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Feature

Follow the Lord

Ma, Jia-Lin

1. Prologue

There are two levels of faith. Those who are at the first level of faith are interested in Christ and church, who delight in attending services and interacting with brothers and sisters. They enjoy participating in church activities, and are touched upon hearing hymns. On the other hand, those who are at the second level of faith are determined to offer themselves to follow Jesus.

Some may ask, “What are the differences between the two levels of faith?” The main difference is our focus: do we worship for our own sense of fulfilment, or do we put Jesus before ourselves?

Am I someone who is only superficially interested in Jesus and church for my own sense of fulfilment? “Jesus answered them and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled’” (John 6:26). Do we want Jesus or do we simply want Jesus to solve our problems? “From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more” (John 6:66).

2. Do we remain at a distance and disassociate ourselves from Jesus, or do we offer ourselves completely?

Nicodemus transformed from a man that secretly went to Jesus at night (John 3:2) into someone that defended Jesus in public (John 7:51). He even courageously expressed his love for Jesus in the midst of peril (John 19:39). What about us?

3. Do we “know of” Jesus, or do we truly “know” Jesus?

When Jesus was invited into the house of Simon, a woman who was a sinner entered and boldly expressed her love for Jesus (Luke 7). Jesus said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil.”

Are we more like Simon, or the woman who was a sinner? When was the last time we gave ourselves to God without reservation, or the last time we shed tears before God?

My question is not whether we “know of” Jesus, but whether we truly “know” Jesus. Do we truly love Jesus? Does Jesus truly know us?

4. Following Jesus

“Then [Jesus] said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me’” (Luke 9:23). Jesus has already invited us. How do we respond?

“Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, ‘Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head’” (Luke 9:57-58). In order to follow Jesus, we need to step out of our comfort zones. We need to press on in times of prosperity or adversity, in wealth or in poverty, and in health or in sickness.

“Then He said to another, ‘Follow Me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father’” (Luke 9:59). When we follow Jesus, there is no room. The time is now – this very moment – to choose to transform. Wait no longer. The time is now.

“And another also said, ‘Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house’” (Luke 9:61). When we follow Jesus, we must not let people,

circumstances, or things hinder us and cause us to look back from our path of faith. Someday, the things which we could not sacrifice may supplant Jesus' place in our hearts.

5. Concluding Remarks

Let us reflect: how strong is our faith? We must bravely follow Jesus without any reservations or regrets, and we must follow with our entire heart.

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Church News

Report – Pakistan & Sri Lanka

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka is an island at the southern tip of India Peninsular. The northern part of the island is mainly populated by Tamils (15% throughout Sri Lanka) while the Sinhalese constitute the largest ethnic group in the country (75%). The Sinhalese are mainly Buddhist (70%) while the Tamils are mainly Hindus (12%). Christians make up only 7.5% of the population.



Formerly there was free communication between southern India and northern Sri Lanka. It was at this time that many Tamils moved freely between Tamil Nadu in the southern part of India & Sri Lanka. Many had family members staying on both sides of the straits. It was at that time that some of the Sri Lankan Tamils came to our church in Chennai, India while visiting their family members there. By the grace of God some of them were baptized.

Later there was some unrest and fighting broke out between the Sri Lankan government troops and the Tamil Tigers (a military group). Tamils were suppressed & persecuted. Many fled the country. Some of our members migrated to other countries. Others could not be contacted.

The situation has calm down now. Our members in India requested us to re-establish contact with our members there. We started to visit Sri Lanka in 2012. We were only able to contact one remaining member in Sri Lanka, Bro Remi. We were also able to meet up with some relatives of the members who have migrated overseas. Other members could not be located. In 2014, we decided to allocate the ministry work in Sri Lanka to the India Mission Committee.



Service at Bro Remi's house



Dn Mark from India, Bro Remi & wife from Sri Lanka

Together with our churches in India, we are now visiting Sri Lanka with an emphasis on evangelism.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan is an Islamic Republic. Pakistan's history has been characterized by periods of military rule, political instability and [conflicts with neighbouring India](#). The country continues to face challenging problems, including [terrorism](#), [poverty](#), [illiteracy](#) and [corruption](#).

It has a population of 180 million. 97% of the population is Muslim. [Sectarian violence](#) among Muslim denominations is common. Christians number about 2,800,000 (1.6%).



The population comprises several ethnic groups. The majority are [Punjabi](#) – 78.7 million (44.15%), Pashtuns – 27.2 million (15.42%), Sindhis – 24.8 million (14.1%) & others.

About 6 years ago, an individual came across our website & found our doctrines to be biblical. He tried to contact us & at the same time started preaching to his friends and practicing what he knew in his congregation. Four years ago, we held serious discussions with him through the Internet. Subsequently we made a trip to visit this group in India.

This group consisted of few individual leaders from different congregations in various parts in the center of the state of Sindh. On hearing the truth, they associated themselves together. We held a 3-day doctrinal seminar with them. To our surprise, we found that this group knew the truth by studying through the Internet. This group of leaders was seriously seeking the truth. They requested for baptism.



Doctrinal seminar with the leaders.

We intended to visit them again to continue the doctrinal seminar. Unfortunately we failed to receive permission to enter Pakistan despite repeated applications.

Later two of the leaders came out to Dubai to attend the Spiritual Meeting there and to further study the truth. Both received the Holy Spirit.



Let us remember the ministry work in Pakistan. Pray that the door of evangelism be opened to us in Pakistan.



Local congregation



Vietnam Ministry

The first seed was sown in 1997 but after two years, the pioneering work stopped. In 2005, the Eastern Hemisphere took over this work and sent volunteers to restart pioneering efforts. Among the approximately 15 baptized, only 9 were contactable. Unfortunately the Christian faith was no longer part of their lives.

We currently have two Taiwanese and one Malaysian brothers residing in Ho Chi Minh. There are a few others who are living in Vietnam but far away from main cities like Ho Chi Minh or Hanoi. From 2005 till 2010, trips were made once a month, focusing mainly on pastoral work and seeking of lost sheep. There were attempts to reach out further and the volunteers traveled by bus and train to places like Canto, Nha Trang and Hanoi. Ho Chi Minh services were mainly conducted in the hotel rooms of the volunteers on Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday morning till afternoon. As more contact was made with the locals, the team felt that there was need to have a proper gathering point.



At Worship Center in Ho Chi Minh

In 2013, a four-story house was rented for USD600/month and frequency of visits was increased. Our stay there is actually illegal as all foreigners are required to register details of their stay with the local authorities. However, if we register, we would arouse suspicion regarding the true purpose of our visit. There is strict restriction on foreign evangelists in this communist country. By the grace of God, the local authorities have only come over once to check on our stay.

At present, we have 3 weeks of services in a month. As our primary focus is to reach out, we usually have services with friends at their places. Some visits take as long as an 8-hour bus ride.

Language is the main barrier to the outreach work. Five volunteers enrolled in a three-month Vietnamese language course, but to date, only one can speak very basic Vietnamese. However, there are some local Vietnamese of Chinese descendants who can speak Cantonese. Thus our sharing with friends is conducted in a mixture of Cantonese, English, and Mandarin. We do have a Vietnamese sister who currently resides in Brunei. When she is scheduled to go over there, these sharing sessions can then be done in Vietnamese or translated into Vietnamese. The evangelical work is still mainly driven by the volunteers; their strategies are to try to engage people in the area around our Evangelical point, as well as follow up with friends and family members of our Vietnamese sister.



With approximately 20 members from Malaysia and Singapore in the Vietnam Volunteer Mission Team, we are striving to have a regular weekly service in Ho Chi Minh, twice a month in Dong Nai (2 hour cab ride) and once a month in Dalat (8 hours bus ride).



The seeds which have been sown are often snatched away by the evil one very quickly or are confused by the preaching of another doctrine. Given that we do not have a permanent presence, locals have certain reservations. May God allow more members to see the Macedonian call of help in this vast field in Vietnam.

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 **Intercession**

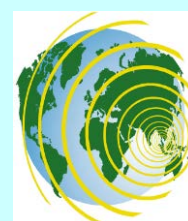
1. Please pray for IA work assignment as below:

Date	Location	Program	Personnel
9/21-10/10	Australia	Fiji pastoral & outreach work	Ezra Chong
9/2-9/14	India CB	Preachers & Ministers Spiritual Nurture	Joseph Chong I-Ju Fang
9/24-10/4		Full Time Workers & CBI EXCO Spiritual Nurture	
		Bangalore Church Spiritual Meeting- Bangalore	Joel Chong Grace Ho I-Ju Fang
		Junior & Intermediate Youths Bible Camp Gospel Outreach & Seminar on Parenting	
9/1-9/29	Indonesia GA	Theological Class	HF Yeh
		Spiritual Convocation (Tanjung Duren / Bandung / Surabaya) Tangerang Church Evangelical service	
		Malang Church Seminar	
9/1-9/30	West Malaysia	Regional Pastoral Attachment by IA sent minister (Perak Region)	Zheng Qun Tsai
9/14-10/4	New Zealand	Sermon preaching training Spring Evangelical Service (Christchurch/Auckland)	Daniel Chin
9/6-9/24	Philippines	Theological Training	Ezekiel Chang
9/14-9/28	Myanmar MC	Youth Leaders Training	Hosea Hoo
9/1-9/30	Sabah GA	Theological Training	JS Huang
9/11-9/20	Canada	ESSC Autumn (Montreal/Calgary/Vancouver/Toronto/Ed monton)	KC Tsai Chao-Yet Kuo Enoch Hou Jonathan Chou Chao-Yet Kuo
9/14-21	FOZ	Pastoral Work & Training	GH Chen MT Kuo
9/14-9/19	Dominican Rep.	Pastoral Visitation & Evangelical Service/ Spiritual Convocation	Jason Hu
9/2-9/9	Germany	Youth Fellowship & Pastoral Visitation (Hamburg)	Michael Chan
9/25-9/28		Training & Special Service (Hamburg)	HH Ko

9/4-9/6	Austria	Spiritual Convocation & Evangelical Service (Vienna)	Michael Chan
9/17-12/6	South Africa	Pastoral ministry/Training/Lesotho Outreach	Luke Chan
9/24-9/29	Dubai	Regular Spiritual Meeting	FF. Chong

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🍌 *You Could Help the Worldwide Evangelism Mission Simply by Contribution a dollar a day...*



How You Can Help

You are called to take action for the sake of worldwide evangelism and the spreading of the gospel...with **a dollar a day**. If everyone could daily extend one dollar towards the International Assembly World Evangelism Fund, we could, together, accomplish the commission that our Lord Jesus Christ left behind. Your financial commitment will open up possibilities and resources that will lead us to save many souls.

Please take time to fill out the offering sheet available at your local church, to pass this message on to loved ones and family, and to pray for God's ministry. May the Lord be gracious to you!

To find out more about the dollar-a-day program and donation options, *please contact* ia@tjc.org or tjciatwn@ms25.hinet.net.

✧ *May our Lord remember your contribution and bless you abundantly!*

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