



TOGETHER ON THE EDGE

IN GOD'S MISSION



CONNECT. COLLABORATE. RESOURCE.



Serving God's Mission in a Covid-19 Season

By Rev. Chan NamChen (PhD)
Executive Director

When we planned for this magazine at the end of 2019, it was impossible to imagine the upheavals around the world and changes to daily routines resulting from Covid-19.

When the pandemic hit, our initial focus was immediate relief - getting aid and food necessities to the poor and to those most impacted by the lockdowns. Months into this storm, it is now evident that life as we knew it has changed permanently - at least for the next year, but probably longer. This virus will not just disappear. Even with a vaccine, we will live in constant vigilance against this lurking threat. Our world has changed. What then do we need to change in our perspectives and practices in serving God's mission?

Changes and challenges

Gaps between the rich and the poor have escalated in a world that is already unequal. At a time when access to medical care and the basics for human life is most needed, it has widened the chasms in life opportunities - for work, income, and education. For the poorer communities and countries, it has destroyed years of efforts in playing catch-up in economic sufficiency and human development goals. All may be in the same storm, but we are not in the same boats. Some are in better boats while others are in boats that are capsizing.

Social habits have changed in a world of social caution. It is physical distancing, wearing masks and minimizing trips out of the home, life interactions and physical contact. These deeply impact the quality and breadth of our relationships. We are used to conveying our hearts through a touch, a handshake, a hug, or the flash of a smile. We bond over a shared meal and a cup of coffee. That is why zoom meetings have their limitations. How do we nurture and maintain relationships? How do we reach out, and build new relationships?

The Christian faith also invests significant meanings to actions such as the laying on of hands in prayer, and the sharing of the bread and cup in the Lord's supper. With the new constraints, how do we communicate meaning in new ways?

Financial contractions deeply impact missions personnel, programs and activities. Travel, both internal and cross-border will be curtailed and more expensive. When travelling does occur, the numbers of people engaged, and the size of meetings will be limited. Travelling will also be weighed against the health risks to the traveller and people visited.

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How then do we engage in cross-border missions? How do we serve God's mission meaningfully when we cannot travel as easily as before? How may we best restructure our programs and activities in the face of financial and travel constraints?

Rethinking how we serve God's mission.

Indigenization of missions. This cardinal missiological principle is often unnecessarily delayed in practice. It is now accelerated by the circumstances. We need to trust local Christians and leaders to take God's mission forward. The Holy Spirit will guide and empower them. Missions is less about the heroic commitments and capabilities of missions' personnel but more of what God is doing in local societies, through local Christian leaders and Christian communities.

Re-evaluate the needs in the local contexts. This pandemic is changing communities, often in unexpected ways, surfacing new configurations of socio-economic and spiritual needs. New types of communities may even emerge in different localities. If serving God's mission is about serving people, then we need to look with fresh eyes at what has evolved and what people actually need.

Maximize the use of online technology and resources. People who were traditionally closed to the use of online and virtual resources are now jolted to learn. Online channels do connect people. Despite their limitations in the deeper dimensions of human interactions, let us tap it for what it is worth.

Recommit to give and share financial resources. The financial impact of this pandemic is highly unequal. Many face challenges, but some will have their assets and incomes increasing during this season. Expenses have also reduced. If we are in these latter categories, consider increasing our giving and sharing, directing finances to where they are most needed.

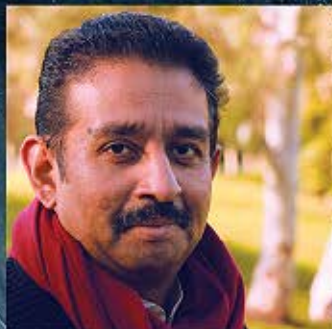
Do hands-on mission in your local context. Missions personnel and Christians who travelled extensively will now have time freed up. Besides quality time with loved ones and taking time out to smell the roses, this is an opportune time to reconnect with our own local grassroots mission. What is God doing in my locality? How may I volunteer my time, skills or just simply to engage where I live?

Use the season to prepare for the re-opening. Constraints is not necessarily a bad thing. It forces us to reflect and recalibrate. It can be a time of building core strengths, of retooling and rebuilding - inside the individual and in the organization. These aspects are often neglected during seasons of busyness. If done well, it will help us to come out stronger and serve more effectively when situations re-open. This season of constraints will pass.

Look to God's sovereignty and pray. This can be a trite platitude and a challenge for people in mission who are by nature, usually activists. Praying, listening, and trusting God are foundational to all our endeavours. These should not be a "no-choice, last resort options only" after we have done all we can to control the flow of events. Rather, these are core to who we are, and what we do.

As we navigate into this Covid-19 world, there is the sense that we "have not passed this way before" (Josh.3:4). Yet, we do know that God has walked ahead of us. As we remain committed to serve His mission, His promises ring true.

He says, "behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt.20:20). He also says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb.13:5).



Navigating the New Seas: Re-Imagining the Mission Journeying

By Rev. Vinod Victor
Chairperson, on behalf of
the AsiaCMS Board of Trustees

You have not trodden these pathways before:

The journey of the tribes of Yahweh reached another hotspot when they reached the banks of the overflowing river Jordan. The Wilderness journey and the Red Sea experience of the past gave them confidence that the Lord would help them find a way to navigate their path in the new crossroads.

In Joshua 3:4 their leader affirms: "You have not gone this way before" but at the same time, in his interaction with the people, he gives them three assurances:

1. God will show you the way
2. God will do a miracle
3. God will continue to be with you

These are perhaps, affirmations that we would need **most** at such a time as this.

Challenges Make Missions Exciting

The journey of missions has always been challenging, in terms of traveling to the people across the world. The Church Mission Society for instance, from its inception in 1799, has had pioneers of missions navigating their way through rough seas into unknown terrains and territories, with the love of Jesus as the core message of mission. **No big wave deterred them.**

Their faith and determination had manifold expressions in the fruits of mission engagement. Today we look back and thank the Lord for all the people who were part of the mission journey thus far, contributing in various ways - going, sending, facilitating, giving, praying, supporting, receiving, and hosting.

We are now at yet another crossroad. The Covid-19 pandemic has already redrafted the course of the world including our missional journey. It is clear that missions need to be done differently now. The shift from Post-Colonial Missions to the Post Corona Missions has to be carefully comprehended. The closing down of borders, restrictions in people movements and lockdowns in several parts of the world, may look intimidating on one hand, while on the other hand, it opens an array of opportunities.

De-Globalisation should be seen as an opportunity to increase the pace of indigenisation of mission and mission practices. Like the Jubilee Year, the time of Rest must be seen as a time for spiritual renewal and 'righting the wrongs' that has crept into the way we conduct our lives, including doing missions. It is an opportunity for deconstructing and reconstructing the missional paradigms. **Yes, challenges always make missions exciting!**

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Being with People is Missions

The pain of the people that we see around is inestimable. The digital world is so impersonal that we see only pale images. Missions need to emphasis on connecting with people beyond digital platforms, without negating the abounding online opportunities that the current time presents. To cry with people and offer consolation, and hope in Christ, that our wounded Healer and wondrous Counsellor can offer to a broken world, should and always will be our focus.

Missions personnel in the frontlines need to be strengthened and we will continue to be committed towards this. Our staff members and People in Mission including mission partners will be supported in all ways possible to be participants of missions in a safe environment despite the turbulence around.

As we continue to focus on people in the margins and edges, our mission strategy will shift from the Decentralisation, Indigenisation and Regionalisation (DIR, which was core when AsiaCMS was formulated) to Empowerment, Companionship and Transformation (DIRECT). We will strive towards Empowerment of personnel and people in the peripherals; Companionship affirmed globally in equal terms; and Transformation of people and structures, based on Kingdom values.

Re-Imagining Mission - Inevitable Need of the Hour

We had grand plans for the years of 2020-22 but we were humbled in realising that our plans are not always the best for God's Mission. The outbreak of the pandemic affected the plan to the extent that it had to be completely revisited. We were quick to listen to the cries of the people across the world affected by the pandemic and rolled out a Covid-19 Relief package that helped people on the edges across Asia.

A word of appreciation to the dedicated staff and team who travelled the extra mile in reaching out to the pain of the people. We do realise that several lives have been uprooted because of the disruptions that Covid-19 brought and our focus in the next phase will be on rebuilding the lives of as many people as possible.

The paradox of the time is inexplicable. While on one end we talk of Artificial Intelligence, on the other end is the failing mental health of people in crisis; on one end are global debates on the trillions spent on new businesses, while on the other people are thirsting for any paid labour that would ensure bread in their table. On one end is digital replication of all that is happening offline, unaware of the constraints online, while on the other is digital fatigue and digital marginalisation. The list is endless.

But we do realise that this phase is temporary. We will have to journey into a new normal. Safe distancing, masks and sanitisers will make way to a new way of leading lives. How do we do missions then? We are now brainstorming on this crucial question. On our knees, we seek God's guidance and we are fully aware that the soft, simple voice of God could come through each of you.

Do share with us your thoughts as to how we can continue to do missions in this changing world.

Let us engage in a conversation while we participate with God in the making of a new future - fully submitting to divine guidance each step of the way.

ABOUT US



Asia Collaborative Mission Services (AsiaCMS) is a trans-denominational mission movement based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and established in 2012. AsiaCMS is associated with the Church Mission Society in the UK and the global CMS network.

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We now live in a rapidly changing world. With changed realities, it can no longer be business as usual for churches, Christian organisations and Christians engaged in God's mission.

There is a need for change and adjustments to some of the traditional mission approaches and priorities, especially for Christians in Asia who seek to be both effective and faithful according to Biblical mandates.

Our tagline, Together on the Edge in God's Mission is formulated in the light of these realities.

To move ahead in the coming years, the breadth of God's mission and the changed global realities demand the cooperative efforts of all of God's people with all of their diverse strengths and resources. Therefore, AsiaCMS seeks to multiply the mission efforts of churches and Christian organisations in a 3-fold focus:

1. Engage the unreached and least-reached people groups with the Gospel.
2. Engage in spheres of mission that are often overlooked, but critical for national contexts.
3. Facilitate collaborations for fresh insights on Asian mission concerns by Asian Christians.

To break new ground in this 3-fold focus, AsiaCMS will:

- Connect people, organisations, and churches to meet needs;
- Facilitate collaborations for mission initiatives;
- Resource people and organisations through mission education, cross-cultural ministry training and support.

Some Of What We Do:

Co-Mission Partners

Our Co-Mission Partner Program connects mission workers with local and national churches, mission organisations and needs in the field. We value partnerships to pioneer new missional initiatives and provide resources for those who are serving in the mission fields.

Support & Training

We add to the efforts of churches, mission leaders and workers to sharpen their involvement in God's mission. AsiaCMS facilitates seminars, training programs and missions education from introductory to post-graduate levels.

Asia Gateway

This intensive one-month programme lays a firm foundation for intercultural mission that combines practical experience with theological reflection. With lecturers and students from different nations, it further equips for intercultural impact. This programme is a partnership that includes the Methodist Church of Malaysia, the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia, OM, OMF, Interserve, STM, SIM and Asia CMS.

Samaritan Strategy

In partnership with CMS-Africa where it has a proven track record, this adapted programme fosters wholistic community development. From foundations of renewed worldviews based on biblical perspectives, it empowers and walks with individuals, and communities as they rise to their God-given purposes.

God's Mission is from Everywhere to Everywhere.

CORE TEAM



Rev Chan NamChen (PhD); EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rev Dr Chan NamChen is the Executive Director of AsiaCMS. He holds a PhD in Intercultural Studies from Fuller Theological Seminary, focusing on Missions and Leadership in Cross-cultural situations. He has been in full-time ministry for over thirty years as a cross-cultural church planter, trainer and pastor. Dr. Chan has a passion to see churches planted; pastors, leaders and churches rising to their God-given commission; and a heart for raising leaders in mission.

*Core Team (cont'd)***Peter Nguyen** (PhD); REGIONAL MANAGER - MEKONG HUB

Rev Dr Peter Nguyen is an ordained minister who is experienced in mission, pastoring, and church planting within the context of Vietnam. He has a PhD in Mission Theology and has served the church in the areas of mission theology, contextual theology, contextualization, East Asian religions, Vietnam and East Asian Christianity. He currently works with AsiaCMS to advocate a catalytic missiological training for the Church in the context of Asia, whilst also collaborating missional services among churches in the Southeast Asia region.

**Stephen Edison** REGIONAL MANAGER - SOUTH ASIA HUB

Stephen manages the Co-Mission Partner's program for Asia CMS and heads its ministry in South Asia. He has a MA in International Relations, a Post Graduate Diploma in Human Rights and International Humanitarian and Refugee Law, a BA (Hons.) in History and is currently completing his M.Div. He has worked extensively in the area of peace and reconciliation, and has a breadth of mission experience, including development. Stephen is based in Delhi, India.

**Suzane Christie** COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Suzane has over 18 years of experience in the publishing and media industry, both as a writer and editor. She holds a BSc in Communications and is currently completing her M.Div. Prior to joining AsiaCMS, she was a freelance writer/editor and still contributes to several Christian publications.

**Marina Wong** OPERATIONS MANAGER

Marina is the operations manager based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She oversees the day to day management for the coordinating office. Marina has significant operations experience in business and was the mission director for her church, prior to joining AsiaCMS.

**Eddie Leong** FINANCE MANAGER

Eddie has been working in the field of accounting for more than 25 years in the commercial sector. He also serves as an assistant treasurer of a local church in Kuala Lumpur.

**Low Chee Teng** FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE OFFICER

Chee Teng is an accountant based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He has more than 30 years of working experience which includes serving as CFO of a public listed company. He now assists in the financial management of AsiaCMS.

SUPPORT TEAM

Tim Lee

Tim Lee is passionate about Christian ministry and splits his time between two organisations, supporting them as they develop locally-led Asian mission. Tim assists Jigsaw Kids in the Philippines as it becomes a sustainable Filipino organisation and works with AsiaCMS to develop their Safeguarding policies and procedures.

Rhena Clouston

Rhena's passion is helping people to build relationships – primarily with Christ, but also within and beyond their communities. She is based in Bangalore, but she has an international background – India, Zambia and the UK have all contributed to her identity and outlook. Rhena provides support to the AsiaCMS Regional Manager for the South Asia Hub with hub-related projects and admin. She also assists with pastoral care of Co-Mission Partners in the South Asia hub.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



AsiaCMS Berhad is a company limited by guarantee in Malaysia. Its board of directors comprise Rev. Pax Tan, Andrew Khoo and Francis K. Tsui. They manage the legal and regulatory requirements to comply with Malaysian laws. We have a group of trustees to preserve, protect and promote the values, vision and principles of AsiaCMS. They have wide skills and missions experience, and provide guidance and governance for AsiaCMS to fulfil its mission and purpose. They are led by Rev. Vinod Victor as Chair.

Board of Trustees (cont'd)**Rev. Vinod Victor (Chair)**

Rev. Vinod is an ordained minister in the Church of South India. He has long been involved in social outreach and mission work in India and further afield. His church is actively involved in social ministry and runs several homes for children.

**Andrew Khoo (Vice Chair)**

Andrew, based in Malaysia, is a practising Barrister focusing on human rights law. He is also a Lay Canon in the Anglican Church.

**Francis K. Tsui**

Francis was born and raised in Hong Kong. Francis works in finance but also has been actively involved in mission across Asia for many years. Prior to joining AsiaCMS, he served as International President of Asian Outreach.

**Rev. Pax Tan**

Rev. Pax pastors a local Baptist church. He has a long history of involvement with social action and leadership with the Malaysian charity Malaysian Care.

**Rev. Aeduk Kim**

Rev. Aeduk is the Rector of West Incheon Anglican Church in South Korea and is actively involved in various mission-related initiatives in the Korean Anglican Church.

**Rt. Rev. Pradeep Samantaroy**

Rt. Rev. Pradeep is the Bishop of Amritsar, Church of North India. He has a wealth of experience in senior church leadership and understanding of the church in Asia.

**Dr Haroon Laldin**

Dr. Haroon is a medical doctor based at a mission hospital in northern Pakistan. He is also pursuing a doctoral studies in mission with a particular interest in engaging with other faiths.

HISTORY

The origins of the Church Mission Society (CMS) go back to 1799 in London, UK, when a small group of Anglican evangelicals with a passion for worldwide outreach met to pray. They included John Newton, who wrote *Amazing Grace*, and William Wilberforce, who was a leader in abolishing the slave trade in England.



They founded the society with a purpose of sending missionaries to Africa and the East, with some early missionaries going to Sierra Leone, Kenya, China, India and Japan.

When CMS was founded, China was closed to all missionaries, yet this didn't stop CMS from sending Robert Morrison as its first missionary to China in 1807. Travelling in defiance of the Chinese authorities, he distributed tracts wherever he could, but it wasn't until after the Opium War that five Chinese ports were opened to European missionaries in 1842 that mission began in earnest in China, setting up schools, founding dispensaries and appointing church leaders.

History (cont'd)

“We are a community of people in Mission”

When CMS began work in India the British East India Company would not allow missionaries in the areas which it administered. William Wilberforce (the first Vice President of CMS and famous campaigner for the abolition of the slave trade) led a movement for the revision of the East India Company charter to enable missionaries to preach the Gospel to the Indians.

By the time a Charter Bill was passed in 1813, CMS already had missionaries training for work in India and by 1814 the first two CMS missionaries arrived in Madras. CMS subsequently worked extensively in India establishing schools, printing Bibles and appointing church leaders.

CMS has a strong legacy of evangelism, church planting, mission schools and hospitals across Asia and Africa. Today CMS UK is still involved in sending mission partners overseas but also pioneering church work in the UK. CMS is committed to seeing indigenous CMS missions established globally - enabling local mission leaders to follow God's leading.

In 2008 it established CMS Africa as an autonomous mission movement based in Nairobi, Kenya. In 2012 AsiaCMS was established as an autonomous mission movement based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia under the first Executive Director, Dr Tan Kang San.

AsiaCMS seeks to draw on the experience and wisdom of the CMS community, but also has the freedom to evolve and develop an authentic Asian mission movement as we follow God's leading and respond to the needs within the Asian context.

Leaders of the global CMS community meet regularly for “Interchange” to encourage, network and support each other. The global CMS network consist of CMS Britain, CMS Africa, CMS New Zealand, CMS Australia, CMS Ireland, SAMS-USA as well as AsiaCMS

COVER STORY

Gospel-Centred Motivations for God's Mission

By Rev Chan Nam Chen (PhD)
Executive Director, AsiaCMS

During the first half of 2020, the courage and commitment of many frontline responders against the Covid-19 threat in Wuhan have been simply astounding. Volunteers pitched in to drive medical staff and sick patients in sheer defiance of a highly contagious disease. Medical staff worked daily for long hours, often to the point of exhaustion.

A video that went viral showed a nurse on her mobile being informed of her mother's death. Heartbroken and in tears, she bowed three times in the direction of her home-city to pay her respects to her mom, and then she turned straight back to the work at hand.

Human motivations are complex, multi-layered and they run the whole gamut - from the good to the bad. **Pushing aside motives that are selfish and carnal, and to go beyond shallow idealism and emotionalism, I propose that only gospel-centred motivations - shaped and emanating from the gospel - will stand the tests of time and trials.**

These are core motivations that we intentionally nurture over time. They become convictions imprinted into the depths of our beings, carefully cultivated in response to the wooing of God's Spirit.

Cover Story (cont'd)

What are gospel-centred motivations?

First, it stems from **the conviction that the gospel asserts a reconciliation with God that is found only in Jesus Christ.**

This is a core component of the gospel message. In a world of many faiths and alternative worldviews, such an assertion can be easily slammed as arrogance. In some Asian countries and certain societies, there is also a visceral hostility toward the Christian faith. Presentations of the gospel message are taboo and at times, illegal.

For these reasons, many Christians shy away or cannot explicitly share the gospel message. For mission workers in locations that are anti-Christian, the only means of communicating God's intents in the gospel are often through activities that lovingly serve the social and development needs of that society.

In these restrictive contexts, we all the more need to nurture this deep inner conviction that reconciliation with God is only possible through Christ. It will motivate us to exhaust all avenues so that individuals who do not know Christ will hear the gospel and have their God-encounters. It will lead us to pray intensely because we know that where we cannot, God can.

We will seek to build authentic and mutually reciprocal relationships with individuals of other faiths so that per chance, we can share the gospel in culturally appropriate ways.

We will also find means to facilitate the gospel-sharing efforts of Christians and mission workers amongst peoples that we cannot personally access - through our prayers, finances and other means of support.

Gospel-centred motivations are based on **the perspective that the gospel impacts all spheres of human life.**

God's mission is ultimately the reconciliation of everything in His creation. The Anglican Communion's 5 marks of mission aptly summarizes the key thrusts:

- 1) to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom;
- 2) to teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
- 3) to respond to human need by loving service;
- 4) to transform unjust structures of society; and
- 5) to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation.

Having this perspective will motivate us to contribute and serve faithfully in activities that might otherwise, be viewed as mundane and insignificant.

Most importantly, Gospel-centred motivation is **the constant awareness that the gospel demands a personal response of obedience to God Himself.**

The gospel - Christ's redemptive death and resurrection - is a call to personal repentance and submission to his lordship. It is a restoration of divine order at every level. While service to God is usually best done in community, the sustaining motivations are often deeply personal.

He is a personal God; He has personally crafted into each of us, His purposes that are best served through our unique personalities and capabilities. Thus, our service to Him is not to be offered or calibrated based on merely what we see other Christians do. We live and serve based on what He has personally spoken into the depths of our hearts.

PROGRAMS WE SUPPORT



SOUTH ASIA CHRISTIAN
YOUTH NETWORK

South Asia Christian Youth Network (SACYN)

SACYN is a network of young leaders from South Asia with a mission to build connections. It is all about inspiring, preparing and strengthening young Christian adults to cross bridges to encounter and share their faith, and lives with those who are from different circumstances, languages, cultures, ethnicity, nationality, lifestyles, faiths, backgrounds etc.

SACYN has had trainings and meetings in various countries in South Asia, which has helped to build bridges and nurture strong personal relations between the future leadership of the Church in South Asia. It has also been a useful vessel to train and equip young people in Asia on issues and challenges that are relevant to the Church and Christianity in Asia today.



Over the past 13 years, SACYN has provided a forum for young leaders in South Asia to meet together annually. The mission of SACYN is to facilitate young people in churches to be personally challenged in their commitment to follow Jesus Christ and for each to find his or her role in being a part of God's mission.

SACYN seeks to strengthen and renew regional churches in their faith and their commitment to make Christ known in their engagement in practical mission for the Kingdom of God

SACYN is committed to help a generation to fully live the kingdom experience and enable them to transcend all possible boundaries that separate people from people. The vision is to encourage, motivate and enable South Asian young people from the region's churches to link up, overcome barriers and work together for the Gospel and Kingdom of God A Vision for a future South Asia that is different.

Programs We Support (cont'd)

Covid-19 Mental Health Response: Dealing with Grief of Loss and Building Resilience

ACMS and its partners are engaged in providing relief to those affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst we have been engaged in providing for the physical needs of the people, our involvement in the Recovery Phase of this pandemic is to address the psycho-social needs and provide resources, where we can.

Collaborating with mental health professionals amongst our partners across South Asia, key issues in each country and region were highlighted. In the current scenario of colossal mental health needs, ACMS is focussing on developing three areas of mental health care tools. The ACMS Covid-19 Mental Health Response 2020 will cover:

1. Mental Health Self-Awareness Toolkit:

Self-Care begins with self-awareness and a self-assessment tool to see how a person is doing and to understand their own needs. It helps them be aware of their needs and meet them. It also points them to places to reach out for support.

2. Dealing with the Grief of Loss Tools:

The year 2020 has brought some sort of loss to almost everyone – loss of loved ones, income, employment, relationships, home and family, and loss of personal space, etc. Understanding the grief cycle and dealing with the grief is essential for our wellbeing.

Output: Mental Healthcare Tools

This response would primarily be in the form of digital resources addressing these issues that help people become aware of, and deal with, their mental health needs, their grief of loss and building their resilience to cope in the challenging days ahead.

3. Building Resilience Toolkit:

The only certainty of these times is its uncertainty. Building our resilience or ability to cope with and bounce back from adverse scenarios we face is a survival skill required in these times. Building a Resilience Toolkit for the South Asian context will be built on already existing resources.

Mekong Indigenous Missional Initiative (MIMI)

This is a new initiative that began in 2019, offering both online and onsite missiological training programs, which are accredited in collaboration with the Union University of California (UUC). This initiative is focused on churches in the Mekong Region.

Designed to transform the missional paradigms and mission practices of churches in the region, it will accelerate indigenous missions and cross-cultural church-planting by local churches.

In 2019, we took a step of faith in initially allocating US\$17,000 for this new thrust, in order to support an annual missions conference for key pastors and leaders (that was held in the first quarter of 2019 with nearly 100 participants), six missional training modules, and networking with local churches. This initiative has expanded from its beginnings. MIMI has the following components:

- a) Missions conferences to inspire and teach key pastors and leaders for indigenous cross-cultural missions**
- b) A training program that consists of 6 modules for cross-cultural church planters.**
- c) Support of local initiatives**

REFLECTIONS

Pressing On

By Suzane Christie

AsiaCMS Communications Manager

It's been a very difficult year and for many, that is an understatement.

The terror that has gripped the lives of so many around the world is palpable and incessant. From the start, their needs were great.; their needs were growing. At AsiaCMS, we delved right into meeting the needs of communities in South East Asia and South Asia soon after the pandemic hit.

We focused closely on walking alongside our Co-Mission Partners (CoMPs), who were on the ground providing relief and aid to those affected by Covid-19. *Our prayer partners and financial supporters helped us walk alongside our mission partners, who had the opportunity to be the face of Jesus to so many who do not know Him.*

Through our relief efforts, we received many stories and testimonies that simply breathed HOPE! Across the region, God was, and still is at work through His hands and feet on the ground, bringing relief, refuge, comfort, peace and hope to those who are crying out.

In many instances, almost exactly when it was needed, God sent bearers of His light to bring food for the hungry, clothes to the needy, shelter to the homeless and comfort to those in despair.

Pressing On (cont'd)

For the stories from the Mekong region and Indonesia, we do not state specific locations or about our CoMPs. Instead, we share with you about the lives of the people that our CoMPs in this region minister to. They shared food, provisions and God's love with various communities in South East Asia. We know these testimonies will touch your hearts and prompt you to lift up our mission workers in prayer.

In many other nations across the world, especially in South Asia, this pandemic is far from over; in fact in many areas, the number of infected cases is escalating whilst the economic repercussions are spiralling. As such, the needs increase and so, we press on and bring hope to those most affected. You will be greatly encouraged by those stories as well.

We certainly have not provided for them all BUT, we remain hopeful in the One who provides. We continue to share the hope we carry and reflect His love and light in these darkest of times. As we hold on to God in faith, we are also grateful to all those who prayed and walked alongside us, as we walked together with others on the edge in God's Mission.

These are a few of those incredible stories of the lives touched and souls reached – not necessarily because the Gospel was “preached” but because the Gospel was lived – in small acts of love that displayed the grand God we serve...

Hearing those who can't - MEKONG REGION

One of our CoMPs ministers to a community of people who are both hearing-impaired and mute. Their relief efforts were distributing food packs to over 150 people within this community of believers. The team gathered to purchase the food and piled them up on motorcycles to take them to a distribution centre, which they set up at their various churches in these three locations and sent word out to their members to come and receive a word of encouragement and some food packs. Here are the stories of just a few of the people that came to receive some relief:

There was one 68-year-old woman, only 1.1m high. She is inborn an invalid and the pandemic hit her hard; she could not work and needed to support her 92-year-old mother. Their home was a small cramped room and they barely made rent. Most of the time, they lived depending on the kindness of others. However, within the community she lives in, she is highly blessed, always sharing about Lord Jesus Christ to everyone she meets, praying they could come to know Him. Those in her community know her for her passion for God, her unflinching gratitude – never complaining about her difficulties, and for the constant joy in her heart and face.

Another lady is married with two sons. She and her husband are both hearing-impaired and mute; their sons, who are 13 and 8, are both healthy and able to speak. As a tailor who works from home, this pandemic caused her family great distress, as they lost their income since no one could come to her house to have their clothes mended. The food packs that this family received were not only an encouragement to her, but it came just at the right time to meet the family's needs.

Another member of this church was a man who was over 70 years of age; both he and his wife were hearing impaired and mute. Their main source of income was selling tea in a small alley. The pandemic stopped all that and they lost their sole income. Having no way to earn any money, they became quite distressed. Naturally, receiving these food packs helped them tremendously and filled their hearts with gratitude – knowing God had not forgotten them and met their needs.

Pressing On (cont'd)

Spreading the Love - INDONESIA

Our CoMP in this region works surrounded by non-believing communities and during this pandemic, has found God opening incredible new doors for the team to share God's love through their relief efforts. They aren't preaching, they are delivering the essence of the Gospel through the food they distribute. They are discovering the most unlikely people receiving Christ. They have seen how when they put love in action, God is doing miracles and revealing Himself to the people. The team's own faith has been strengthened as they see God's love increasing in the smiling faces and tears of joy from the communities they have been helping.

The main activities of our CoMP here have been to help spray with disinfectants, pray and distribute food packs. The team met to make the sanitizers before going out to public areas and houses to spray, whilst they pray. Families were happy when they were given sanitizers and had their houses disinfected. The community felt safe and comforted after the team provided disinfectant sprays and even asked them if they could do it once a week, which the team agreed to.

The team were allowed to pray freely in the places they went into, including Mosques. They sprayed disinfectants in different mosques, one at a time. As they sprayed, the team prayed. The Muslim families were very respectful and appreciative that they were willing to spray the mosque. They said, "thank you - even though we are Muslims and you are Christians, you are willing to do this for us."

Thus far, the team managed to provide food distribution to 685 families; each package was for a week's supply, containing 5 kg of rice, 20 pieces of egg and 1 kg of oil. Overall, the community was touched and happy; many have come to know Christ through this relief effort, even though that was never the main objective. Meeting the needs of the people during this pandemic was the priority and the team was blessed to have had this opportunity to spread God's love.

The Forgotten Unreached - EAST NEPAL

Our partnering organization, Reach Out-Nepal (RON), based in East Nepal and serving the Musar community, are meeting the needs of the poorest and most discriminated groups in Nepal. In the past two years, a new church was set up amongst this community of mostly unskilled migrant workers.

Within the community, the family relies on the fathers to provide and this in itself is sometimes a challenge in this remote part of Nepal. Due to the geographical situation, farming is simply not possible in this mountainous region and job opportunities are scarce. This forces most of the men to go out elsewhere as migrant workers to provide for their families.

During this pandemic, RON partnered with AsiaCMS to supply food for people living near Kalapani, a remote and disputed area between Nepal and India. The Dalit people living here have not been on the government radar because of the border issue for the last 50 years. Also because, the Dalit are considered an untouchable caste within the Hindu community. Unfortunately, even during the pandemic, they were still neglected by the government.

With over 90% of the male population working and stuck in India during the lockdown, they could not send money to their families. The community were completely neglected and overlooked by relief efforts of the government and non-government aid groups. RON was able to act quickly and transport food packs for 70 families despite rough terrains and risky road conditions. Fortunately, a local leader was able to hire a tractor to load and transport the food up to the location, which took over four hours to reach.

One woman from the community testified that it felt like God came to their village and saved them from the hunger. She said that for days on end, they were eating only potatoes. Her children were physically weak from lack of nutrition. RON was not only able to provide them food to meet their physical hunger but most importantly, the team spoke to the people about Jesus, who is their true provider and spiritual food.

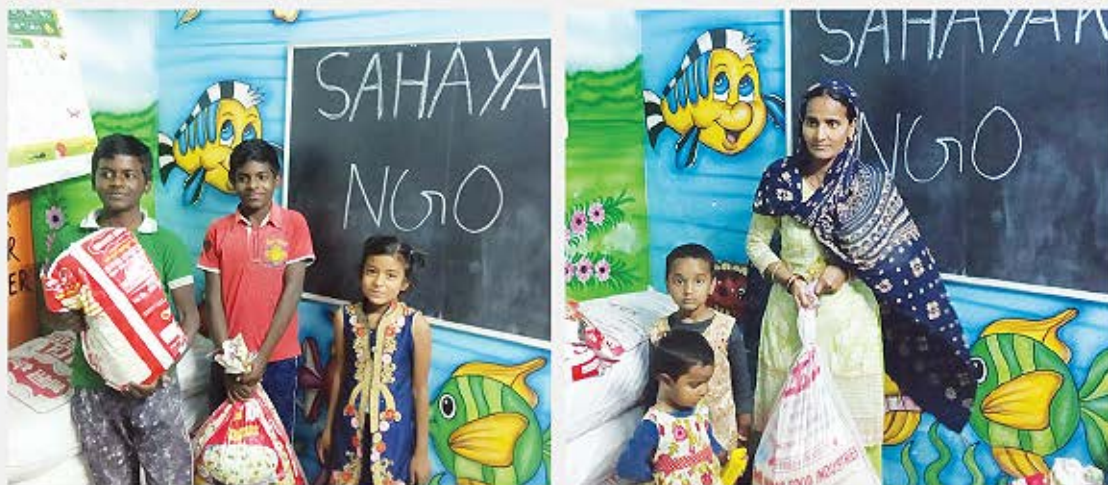


Pressing On (cont'd)

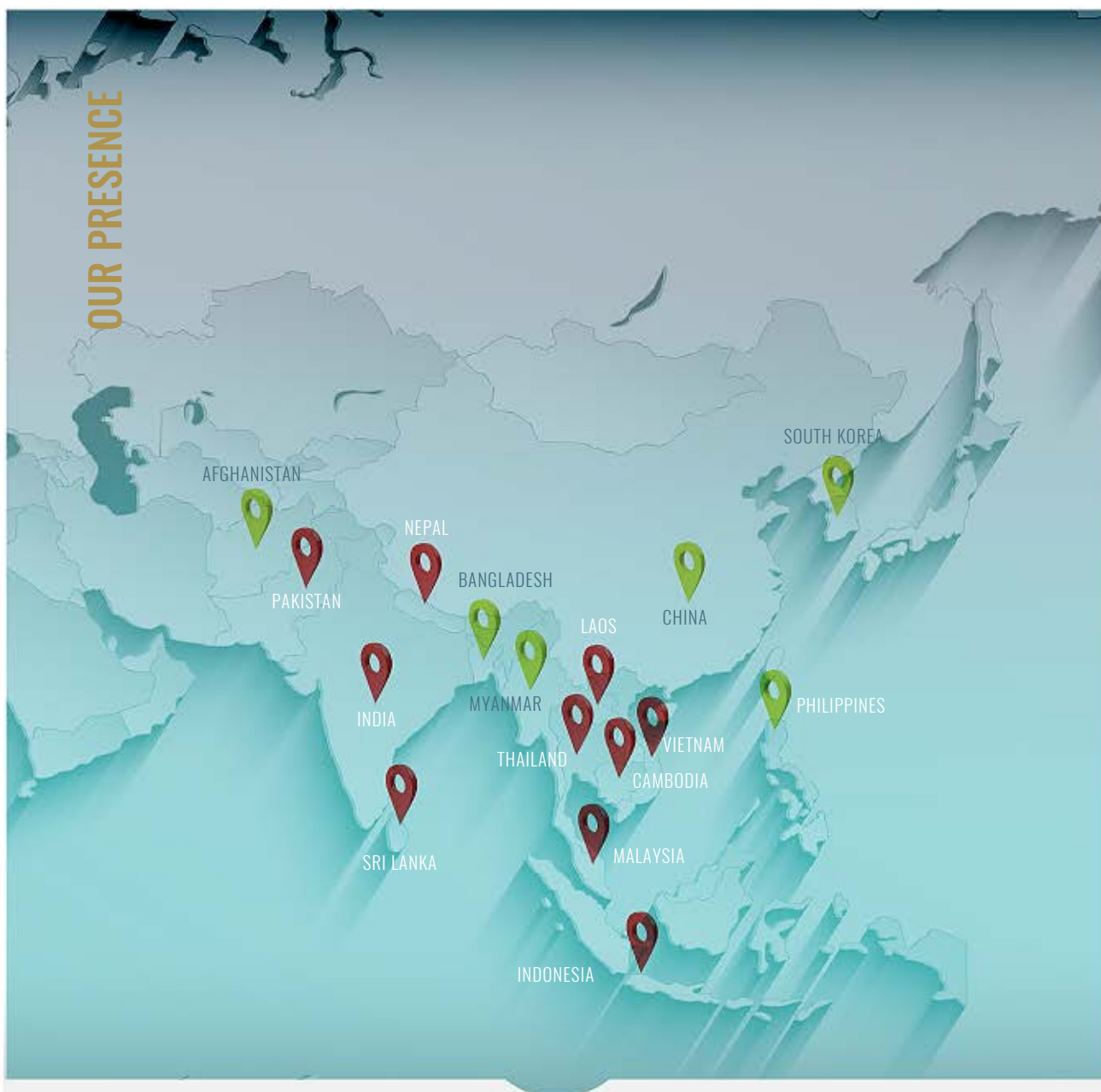
Relief for the children and families of Sahayak... HARYANA-DELHI, INDIA

The team at Sahayak work amongst migrant labourers' community in Gurgaon, with a primary focus on children and women who constitute the most vulnerable groups. When the total lockdown was announced, there was a huge panic amongst many who wanted to go back to their native villages; some even decided to travel on foot as the factories shut down and housemaids were asked to stay at home by their employers. The reality that there was no cure for the virus only added more chaos to the panic. Many needed food provisions and the Sahayak kids were instrumental in identifying and helping the families to come to the Sahayak Centre one by one to pick up food packets.

One of the kid's mother shared that it was such a relief to get this care package; she shared how she, along with her three kids, had walked for days to reach the Uttar Pradesh border only to be threatened by the police with violence. She was worried about how to provide for her kids when Anand informed her of the food packages being available; she felt her prayers were answered. With the lockdown extended and many more still needing relief, we hope to reach out again for the month of May as well. Sahayak is hoping to provide 100 families with emergency relief packages of dry rations and essential supplies for another month. These are dire times and they are doing all they can do to help families of daily wage labourers, who they have direct access to. This is not charity, but a basic human right - the right to food.



OUR PRESENCE



Our Co-Mission Partners are spearheading initiatives in building national capacity and providing leadership in critical spheres of mission.

Our Presence (cont'd)

These include building theological and leadership capacity, reaching least-reached people groups, church planting, engagement with the rural and urban poor through community development, education and ministry thrusts in arenas of child protection, peace and reconciliation, and drug rehabilitation.

Our Presence

- CAMBODIA
- INDIA
- INDONESIA
- LAOS
- MALAYSIA
- NEPAL
- PAKISTAN
- SRI LANKA
- THAILAND
- VIETNAM

Our Aspirations and Vision

We aspire to extend our presence to walk alongside national churches and indigenous movements in furthering God's mission. We seek to establish strong regional hubs in South Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia, China and Central Asia to facilitate God's mission in these countries

- AFGHANISTAN
- BANGLADESH
- CHINA
- MYANMAR
- SOUTH KOREA
- PHILIPPINES

ASIACMS CO-MISSION PARTNERS

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others”

2 Timothy 2:2

AsiaCMS focuses on partnerships and supporting indigenous Asian mission movements. Our Co-Mission Partners across Asia are co-sent; they are selected and placed by either a local mission agency or church, and we walk alongside them in partnership to offer resource, training and support. We believe in supporting local mission and want to support what God is doing in the region through our co-mission partners. These are just some of our people out in the field and the ministry they are involved in. AsiaCMS also has several other Co-Mission Partners who serve in more security-sensitive countries, who are not featured here.

Co-Mission Partners (cont'd)**INDIA**

Rev Hemkhomang; Churachandpur, Manipur
Church Leadership Training

Rev Mang serves in a theological college that strives to equip lay leaders of the church who have never had any theological training. Most of their local churches are under the care of untrained lay leaders; that's why this training is crucial. They also train young people who are prospective leaders in the church and in society. His call is to train and equip leaders with a servant's heart for the church and God's kingdom.

He was born and brought up in a devoted Christian family of 10 members. His parents were illiterate with no proper employment at hand and so, Rev Mang grew up in severe poverty with no proper education. However, his parents had a strong desire and commitment to serve the Lord with whatever means they had at their disposal. So, when he was about 10 years old, his parents dedicated him into full time ministry under the guidance of a pastor.

Since then, Rev Mang was constantly in the prayers of his family and church so that someday he would serve the Lord full time. Then, in the year 2000, he heard and responded to God's call. Subsequently, he completed two stages of theological training from 2002 to 2010, first for his Bachelor of Divinity and then, master's in theology. His theological trainings have given him a strong desire to serve among the poor and downtrodden, and this commitment has led him to where he is currently serving.

**INDIA**

Rev Shirish; Guwahati, Assam
Christian Education

Rev Shirish's call is to be a Christian educator and for the last decade, he has responded to this call as the residential Christian Educator with The Association for Theological Education by Extension (TAFTEE). He is involved in promoting and assisting the local churches in Christian leadership and discipleship. As a pastor and teacher, he engages in opportunities to proclaim Christ in various private and public sectors of India.

He is also involved in pioneering work in new regions and areas of north India, where many churches, mission organisations, schools, and universities provide an opportunity for gospel ministry and relationship that can make Christ known effectively. They work interdenominationally with all the evangelical churches in India, independent and emerging churches, and mission organisations for Christian leadership and discipleship.

After graduating with a BSc and MSc in Chemistry, he worked as a chemist in a multinational company, whilst serving as a lay pastor in the church. He then completed a Master in Business Administration before stepping into fulltime ministry in the year 2000. It was during his time studying for a Master in Divinity at the Southern Asia Bible College in Bangalore two years later that felt a special burden in his heart regarding missions in North India.

During a three-year tenure and several exposure trips during the summer ministry in North India, he confirmed the need, desire, and passion for doing missions. Studying a MTh (Pastoral Practice & Applied Theology) at TAFTEE opened the doors for him to be an interdenominational and inter-cultural missionary and enhanced the call as a missional leader.

Co-Mission Partners (cont'd)

NEPAL

Dr. Abraham Saggi; Kathmandu

Theological Education

Dr Saggi Abraham is the director for a consortium, which is providing an ATA recognised MDiv in Nepal for the first time. He will also be capacity building a local Nepali leader to take over the role after his commitment of three to four years is done. Saggi is the founding dean of the Nepal Theological Academy in Kathmandu, Nepal, a country enjoying fast church growth but lacking in higher theological education.

He served the Lord at SAIACS as Registrar, Academic Dean and Director of D.Min studies between May 2007 and December 2014. He holds a PhD in Old Testament from the University of Mysore, B.Th from Hindustan Bible Institute and College, Chennai, B.D from Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, and MTh. from United Theological College, Bangalore. He also has an M.A (Philosophy) from Osmania University, Hyderabad.

He was secretary of mission agency Parivarthana Trust in India for 10 years, during which time he visited various mission fields and organised seminars and training sessions for missionaries. He has been involved in theological education for the last thirty years, including initiating and implementing new academic programmes in two leading seminaries in India. He was also involved in the evaluation of theological colleges when he served on the ATA India executive committee.

His vision is that one day the fast-growing church in Nepal will have adequate and well-trained pastors to take care of the existing churches. He desires to see more native missionaries reach out to the unreached Nepalese with the gospel and that one day there will be Christ-like first- and second-level leaders groomed for leadership roles in the denominations, mission agencies and theological institutions in Nepal.



NEPAL

Ashish & Karuna; Kathmandu

Church Planting

Ashish and Karuna both serve on the faculty at the Nepal Theological College. They both have a similar call on their lives to minister for the Kingdom of God through teaching, preaching, Counselling and music ministry. Their heart is to equip and empower Christians so that there are more committed and responsible leaders who can lead God's mission. Ashish has a deep interest in cross-cultural mission, particularly in Nepal and believes that higher education or professional skills will bring more quality to cross-cultural Mission. He has completed a 1-year certificate course in Methodist Bible Seminary, Gujarat and his Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Theology in Missiology.

He is currently involved in teaching, encouraging and preparing youth for future mission; conducting workshops, seminars and gatherings for churches to be involved in mission; creating the atmosphere of mission to make people more mission-minded; and using Music and Media in mission. Karuna has a heart to counsel and equip women leaders through training. She is involved in developing the counselling field and teaching on the importance and methods of counselling; providing counselling trainings as required; conducting seminars and workshop for leaders and developing follow-up meetings for sharing and reflection. She has completed her Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Divinity, and Master of Theology in Christian Counselling and is pursuing her PhD studies from Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, UK.

Co-Mission Partners (cont'd)

NEPAL

Jiwan Bharati; Pokhara

Communication & Administration

Jiwan works in the field of administration for a mission outreach organization, where he collates valuable information, such as stories concerning the challenges of church planting and fellowship, as well as details of situations faced by Christians in Nepal.

Jiwan's gift is to encourage people to open their hearts and share their stories. These stories are subsequently shared with the board of his organization, which then assess the situation and endeavour to address the difficulties.

Jiwan's call into mission followed the footsteps of his father who served God in ministry. After completing his secondary education, Jiwan joined a DTS school and worked there for three years as staff and student. During his time there, he equipped himself with the Word of God and engaged with various cultures.

In 2008, he joined a mission organization as an office assistant and then grew into his current role. Jiwan is now also involved with the local church, working with youths and preteens, sharing challenging stories from his own life. He has a heart to reach people from the Tibetan tribes and to minister among communities in the north of Nepal.



NEPAL

Indira Thapa

Leadership & Missional Training

Indira recently assumed the leadership of the National Mission Commission of Nepal (NMCN), the national Christian indigenous, interdenominational and non-profit social organisation based in Kathmandu. Indira grew up in Christian family but personally accepted Christ as her Saviour when she was 14 years old. Since then, she committed her life to God and became involved in various spheres of God's mission through different works.

She began working in NMCN in 2005 and it was there when she first felt that her missional journey for God's Kingdom had truly begun. She became inspired to do something that would make a difference in the lives of people and for them to know the Jesus in their life. This led her to go to Bible College with her husband for further theological education.

They both attended the International Graduate school of Leadership (IGSL) in Philippines for three years. After graduating from IGSL, together with her husband, Indira started to teach in a Bible College and began conducting Bible study and discipleship with young people.

She also started to help in their local church ministry, all the while experiencing God working through them to reach out to others. Indira is grateful for God's faithfulness in every step of her life, which gives her strength to keep on moving, working for God kingdom and being part of God's mission.

Co-Mission Partners (cont'd)

NEPAL

Gopal & Susma Tamang

Leadership Training

Gopal and Susma work within the area of Leadership Training in Nepal - under the Leadership Training Department of the National Churches Fellowship of Nepal (LTD-NCFN). Gopal is the Training Coordinator involved in equipping and training local church leaders.

Susma assists her husband during trainings seasons and is also involved in personally staying engaged with the students, providing them guidance and counsel as and when the need arises.

The couple are also involved in staying connected with local church leaders to keep them informed of trainings available. Gopal also spends time to visit churches to keep them updated on the resources that are made available to them. He also oversees the process of selecting students for the training programs and coordinates the schedules and teaching sessions.



PAKISTAN

Anila Justine; Karachi

Drug Rehabilitation

Anila works in the area of drug rehabilitation, as drug addiction is a serious issue in Pakistan. According to estimates, there are more than half a million chronic drug users in Pakistan. Young people are especially at risk of experimenting with soft drugs that are easily available and gradually become hooked on hard drugs as well.

Families suffer socially, spiritually, and financially due to a family member's drug seeking behaviour; and they adopt much unhealthy behaviour. Individuals and families trapped in the vicious cycle of drug addiction need professional help and counselling to break the cycle of dependency.

Anila is actively involved in counselling individuals and families who suffer from drug addiction. She also helps IBTIDA run a residential rehabilitation facility in which men and women stay for longer term rehabilitation before gradually re-entering mainstream life. The project emphasises individual spiritual growth and helps people of all faiths from Karachi and surrounding areas to come off drugs, believing that the best way to stay drug free is through transformed lives.

Besides serving in the residential centre, she reaches out to different communities with a message of prevention to help young people stay off drugs. Anila is passionate about sharing the love of God with those who are struggling with drug misuse and need someone's help to overcome the complexities of drug-related issues.

Co-Mission Partners (cont'd)**PAKISTAN****Dr. Qaiser Julius; Lahore**

Theological Education

Dr. Qaiser is the Director of Open Theological Seminary (OTS), providing leadership to the institution, whilst also assuming teaching and preaching roles. He represents OTS on different platforms, nationally and internationally; teaches Hermeneutics and New Testament Greek at the Gujranwala Theological Seminary; and help the Langham Expository Preaching program in Pakistan as a volunteer coordinator.

Dr. Qaiser's call is to the field of theological education and under his leadership, the Open Theological Seminary (OTS) has grown to enter a new phase with new initiatives such as a Master Program in Christian studies. Dr. Qaiser's journey began during his time in university when he met a Campus Crusade for Christ ministry worker, who invited him to join their Bible study group.

This led him come to know Christ personally and he joined the Campus Crusade's one-month NEW LIFE Training in Karachi, which changed his perspective completely about ministry. It was then that he felt a calling from God, which slowly took root in his life and led him to begin thinking about full-time ministry work.

After a year on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ, he spent a few years on his theological education at the Gujranwala Theological Seminary, where he completed M.Div. He then worked as a pastor for a small congregation, which provided great experience for his future ministry work in theological education.

It was during his pastoral ministry that he received an invitation from the Open Theological Seminary, which he accepted and within a short period of time with OTS, Dr Qaiser realised that was the place and area of ministry where God wanted to use his gifting. He joined OTS in 1999 and since then, God has been using his skills in different capacities within the institution.

**SRI LANKA****Nevedita Jeevabalan; Colombo**

Children's Ministry

Nevedita has a heart to reveal God's love to children who have experienced trauma and abuse. Currently, she manages all aspects of the Child Protection Department of LEADS, a community development organization. This includes therapy centres in Colombo, Badulla and Jaffna; respite centres in Colombo and Jaffna; and provision of technical support to all programmes on child protection.

Most children who are referred to LEADS for assistance have been either abused, abandoned at a young age, or experienced various traumatic situations. Throughout their lives, they may have never encountered a loving, trustworthy adult. Nevedita believes that the greatest difference she can make in the lives of these children is to be an ambassador of God's love, especially in her home country of Sri Lanka where the need is great.

Nevedita has a background in Psychology and she has gained experience working under the Council of National Mental Health Institution in Sri Lanka. She has been working at LEADS for the past 14 years and has grown in her role to also equip others who could work in a similar capacity. She also works with children who have been sexually abused.

Nevedita's passion is to help the disadvantaged, the voiceless and traumatised children of Sri Lanka. She longs to see conditions for children improve and adequate care is given to the children living in Sri Lanka and to children in need of justice.

Co-Mission Partners (cont'd)**SRI LANKA****Russell De Alwis; Colombo**

Integral Mission and Church Relations

Russell began working with LEADS, a community development organization that is passionate and purposeful about reaching the most vulnerable in Sri Lanka, as a Child Protection Officer. He began serving as the Church Relations Coordinator, as well as Training Coordinator since 2018.

Part of Russell's work involves establishing strong network and connections with local Pastors, Churches and Christian academies, such as the Lanka Bible College and Colombo Theological Seminary (CTS). He is also involved in teaching, motivating and strengthening local Church leaders to engage in Missions in a holistic manner.

As the Church Relation coordinator at LEADS, he is currently involved in promoting the concept of "Integral Mission" to church leaders all around Sri Lanka. This is to encourage church leaders to demonstrate God's love through helping people who are in need in their respected communities.

Russell began his ministry working with children and to this day, he is passionate about bringing children freedom from abuse and oppression, whilst educating and creating public awareness on how children should be better protected. He has always had the heart to serve God being involved in missions to serve communities who do not know Christ. During his theological education and learning more about Integral Missions, Russell gained more depth and understanding on how he can do this.

**CAMBODIA****Ps. Chhinho Saing; Phnom Penh**

Church Planting

Ps Chhinho sees Cambodia as a great harvest field of people who are seeking truth and everlasting peace in their life, soul and spirit. He views himself as a servant of God in the service of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to bring the love of God to the lost and the broken.

He oversees 42 home churches planted by Shalom Mission Cambodia (SMC) in 17 provinces throughout Cambodia and conducts leadership training and community development. His ministry also provides after school programs to local children through the Shalom Dream Center located in Mondul Kiri.

SMC was founded in September 2002, in Phnom Penh when seven neighbouring families came together to worship God together. Since then it has grown into an evangelistic organisation that plants churches and operates development projects in other provinces of Cambodia.

Prior to the setting up of SMC, Ps Chhinho was working as the Country Coordinator for Cambodian Mission for Christ. Currently, he is also an advisor to Good Neighbour International Cambodia on Holistic Leadership Development.

In the initial stage of SMC, he was blessed with fellow Christians who shared his perspective of the mission field. To them, the role of a church in the mission field is not only to preach and teach the gospel but also to actively participate in activities that reflect God's care for His people. This is what Ps Chhinho endeavours to do in his ministry daily.

Co-Mission Partners (cont'd)**James Pham**

Church Planting

James hails from one of the neighbouring countries in the Mekong region based in Laos. His primary area of missions is to share the gospel and plant new churches for his native countrymen who are living in Laos.

He was born and raised somewhat in poverty, but God saved him and led him to pursue a life in ministry. James is grateful to have led a life immersed in the Word of God and having had the opportunity to learn and eventually teach the Word, lead a small group in worship and be involved in missionary training.

Over the past three years, God has blessed him in his preparation for this ministry. He now fluently speaks the Lao language and has fully acclimatised to the local climate and culture. This has allowed him to be more effective in preaching in the local language and reaching out to the people in Laos.

His vision is to share the gospel and goodness of God with as many people as possible, plant new churches, promote unity among different groups of people from his native country and also support the Lao church. James also plays a role in supporting training programmes for the Lao and his native churches in Laos.

**Helen Avadiar-Nimbalker**

Trauma Counselling/Inner Healing and Human Trafficking

Helen is a Malaysian based in Chiang Mai, with a heart to see God's people live an abundant life free from oppression and bondage. Helen currently works within the area of inner healing and trauma counselling with the Kingdom Family Multiplication (KFM), whilst also assisting the team equip pastors and leaders from unreached people groups in the region. She is currently spearheading their involvement in working against modern-day slavery.

Helen has been an advocate against human trafficking for many years and was involved with various projects related to the cause in Malaysia, including organising Malaysia's first Walk For Freedom in 2017, in partnership with A21. Her passion is to now delve deeper in the area of human trafficking and provide rehabilitation, counselling and inner healing to survivors.

Since beginning her ministry in Chiang Mai in 2018, Helen has spent much of her time equipping herself in learning the Thai language, understanding the local culture, establishing a community of Intercessors to pray for the cause of human trafficking and also building friendships with many of the women who are trapped in the sex industry.

Along with her husband Vincent, Helen has been developing a Transformation Program that will assist women who choose to leave the sex industry to start their lives over. So far, one woman has left the sex trade and is now actively engaged with helping Helen reach out to others and in small community relief programs.

Co-Mission Partners (cont'd)**Peter Bui**

Cross-cultural Missional Training and Church Planting

Peter is involved in cross-cultural missional training to reach to the least and unreached people group. His primary area of missions is to train those who are able to train others to plant new churches to reach the unreached people group in Vietnam. Peter also works with various church leaders to train young church leaders for evangelical missions within the region.

Peter heard the call of God when he was only 20. He followed his call wholeheartedly and began evangelizing to local communities whilst pursuing his theological education. Upon graduation, he moved to a neighbouring city and began working in the mission field. He has a heart to the Gospel reaching the unreached beyond the borders of his own native country.

By prioritizing cross-cultural training of local leaders of specific unreached communities, Peter is able to teach these leaders how they can influence and reach their people with the Gospel. He also spends adequate time providing pastoral guidance to various local church and evangelical missions centres. He is also involved in training local church leaders to plant churches across the borders within the Mekong region.

**Ria; Jakarta**

Urban Poor Outreach Programme

Ria is the Executive Director (CEO) of Indonesia Care, an Urban Poor Ministry that was formed in the mid-2010s. Her passion is to mobilise churches and equip them to work together for urban poor development. Ria's heart is to bring the peace of God to the poor and empower them through economic, health, and education development programmes. Through Indonesia Care, Ria works towards mobilising and collaborating with local churches to doing urban missions. Their aim is to bring transformation to the lives of the poor by empowering them through sustainable projects.

Since the mid-80s, Ria was called by God to serve in various student ministries on her college campus. The vision and hunger to serve the students in Indonesia only grew bigger over time. In 1988, after her graduation, Ria began serving through FES Indonesia (Perkantass), and became involved in pioneering student fellowships in Sumatra, Kalimantan and Papua.

Subsequently, she began serving in OMF International in the year 2000 to help prepare and equip Indonesians to serve as missionaries in East Asian countries. Through all those experiences, Ria's burden to serve and develop her homeland only grew stronger and deeper, eventually leading her to her current ministry with Indonesia Care.

Co-Mission Partners (cont'd)**Ps J**

Community Development

Ps J works amongst an unreached people group in one of the Indonesian islands. Whilst studying in Singapore for his Masters in Missions program, he received a revelation from God that he will serve and reach out to the unreached ethnic group.

He had a vision of a fisherman in the boat and on top of the fisherman there were seven light, which spoke of the perfection of the Holy Spirit. This vision really encouraged him and strengthen his calling to reach the unreached ethnic group.

His ministry helps poor people in rural areas within the island and they help the community by providing education - starting from kindergarten, with a free tuition centre. With so many children who are orphaned around them, they also adopt these children and provide them with accommodation and free education.

One of the vital roles of his ministry is to provide education for the children in the rural area. Every year they give out scholarship for 40 children to attend their kindergarten, which includes free uniform, school fees, books. The ministry is also helping a few of the older orphaned children to attend a local primary and high school by providing them school fees, uniforms, accommodation, and other basic necessities.

Re-imagining The New Normal

By Andrew Khoo

AsiaCMS Board of Trustees

During this time of 'lockdown', we have thought and wondered about the post-lockdown period. We, and others, have asked, "What will the 'new normal' look like?"

Before trying to answer that question, perhaps it would be good for us to first ask ourselves, "What was the 'old normal' like for us?" Was it perfect? If not, was it acceptable to us?

If yes, why was it acceptable to us?

Could it be that the 'old normal' was acceptable to us because we had settled into a cosy relationship with the imperfect?

We had carved out a 'comfortable compromise' with everyday life, which didn't impose too many challenges on us; an arrangement where we could get along without too many concerns.

Were we concerned about the refugees and undocumented migrant workers who inhabited the grey area of the informal economy, with its daily-rated and low-remunerated wage? - these were the first type of jobs to evaporate when the lockdown came, casting such workers and their families immediately into financial and food insecurity, and uncertainty.

*Re-Imagining the New Norm (cont'd)***Could it be that the 'old normal' was acceptable to us because we had settled into a cosy relationship with the imperfect?**

We had carved out a 'comfortable compromise' with everyday life, which didn't impose too many challenges on us; an arrangement where we could get along without too many concerns.

Were we concerned about the refugees and undocumented migrant workers who inhabited the grey area of the informal economy, with its daily-rated and low-remunerated wage? - these were the first type of jobs to evaporate when the lockdown came, casting such workers and their families immediately into financial and food insecurity, and uncertainty.

Did we care about the poor and the marginalised; those who did not have enough to eat, and who are dependent to a large extent, on some form of income and food support and supplement? - their access to that assistance was jeopardised by movement restrictions and the (initial) prohibition on non-governmental organisations and societies from continuing with their charitable activities.

And did we think about the 'front liners'? Not just those at the front-line of the medical response to COVID-19, but the 'backroom' people? - the ones we relied upon to stock the shelves of the supermarkets and convenience stores; the ones who prepared food at restaurants for our takeaways; the ones who drove cars and rode motorbikes to deliver the takeaways to us; the ones who kept our streets clean and collected our garbage, come rain, shine or disease.

It is interesting to reflect on what the government considered as 'essential services' during the lockdown. Places of religious worship were shut, religious services were prohibited, and ministers of religion could not make pastoral visits. But work that can be considered dirty, difficult and dangerous were prioritised.

Hospital cleaners suddenly became singularly important. The first became last, and the last was considered first. People to whom we would not give a second look, whom we took for granted, suddenly became the focus of attention - And a critical need.

So in the 'new normal', will there be a permanent re-evaluation of people in these categories of work? Or, after a while, will we forget and will things simply slide to casual normalcy?

Will the characteristics of the 'old normal' - distance, disconnection, disenfranchisement, dislocation - return? Will we allow them to return?

Will we replace physical distance with God and with others with a spiritual connection - social disenfranchisement of God's human and environmental creation with spiritual relocation/replacement?

And will we recover our priorities by rediscovering God's?

In both private faith and public fidelity to the Gospel, will the 'new normal' or reimagining the future post-COVID-19 move us and those around us from emotional helplessness and emptiness to spiritual empowerment, especially as we have just commemorated Pentecost?

In the words of the Most Revd. Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury: "Re-imagining enables re-evaluation of current societal challenges and the re-ordering of priorities for each stakeholder."

Wishing you a vivid re-imagination in the 'new normal'!

REFLECTIONS

In the hands of the Master Potter

Reflections from the life of the Apostle Peter

By **Stephen Edison;**
AsiaCMS Regional Hub Manager –
South Asia

We are lumps of clay in the hands of a master potter. When we submit our lives to Christ, His work of moulding and shaping us begins and continues throughout our lives

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Mt.16:18)

When Simon was given the name Peter by Jesus there was little in his nature to associate with the stability, consistency and endurance of a rock. If we were to apply the parameters for selection of leaders of the church today based on Peters ‘CV’ recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, we find the picture of a man who was a natural-born leader and an outspoken disciple of Jesus with a personality that was aggressive, enthusiastic, self-confident, strong-willed and impulsive.

He recognised Jesus as the Christ (Mt.16:16), witnessed the transfiguration of Christ (17:1-3), assured Him that he would never deny Him (26:35), and then in a moment of weakness and fear did exactly that(26:69-75). Leading up to Jesus crucifixion, two disciples stood at a fork in the road; Simon Peter had denied him, and Judas Iscariot had betrayed him. Judas betrayal was led by his greed (Jn. 12:6) and perhaps disillusionment with his hope of a Messiah in the context of Israel’s suffering and Peter’s denial was in a moment of fear and weakness.

In the Hands of the Master Potter (cont'd)

Jesus knew and foretold their denial and betrayal (Jn 13:21 - 26, 13:38). The difference was that only Peter repented and was restored into relationship with God. Repentance is what Satan discourages in our lives undermining Grace and creating perceptions that build on our natural tendency of 'earning back' God's love and acceptance. At the core of Christ's sacrifice was His love for us and His yearning for the restoration of a relationship, which was lost because of our sin.

We will all sin and fall short. Sin will have consequences, but grace earned at the Cross ensures our slates will be wiped clean when we truly repent. His work will continue in and through our lives. **As God moulds and shapes us, it opens us to view the world through His eyes, beyond our familiar context and comfort zones.**

As the Lord continued to mould and shape Peter, his perspective broadened, and he understood God's plan of salvation included all creation and every nation. Peter was the first apostle, to overcome the barriers of his context and brought Gentiles into the Body of Christ (Acts 10). He faced the circumcision party within the Jewish Christians, who insisted on Jewish traditions be requisite to be Christians (Acts 11).

It's natural to hold on to the familiar and comfortable in our culture, denomination or traditions. We as His followers and His church need to view the world through Christ's eyes.

We may need from time to time review our contexts to reflect if we may be burdening those coming into faith with cultural baggage, in addition to the Truth, making their spiritual growth and feeling of belonging more challenging.

God has and will continue to do extraordinary things through ordinary lives, which are committed to Him.

As we read through Peter's letter to the persecuted Christians across Asia Minor (1 Peter) we see the rock that Jesus foresaw. He shepherded the early church through some of its darkest times with faith, courage, wisdom and steadfastness not present when he first met Jesus. The years of walking with God, building on the gifts he had and leaning on God's grace to overcome weaknesses and limitations had prepared Peter for what God had planned to accomplish in him and through him.

God can do the same in and through our lives as we walk with Him. Peter stood strong through the trials and tribulations of his time. Today across Asian countries we see common challenges. Over recent years, a growing feeling of marginalization among the majorities (ethnic and religious) and resulting majoritarian policies and political leaders catering to these feelings.

We also see rising fundamentalism, economic inequality and tensions between nations. Alongside ecological challenges, we also have an unexpected crisis like the ongoing Covid19 pandemic that is sweeping across the world. The church exists not in a vacuum but in the context of all these realities. We rest assured that through it all, God is in control. He will walk alongside us to be reflections of His light in challenging times.

REFLECTIONS

Look Up to God then Look Out to Others

By Peter Nguyen

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Where do we turn to amidst this Covid-19 pandemic suffering or any other circumstances as followers of Christ today? Is our hope in Christ? A famous hymn written by Edward Mote, “On Christ the Solid Rock” reminds us that our hope is, and should be, built on Jesus.

In Numbers 21:4-9, a bronze serpent is mentioned as a symbol of healing for the Israelites. Just before they crossed the Jordan River, the Israelites were once again discouraged; they spoke against the LORD and Moses and questioned Him for taking them out of Egypt to die. Throughout the journey, the people never stopped murmuring for fear of dying in the wilderness. They kept remembering their days in Egypt when they had fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic (Numbers 11:5).

The LORD then sent fiery serpents that bit them, causing many of them to die.

We do not know how many people died but enough that they had to beg Moses to pray for them to the LORD because of they spoke against the LORD and Moses. The LORD then told Moses to make a bronze serpent and set it up on a pole so that those who were bitten by the fiery serpents could look up at the bronze serpent and live.

It is possible that while waiting for the bronze serpent to be made and set up on a pole, more people were bitten to death. But, as soon as the bronze serpent was set on the pole, people were healed from the bites and wounds. It became a symbol of healing for the Israelites. Since then, the symbol became an object of worship to the Israelites on the high places, where the people burned incense to it (Nehushtan) until King Hezekiah ordered this bronze serpent to be broken down (II Kings 18: 4).

Look Up to God then Look Out to Others (cont'd)

We do not need to look at the symbol of the bronze serpent on the pole to be saved, because we can look upon Jesus himself, who is our hope and Saviour. In John 3: 14,15, Jesus said, “**And as Moses lifted up the serpent in wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.**” I do not know if this CoVid-19 pandemic is a test of our faith in God but reflecting on the journey of the Israelites in the desert for 40 years, it seems that our journey on earth may face similar challenges and hardship.

During those situations, does our help come from the LORD (Psalm 121)? The God-Who-Sees (El Roi) will not leave us; he is still with us on this journey. The one powerful God who showed compassion and was slow to anger - to the Israelites that He rescued them from death is the same God who “**loves the world that He sent his only-begotten Son, Jesus, so that we may believe in him and have eternal life**” (John 3: 16).

Jesus is the Redeemer of our souls in times of need. Those who believe in Christ may have abundant and eternal life (John 10:10). Therefore, we can be confident with peace in our hearts because our hope is in Christ, our Lord and Saviour. **We should share that hope in Christ with others who are hopeless and have nowhere to turn to.** This can be demonstrated through practical love for our neighbours, instead of alienation and isolation. Christians have been sacrificially showing their love to others throughout the history of humanity. For instance, during the terrible Antonine plague in the 2nd century, which killed about a quarter of the mighty Roman empire, the Church was able to spread out everywhere because the members treated each other and the people around them, with kindness and impressively in the harsh circumstances of that time.¹

During these uncertain times of a global pandemic, the thoughts of Martin Luther, which he wrote during The Black Death plague, can be an encouragement: “I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated and thus perchance, inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me, and I have done what He has expected of me and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the death of others. **If my neighbour needs me however, I shall not avoid place or person but will go freely as stated above.** See this is such a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy and does not tempt God.”²

¹ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/13/christianity-epidemics-2000-years-should-i-still-go-to-church-coronavirus/>, accessed on 17/04/2020.

² *Luther's Works Volume 43 pg. 132 the letter “Whether one may flee from a Deadly Plague” written to Rev. Dr. John Hess*, <https://www.immanuelsc.org/daily-devotions/2020/3/14/martin-luther-and-the-black-death>, accessed on 17/04/2020.



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ON THE EDGE**
IN GOD'S MISSION

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