Love to our Neighbours
A Shining Light to the Nations — Loh Seng Kok
Week 4: Days 19–25 Preserving Democracy: Loving our Neighbours through National Participation 28
Week 5: Days 26–32 Transparency, Truth and Governance: Loving our Neighbours through Accountability 31
Week 6: Days 33—40 The Church for the Nation: Loving our Nation!
City Co-ordinators

INTRODUCTORY WORDS

Love our Neighbour – A Shining Light to the Nations

n Jesus' teachings, our relationship with our fellow men is inseparable from our relationship with God. Love of God and love of our neighbours are two aspects of the same calling.

And one of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognising that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' "The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (NAS, Mark 12:28-31)

Jesus also told the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) to illustrate what it means to truly love your neighbour. The Jews and Samaritans had been enemies for hundreds of years. The Jews of Jesus' society considered the Samaritans to be ceremonially unclean, social outcasts, religious heretics. Yet, the Samaritan took pity on the man who had been robbed and beaten. He gave freely of both his time and his money to help the Jewish man who was not only a stranger, but also an enemy from a foreign country. In this parable, Jesus challenges us to "Go and do the same" (TLB).

In many of His sermons and parables, Jesus seeks to shock us out of our selfishness and worldliness and create in us a true passion for the welfare of our fellow men.

We must be practical in our faith; we must "do the same" as He has commanded. Here are some practical ways to love our neighbour:

♥ Just be there

We all have times when we could just use a friend during some sort of trial or hardship, and often those are the times when we find out who really cares about us and who considers us a priority. Love a neighbour by being there when he/she needs you.

♥ Give

Churches can set up a ministry for the poor in the community. You can contribute to this fund and be assured that the money is used wisely. Good works require finances, so give generously to this ministry.

♥ Ease their load

We all get overwhelmed at times in life with our responsibilities and workload. Show love by offering to take some of your neighbours' load, even if it's just for a little while, to give them a breather.

♥ Think practical

Can we help by providing transport, doing grocery shopping, repair and maintenance work, etc.?

When we truly love our neighbours, our light will shine before men and they will glorify our Father in heaven. It will make Malaysia a better place, and we will find our own fulfilment in life.

Rev. Eu Hong Seng

Chairman, NECF Malaysia Council July 2009

REFLECTIONS FROM A CHURCH LEADER

alaysian life has been pretty tumultuous over the past several years and in particular since March 8 of last year. So many areas of Malaysian life are under stress and strain with none of our institutions having come out unscathed in our days of trials.

Perhaps we might find some answers from among the Old Testament prophets as to how we shall pray and live today. One such prophet would be Jeremiah who was appointed to be God's spokesman to the nations and kingdoms to "uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and plant." (Jer. 1:10)

Jeremiah's first task was "to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow" the pretentious thought of men and women who chose to live without God and "worshipping what their hands have made" (Jer. 1:16). It began with the rulers, the court officials, the religious establishment and the property owners (Jer. 1:18). They chose to live their own lives and exploited others — the poor, the widows and orphans, the powerless and others. Jeremiah showed how they forgot about God.

The positive task of Jeremiah was to build and to plant. Jeremiah called Judah back to God and to build a righteous and just society. "Building" and "planting" speak of a long-term process in doing what God has in mind for our nation. The core message from the prophets is that God's heart is always for the outcasts and the down-trodden. He is always seeking for His people to live out the justice of God in their lives. In short, the prophets were urging the people to love our neighbours!

While we face the uncertainties of our day, perhaps brought about by our self-seeking ways, let us pay attention to Jeremiah's message to call people back to God and His ways and together work for a just, loving and caring Malaysia as we participate in prayer and nation-building.

Tan Kong Beng

Executive Secretary
Christian Fellowship of Malaysia
Just before Lent 2009

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

nd who is my neighbour? That is the question the scribe asked Jesus (Luke 10:29) which gave the occasion for Jesus to tell what is now commonly known as the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Today, one may ask the same question which the scribe asked with the parable vividly illustrating to us who our neighbours are. Are our neighbours the people groups around us, within our vicinity, community and the world? Or are they the unreached and unenvangelised or least-reached people around the globe? Or are they the people most neglected and excluded in society and our community? These and others are pertinent questions for enquiry in a world that has become global and connected in every way with different people of every culture, dialect and language around us. Speaking from a Biblical perspective, the parable demonstrates in no uncertain terms that our neighbour is primarily anyone in need. This includes "the vulnerable, the powerless, the poor, the marginalised and victims of racial discrimination".

For the purpose of this prayer booklet, we will highlight the following for informed prayer and participation:

- The ethnic groups Malay, Chinese and Indians according to their population and statistics
- The migrant population and estimated percentage make-up
- The indigenous community and native people
- The poor and marginalised according to estimated percentage make-up

We trust that the highlights provided here will give the Church the relevant information and make for informed payer for the various categories of people, many of whom their needs are often neglected and consequently forgotten.

With prayers from each and everyone, we trust that the Lord will move us into merciful and compassionate action depicting the example set by Christ who was concerned for the welfare and well-being of all in our quest and contribution to a Christian vision for a pluralist-civil society within the context of Malaysia.

Eugene Yapp & Lucrece Loo

40-Day Fast & Prayer Booklet 2009 July 2009

¹ "Church and State and Nation-Building: A Conference Report, Hong Kong, 1988" in *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel*, eds., Vinay Samuel and Chris Suqden. (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), 466

THE MALAYS

he Malays have their early roots in Hinduism and this can be seen in certain aspects of their culture and life. Before the coming of Islam, the Malays lived for centuries under Hindu rajas. When Islam was brought to Malaysia by Arabic and Indian traders, the Melaka Sultanate adopted Islam and became Muslims with the Malay people coming to embrace and ardently following the Islamic faith. All Malay people are considered Islamic though levels of devotion to the religion are varied.

Despite the historical, social-cultural origin and ethnic heritage, Malays as a people group took on legal definition during the British intervention. The first formal colonial definition of 'Malay' was made in the 1913 Malay Reservation Acts, classifying a Malay as any person

belonging to the Malayan race who habitually spoke Malay or any other Malayan language and who professed Islam.

Article 160 of the Federal Constitution defines a Malay as "a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the

All Malay people are considered Islamic though levels of devotion to the religion are varied.

Malay language, conforms to Malay custom and - (a) was before Merdeka Day born in the Federation or in Singapore or born of parents one of whom was born in the Federation or in Singapore, or is on that day domiciled in the Federation or in Singapore, or (b) is the issue of such a person".

Subsequently, the term 'Bumiputera' ('sons of the soil') was used with reference to the Malays and other indigenous groups. These "Bumiputeras' are guaranteed a special position under the Federal Constitution for certain privileges such as the public service, scholarships, exhibitions and other similar educational or training privileges.

Statistic reveals that today the Malays number around 13,773,100 million in the country (*Population by Ethnic Group, 2007 based on Adjusted 2000 Population Census*).

THE CHINESE

he first Chinese settlements date from as early as the 13th century. However, it was in the 15th century when Admiral Cheng Ho visited Melaka that paved the way for the Chinese community to establish themselves in this country. Some early Chinese traders settled and founded small communities while others intermarried with Malays, producing what was later known as *Babas* or Straits Chinese. The early Chinese communities each had their own leaders known as the *Kapitan Cina* appointed by the Dutch in Melaka and elsewhere by the Malay rulers.

The Chinese have three basic groups identified by the language and dialect they speak. The Hokkien is the largest Chinese dialect spoken among Chinese groups in Malaysia. Originally, the Hokkien people were the descendants of the earliest Chinese settlers on the Peninsula who originated mainly from Fujian (also called Min) Province in China. The Cantonese is the

second largest Chinese dialect spoken among Chinese in Malaysia. A majority of Cantonese-speaking Chinese are the descendants of immigrants who came from the Chinese provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi in the mid-19th and early 20th centuries. The third group is the Han Chinese-speaking Mandarin. They are the largest ethnic group in the world, numbering about 1.3 billion. Although the vast majority of them live in mainland China, many have immigrated to other countries, and today they reside in nearly every nation of the world including Malaysia.

Today, many of the Chinese in Malaysia have maintained their culture and language to varying degrees.

Today, many of the Chinese in Malaysia have maintained their culture and language to varying degrees. They have continued living by their traditional Chinese customs, especially those regarding marriage and the family and have established successful businesses and trade around the country. Statistic shows that the Chinese in Malaysia today number around 6,287,900 (*Population by Ethnic Group, 2007 based on Adjusted 2000 Population Census*).

THE INDIANS

he Tamil Indians first arrived on the Malay Peninsula in the 15th century and were successful as textile and spice merchants. Under the British rule in Malaysia during the 18th and 19th century, the Indians arrived to meet the demands for cheap labour in the British-owned sugar and coffee plantations. The demand for Indian workers intensified when rubber was introduced in 1905. Later, many of the Tamil labourers from Tamil Nadu and neighbouring states in South India were brought in to build roads and railways or to work on tea plantations. They were then recruited to work in the rubber and palm oil industries.

Today, the Tamil Indians comprise six and one half percent of the Malaysia population. Like many of the other ethnic groups in Malaysia, the Indian communities proudly continue

with their traditional customs, language and religions. Many Indians have successfully ventured into all walks of Malaysian life with some being professionals while the majority are manual labourers. When the manufacturing and service industries supplanted agriculture, many of the manual workers lost their jobs and their liveli-

The Indian communities proudly continue with their traditional customs, language and religions.

hood was severely affected. With fewer career options at their feet, many Indians were subjected to alienation and exploitation. Some who were engaging in commercial activities, especially the Muslim Indians, prospered.

Today, the Indians are the smallest of the three main ethnic groups in Malaysia and they number approximately 1,883,900 (*Population by Ethnic Group, 2007 based on Adjusted 2000 Population Census*).

THE MIGRANTS

any of the migrants in Malaysia comprise foreign workers employed in various sectors that pertain to the economy of the country such as airports, hotels, restaurants, clinics, construction, manufacturing, services and plantation sectors and petrol stations. They are now seen as an indispensable work force in the country although the government is trying to reduce reliance on these workers. As at 31 July 2006, it was reported in the Dewan Rakyat that there were 1,823,431 foreigners from at least 22 countries in Malaysia (*Bernama*, Sept 11, 2006). This figure has increased significantly over the last two years. In 2008, the deputy minister of the Human Resources Ministry, Datuk Abdul Rahman Bakar was reported as saying that there were some 2.01 million foreign workers in the country (*Sunday Times*, 20 Jan, 2008).

On the international scene, according to the "International Migration Report 2002" issued by the United Nation Population Division, over 175 million migrants live in countries other than those of their birth, not to mention those who are internally displaced. With this figure, we cannot ignore the fact that the migrant work force has become our neighbours in our own land!

God has brought them here for a purpose. Indeed, the Christian community has begun to recognise this phenomenon and many have started migrant or "Diaspora" ministries amongst the people groups.

A simple breakdown of the five countries or people group that have the largest work force in the countries as at 31 July 2006 is as follows (*Bernama*, Sept 11, 2006):

Indonesians – 1,172,990
 Nepalese – 199,962
 Migrant Indians – 130,768
 Vietnamese – 96,892
 Bangladeshi – 64,156

The figures here may have increased over the last three years. Along with the growing population of the migrant workers, there are also many illegal immigrants in the country who together have added and compounded the social problems within our country. How then can the Church take a proactive role and engage with these people groups in such a situation? This is an area of great challenge and for all our prayers!

THE INDIGENOUS MINORITY PEOPLE

he indigenous minority people of Malaysia may generally be classified in two groups:

(1) the Orang Asli, and (2) the indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak. Together, they constitute a significant percentage in terms of population in Malaysia. These people groups are certainly our neighbours but their plight and struggles are rarely highlighted.

Orang Asli

According to the Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli, (http://www.jheoa.gov.my/v2/bi/index. php?option=com_docman&Itemid=126; assessed on 9 Jan, 2009), the Orang Asli in the Peninsula may be divided into three groups: (1) the Negrito people, (2) the Proto Malays people, and (3) the Senoi people.

The Negrito comprises the Kensiu, Kintak, Lanoh, Jahai, Mendriq and Bateq people. They mainly inhabit the mainlands around the vicinity of the Titiwangsa range and cluster mostly at the north side of the Peninsula.

The Proto Malays comprises the Temuan, Semelai, Jakun, Kanaq people, Kuala people and Seletar people. In the beginning they inhabited the areas around the river mouth or wet areas. Currently, they are able to build villages and settlements within their own areas and are now enjoying a higher quality of life brought about by developments.

The Senoi comprises the Che Wong, Mah Meri, Jahut, Semoq Beri, Semai and Temiar people. They inhabit the sidelands of the Titiwangsa range as well as the beaches of Selangor. They are also found in the interiors of the states of Perak, Kelantan, Pahang and Terengganu.

According to statistic, in the year 2000, the Orang Asli comprises only 0.5% of the total population in Malaysia which numbers approximately 148,000. The largest group is the Senois, constituting about 54% of the total Orang Asli population with the Proto Malays 43% and the Semang forming 3% (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orang_Asli; accessed on 9 Jan, 2009).

The Indigenous People of Sabah

The people of Sabah are divided into 32 officially recognised ethic groups. The largest of these is the Chinese. The largest indigenous ethnic group is the Kadazan-Dusun, followed by the Bajau and then the Murut. The Federal Government officially recognises 28 ethnic groups as being indigenous or Bumiputra in Sabah (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabah; accessed on 9 Jan, 2009).

According to the Malaysia Statistic Department, 2006, the population of Sabah is estimated at 2,997,000 of which 17.8% is Kadazan-Dusun, the Bajau 13.4%, Malay 11.52%, Murut 3.3%, Other Bumiputera 14.6% (Rungus, Iranun, Bisaya, Tatana, Lun Dayeh, Tindal, Tobilung, Kimaragang, Suluk, Ubian, Tagal, Timogun, Nabay, Kedayan, Orang Sungai, Makiang, Minokok, Mangka'ak, Lobu, Bonggi, Tidong, Ida'an, Begahak, Kagayan, Talantang, Tinagas, Banjar, Gana, Kuijau, Tombonuo, Dumpas, Peluan, Baukan, Sino, Bugis, Jawa), Chinese 9.6%, Indian 0.37%, Others 4.8%, non-citizens 25% (Filipino, Indonesian).

The religious breakdown (2000) is Islam 63.7%, Christianity 27.8%, Buddhism 6.4%, No Religion 1.0%, Taoism/Confucianism 0.4%, Others 0.3%, Hinduism 0.1%, Unknown 0.3%. [Extracted from *NECF For Your Intercession Report*, May 2008].

While it used to be that Sabah was a Christian state, this is no longer the case. Islam has made inroads to this state and the Christians now rank a distant second. There are many in Sabah who still have not been reached with the Gospel and the Christian community needs to pray for the movement of the Gospel in this land.

The Indigenous People of Sarawak

The people of Sarawak is divided into more than 40 sub-ethnic groups, each with its own distinct language, culture and lifestyle. The Malaysia Statistics Department, 2007 reveals the population of Sarawak to be around 2,404,500. Out of this figure, the Dayaks ranks as the largest people group in Sarawak with 48.2%, Chinese (25.5%), Malays (22%), others (0.4%), non-citizens (3.7%).

In terms of religious breakdown (2000), Christianity ranks at 42.6% while Islam (31.3%), Buddhism (12%), Tribal (5.2%), No Religion (3.9%), Taoism/Confucianism (2.6%), Others (1.3%), Hinduism (0.1%), Unknown (1.0%). [Extracted from *NECF For Your Intercession Report*, July 2008].

Currently, the Dayak Ibans forms the largest percentage of Sarawak's population. There are other people groups such as the Melanau, Dayak Bidayuh, Dayak Orang Ulu, Dayak Kayan, Dayak Kelabit, Dayak Kenyah, Dayak Penanand Sebob/Chebob (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarawak; accessed on 9 Jan, 2009).

It should be pointed out that Sarawak is the only state currently with the majority of Christians. In other words, it is the only Christian state left in Malaysia. How long this remains is left to be seen as the percentage in terms of Muslim population is a close second with 31.3%. There is a need for greater and more concerted effort to be made on the part of the Church in Sarawak for the evangelisation of the people there.

PREPARATION OF HEARTS

Believers do not pray with the view to informing God about things unknown to Him, or of exciting Him to do His duty, or of urging Him as though He were reluctant. On the contrary, they pray in order that they may arouse themselves to seek Him, that they may exercise their faith in meditating on His promise, that they may relieve themselves from their anxieties by pouring them into His bosom; in a word that they may declare that from Him alone they hope and expect, both for themselves and for others, all good things.

~ John Calvin (1509-1564, French reformed theologian)

edicate "40-Day Fast & Prayer" to God. Acknowledge His Lordship over all areas of our lives — personal, family, church, community, marketplace, nation/government and the world.

"... What does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?" (Deut 10:12, 13, NIV)

P

God's love is action on the cross. Where is our action?

R

Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. (1 John 2:9-10, ESV)

A Y

Continue to pour forth Your love to those around us, may Your righteousness be upon the hearts of those who pray.

A SHINING LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

Coming Together to Love our Neighbours

alaysia as a nation enters its 52nd year of independence this year. The dynamics in the country have changed so much that Malaysia itself has become a mission field. There is so much that we can do in our very own backyard. Therefore, the theme for our 40-Day Fast & Prayer, "Love our Neighbours — A Shining Light to the Nations" has been chosen to meet the growing challenges the churches are facing.

When our Lord met the Samaritan woman, the first thing He did was not to introduce Himself and offer to help her get out of the terrible situation she was in. Instead, Jesus said, "Give me a drink" (John 4:7). Jesus asked for help to give Him something which He could have provided for Himself. He, however, became weak in order to win over this woman who was rejected and regarded as an outcast by society.

Our Lord Jesus cares for those who have been overlooked and cast aside. He is concerned about people with needs. When we open our hearts to those whom God cares, we encounter His presence. The recipients in turn will experience the change and blessings when we allow God to work through us in compassion.

The churches in Malaysia therefore need to come together in unity and in action to care and bring about change and blessings. This is how we become the salt and light to the community and nation. In today's society, people are so distant and detached from religion and faith that they will not usually respond immediately to our witness. We need to be with them, to understand them and help them understand us.

My prayer is that while we intercede for the nation, we should humbly come together in unity of hearts and minds to seek and be sensitive to the Lord's direction to respond to the practical needs around us. In that way, we will "let our light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Sam Ang

NECF Malaysia Secretary-General July 2009

COMING TOGETHER TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOURS

WEEK 1: DAYS 1-4

The unity of the Church and removing hindrances

n order for the church to love our neighbours and be a shining light to the nations, it is necessary for believers of every church irrespective of creed or denomination to remove all hindrances whether in the form of prejudices, biases, fear, jealousy or all other factors that may prevent us from reaching out sincerely and genuinely to our neighbours. It is essential for inner transformation to take place

as it establishes the only means by which outward transformation can be brought to families, community, marketplace, nation and the world. Christians need to take ownership of loving our nation first before being able to love the people of the nation.

May His love overflows to us and transforms our daily living in obedience and service to Him! May we love others as He has loved us!

P	Day 1 (22 July, Wednesday)	A change of heart and mind (Ps. 139:23-24; Psa. 51) Reconciliation with God — Confess and repent of all hindrances and seek forgiveness for our hypocrisy, superficiality, prejudices, lack of love and compassion Reconciliation in Church — Pray that broken relationships may be mended and for reconciliation within the body of Christ
R A Y	Day 2 (23 July, Thursday)	 A love for Malaysia (Acts 17:26, Gen. 13:14-15; Ruth 1:16-17) Thank God for all the blessings and diversity of culture in the nation. Allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart where you have not loved this nation Racial harmony and mutual respect and honour for all races Believers to pledge our allegiance to God, to honour and love this nation That God may move dramatically to heal the prejudices and racial discord in our nation Release blessings for the state/town you are in

P R A Y	Day 3 (24 July, Friday)	 Love for the people of the Nation (Rom. 9:3; Matt. 9:35-38) Confess we have not loved the people of our nation and ask for forgiveness. That we have a compassionate heart and love to reach out to every people group For spiritual awakening and the harvest of souls amongst the least reached people groups in Malaysia and for more labourers Churches to be impregnated with vision for growth and church planting for each indigenous or foreign group
	Day 4 (25 July, Saturday)	 The unity of the Church to love our Nation and neighbours (John 17:20-26) On behalf of the Church – Repent of the sins of pride, strife, contention and distrust. Confess where we have not contributed to the unity of the body of Christ Continuous work of the Holy Spirit to unite and to strengthen churches to work together to transform communities Effective networking among all churches in reaching out to all people groups in our nation

ACTION FOR YOUR CHURCH

- 1 Renew our love for Him and our commitment to love others so that none should perish.
- **2** As you drive, jog or walk along, release prayer of blessings and thanksgiving to the surrounding places in your community.
- **3** Call up a believer from another church and release prayer of blessings, calling for unity with each other and for all churches.

A SHINING LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

Living to Love our Neighbours

halom! We have come a long way since the days of 1998 when New Covenant Community Church (NCC) sought out the poor in Sentul. Realising the dire needs of the Sentul poor community, the church wasted no time in dispensing care and relief for a start. However, the truth of the matter is that the poor will always be subject to the clutch of poverty, prejudice and discrimination unless we develop a sustainable program that leads to real breakthrough. Education is the keyword, and since 2002, there has been no looking back for us. Using education to break the cycle of poverty became our vision, and through NCC's vehicle, Harvest Centre (a one-stop education centre), we embarked on an uphill journey of sheer hard work to provide holistic education programs for the underprivileged children.

Against all odds, we carried on knowing that to walk the talk invariably comes with a price! Jesus Himself showed us that He was prepared to pay the price as He confronted the religious heavyweights in His days to minister to the poor and needy. It's the cost of doing whatever it takes to bring about God's justice and righteousness to not just a broken world, but a world of cynical souls who have an uncanny aptitude of deciphering insincerity or even hypocrisy.

When God chooses to show a glimpse of His heart for the poor, be prepared to be jolted by the velocity of pain that hits back! He may not stop there and may even choose to turn your worldview upside down, resulting in the kind of response that comes from an equally broken heart. It then becomes a natural progression when we set about dirtying our hands and breaking our backs to tackle the task before us. This is no longer an option but an imperative. This in a nutshell is our worldview and prerequisite to presenting the "Full Gospel" bringing new life and hope to a world fraught with hopelessness and despair.

At Harvest Centre, we know that we have little apart from Christ to take up this challenge. We thank God for giving us the resolve and tenacity to labour on. We draw inspiration from God's works of justice and righteousness for the oppressed since time immemorial beginning with the people of Israel (Exodus 1-19). What we do is merely a grateful response to His goodness. To God be the glory!

For if you did it unto the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you did it to Me. (Matt. 25:40) . . . And if you failed to do it unto the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you failed to do it unto Me. (Matt. 25:45)

Rev. Elisha Satvinder

New Covenant Community Church February 2009

LIVING TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOURS

WEEK 2: DAYS 5-11

Meeting the needs of our neighbours, particularly the poor

he urban poor has been defined as individuals or families in the urban areas who lack the ability to produce basic needs. According to the midterm review of the 9th Malaysia Plan, a poor family is classified as one whose income is less than RM720 in the Peninsula and RM960 and RM380 in Sabah and Sarawak respectively.

The Yayasan Strategik Sosial [YSS] views these figures as being too low and unrealistic and therefore proposes a figure of less than RM1,500 as representing a low-income family ("Policy Factsheet: Urban Poverty", paper presented at the National Summit on Urban Poor and Low Income Groups, July 2008).

If one were to take the baseline proposed by the government under the 9th Malaysia Plan or even by the YSS, it is not difficult to see that there are many poor families within the urban setting. Some have suggested that there are as many as 8.6% of families in Malaysia earning less than RM1,000 per month. With the current economic crunch, it is forecasted that up to 660,000 will lose their jobs this year. This amounts to 6% in terms of unemployment rate and represents the worst in terms of statistic for the last five years (*NST*, 30 Jan, 2009).

These are great needs. Will the Christian community rise up to meet this challenge?

P	Day 5 (26 July, Sunday)	Compassion in action (James 2:14-17; 1 John 3:18) Renewing of mind and a compassionate heart Seek out practical opportunities to minister to the felt needs of our neighbours in our community A united vision for God's kingdom rather than our own
R A Y	Day 6 (27 July, Monday)	Delivering the poor from hardship and poverty (Matt. 25:31-46) Confess and repent for our passive and indifferent attitude to the poor and marginalised God to hear the cries of those who are facing hardships and difficulties and bring deliverance to the poor and excluded Christians to be empowered and moved with compassion to reach out to the needy and poor in tangible ways

P R A Y	Day 7 (28 July, Tuesday)	 The government to eradicate poverty (Prov. 22:22-23) Against policies that discriminate against the poor National commitment, policies and action to eliminate poverty and address the legitimate needs of the poor For proper education to be given to empower the poor for good and healthy living The business community will exercise its responsibility to provide opportunities for the poor and the less fortunate
	Day 8 (29 July, Wednesday)	The lower income and menial workers (Ps. 82:3-4; Ps. 140:12) Against exploitation on the lower income group Churches to have an expanded vision of their interest and the heart to reach out to these people Churches to make the Gospel relevant to the life of these people Upholding the lower income and menial workers such as hawkers, garbage collectors, etc.
	Day 9 (30 July, Thursday)	 The Church – action for the poor (Matt. 5:16; Prov. 28:27) Churches to have effective strategies to reach the poor and for favour with the authorities to implement them Our home groups/cells may be more accessible to all kinds of broken, hurting, poor and needy people
	Day 10 (31 July, Friday)	 The Church – evangelising the poor (Luke 4:18-19) To open doors of opportunities to witness and proclaim the Gospel to the poor and needy Powerful visitation of the Holy Spirit to break bondages among the excluded and poor Salvation for the excluded and poor

P R A

Day 11 (1 August, Saturday)

The Church – evangelising the excluded (Rom. 1:16; Rom. 10:14-15)

- The Lord to be compassionate for the excluded in society such as the prostitutes, drug addicts, single moms, the homeless and neglected, etc.
- Churches to network together with government agencies to help this group of people
- Uphold the NGOs such as Malaysian Care or rehabilitation centres that reach out to these people

ACTION FOR YOUR CHURCH

- 1 Uphold a Christian NGO that reach out to the excluded and the poor.
- 2 Identify a poor and needy group of people within your area or community and formulate ways and action to care for them.

A SHINING LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

Bringing Love to our Neighbours

bout 15 years ago, I informed many of my friends that in years to come, Native Customary Rights (NCR) over land in Sarawak would be a social, political and legal issue. Today, I am not too far wrong since millions of NCR lands have so far been issued out under timber licenses, provisional leases (for oil palm plantations), replanting licences and quarry licences. This happens because there are no prior investigations by the Land & Surveys Department of Sarawak before the issuance of such licences and leases. In most instances, licences and leases were issued out summarily and arbitrarily. As a result, natives will only find out that their lands have been taken away when bulldozers and tractors appear to commence work.

Today, there are about 200 cases filed in the High Court of Sarawak coming from all over the State affecting the entire ethnic natives group in Sarawak. My firm handles almost half of them. The number of cases filed in Court today is a reflection of the seriousness of the issue. The average time to get a case heard at a full trial is six to seven years. Below are some problems and challenges we face.

1. State Government's reluctance to recognise and enforce Court's decision

Notwithstanding the decisions from the Federal Court, the State Government has refused to recognise that the Native Customary Land includes the *pulau* and *pemakai menua* of the natives. Instead, the State Government has insisted that the Native Customary Land be confined to only the *temuda* area. One reason may be that if it agrees with the Federal Court's decision, this will open a floodgate of legal actions against the State Government.

2. Proving NCR claim lies with the natives

The Sarawak Land Code puts the onus of proving NCR claims on the natives. To do so, the natives must provide corroborative evidences in addition to their oral testimonies. This puts the natives in a dilemma. Where else can the natives get corroborative evidences? They have no titles or documents! It appears the courts have put a heavier burden on the natives to prove their case. This is certainly not acceptable and unfair.

3. Native Customary Land remains without titles

Many of the Native Customary Lands are untitled. Conflicts and disputes over these lands may be resolved if the lands are **surveyed**, **gazetted and issued titles**. The present State Government is very reluctant to do so and in fact refuses to act. This may be prompted by the desire to maintain *status quo* so that all who are benefiting may continue to do so.

4. Arrest and imprisonment

When there is a dispute over Native Customary Land, police reports would normally be lodged. In most cases, the police would act against the natives, like arresting them and putting them in a police-lockup for a few nights to demoralise them. However, when the natives lodge reports of trespass against licensee and lessees, the police are slow to act. In most cases no action is taken at all.

There is an urgent need to remember the natives, many of whom are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Please pray that those involved in NCR cases may continue to give their services with joy and conviction, notwithstanding the many challenges, and that the Government and authorities may be serious in dealing with the issue of NCR and carry out good policies for the benefit of the natives and not individuals.

Baru Bian

Advocate & Solicitor, Sabah February 2009

HOME FOR THE HOMELESS: BRINGING LOVE TO OUR NEIGHBOURS

WEEK 3: DAYS 12-18

Remembering the struggles and preserving the rights of our neighbours, particularly the neglected and marginalised

he plight and struggles of our indigenous neighbours in various states and in Sabah and Sarawak have rarely been highlighted. Yet they constitute one of the most oppressed and neglected. As lawyer Baru Bian points out, their native and customary rights in terms of occupation and possession of land have been taken for granted and exploited by the rich and powerful. This applies to the Orang Asli as well. Many of the Orang Asli's land, which they have owned for ages, has slowly been taken away from them.

This creates tension and anger. All these

neighbours need compassion, mercy, prayer and above all, our help and action! Will the Church rise up to take the necessary action by bringing love to our neighbours?

"Marginalised neighbourhoods are the innocent victims of injustice and are at the centre of God's concern. The uniqueness of the church as a community of care must extend to reaching out to the poor and marginalised holistically and proactively." — Kon Onn Sein, "Transforming Neighbourhood: Grounding the Great Commission on the Commandment" in NECF Forum VI, Oct, 2008.

P	Day 12 (2 August, Sunday)	 Concern for States of Sabah and Sarawak (Isa. 60:1-2) A fair and just government in Sabah and Sarawak; for the Sabah government to take steps to solve the illegal immigrant problem Pray that the State Governments may rule and administer the States well, bringing benefits to the people For a just and fair judiciary who will act to preserve the rights of the indigenous people, their cultural identity and religious
R A Y	Day 13 (3 August, Monday)	heritage Remembering the needs of the Church in Sabah and Sarawak (Isa. 64:1-9) • Fire of revival to sweep through Sabah and Sarawak to awaken every church to her role and calling for her state and nation • Manifold wisdom of the Lord be upon the Heads of churches, pastors, elders and leaders in the churches in Sabah and Sarawak as they deal with their community issues

P R A Y	Day 13 (3 August, Monday)	Remembering the needs of the Church in Sabah and Sarawak (Isa. 64:1-9) United prayer movement and vision for national transformation to meet the needs of the community there Church to be fervent in evangelism and outreach to every people
	Day 14 (4 August, Tuesday)	 Helping the churches in smaller areas and other towns (Acts 20:35, 2 Cor. 9:8-15) Churches in Peninsular Malaysia to be a blessing and to release their resources to help the churches in Sabah and Sarawak Uphold churches who are facing difficulties, manpower and resources in the East Coast and smaller towns The smaller churches will work together with churches in Peninsular Malaysia for the common goal of loving our neighbours
	Day 15 (5 August, Wednesday)	 Helping the indigenous people of Peninsular Malaysia (Isa. 60:21-22) The Orang Asli in Malaysia: for their general welfare and wellbeing as a community of people Pray that injustices and deprivation of rights that these indigenous people go through will cease The government will be sincere and genuine to extend help to the indigenous people without ulterior motives
	Day 16 (6 August, Thursday)	 Strong Church amongst the indigenous people of Peninsular Malaysia (Eph. 3:16-21) The Lord to raise up godly, strong and righteous leader amongst the indigenous people Leaders to be filled with the fullness of God and to set godly example for the believers in their midst Churches to be rooted in the Word and be strong in discipleship and reaching out to their own people That the spiritual bondage and influence of other religions as well as the restrictions imposed to be broken

P R A Y	Day 17 (7 August, Friday)	 Church helping the migrant people in Malaysia (Prov. 14:31; Prov. 19:17) Repent if we have exploited the migrant workers Churches may extend practical help and a helping hand by offering a place of solace for their physical/emotional needs Christian homes to be opened for migrants to experience God's goodness, love and hospitality When the migrants taste Christian hospitality and God's goodness, they will seek after Christ For growth in the life of believers and the migrant fellowship groups
	Day 18 (8 August, Saturday)	 Government's role for the migrants (Ps. 72:1-4, 12-14; Jer. 22:3) Pray that all rampant abuses against the migrants will cease The government to sincerely take steps to look into the plight and welfare of the migrants Wisdom for the authorities to deal with rising criminal activities among the immigrants

ACTION FOR YOUR CHURCH

- 1 Identify a particular indigenous people group or migrant group and adopt them as well as pray and support them regularly.
- 2 Make efforts and initiatives to regularly support the indigenous people or migrant group in ways that will really meet their needs.

A SHINING LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

National Participation

believe that as God has placed us here in this country as citizens, we are called to identify ourselves with the land of our birth for better or for worse. We are accountable and responsible for the future of this country. Therefore, we should work hard to protect it for God, our family and generations to come.

I thank God that He had placed me as an elected representative to the Parliament in 2004 where I could bring the people's voice into the House in the drafting and tabling of bills in this country.

It is a clarion call of the people that debates in the House of Elected Representatives (both state and federal) are central to democracy. However, as we continue to examine our collective condition in all its complexities, sensitivities and underpinnings, the public space must expand apace to allow democratic discussions to thrive in an atmosphere of civilised dialogue. Only then will those who hold dissenting views be able to speak up confidently without being vilified merely for expressing their views for the betterment and development of this country.

I have personally encountered untoward reactions and vilifications when raising the people's concerns in parliament regarding many issues, particularly related to religious and racial issues. Various proposals made by me were interpreted by some quarters as an affront to the sensitivities of the Malay community and greeted with negative and strong 'objections' even outside the parliament. Notwithstanding these, the call to duty has always guided me in my role as an elected representative to Parliament.

Despite all the setbacks and discouragements I faced along the way, I continue to believe and trust that since God had opened the door for some of us to speak up, He will surely continue His good work to bring it to completion one day and in His time (Phil. 1:6 and Ecc. 3).

God is our final quest. I pray for God's will to be done.

Loh Seng Kok

Ex-Elected Representative February 2009

PRESERVING DEMOCRACY: LOVING OUR NEIGHBOURS THROUGH NATIONAL PARTICIPATION

WEEK 4: DAYS 19-25

Mobilising the Church to the public square to seek the welfare of the nation

he Christian faith is not a private affair but to be expressed and manifest in public for the good, righteousness, justice and peace of society, community and the nation. This week, we seek to remember those of our brothers and sisters in Christ who are

engaged in the public arena for this very purpose. These brothers and sisters in Christ need our prayers and we hope that as we pray, God will bring about a transformation in our own lives that we too may be moved to participate more actively in the public square.

P R A Y	Day 19 (9 August, Sunday)	 The Christian in the public square (Esther 4:13-14) Confess if you have kept your faith private and away from public concerns That the Lord may renew your heart and mind for involvement in the public square Pray for Christians in the public square: for their eyes to be enlightened to the hope and calling in the public square and see the vast opportunity to be the letters of Christ through exemplary lives that are without hypocrisy, are righteous and wise in the dealings and treatment of others, without fear or favour, putting
	Day 20 (10 August, Monday)	Interceding for those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-4; Prov. 14:34) Bless those whom God has placed in authority over the nation Uphold those in authority, members of the Executive, Judiciary and Parliament: that they may exercise power righteously with accountability Against corruptions in the authorities: that there will not be any misuse and abuse of Government funds

P R A Y	Day 21 (11 August, Tuesday)	 For a fair and righteous judiciary (Prov. 8:14-16; Lev. 19:15) Judges to play their rightful role as arbitrators and dispensers of justice without fear or favour All judicial personnel such as judges, administrative staff, lawyers may be diligent in exercising their duties That civil law will continue to be the law of the land and that the Rule of Law be upheld and respected
	Day 22 (12 August, Wednesday)	 Interceding for Christian MPs and those playing a role in the public square (Isa. 11:2-5) Christian politicians will be courageous, standing for justice and speaking to defend the poor, oppressed and marginalised God's protection, humility of service and protection against moral corruption upon all these servants Other Christian workers in NGOs, social service organisations and other organisations, Christian activists and others who are contributing to the welfare of the nation
	Day 23 (13 August, Thursday)	 Christians to take part in the public arena (Isa. 42:1, 6-8) Churches to stand and to challenge their congregation to participate in public concerns The Lord to raise more Christian workers in the public arena and field of work The Lord's wisdom, strength and counsel be on all his servants who are engaged in the public square The Church to be bold and courageous to speak out against the deprivation of rights and any unfair distribution of social goods

P R A Y	Day 24 (14 August, Friday)	Removing hindrances that obstruct transformation (Isa. 57:14-15) Confess and renounce our attitude of maintaining a "status quo" attitude and self-interest Christians to be liberated from the forces of market capitalism and remove idols in our lives Remove every spirit of control, intimidation, manipulation and fear that obstruct change for the welfare of the people
	Day 25 (15 August, Saturday)	 Impacting and transforming society (Isa. 40:3-5) Beseech the Lord for the transformation of lives, beginning in us, overflowing to our society and nation by the power of God Christian participation and involvement will bring impact and real transformation to society and the nation God's grace and favour as well as protection be on the Church as we engage in the affairs of the nation The Church to be a cutting edge in nation building

ACTION FOR YOUR CHURCH

- 1 Identify a specific public issue of concern, then bring it before your church for continued and consistent prayer.
- **2** As you pray, reflect and make effort in which your church may play a part or a role in the specific public issue of concern.

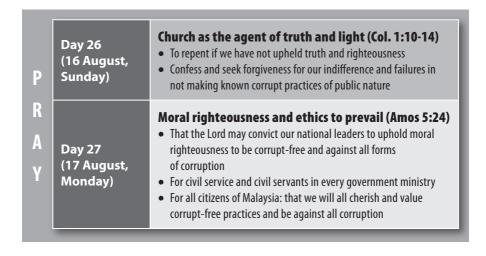
TRANSPARENCY, TRUTH & GOVERNANCE: LOVING OUR NEIGHBOURS THROUGH ACCOUNTABILITY

WEEK 5: DAYS 26-32

The Church as the beacon of truth and light to the nation

he corruption perception index for our country ranks at 47 out of 180 countries for year 2008 with a score of 5.1%. Commenting on this development, Transparency International Malaysia in a statement says, "This shows that the trend of the CPI for Malaysia has remained mediocre at mid-point, with no improvement over the last eight years" (*The Star*, 24 Sept 2008). These are very telling words for which everyone, including the Christian community, needs to take note

of. There is urgency in that we need to ensure reforms are brought to those in governing authorities to live by ethical righteousness and truth as well as enforcement agencies like the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Agency to really play their role of safeguarding the integrity of the nation without fear, favour or compromise. In these times and season in Malaysia, it is imperative that the Church shines as the beacon of light for transparency, truth and accountability.



P R A Y	Day 28 (18 August, Tuesday)	 Christians in authority against corruption (Micah 6:8; Exo. 23:7-8) That Christians in position of authority, whether as MPs or in the civil service, to be against corruption, living lives and serving in moral righteousness That the Church may have the moral courage to speak out and make known all forms of corruption
	Day 29 (19 August, Wednesday)	Believers to engage and participate against corruption (Phil. 2:12-16) Believers to be blameless and to hold fast to truth and integrity For more Christians to come forward and be involved in efforts to eradicate corruption and corrupt practices in all sectors of life For Christians who are already involved in this area of work: that the Church may back them up and support their efforts in every way possible That efforts by individuals and organisations to monitor and check on corruption will truly be effective
	Day 30 (20 August, Thursday)	 Enforcement agencies against corruption (Prov. 6:35; Psa. 26:11-12) Continue to expose and to root out every corrupt practice in all agencies The enforcement authorities may be truly responsible and carry out their duties without fear or favour Enforcement authorities and citizens may be able to cooperate with each other to stem out corruption and corrupt practices in all sectors of life

P	Day 31 (21 August, Friday)	 Christian businessmen upholding integrity and righteousness (Ps. 37:23-29; Isa. 60:5) All Christians to renounce and be free from every trace of greed and corruption Christian businessmen to uphold integrity and righteousness in their dealing and to be His salt and light Christian businessmen to be faithful stewards who release their
R		wealth to evangelism and kingdom building-initiatives
Y	Day 32 (22 August, Saturday)	 Restoring justice and equity (Psa. 89:14-18) The Lord's presence to sweep through the land: that the Holy Spirit may really purge this nation of the ills and evils of corruption Against nepotism and cronyism, restoring justice, equity and righteousness That the wealth and economic benefits will filter down to all people

ACTION FOR YOUR CHURCH

- 1 Set aside time as an act of worship welcoming the King of Glory to take His rightful place and to turn our nation upside right. Then pray for revival and outpouring of His Spirit.
- 2 Identify a specific area where your church feels that corruption is manifest and seek ways in which your church may participate in to rid corruption.

THE CHURCH FOR THE NATION: LOVING OUR NATION!

WEEK 6: DAYS 33-40

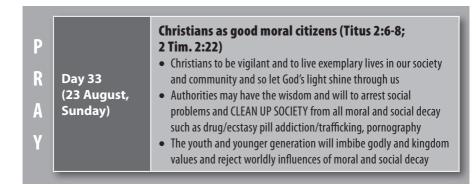
Going on our knees for the conversion of the people in our nation and the well-being of everyone

he great missionary apostle, Paul, citing Isaiah 49:6 had this to say, "The Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed you as a light for the Gentiles, that you should bring salvation to the end of the earth'" (Acts 13:47), indicating that Christ's mission to bring "justice-salvation" to the earth has now been given to the Church. Therefore to fulfil the Great Commission is to fulfil the Creation Mandate to develop a civilisation in which human relations and human institutions are shaped by justice and kindness and are thus submissive to God's reign. We need to take a look at the Great Commission in this light.

This Commission is thus obviously much

more than evangelising the world or even "saving souls" and is really about "saving" the world by helping to bring it into the order God intended... Those in every nation who willingly respond to the Gospel of the Kingdom are to bear witness to it in and through every area of their life, so that they will make a difference in and to the institutions of which they are a part, whether the family, church, economy, or even the state. In this way they seek to bring their nation into submission to the reign of Christ.

(Extracted from *NECF Forum VI*, Oct 2008: "The Great Commission and The Creation Mandate" by Leong Tien Fock, Ph.D)



	Day 34 (24 August, Monday)	 The family and household as the foundation for a healthy nation (Gen. 12:3b; Col. 3:18-21) Families to align their lives with godly values and principles and for family altars be established Christian families to seek to be a positive influence wherever they are – work, play, school or home – thereby being role models to society Raising up Christian families to be a prayer force to change the destiny of families and nation and beyond The Holy Spirit to empower parents to be fathers and mothers to their children and for healing and reconciliation between parents and children
P R A Y	Day 35 (25 August, Tuesday)	 Care for extended family (Deut. 5:16; 1 Tim. 5:3-4) Ask for forgiveness if we have not honoured and loved our elderly parents or relatives For God's love to touch the many who are aged and are living without care from their loved ones For all Christian families who care for the elderly and aged that they will model and showcase a loving, caring and compassionate community More Christian homes to care for the elderly and sick to be established
	Day 36 (26 August, Wednesday)	 A just and effective education system (Prov. 22:6) For truth and excellence to be restored to our education system that all learning curriculum and syllabuses shall be wholesome and educational Against unhealthy elements and unjust policies in our education institutions that divide the races and sow seeds of discord, hatred, suspicion and distrust among our students Greater racial unity to be fostered among the students, educators and administrators in these educational institutions God to raise up Christians to enter the education field and infuse it with godly, fair and righteous values

P R A Y	Day 37 (27 August, Thursday)	 Government to preserve the nation as a secular state (Ps. 2:8) Government will give itself totally over to the service and benefit of the Rakyat and aspire to bring progress for all as its all surpassing mission Our fundamental rights and liberties as a pluralist-civil society may remain in place Extremist elements will not change and transform this nation as a secular state
	Day 38 (28 August, Friday)	Religious extremism (Ps. 11:4-6) All extreme religious actions will be exposed and stamped out All religious groups and all races will appreciate and accept diversity while maintaining harmony with one another Government to take swift action against extremism
	Day 39 (29 August, Saturday)	 All Christians as watchmen (Isa. 62:6-7; Amos 9:13) All Christians to be awakened and take up the role as watchmen over the nation Plead for a spirit of intercession and supplication to come upon every believer to pray for the revival of this nation God to raise up labourers, sowers and reapers for the coming wave of revival and national harvest
	Day 40 (30 August, Sunday)	 Celebrating our independence and praying for the future of the nation (Num. 6:25: Isa. 62:1-4) Praise God for 52 years of independence, peace and harmony. May God's favour be continually upon us that we will continue to dwell in peace and safety Pray that the future of this nation will be built upon justice, righteousness, fairness and integrity. O Lord, make the Church a blessing to this nation! Uphold the national prayer rally tonight at FGA KL, for the speaker and God's presence to be manifested

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Taiping	Ps. Simon Chandran	05-8086458
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Port Dickson	Ps. Zadok Jeevan	012-2971531
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Sandakan	Ps Johnny Wong	019-5833727

^{*} Contact particulars is as at 20th March 2009



Many formation

LEADING WITH CREATIVITY & CONVICTION IN CRISIS

AUGUST 25-27, 2009 (TUESDAY-THURSDAY) ▷ FULL GOSPEL ASSEMBLY, KL



Some workshops during the conference are:

- Children Home/Orphanage Centre
- Dialysis Centre
- Feeding Programme for Poor Communities
- My-Kasih technology and food mart
- Final Implication— from a financial consultant
- Youth Centre Programme
 - Family Life Matters
 - Disaster Relief Efforts

CHARITY

Sow in your meal savings (envelope provided)

PRAYING ROUND THE CLOCK

Log on to www.necf.org.my

NOTE: For information on individual states and federal territories, please log on to www.necf.org.my For Your Intercession.