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## BeritaNECF

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*Berita NECF is a quarterly publication of the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship Malaysia.*



Chairman's Message

## From Translation To Transformation

*the anointing to transform the nation (2 Kings 2:1-22)*

*By Rev. Dr. Eu Hong Seng*

**T**his extraordinary chapter describes the sudden appearance of a chariot of fire and the taking up of Elijah in a whirlwind (v11). The tenacity of Elisha in desiring the anointing must not be overlooked in the stunning translation of Elijah into heaven. Elisha could not be persuaded by Elijah to remain behind and this was definitely no casual desire for Elijah's anointing. Elisha would be content with nothing less than a double portion.

The mantle of Elijah *did fall*, and Elisha "took up the mantle of Elijah" (v13). Often times, we can get too caught up with our talents and anointing that we forget we are where we are today because of the mantle of another.

With Elijah's mantle, Elisha parted the Jordan. Interestingly his first miracle was identical to that of Elijah's parting of the Jordan earlier on in v8. At the river bank, Elisha cried out, "Where is the God of Elijah?" (v14a). This is a needful reminder that the focus must be on God if we are to effectively move in the anointing.

The subsequent confession of the sons of the prophets confirmed that the spirit of Elijah indeed did rest upon Elisha (v15).

The story then transits to Jericho, where the men of the city informed Elisha that "the water is bad, and the ground barren" (v19 NKJV). It was purported that the contaminated water caused a rash of miscarriages, hence the "death" reported in v21. Evidently there was also economic death, because the land was "unproductive" (NIV).

Through prophetic insight, Elisha requested for a new bowl with salt to be brought in.

The salt was thrown into the water source, and he declared the rhema word - the first message from Yahweh, the first in his 'career'.

This use of salt most likely symbolized a break with the past, such as was declared when offerings were made holy by the rubbing of salt (Lev 2:13).<sup>1</sup>

In declaring his act as "This is what the LORD says" Elisha indicated this was no magical solution.

"And the water has remained pure to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken" (v22). Robert L. Hubbard Jr states that "to modern visitors, Jericho remains a small tropical paradise shaded by palm trees and abounding in citrus fruit."<sup>2</sup> The miracle had not been a mere temporal transformation.

There are various theories as to why Elisha desired a double portion of Elijah's

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## NECF's Stand In The Light Of Australia Voting 'Yes' To Same Sex Marriage

Results of a postal survey in Australia released Wednesday, 15 November 2017 revealed that 61% of the population voted to allow same-sex marriage. NECF has always been consistent in its stand on this issue i.e. we do not condone same-sex marriage because it is incompatible with God's will as revealed in the Scripture. For elaboration on this, please refer to the link [www.necf.org.my/view\\_file.cfm?fileid=816](http://www.necf.org.my/view_file.cfm?fileid=816) as well as [www.necf.org.my/newsmaster.cfm?&menuid=2&action=view](http://www.necf.org.my/newsmaster.cfm?&menuid=2&action=view) for NECF's stand on gay church."

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### "From Translation To Transformation"

anointing. Herein is the hint - almost immediately after taking up Elijah's mantle, Elisha's inaugural miracle (apart from the parting of the Jordan in front of the sons of the prophets) was the transformation of a city – both water and land were healed.

Today, there is this critical need for the "double anointing" to usher in change for our land.

Everyone seems to lament the "bad water and unproductive land" (of our nation), but no solution has been forthcoming. The parting of Jordan had served only to give *confirmation* to the prophets. Nothing else beyond that. Could we have missed the point that some miracles do not actually transform cities and nations?

Blind eyes can open, the deaf can hear, the wheel-chair bound can walk the streets again. Yet the nation remains unhealed. The "anointing" we see today seems to be limited to the healing of physical bodies. We are no doubt grateful for the "supernatural encounter." But we want, and we need more.

Simply put, the translation of Elijah did not heal Jericho.

The dire need today is for men to press in for the double anointing and to be used by God in the healing of the land. It's time we covet Elisha's mantle if the Church is to be serious about transformational miracles.

<sup>1</sup> Paul R. House, 1, 2 Kings, *The New American Commentary*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 8:260.

<sup>2</sup> Robert L. Hubbard Jr, *First and Second Kings, Everyman's Bible Commentary*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991), 141.

# A Vibrant Christian Witness In Turbulent Times

By Rev Datuk Jerry Dusing

Matthew 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

It is natural for Christian leaders who are visible to the public to be subjected to scrutiny. What image or impression the public may have is measured by the leaders' behavior in the public arena. It is not surprising that on many occasions, people who have followed the development of the Allah case have asked me concerning my personal motivation in taking on the matter. Some have remarked, "You must be brave." But is it really about bravery?

The "Allah" court action which I have taken on behalf of SIB Sabah has brought significant awareness to the larger Malaysian Christian community on the plight of the bumiputra Christians of Sabah and Sarawak. Often, I have been asked to explain what has been the primary personal motivating factor for me to have brought this case to the High Court in KL. This has led me to really ponder whether I have really been brave. The truth of the matter is that I was far from being brave! It is more about being true to the conviction for the need to stand up for truth and justice. I am reminded of what the Lord Himself said in Matthew 10:32-33,

"...whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven."

Can we bear the thought of denying our core conviction, and hence the Lord, for the sake of self-preservation? Remember the time when the children of Israel were faced with the threat of annihilation in the wicked plot of Haman (Esther 3:8-11). What did Mordecai say to Queen Esther?

"Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:13-14

Our personal safety cannot be guaranteed if we fail in our responsibility to stand up for the truth. It is this inner conviction which prompted me to stand up for the truth and to "fight" for justice.

I believe there are three qualities which are the defining elements of being a vibrant Christian witness in the community we live in. In facing challenging life situations, our response will expose these three qualities which are: steadfastness, consistency and being resolute.

**Firstly, the quality of steadfastness.** This is what the apostle Paul had to say (1 Corinthians 15:58, ESV):

"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain."

Paul encouraged the Corinthian church to remain faithful to everything he had taught them. To be steadfast and unmovable is to be spiritually grounded on the Word of God. A steadfast person knows what he believes and he cannot be "tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching" (Ephesians 4:14). The truth of God's Word should so penetrate our minds and hearts that it shapes our thinking and our actions. In other words, the Word of God has been engrafted into our hearts so that the Word begins to exert its influence in our spiritual being. Hence, faced with situations such as the Allah case, our guiding light is then the firm foundation of God's Word on which our faith rests! It is no longer about personal bravery or otherwise, but a response of obedience to the inner conviction that is in our hearts.

**Secondly, the quality of consistency.** Consistency to me has to do with our moral standards, actions, and values that are not contradictory to the principles of scripture. While steadfastness defines our inner convictions, consistency is the external reflection of our inner steadfastness. Consistency in our lives also implies an inner integrity. To achieve consistency, we must work to shape our desires to produce a kind of internal harmony. Invariably, when we choose to act in ways inconsistent with the truth, we are faced with inner conflicting tensions. Examples of these tensions include the tension about our personal safety, achieving our personal goals and our position in the workplace. To develop internal harmony is not a simple exercise.

For me the most important factor to achieving internal harmony is to maintain a consistent relationship with the Lord. It is in my daily communion with the Lord that I find spiritual refreshing and strength to resist any thoughts of compromising or quitting. I find this quotation about how Martin Luther faced the devil's temptation very helpful:

"Martin Luther was often very graphic in his description of the activities of the Devil. Asked one time how he overcame the Devil, he replied, "Well, when he comes knocking upon the door of my heart, and asks "Who lives here?" the dear Lord Jesus goes to the door and says, "Martin Luther used to live here but he has moved out. Now I live here." The Devil seeing the nail-prints in the hands, and the pierced sides, takes flight immediately." It is surely good for every life and for every home to have Jesus as a permanent

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## “A Vibrant Christian Witness In Turbulent Times”

resident. Thus assured, heavenly blessings are sure to fall upon such bodies.”<sup>1</sup>

The SIB Allah Court case has been ongoing for over ten years. It is easier to “pack the bag” and let the case go by. Nevertheless, for the greater cause we must go on. The Lord Jesus is the centre of our life and prime mover within for every decision we make. But to prevent spiritual weariness, supplicating for the daily provision of God’s grace is paramount.

I should also mention the difference between consistency and “belligerent stubbornness.” Explaining this difference will help highlight what consistency is all about. In my view, consistency has to do with holding a set of principles that is balanced and well-reasoned. In contrast, a person who is being stubborn may be holding a view, not for the sake of well-reasoned principles, but to avoid losing certain grounds for their own agenda.

In the Allah Case, are we being belligerently stubborn? Our case for the use of the word “Allah” is based on theological, linguistic and translation theories. Further, the Malaysian Agreement established as the basis prior to the formation of Malaysia guarantees freedom of religion as stated in the 20-point and 18-point agreement for Sabah and Sarawak respectively. This is captured in the Malaysian constitution where religious freedom is guaranteed and religious bodies are given the freedom to manage their internal religious affairs. While the constitution honours Islam as being the official religion in Malaysia, that status however, does not subjugate all other religions to a more inferior status as this would be a contradiction to the guarantee of religious freedom.

**Finally, being resolute** has to do with being firm in purpose or belief. We display an immovable determination and commitment to a cause. Our actions are firm, decisive and unwavering in spite of the gravity of the situation. Two persons who best illustrate what it looks like to be resolute are Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer of Nazi Germany under the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler. They represent Christian service in two extreme environments.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta served in an environment of extreme poverty in Calcutta, India. The following quote illustrates well the devotion of Mother Teresa.

There is always the danger that we may just do the work for the sake of the work. This is where the respect and the love and the devotion come in - that we do it to God, to Christ, and that’s why we try to do it as beautifully as possible.”<sup>2</sup>

Mother Teresa had the option to serve in her hometown in Albania. But she chose to be obedient to the call of the Lord and served the poor and destitute in the streets of Calcutta, India. While speaking to the officials at the February 3, 1994 National Prayer Breakfast by invitation of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, she described graphically an incident in her street ministry:

“Then there was the man we picked up from the drain, half eaten by worms and, after we had

brought him to the home, he only said, “I have lived like an animal in the street, but I am going to die as an angel, loved and cared for.” Then, after we had removed all the worms from his body, all he said, with a big smile, was: “Sister, I am going home to God” - and he died. It was so wonderful to see the greatness of that man who could speak like that without blaming anybody, without comparing anything. Like an angel - this is the greatness of people who are spiritually rich even when they are materially poor.”<sup>3</sup>

Mother Teresa went to the trouble of comforting the dying and helpless because for her it was giving dignity to the dying and becoming God’s merciful and loving hand before their final departure from this earth.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, on the other hand, served as a Lutheran Pastor in Nazi Germany from February 4, 1906 until his death in a Nazi concentration camp by hanging on April 9, 1945. Bonhoeffer became known for his staunch resistance to the Nazi dictatorship, including vocal opposition to Hitler’s euthanasia program and genocidal persecution of the Jews. He is often known for his view on what he called “cheap grace”:

“Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession.... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”<sup>4</sup>

The test of his conviction was his willingness to continue being in Nazi Germany even when he had the opportunity to escape. For Dietrich, it was commitment to a calling to be a voice of righteousness and the hands of mercy to offer whatever help he could give to the severely persecuted Jews. This is what he said:

“To endure the cross is not tragedy; it is the suffering which is the fruit of an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ.”<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his steadfastness and resolution to be consistent to his deeply held beliefs, demonstrated clearly what vibrant Christian witness is about.

I believe that as Malaysian Christians living in these times, we need many Mother Teresas and Dietrich Bonhoeffers who are prepared to stand up for their faith!

<sup>1</sup> Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*

<sup>2</sup> Brainy Quote, [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/mother\\_teresa.html#0OvVF2w9aTqgWXGF.99](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/mother_teresa.html#0OvVF2w9aTqgWXGF.99)

<sup>3</sup> EWTN,

<sup>4</sup> Bonhoeffer website <http://www.dbonhoeffer.org/Quotes.html>

<sup>5</sup> Bonhoeffer website <http://www.dbonhoeffer.org/Quotes.html>



Rev Datuk Jerry Dusing is a NECF Council Member and President of Sidang Injil Borneo (SIB) Sabah.



Bishop Tendaro addressing the audience at the conference.

The National Leadership Conference was held at Full Gospel Tabernacle, Subang Jaya on 15th September 2017. A total of 84 participants comprising church pastors and leaders attended the conference. The speakers were Bishop Efraim M Tendaro, Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) and NECF Chairman, Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng.

Bishop Efraim who was the first speaker shared on rethinking governance in the light of culture, context and change which have shaped the way we see leadership through the years. He emphasized that the church ought to hold on to the basic principles of biblical leadership which is shared leadership in the kingdom of God. He cited examples from the lives of Peter, Jesus, Paul and the people of God in Israel where they practised plurality of leaders and functioned as a team with different gifts to minister effectively. Leadership is not a one-man or one-woman rule, but a collective effort as in how the Trinity works together as one.

The speaker mentioned nine models of Biblical leadership:

### 1 Positional leadership

Joseph rose to various leadership roles at different seasons of his life. His leadership skills were prominent to the extent that he won the favour of his master, Potiphar, and the Pharaoh, and later became the Prime Minister of Egypt. His position enabled him to save Egypt and the neighbouring countries from a great famine.

### 2 Personal leadership

Moses became a leader due to his personal qualifications and skills. He received the best education in Egypt and he also went through the training process to be a shepherd. He learnt how to survive in the desert. Hence, his knowledge and experience in life enabled him to be God's chosen one to deliver His people from Egypt.

### 3 Team leadership

Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses reminded him of the importance of having sufficient leaders to help him minister to the many needs of the people. Moses was not to be the sole leader taking care of the needs of the Israelites in the wilderness.

### 4 Political leadership

Samuel, the prophet, was seen as a spiritual advisor to God's people and even to the royal family of King Saul.

### 5 Ethical leadership

Elijah, a prophet, exercised his role as the voice of the Messenger to God's people.

### 6 Visionary leadership

Nehemiah had a vision to help the people of God, and he faithfully carried out the mission to rebuild the wall with the right strategy. This led to effectiveness and sustainability, thereby completing the wall in 52 days.

### 7 Servant leadership

Jesus showed that true leadership is not about being served, but to serve.

### 8 Ministry leadership

Paul led by ministering to a large group of people. In the Bible he listed around 86 names, ranging from his closest disciples to the people in the churches around the region of Rome.

### 9 Pastoral leadership

Peter exercised his leadership through shepherding and he showed the way by being a good shepherd.

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## “What It Takes To Be A National Leader”

Bishop Efraim also shared about the following elements of Biblical leadership based on Jeremiah 3:15.

*Jeremiah 3:15 – Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding. (New International Version- NIV)*

### 1 Calling – The Nature of Leadership

The words “I will give you ...” imply that it is God who chooses and qualifies us as leaders. Leadership is God’s gift to us.

### 2 Character – Standard of leadership

The words “after my own heart” indicate that a good leader is identified by his/ her character, and the leader’s love and holiness reflect the character of God.

### 3 Community – Context of leadership

The words “will lead you” highlight the relational setting of the people of God. The shepherds will lead the people.

### 4 Competence – Qualification of leadership

In the words “with knowledge and understanding”, the need to have a combination of knowledge, practical wisdom and understanding in order to be good leaders is stated. Their daily experiences will make them more understanding and they will be capable to face various challenges in their workplaces and ministries.

He further shared on qualities in developing leadership based on 1 Chronicles 12: 32- 33.

*1 Chronicles 12:32-33 – from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do—200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command; 33 from Zebulun, experienced soldiers prepared for battle with every type of weapon, to help David with undivided loyalty—50,000; (New International Version- NIV)*

### 1 Discernment (Wisdom)

In verse 32, the words “from Issachar, men who understood the times”— show that application of knowledge in day to day experiences is as important as is the accumulation of knowledge. Wisdom can be obtained through prayer (James 1:5) and mentoring (Proverbs 13: 20).

### 2 Discipline (Accountability)

The words “and knew what Israel should do” emphasize the importance of accountability and being disciplined in the battlefield.

### 3 Diligence ( Hardworking )

The words “from Zebulun, experienced soldiers prepared for battle with every type of weapon” highlight the preparation of the soldiers for the battles. They have to practise constantly in order to master different weapons utilising both the left and the right sides so that they can protect themselves from the enemies.

### 4 Devotion (Undivided loyalty)

The words “to help David with undivided loyalty” state the commitment that one should have in their walk with God. The journey of Biblical leadership requires that no one should replace God’s position as the centre of our lives.

Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng was the second speaker and he shared on the ten mistakes that national leaders make.

- The person is not accountable to the body he/she represents
- The national leader is not church based for prayer support
- The leader does not have respect for protocols and boundaries
- The person shows inconsistencies in his/her character and behaviour
- The person has inability to relate at different levels such as to the government, national leaders, fellow pastors and non-Christians
- Lack of understanding about the difference between activism and church work
- Lack of a strong support base
- When leaders do not find time for friendships
- Weak prayer life and
- Personal weaknesses that are not dealt with.

He also shared on ten ways to move forward in national leadership:

- Right tools
- Right team
- Right time
- Right attitude
- Right spouse
- Right mentor/counsellor
- Right priorities
- Right ending (Finish well)
- Right successor and
- Right strategy.

The conference concluded with a question and answer session and prayer.



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LUMA in Georgetown serves the creative arts scene in Penang.

## Creative Arts: The Oft-Neglected Marketplace

By Anna Tan

The essence of creative arts is story. A well-placed story at a well-timed moment tears your heart in ways that bare-faced facts could never do. By stepping out of yourself in that short span of time, you open yourself to be vulnerable to the Great Story that loops in endless sequences, in countless revisions, in trickles of narrative, or floods of words, in fluid motions, or static pictures: the One Story that always says in the end that man needs a hero. Sometimes the hero echoes the works of God, and sometimes, he echoes the works of man, but the immutable truth remains that man cannot ever save himself.

The thing with *story*—whether read, watched, viewed, or heard—is that it often manages to break through preconceived ideas long enough to make one question: *Is this right? Is this true? What does this tell me about myself and God?*

Jesus Himself spoke in parables (pretty much dramatic storytelling) because at times it's the only way to get through to hearts and minds. These parables provoked the hearer to engage with the puzzling sayings and the profound questions they raised—but at the same time, they obstructed the truth from those whose hearts were not open to it. As it is said: *He who has ears to hear, let him hear.*

Anyone who has grown up in church would likely have encountered the idea that involvement in the arts—drama, dance, music, media, visual arts—isn't good for your Christian life (besides not providing a stable income). There's this perception that everyone involved is somehow weird, gay, and not a good influence. This has slowly been changing in Malaysia over the past fifteen years. There has been a rise in the number of productions from various churches and

inter-church drama groups, some of which have even garnered acclaim at the Boh Cameronian Arts Awards, an annual arts award event which celebrates outstanding performances in dance, music, theatre and musical theatre in Malaysia. These shows, such as *Everworld and Esya, The Musical* (SIBKL), *Crazy Little Thing Called Love* (Footstool Players), and *The Tailor Made Man* (Actspressions), stand out as beacons of what the church can do. Yet, these shows have, for the most part, been *in* the church *for* the church. What about those outside these four walls?

In the conversation about marketplace ministry, we usually focus on businesses and professional jobs. Despite our preoccupation with Christian celebrities (or who is or isn't Christian in Hollywood), it's easy to forget that the arts is a marketplace and a ministry—one where a Christian witness can either stand or fall in spectacular scale and style. Thus, if work is your worship and your mission field, then it follows that creative arts—creativity and the creation of beauty—used rightly, is also a form of worship.

Instead of creating a new microcosm of “Christian art” the focus then should be to ensure that we are being a light in this specific marketplace. We need to change the narrative that says—“We pull ourselves out of this [sphere] because [all these bad things] are happening, and all the people involved act in [these certain kinds of ways that we disagree with] and we don't want to be influenced by them” and instead say—“Despite all the [things we disagree with] that are happening,

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## “Creative Arts: The Oft-Neglected Marketplace”

we will continue to be involved in this [sphere] in order to be able to influence them for good because we believe that God has called us to redeem His creation by our presence in this [sphere] and among these people.”

How can we do that? There are currently several initiatives taking place across Malaysia to both gather and encourage Christians in the arts which need both your support and prayer. The most general of these initiatives is the Christian Creatives Network Malaysia (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/163356500797366/>), a Facebook group set up in 2017 to network Malaysian Christians in the performing arts, fine arts, and literary arts. Spearheaded by Colin Kirton, Juwita Suwito, and Gina Yap Lai Yoong, the group intends to provide a platform for networking, collaboration, encouragement, and accountability. The group also organises face-to-face events, such as talks, workshops, and fellowship sessions, once a quarter.

On the media front, the LiveWire! Media Network (<http://www.livewiremedia.org/>) was set up in 2004 as a cross-denominational, inter-church media network by a coalition of media ministry leaders from across Malaysia. The group is currently led by Goh Choon Ean, Lim Kee Sitt, Wong Cin Dee, and Gina Yap Lai Yoong. Besides providing digital media and video production services, LiveWire! also produces the annual Charge Up! Conference to both train and recharge media staff in churches and Christian organisations.

LiveWire! birthed LUMA (<http://luma.net.my/>) in 2012 to be a light beyond church walls by supporting arts and culture communities in Penang. Other than providing technical and production support, LUMA also collaborates with Hin Bus Art Depot to open up a space to host programmes like the

Malaysian Writers Society Write-ins, Say It Like You Mean It workshops, film screenings by Cinechat and Penang Urbanites and interfaith live group sessions—in line with their vision of keeping an open house, being generous with their lives and fusing a sense of community in creativity (Matthew 5:14-16).

ArtSowers, led by Lew Tau Fei, is another such coalition of artists, primarily in the visual arts, with the goal of “reclaim(ing) our place as creative leaders and put(ting) God’s glory into art once again”. The group holds art talks, art exhibitions, and prayer meetings as well as fellowship to discuss the creative industry in Petaling Jaya.

In Exodus 31, God spoke to Moses about building the tabernacle. Right at the start of the passage, God called two men by name: Bezalel and Oholiab. In stark difference to the normal narrative of today, where you’re usually “called” into missions or “called” into ministry, Bezalel and Oholiab were called by name not into some ‘holy’ job. They were called and filled with the Spirit for craftsmanship. They were called to be artists, creating works of beauty for the tabernacle.

Our words have power. Our art has power. We need to stop playing catch-up with where the world is going. We need to stand up for our convictions. We need to be that light in the dark places. We need to be so good at what we do, and so strong in what we believe in that people will stop and listen. Even if they don’t agree with us.

Goh Choon Ean puts it very simply: “It’s not just about the big stuff, but about the daily living; not just supporting [artists] in practical help, but also building lifetime friendships that last, and being part of the community for the long run.” And you can’t do that if you’re not present and on the scene.



Anna Tan is a freelance writer and editor. She worships at Penang Christian Centre.



Christian Creatives Network Malaysia provides a platform for networking, collaboration, encouragement, and accountability.





# Fast And Pray For Malaysia: Transformation Through Hope In God

By Joycelyn Ong

*Passionate and anointed time of prayer and worship.*

The launch of NECF's 40 Day Fast and Prayer for The Nation in the Klang Valley was held at Damansara Utama Methodist Church (DUMC) on the 6th of August. This year marks the 17th year of the 40 Day Fast and Prayer event. This year's theme is 'Hope in God' which is based on Ezekiel 37: 1-14.

Rev Andy Chi, the Assistant Secretary General of NECF and Rev Elisha Satvinder, the Hon. Secretary of NECF called upon the congregation to respond to the Word of God by being rooted in the Word. The congregation was then challenged to contribute financially towards the Reading through the Bible Plan and the 40 Day Fast and Prayer event as these would empower the local church to influence the nation.

## **Journeying through Samuel's Experience**

NECF Chairman, Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng, shared a devotion entitled "Mistakes Good People Make - Lessons from Samuel's life". He highlighted the eight mistakes, and then he encouraged us to learn from these mistakes.

### **Mistaking the voice of God for man's voice (1 Samuel 3:4, 9-10).**

Samuel initially did not recognize the voice of God. He thought he had heard the voice of Eli. Rev Eu gave the example of the modern church and the many voices she is hearing today: it appears as if almost everyone has spoken except God. He hoped that through this 40 Day Fast and Prayer, we will all learn to sharpen our spiritual sensitivity to hear from God.

### **The presence of God will always protect us (1 Samuel 2:24-25).**

We allow ourselves to fall into the sin of presumption when we assume that God will never allow the enemy to overwhelm us. The fathers in the days of Samuel

committed the sin of neglect; Eli himself did not step up to discipline and correct his sons who were sinning against God. Similarly, churches and fathers today are also choosing to neglect certain crucial issues by making things optional. There is plenty of preaching but little enforcement.

### **Succession in place lulls us into thinking success is in place (1 Samuel 2:27-29)**

It is easy to generalize that Eli had nothing to worry about. After all, his sons were ready to help out and take over his position should anything happen to him. But they were clearly neither favoured nor chosen by God because of their wicked ways. Eli could not imagine that his succession plan would fail. He failed to recognize that God had allowed it to fail because he had chosen to honour his own sons above God.

### **Godly men always learn from the mistakes of others (1 Samuel 8:2-5).**

It appears that Samuel, a righteous man, would be unlikely to commit the same mistakes as Eli. However, 1 Samuel chapter 8 records that when Samuel was at an old age, the people told him that his own sons were not walking uprightly. Sometimes we fail to realize that we could also make the same mistakes as others.

### **The Church will always obey the prophets (1 Samuel 8:19-20).**

Samuel had warned the people about having a king, but the people insisted on having one. They said a firm no to his pleadings. This shows that even though

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# Why Education And The Need For REEP

By Cheli Nadarajah

"Thank you for teaching me about life!" These were the words of Cheryl, a 31-year old ex-student, whom I had taught when she was in Form 4 in Kuching.

Cheryl did not complete her Form 4 education. Her parents separated and she had to live with her grandmother. She ran away from home at the age of 16; was brought back home only to be sent to live with her great-granduncle and his family. She tried resuming her studies but it was too costly for her. She did part-time work as a salesgirl in the malls to pay for her studies but it was not enough to see her through any course in the colleges.

When she was 26, her grandmother passed away and her great-granduncle went bankrupt. It was a do or die situation for her. She took out all her savings and started helping her great-granduncle in his small business. Her passion for life and her diligence got the business up and running. The next two years were very trying but Cheryl was determined to work hard and learn as much as she could to make the business a success. The great-granduncle opened his first mini mall in Penang in 2014 and by the end of 2015, he had opened his second mall. Cheryl was taught every technique and method of the trade and was made the manager of both these malls. She also began to buy foreign currencies diligently every month, and she saved up. Today she runs a thriving business of her own. She took us out for dinner to thank me for teaching her about life.

As an educator, I think about what to impart to my students daily. I can teach them the contents in a textbook but how relevant will this be to these students? Education, in a nutshell, must contain three elements: knowledge, skills and character. Tyron Edwards, a theologian in the 18th century said, *"The great end of education is to discipline rather than to furnish the mind, to train the mind to use its power rather than to fill it with the accumulation of others."* Martin Luther King, Jr said, *"Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education."*

Education trains the mind to think and it helps a student to respond to stimuli and provocations. It teaches the brain to understand concepts and ideas. Education teaches discipline where a child is taught how to organise his life with regards to time and schedules, and it teaches the child to be disciplined in respecting people in authority and to respect the learning processes.

Education is vital to ensure that we become better citizens of a nation. People who are educated become aware of the socio-economic situation in the nation and are able to contribute ideas to make things better. Most of what we learn as principles and values are taught in schools: simple things like being thrifty and not being wasteful to complicated formulae.

Education is important for politics and the economy in a nation. A nation that is educated is able to choose the right

government and make a positive difference in the nation's economy and well-being. Getting a basic decent job requires one to be educated. Without education, a nation will be bogged down with issues of unemployment which leads to rise in crime and other social problems.

One of the fundamental purposes of education is to help children become independent decision makers. In order to achieve this, we need to help children take ownership of their own education by helping them desire and crave for more knowledge, skills and character. Every child has some form of potential to do well in life. However, *"Our potential is one thing. What we do with it is quite another."* (Angela Duckworth)

With all these in mind and the trying times we are going through in our nation, some measures must be taken to quickly and effectively address the decline in education. The most vulnerable group that loses out in advancement will always be the needy and marginalised. NECF has taken the initiative to address the poor educational performances of children of needy communities in the country by formulating a structured, weekly remedial after-school tuition programme for primary school children. Our aim is to build their confidence through the acquisition of the basic foundational skills, namely the 3 Rs - Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. This programme is called Restorative Educational Empowerment Programme or REEP.

REEP aims to restore the joy of learning, and the famous Chinese proverb: *"Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime"* sums it all up. It is not just about giving help but to help the needy children to learn to help themselves. Proverbs 22:6 says, *"Train up the child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it"*. By motivating and developing confidence in children, REEP aims to encourage children to attend school and address the deteriorating standard of proficiency in English, Mathematics and Science amongst such school-going children. Increasing the literacy rate among the needy people groups is fundamental as it is a known fact that children who cannot read or write and count tend to become victims of bullies and society at large.

In the REEP programmes, children are placed in groups according to their cognitive levels - they are placed where they really are - and not according to their age group as is practised in schools in Malaysia. In REEP, we work towards helping the children from where they really are, to arrive at where they should be - their school age! By using a simple Individual Educational system, we allow children to work at their capacity and progress slowly but surely at their own pace. Teachers or tutors no longer function as information providers; they serve as facilitators and coaches - working from the level of the child.

There is still a lot of work that needs to be done to help restore what is lost and what needs to be present in education.

NECF's effort in introducing REEP is a powerful measure in seeing the nation being transformed through the church. In a mass education context, marginalised children are the most prone to be victims of such a biased system. Children who are academically marginalised get left behind in the system. Slow learners are not given the opportunity to repeat or re-sit the exams. This kind of system is ideal for the masses but becomes a bore for the fast learners – thus creating boredom in schools and a constant struggle to depend on teachers – as teachers focus all their attention on the masses. Self-motivated students organise their own study 'life' by attending tuition classes – which is an alternative school for many.

In a world that is so open and accessible, we do not need teachers to play roles as information providers. In cities where the internet connection is easily available, we find most students and the general public being dependent on google to search for help or information. Gone are the days when all the information in the world was stored in large libraries and they were all in print form. Access to such knowledge was only accessible to a few and in order to make it accessible to

the masses, schools were built and teachers were trained. In these days, the role of the teacher has changed to that of a coach and a facilitator. One thing which has not changed over the years is the perception that teachers are role models in society.

The restoration of education must take place and it has to happen soon before there is a complete loss. REEP training of tutors and volunteers need to be planned and executed with the churches of Malaysia anchoring this initiative. We have been called to redeem and restore the mountains and education is one of them.



*Cheli Nadarajah is the chairman of the Education Commission. He worships at SIB KL.*

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## **“Fast and Pray for Malaysia: Transformation through Hope in God”**

Samuel was known to be a godly leader and a spiritual advisor, his advice had fallen on deaf ears. The people ignored him.

### **We bemoan what God is not pleased with (1 Samuel 16:1).**

When God decided to replace Saul with a new king, Samuel was saddened. When we are so used to an old system or old regime, we do not realize that God knows what He is doing. In 1 Samuel 16, the Lord had to come to Samuel and ask him, “How long will you mourn for Saul?” Indeed, we have to move on when God instructs us to do so.

### **Prophetic men of God know the choice of God (1 Samuel 16).**

During the time of selection for the next king to succeed Saul, Samuel assumed that David's brothers were better choices compared to David. When Samuel saw the eldest son of Jesse, he thought for sure that he would be chosen by God. But God confronted him, stating that man will always be deceived by the outward appearance. God, however, looks at the heart. The seven sons were presented to Samuel. They were not bad choices, but they were simply not God's choice.

### **We cheat the next generation by fighting their Goliaths.**

One thing that Samuel did right was that he did not engage in all the fights that came up. During the battle with the Ammonites, he was with Saul in facing them. But when it came to encountering Goliath, Samuel stood aside and allowed David

to fight. There are some battles that we need to learn to step back from and let the next generation do the fighting. They must fight the battles themselves before they get to move on and be promoted.

Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng summarized by saying the following:

The need to pray is getting more urgent than ever before.

The prophetic ministries must be judged.

We need to remind ourselves that the Word of God must be our plumb line.

We must be reminded of the replacement theology, as in how God dealt with Eli and his sons. We need to be saying to God, “Speak Lord, your servant hears.”

We must allow the younger generation to fight their own battles.

### **Praying in One Voice**

Pastor Sam Ang, the Hon. Treasurer of NECF exhorted the congregation to respond to the message, and he then led the congregation in a time of intercession. There was a time of group prayer. Prayer items included praying for the revival of churches, Pastor Raymond Koh and his family, the upcoming 14th General Election, and for the prosperity as well as peace and security in the country.

Several leaders led in prayers for the church, nation and the region. Pastor Chris Kam of DUMC prayed for the church, Rev Esther Kong of GA6111 Bread of Life for the nation and Pastor Dr Chew Weng Chee of SIBKL prayed for the region. Elder Kong Yeng Pooi, NECF Council Member, closed the session with the benediction.



*Joycelyn Ong serves as a Communications intern at NECF from July to September 2017*



# Malaysia Day Prayer Rally Challenges Christians To Love And Intercede For The Nation

By Clement Tan



Participants standing up to respect the National Anthem.

The event began with a parade of the Malaysian flag and the flags of every state in Malaysia. This was followed by lively and vibrant worship. Dr Khoo Kay Hup prayed with reference to 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Ps Andy Chi highlighted the many prayer gatherings that were held around the country both on the previous day and on Malaysia Day itself. It was truly a delight to know that many churches and individuals were also interceding for our country on this momentous day.

NECF Chairman Rev Eu Hong Seng shared an interesting devotional message entitled **"7 Men Must Hang"**, taken from 2 Samuel 21:1-14. David had delivered seven men of Saul's descendants into the hands of the Gibeonites because Saul had sought to kill the Gibeonites even though the Israelites had sworn to protect them.

Bishop Ephraim Tendero, the Secretary General of World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) challenged us with the message entitled **"I Love My Country"**. He made reference to Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Timothy 2:1-6, reminding us of the importance of being subject to the governing authorities as they have been appointed by God.

He proceeded to encourage us to love our country because God has given this country to us. He shared 10 practical steps. The following are of particular interest and importance:

- To appreciate our heritage by knowing our background and to understand the factors that have helped to shape the psyche and behaviour of the people.
- To treasure the symbols of our country by being

proud of our flag and to sing the national anthem wholeheartedly.

As citizens to talk positively of our country, rather than to be cynical about the affairs of our country To be an asset to the nation by raising the standard of performance in our respective occupations. Excellence is something we are to strive for.

Bishop Tendero then concluded by stating that our positive contribution will bring about a much better society and enhancement to the country. However, he added that the future of the nation is dependent on God. God raises the authorities and the people of God have their part in being responsible for the destiny of the country through the exercise of the gifts of prophecy and intercession.

The Rukun Negara was recited, followed by a time for group intercession led by senior pastors from various churches. Intercession included praying for a renewed hunger for God's Word among Christians, the 14th General Election, and for peace and security in the Southeast Asian region.

Overall, it was very encouraging to witness a large number of people turning up to intercede for the nation on Malaysia Day. We hope that this event will encourage patriotism and challenge us to intercede fervently for our nation.



Clement Tan is the Assistant Executive Secretary of the Legal and Research Commission, NECF.

# Are You Making Space For Millennials?

By Regina Yan Ginny

As a Christian growing up in a family-oriented church, I feel bad for older leaders who are trying their best to reach out to millennials or Generation Y (1980 – 2000)<sup>1</sup>. I have personally witnessed, based on my church situation for the past 5 years, a record number leaving the church for various reasons and they are not returning despite a majority being raised in Christian households.

Of course, this is not new information since millennials have been widely known to transcend the cynical rebellion of Generation X while earning the reputation of being entitled, unmotivated, lazy and addicted to technology. This is based on my reading of Christian research experts such as Barna Group, LifeWay Research, and Rainer Research.

The struggle is real. Companies try to retain us, but we change jobs<sup>2</sup> every few years. Thus, my personal view and observation is that parents become confused as to how to motivate us to grow up and get a real job. Church leaders try to get us to attend weekly services, but we want the worship sessions and sermons, either live online or which have been recorded on our hand phones.

Although research has revealed that millennials may seem to be highly skeptical of religion, my personal reading of the Leadership Journal (Managing Editor, Drew Dyck) reveals that many are still thirsty to find out their purpose in life. The truth is, it isn't Jesus they are rejecting, but they are rejecting churches that are not making themselves relevant to the millennial culture<sup>3</sup>.

One thing remains clear: The relationship between millennials and the church is shifting. On this note, it is particularly inspiring that Paul advised Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12 "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

I personally believe, based on my observations and communication with the millennials, there are **two main characteristics** about this generation, including practical ways for churches to connect and engage with them.

## 1. Authenticity – Is our church real?

It's not rocket science to realize that millennials have been surrounded with instant access to information through broadband, smartphones, laptops and social media. When they sense that people or leaders are lying to them, or when

the congregation is just going through the motions – they leave without hesitation.

Millennials desire to live real and meaningful lives in the context of other people's real lives. This is what Paul wrote: "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body." (Ephesians 4:25)

They also do not have the same sense of obligation to attend church that previous generations may have had. The truth is that these young adults want to be mentored, not preached at. You see, being a generation with the highest percentage of fatherless homes, they crave for meaningful relationships and mentors who are willing to authentically invest in their lives and future. If we do not have real people who actually care about us, why not just listen to a sermon on our couches?

The point is, millennials not only wish to be mentored but they also want to be heard and valued for who they are in a world that says they are not good enough. Studies have shown that those who stay in churches are more likely to have

had close, personal friendships or mentors within the community.

Thus, one of the effective ways for churches to convey authenticity is by ensuring that what a person sees or experiences in your worship services is consistent with the messages heard or communicated throughout the service. It also means walking the talk and talking the walk.

Thus, don't just tell millennials that they should do things just because you as leaders or older church members say so. Listen actively to them while trusting our Heavenly Father "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Edh 4:13)

## 2. Quality Content – Is our church being Christ-like?

While many churches assume that they need flashing lights, big screens and a worship concert to attract the younger generation – this is simply not true. We are not looking for a show; we are looking for quality, dedication and excellence.

Millennials yearn for an experiential service that reflects

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## “Are You Making Space For Millennials?”

deep biblical thoughtfulness and theological truths. Their focus is on songs with theologically rich lyrics.

Besides, most churches today are designed as a place of activities, not rest – with spaces to “do” rather than to “be” at. In this fast-paced, hurried world, Jesus said in Matthew 11:28: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Thus, making room for rest has to be one of the main purposes of a church. This means not just focusing on rituals or ministries, but on the experiential part of encountering Christ during church services.

Although ministries and activities are designed to connect people with God and each other, millennials generally look for space or opportunities to hear from God. What this implies is that they can personally encounter Christ and explore their spiritual lives on their own terms. As recorded in the Gospel of Luke, while Martha was distracted with work, her sister Mary sat at Jesus' feet, listening to His Word. Jesus said "...Mary has chosen what is better..." (Luke 10:42)

So, it isn't to make the church cool, but it's to call people to "...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19) by placing a high priority on teaching and preaching in the church.

In a nutshell, millennials are a talented and dynamic generation – eager to make a difference to the world. Though these practical tips might help bring millennials to church, essentially, what they really want is to have a relationship with a Jesus they can relate to. Thus, sermons that are preached should communicate in a way where they can understand and relate to.

I'm not saying that the older generations have seen Jesus incorrectly, but they may have only seen Him through the lens of their culture. Being challenged to do better is something the church should always welcome.

Therefore, instead of trying to change millennials, connect and embrace them for who they are while constantly pushing them back to their ultimate purpose in life – Christ.

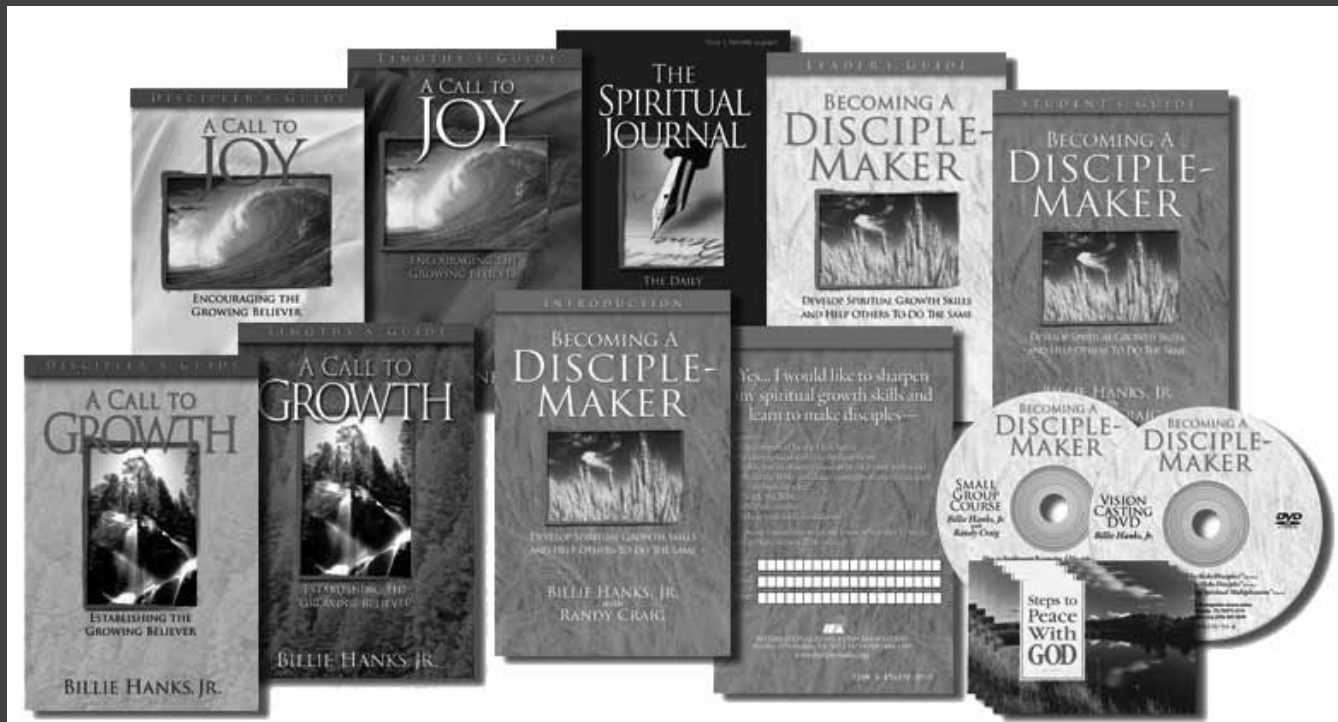
<sup>1</sup>Those born in or after the 1980s and who entered the labour market in the 2000s (Pyoria et al., 2017). Source: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244017697158>

<sup>2</sup> According to a research by PriceWaterhouseCoopers: <https://www.pwc.com/m1/en/services/consulting/documents/millennials-at-work.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Source: <http://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/articles/millennials-are-not-rejecting-jesus.aspx>



*Regina Yan Ginny currently works in SEGi University as a Marketing Executive and attends Sungei Way Christian Church, Petaling Jaya.*



Becoming A Disciple-Maker is an effective Christian follow up by establishing a one-to-one discipling process at your church. A group of more mature believers are selected and trained to become equipped Disciple-Makers. When a new Christian or new member joins your church, they are offered a friendship with one of these trained Disciple-Makers. The goal is for each new Christian to establish a friendship – become a self-feeder from the Word of God – grow spiritually – and then share their faith with others resulting in spiritual multiplication! To enquire more regarding Becoming A Disciple-Maker please go to our website at [www.necf.org.my](http://www.necf.org.my).



# A Memorable Trip to the 'Graveyard of Missions'

By Rev Daniel Loh



*Tamil Youth Net Missions Team to Bihar.*

The NECF's Tamil Commission Youth Net organised a missions exposure trip to Bihar, India from 28 August to 5 September, 2017. It consisted of a team of eight people. This is a follow-up to the Tamil Youth GO (Global Missions) Conference that was held on 3 June 2017 at Full Gospel Tabernacle Subang Jaya which drew a crowd of almost 1,700 youths. Eight youths /young adults volunteered to visit the mission fields run by the Gospel Echoing Missionary Society of India (GEMS), which has its headquarters in Bihar.

GEMS is a missions organisation started by Augustine Jebakumar, who went from South India to start missions work in Bihar. Bihar is the 13th largest state of India but it has the third largest population on India. It was once called the 'Graveyard of Missions'.

We visited the GEMS campus which is situated on about 40 acres of land and which consists of the GEMS hospital, GEMS overall missions' operation offices, schools, skill training centres, colleges, discipleship and training centres and churches.

It was a rich experience to visit several churches and institutes started by GEMS' missionaries. Most of the churches are in the villages and in tough terrain. It was amazing to see how missionaries had penetrated some of the difficult places where poverty was rampant. Through sheer hard work and dedication they planted churches in predominantly Hindu areas. They had sacrificed much for the Gospel.

The most shocking experience was the visit to a centre/school for children. There were about 300 children in the centre.

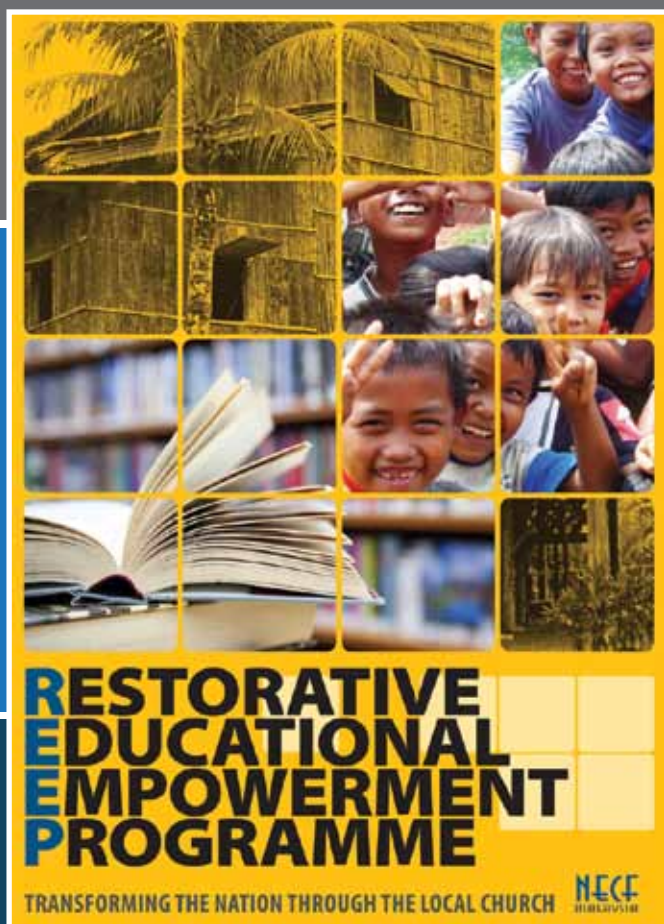
Their mothers were all prostitutes. In that vicinity alone, there were more than 52 prostitution villages. Twelve of them have been reached with the Gospel. They desperately need more workers to reach out to the other villages. We were given the opportunity to preach in some of the villages. It was painful to speak to these mothers. It was heart-moving to see GEMS carving out a life of hope for these neglected children and mothers.

Another heart-touching moment was seeing the staff and the workers in the GEMS campus gathering every morning at 5.00am to pray. Each morning, more than 500 people gather to pray. It was amazing to see the spirit of prayer pervading the whole of the GEMS campus.

Meeting up with the founder of GEMS, Augustine Jebakumar, fellowshipping with the missionaries, visiting the numerous centres of GEMS, preaching in the village churches and seeing the conditions of the poor in Bihar - all these made a great impact on our lives. We are planning our next mission trip to Jaffna, Sri Lanka, a land once torn apart by a 30-year civil war. It was awesome to see the missionary spirit of GEMS changing a land once called the 'graveyard of missionaries' into a rich harvest field!



*Rev Daniel Loh is NECF's Administrator and Executive Secretary of its Tamil Commission.*



For more information, log on to [www.necf.org.my](http://www.necf.org.my)



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