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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I will not Let you go...

By Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng

Though described as a “quiet man” (Gen25:27 ESV), Jacob was a person of duplicitous character; not above lying, betraying, stealing and cheating to get his way. Despite his numerous unsavoury acts, the younger son of Isaac and Rebekah clearly lived a life that demonstrated incontrovertible evidence of God's boundless mercy.

Thanks to his wily schemes against Esau, his twin brother, Jacob is forced to flee from home to save his own skin. He travels up to Haran and seeks refuge with Laban, his uncle and later, father-in-law. True to form, his relationship with Laban is founded on deception and counter-deception - resulting in Jacob and his family stealing away in the night with Laban's household gods in tow. However, this abrupt departure leads Jacob back to Canaan where he inevitably comes full circle to confront his unresolved conflict with Esau.

Before the showdown with his brother at Jabbok, Jacob experiences a divine encounter wrestling with a ‘man’, believed to be God Himself. The all-night wrestling was testament to Jacob's desperation and perseverance. Though his hip became out of joint when the Angel touched its socket, Jacob clung on, determined to win God's blessings. He cried, “I will not let you go unless You bless me! (Gen 32:26)

In this pandemic season, the cries to be delivered and protected from sickness, financial ruin and death seem paramount. Despair, anxiety and fear have driven down many a knee before God as the government, authorities

and experts seek solutions and relief. While we rejoice at the sign of a growing prayer movement in Malaysia, I would not be remiss to state the Church actually has barely stretched a muscle in her wrestling stance.

We love recounting stories of men of God in times past who prayed till their knees left imprints on the wooden floors of church basements. Sadly, I suspect the prayer and worship landscape in our present churches remains flat and undented in comparison. Marginal online attendance, tardy log-ins and perfunctory act of communion during services are plain for all to see. While the few godly leaders faithfully travail in intercession, the rest are content to cheer them on from the sides instead of seeking the Lord themselves.

There is no mistake that we all want to be blessed. We yearn for the return of our good life, and the good things that come with it. We pray to be shielded from ill-health and all manner of viruses; we plea for the continuance of our lifestyle and the list goes on. Recently I met a man who wanted to eat all he enjoys and yet still stay slim. We might laugh at such foolishness, but in the same token, there are many among us who feverishly claim the promises of Scriptures, and yet have no qualms indulging in the pride of life, lust of the flesh and eyes. How naïve can we get?

While Jacob's prayer in Genesis 32 no doubt smacks a “bless-me” entreaty, it should be noted that God's pervasive favour on him sits within the larger biblical

narrative of His destiny and purpose for the coming nation of Israel through this man. Likewise, on this side of dispensation, the Church has a lot more to intercede for than merely deliverance in this pandemic and the blessing of a comfortable life for herself. Indeed there remains much to bring before God, our Father.



Given the urgent needs of our time, locking ourselves in prayer closets with our heads in between our knees in anguish like Elijah¹ may not be enough. We must remember that interceding for our nation is a collective responsibility. The young, the old, children, whole families must gather together to repent, fast and pray as how it was in the days of Ezra.

Apostle Paul pleads with us in Romans 12:1-2², to present our bodies a living sacrifice and not be conformed to this world. Truly, the call to surrender ourselves and live separate from the dictates of the world is not easy to heed. There will be much wrestling ahead – not only with our carnal selves, but also with the Lord Himself. It may not just cost us an arm, a hip or a joint – but perhaps, also our very lives.

Yet, like Jacob, we must not let Him go. For when we pray and commit to do the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, we will be comforted that He too will not let us go.

¹ Kings 18:42

² Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV)

- 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.
- 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.



4 DAYS

FAST & PRAYER

LAUNCH

6 AUGUST (FRIDAY)

8.00pm


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Email: enquiries@necf.org.my
Website: www.necf.org.my

Yearning for Divine Blessing in their businesses



The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the livelihood of many businessmen of different races. This includes Indian businessmen of Tamil origin who face challenges to stay afloat. For some, businesses have to be closed or on the verge of closing down, and many are very discouraged and worried about their future.

NECF's Tamil Commission took cognizance of this situation and organized the Tamil Businessmen Blessing Prayer Meeting on 21 April 2021 to encourage, strengthen and to give a sense of motivation to all the businessmen to stay strong and trust the Lord. The meeting was conducted via zoom to about 107 people and more than 400 people viewed it on YouTube.

Bro Mohan C. Lazarus from India, the founder of Jesus Redeems Ministry who regularly conducts **Businessmen Blessing Prayer Meetings** was the speaker. As a prelude to the meeting, three businessmen shared their testimonies about how the Lord has been faithful in prospering their businesses despite the pandemic. One of them who owns a factory producing household materials testified about how God blessed him financially before and even during this pandemic. According to him, he has been faithfully conducting daily morning prayers, devotions for his staff before they start operations and how they have constantly been faithful in their tithes, offerings, giving to missions and helping the poor and the needy.

Bro Mohan, in his introduction shared that he is well aware of the effects of the pandemic in Malaysia and how the business people are struggling. The text that he shared was taken from **Luke 5:1-8** which tells about Jesus preaching in a boat to the multitudes of people who had gathered on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. After He finished speaking, Jesus told Simon to put out the boat in deep waters and let down the nets to catch fish. Simon however replied that he and his friends had been working all night and had not caught anything.

As expert fishermen, they were in dilemma as they were not only exhausted but also it was a well-known fact that fishes were usually caught at night in shallow waters and not daytime in deep waters. Simon Peter nevertheless obeyed Jesus' instruction even though he

couldn't see any rhyme or reason to put down their nets. Once this was done, Simon and his friends were able to catch a lot of fishes until the boat almost sank.

According to Bro Mohan it is very common for a businessman to say that the pandemic is severe, there is no way we can survive and we might as well close down our businesses. At this difficult phase disappointments, depressions and discouragement would have seeped in and the questions in their minds would be :

- When will this pandemic end?
- Will there be a second, third or fourth wave?
- How long are we going to bear with this?

Bro Mohan stressed that it is important not to be overwhelmed by the situation. He assured them that the Lord is nearer to us than what we think. He knows our situation and is able to bring us out of it. Business people often fail to put Jesus first in their lives and allow Him to come into their businesses and take control of every situation. If the first priority is given to the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom work, there would be breakthroughs and overflowing favour of God. That's what Simon Peter did. He obeyed the Word of the Lord to put down the nets to catch fish. And what was the result? He managed to reap an abundant catch of fishes!

Bro Mohan assured the participants that God truly speaks even in the midst of the pandemic and His wisdom is much needed for business people. Therefore, we need to seek the whole counsel of the Lord and be still and wait upon Him. And while waiting upon the Lord, fast and pray.

Viewers who tuned in to the meeting indeed have been richly encouraged, inspired and blessed by the testimonies shared by the three businessmen together with the message given by Bro Mohan C. Lazarus.

NECF Malaysia

21 APRIL 2021
8.00pm
WEDNESDAY

TAMIL BUSINESSMEN BLESSING PRAYER

தொழில் மற்றும் வியாபாரம்
செய்வோருக்கான
ஆசீர்வாத ஜெபம்

MEETING ID: 947 4103 1572

Organised By:
NECF TAMIL COMMISSION

BRO. MOHAN C. LAZARUS
Jesus Redeems Ministry

Contact:
Rev. Daniel Loh 017 886 6003 • Rev. Sestiraja 012 350 8534
Rev. Bernard Papuraj 012 477 0032 • Pr. Jonathan Renu 012 223 7974

What can we do as a Church in the Face of the Worsening Pandemic?

Dato' Dr Amar-Singh HSS, a consultant paediatrician shared the above talk via Zoom organised by the Klang Valley Pastors Fellowship on 3 June 2021. The salient points of his talk are reproduced here with his permission.

Dr Amar in his introduction gave some personal insights into the Covid-19 situation in the country. The situation is worsening in the whole nation and not just in the Klang Valley, or only in selected states. It is important to recognise that numbers reported daily do not give the full picture as our testing is very limited, except perhaps for Selangor state. Hence Selangor gets a "bad" outlook with many cases merely because they test extensively

He emphasised that clusters are no longer the primary focus as unlinked community spread is huge (on May 11, 2021, the Director-General of Health stated that 80 per cent of cases are from the community).

According to him, Intensive Care Unit (ICU)'s bed occupancy is at critical level nationwide. Nine out of 10 ICU beds nationally are occupied and in all states, MOH has "repurposed" other beds to become ICU beds

He added that the number of Covid-19 patients dying is rising and the mortality rate is increasing. In just the first 18 days of May 2021 we had 500 reported deaths, the same number we experienced in the full year of 2020. There is in fact increasing numbers of deaths among younger persons.

In addition increasing numbers of individuals are presenting at clinical Stage 4 or 5 (severe disease) which could be due to the increased spread of mutations (especially South African variant). Although our genome testing is limited, it is likely that a sizable proportion of the current massive outbreak is due to variants.

Our vaccination has been limited due to supply issues. The bulk of vaccines we have been informed will come from July onwards (in the second half of the year). Until we can vaccinate 60-70 per cent of the population, we will be open to more dangerous waves of Covid-19.

What can we do then?

The key is to **avoid getting infected**. This requires a shared responsibility that is built on trust and discipline (routines) between everyone – especially if we are

working, studying outside the home. What we like to call 'Trust Bubbles'. It must be remembered that there is no safe number for any group to meet.

These are the highlights of initiatives to strengthen our response while we wait for some degree of community protection from vaccines:

1. Limit all unnecessary contact with others to maintain a Home Safety Bubble

Assume everyone outside of our immediate family is positive. Don't visit our extended family or grandparents and don't stop to talk to our neighbours when doing our morning walk – speak to them via a video call. Stop all family and religious gathering, even in small groups.

2. Work from home if you can and as much as possible

Even if offices are allowed to have some staffing, aim to have none working together in any air-conditioned environment, i.e. completely working from home. This virus is easily spread in a closed room or building, even if we are wearing masks. Do not eat with others outside our home, preferably buy back food. If we need to go out to work then make sure that our office has **Work Safety Bubbles** in addition to **basic SOP measures like:**

- Offices must monitor the health of all staff (including cleaners and security). Any staff that is not well must not come to work and may require Covid-19 testing.
- Offices must inform all staff if any person in the centre had contact with a positive person (while maintaining confidentiality). Clear lines of action need to be taken, including stopping the person from coming until cleared by testing.



- Offices must inform all parents and staff immediately if any person is positive in the centre (while maintaining confidentiality). Clear lines of action need to be taken, including closing the premises until everyone is cleared by testing and quarantine.

3. Online education for children

In the current crisis, keeping children at home and continuing their education there is the right move. Many children (40%) have no digital devices. We need to work together to share our pre-loved (old) or new devices with the community as well as invest in Chromebooks for them (cheaper than laptops).

4. Improve the quality and fit of your mask

Many wear 3-ply surgical masks thinking they are fine, but most masks leak, especially from the side/edges. When wearing a mask make sure it has quality (filtration capacity) and has a good fit (minimal leak). The 'knot and tuck method' is one quick way to make disposable masks fit better. Another is to wear a cloth mask over the 3-ply surgical mask.

5. Get vaccinated the moment you have a chance

Do not pass-up any vaccine opportunity. All vaccines have potential serious side effects but these are rare (~ 1:100,000).

6. Focus on ventilation

We now know that the Covid-19 virus is primarily spread by airborne mechanisms, especially indoors. Tiny suspended particles can remain airborne for hours and are recognised as an important route of transmission. Keeping a 1-2 meters distance in a room is of little value unless we improve ventilation. Focus on improving ventilation in all parts of the building and maximising the intake of outdoor air. This means encouraging fresh air to come in all the time and stopping recirculation of air by air-conditioning units.

7. Need to maintain our own personal fitness - physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

A daily and weekly routine helps. Keep finding hope in little things; do not give in to despair. We need to work at supporting the well-being of everyone around us. We need to be alert to and be aware of anyone who requires psychosocial support.

As positive cases rise rapidly in Malaysia we may also face some other difficulties. More Covid-19 positive individuals will be under home quarantine and some may require oxygen support (Stage 3). There are some suggestions that we can help them such as:-

a. Investing in Oxygen Concentrators

Oxygen concentrators are medical devices that deliver oxygen and have been used in the homes for palliative care and for people with chronic breathing problems. They run on electricity, do not need an oxygen cylinder, offer unlimited oxygen supply and are portable. They work by filtering surrounding air, compressing it and delivering oxygen. They also have filters that help remove dust and other particles. They can however be noisy and you will also need clean plastic face masks and tubing to deliver the oxygen.

What we could do is to buy them and give or loan to hospitals or make them available to relevant disaster NGOs so that they can be used optimally. Also remember that you will not know how best to deliver oxygen and should consult medical personnel. These devices will be increasingly hard to purchase but some of us may have good business or NGO connections with other nations to help bring them into the country.



b. Investing in finger Pulse Oximeters

The single best monitor, if you are infected with Covid-19, is your blood oxygen saturation (SaO2) level. Commercial devices used in hospitals are expensive and there has been a huge number of cheaper finger pulse oximeters produced for the home market. These will be useful if you are being quarantined at home (likely to happen when numbers are huge) or even if admitted in a mass quarantine centre. If infected, use it to monitor the blood oxygen level.

c. Using our talents and resources to help others

Individuals with medical background (retired or active) should consider supporting those who are home quarantined and require monitoring. A video call 2-3 times a day can allow for a quick check on their status and oxygen needs. A significant portion of our public is struggling with daily needs and we need to support them. We should consider sharing our resources and wealth in these difficult times.

The talk was well attended with around 70 participants. It was indeed insightful of the current COVID-19 situation in the country as well as practical and useful measures to take as a church in the face of this worsening pandemic.



Four Important Affirmations in the New Landscape

By Rev. C. B. Samuel

This article first appeared in Asia Evangelical Alliance (AEA)'s e-Newsletter December 2020 issue on <https://asiaevangelicals.org/>. It is reproduced here with permission from AEA.

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

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

1. Our Identity: God's Chosen People

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

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

We often fall into the trap of defining a church in terms of buildings, numbers, or programmes. But the Bible says what defines us is the fact that we have been chosen by God, by God's foreknowledge, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit. We should not be confused and only think about increased programmes, activities and size that are of less significance. In the context of changing landscape, with many uncertainties even maybe persecutions ahead of us, we are to once again emphasize the fact of who we are and give our churches strong grounding on our identity.

2. Our Calling: To Be Holy

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

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

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

3. Our Purpose: Witnessing to the World

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

Thirdly, we should hold on to our purpose, which is to witness to the world how God has brought us from darkness into His wonderful light. During the coronavirus lockdown, many churches have adapted very well, moving from real services to virtual ones. But the problem is, many churches tend to just focus on providing good services for their congregations. Outreach efforts to people in need have been curtailed and churches have become very inner-oriented.

As we move on to the new landscape, we must not forget our purpose. We are not supposed to withdraw and just focus on ourselves. Churches should look for ways in which we can declare praises to God through our own testimonies of transitioning from darkness to light.

4. The Supremacy of Jesus Christ

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

Jesus is the Representation of God

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

Churches have to hold on to the supremacy of Jesus Christ as God himself. There is only one revelation of God in human history, which is Jesus Christ. There is no other way to God other than through the One who came from God, who is God. There is no other name by which we have salvation other than the name of Jesus Christ.

As we move on to the new landscape, there may be a lot of pressures to talk about other things, including the Kingdom of God. However, we must remember that the Kingdom of God is essentially the Kingdom of the Son, who is God. We cannot forget this uniqueness of Jesus and His supremacy.

Jesus is the Creator God

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

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

Jesus is Supreme over the church

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

Sometimes, we may falsely believe that we are the ones who own the church. But the Bible says Jesus is the head of the church and He is supreme over the church. The church belongs to Jesus. In Saul's encounter with Jesus on his road to Damascus, Jesus asked "Saul, why do you persecute me?" Saul was persecuting Jesus because he was persecuting churches. When someone touches the Church, we must remember it is Jesus who they are dealing with.

For in Jesus, the Fullness of God dwelt

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

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

Jesus is the Source of all wisdom and knowledge

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

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

We are not going to win Asia for Christ by our clever strategies. Yes, strategies are important. But the way we will win Asia for Christ is by upholding the supremacy of Christ. With this, we do not go as people who are defeated but as people who have authority. Jesus is the head of every power and authority (Col. 2:10). He has also disarmed all powers and authorities and triumphed over them on the cross (Col. 2:15).

As long as the church of Jesus Christ continues to be firm in its relationship with Christ, as long as we remain connected to Christ, we will always reflect Him through our words and deeds, and bring hope to the world.

Rev. C. B. Samuel is from India and is the Theological Advisor for EFICOR and Micah Global.

Seeking God through Prayer



The surge in COVID-19 cases has caused us to seek alternative means to address the needs of the current situation, in order to serve and connect to churches all over the nation. In this regard, the Prayer Commission initiated prayer for the nation in different language groups. The following is the report of the various commissions who are involved.

Chinese Commission

They had its “111 Prayer for Our Country” event via Zoom

Every 1st Monday of the month from 1.00 - 2.00 pm.

The purpose of the event is as follows:

- Gather churches in Malaysia to pray and intercede for the nation.
- Foster the relationship/partnership between pastors, leaders and intercessors from different churches in different localities.

Altogether six meetings had been held as follows :

No.	Month	Lead	Church/Fellowship
1	January	Pr Grace Lee	FGAKL
2	February	Pr Wong Chee Meng	Philadelphia
3	March	Pr Lazarus Chin	Kepong Pastors' Fellowship
4	April	Rev Samuel Lau	Gospel Mission Church Sungai Petani
5	May	Rev Peter Lim	Calvary Life Assembly Melaka
6	June	Pr Belinda Tan	Emmanuel Baptist Church Kuching

Attendance at each meeting averaged 76 to 287 people.

There was an Annual Chinese Prayer Camp with the theme **“Awakening, Revival and Transformation”** via zoom on 29 April to 1 May 2021. Rev Lydia Wong from Hong Kong was the main speaker with Pr Yew Kuan Yee, our Chinese Commission member.

Feedback received from churches about the camp is good. The youth and young adults in particular were greatly blessed by the messages that were shared. Attendance was 355 people in the daytime sessions and more than 1,000 people in the night sessions.

Prayer Commission

“Prayer for the Nation,” via Zoom

Every 3rd Tuesday of the month between 1.00 - 2.00 pm.

The purpose of the event is two-fold:

- Enhance the connection, friendship and collaboration among churches and pastors/prayer leaders in the nation.
- Raised the prayer momentum as a preparation for the annual 40-Day Fast and Prayer event from 7 August to 15 August.

Thus far, six prayer meetings had been conducted as follows:

No.	Month	State	Lead
1	January	Kelantan	Rev Henderson Wee
2	February	Perak	Rev Chan Theam Lai
3	March	Penang	Rev Liew Yean Huat
4	April	Sabah	Rev Aster Soong
5	May	Melaka	Rev Ronnie Chiu
6	June	Selangor	Sis Lucrece Loo

Attendance at each meeting averaged 100 to 160 people.

Bahasa Malaysia (BM) Commission

Monthly Jaringan Doa Nasional (JDN) via Zoom

Every 3rd. Friday from 9.00 – 10.30 pm

The aim of the event is as follows:

- Encourage and motivate one another to build the Kingdom of God.
- Pray unceasingly towards seeing a revival in our midst.

Attendance at each meeting averaged 30-60 people.

Annual 40-Day Fast and Prayer 2021 Launches

The theme for 40-Day Fast and Prayer 2021 is **“Be still and know that I am God”** taken from Psalm 46:10. In this turbulent and uncertain time, it is of utmost importance for us to be still, and continue to seek God, to know Him so that we know the way to go and have peace and joy in the midst of hardships and troubles.

Due to the widespread COVID-19 outbreak in the nation the Prayer Launches for this year will be conducted in the online mode via broadcasts in YouTube and Facebook. There will be four launches in various languages i.e. English, Chinese, Bahasa Malaysia and Tamil instead of just having language translations and subtitles. The date, day and time for these language launches are as follows :

Language	English	Chinese	Bahasa Malaysia	Tamil
Date	6 Aug 2021	4 Aug 2021	6 Aug 2021	5 Aug 2021
Day	Friday	Wednesday	Friday	Thursday
Time	8.00 pm	8.00 pm	9.00 pm	8.00 pm

NECF will be updating news on its website and Facebook pages regarding these launches!