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Feature

Standing to Minister God Daily

Nai-Hsin Chen

In the Old Testament time, every priest stood ministering to the Lord daily (Heb 10:11). However, in the New Testament time, all the members who have been baptized in the Lord Jesus Christ are priests belonging to God; and thus need to stand ministering to God daily all the more.

Ministering to God is the duty of everyone (Ecc 12:13). The Bible encourages us to be zealous in the heart and serve the Lord often (Rom 12:11). Special ministry refers to service in the church, including various holy works and service worships. General ministry refers to living out the image of the Christian in our everyday lives that others may see the Lord in us, to come to know Jesus through us, which is a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1).

The Meaning of Standing to Minister God:

1. Those of Good Health

Those who are physically weak and sick may not be able to stand. We must be healthy in spirit; to receive spiritual food often and work hard to cultivate our spirituality (Jn 5:39), to understand God's will and be filled with spiritual joy. Only a healthy person can eat and work. Standing is a sign of vitality and life (Jn 10:9-10). We ask God to grant all of us a healthy and abundant spiritual life.

2. Those with Strength and Power (Eph 3:13-16)

Ministering to God requires spiritual strength (1 Th 5:17). Through constant prayers we may acquire the power to strengthen our heart. Physical suffering or poverty cannot defeat our services. The ancient saints may have fallen, but their faith never failed. Just like our Lord Jesus and Stephen, though it seemed that their physical bodies had fallen, their inner spirit was ever so strong. Many spiritual predecessors were stricken with physical illness and suffering. However, tribulation could not stop them from their love to serve God and men. Though weakened in the body, their heart of hope, spiritual joy and steadfast faith continued to drive them to serve God. Their spiritual strength was evident in their prayers, love, and service worships.

3. Those who are Watchful (1 Th 5:6)

When exiting Egypt, the Israelites had to gird their waists, put on their shoes, and have their staffs in hand to be ready to leave Egypt at any given moment. The wise virgins prepared oil in their lamps. Be alert and watchful. A spiritual watchman observes his surroundings from the tower. Be alert. Know the hour, time, and moment to give instructions at the appointed times, give out signals, to know the current conditions of the flock, and to lead, care, and distribute food at the appointed time.

4. Those Not Stricken Down

Satan often uses various ways to hinder us from our ministry. Or through slanders, gossips, various temptations, tribulations, and lusts of the flesh and eyes, he wants us to love the world more and God less. He is always looking to devour the believers, to defeat our ministry. However, we must stand firm in the spirit and truth (1 Co 16:13) and not be stricken down easily. But let us not think we are standing firm lest we fall (1 Col 10:12). Rather, we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

5. Those Who Rely on the Power of the Lord (Is 4:6)

We do not serve God through our own abilities and knowledge attempt. Spiritual ministry is different from that of the world's. It is easy for men to dealing with spiritual matters using worldly ways and thinking. However, serving God requires greater reliance in the power of God in order to be able to stand to minister God. Our greatest enemy is ourselves. By relying on God to change ourselves, we will receive spiritual wisdom and power, and then we have victory upon victory. Sacrifices cannot take away sin (Heb 10:11). Offering and service cannot save us. Salvation depends on and comes only through the precious blood of our Lord.

Standing to minister to God daily requires perseverance and faith; it is not lukewarm. Prophetess Hannah, at age 84, still ministered to God day and night (Luke 2:36-37). The duty of a watchman never ceases, whether day or night (Is 62:6). We must sow in the morning and at night (Ecc 11:6). Jesus taught people in the temple daily (Luke 19:47). The Lord said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23). In the apostolic time, believers continued daily with one accord in the temple and the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:46-47). The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11). Let us exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today" (Heb 3:13).

Men in this world toil and labor each day for the pursuit of more wealth and a better future; they serve Mammon. We must hold on to today while we still live with health, energy, when our Lord still has use of us. At the beginning of this New Year, let us be determined to stand and minister to our God daily, to serve our Lord with all our heart, all our strength, and all our mind in repayment of His great love. May God help and bless each one of us.

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 *Church News*

Malaysia GA Holy Work Update

I. Background

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, with Islam being the largest and state religion. Although religious freedom is constitutionally provisioned, the task of setting up Churches appears to have grown increasingly harder over the last 90 years.

II. History of Church Development

In the first 70 years of the church, evangelism has largely been within the Chinese community. Around 1997, the first two brethren of Indian ethnicity were converted. They subsequently preached to their family members and relatives. In 2003, we had the opportunity to reach out to the indigenous Semai people. Twelve people were baptized and the first Indigenous people Church was established in Batu 8 at the foot of the Cameron Highlands in 2006. Around 2011, the arrival of Myanmar brethren seeking employment in Malaysia presented us with the opportunity to reach out to Myanmar's residing in this country. This then led to the establishment of a Myanmar Fellowship Centre in 2015.

III. Current Work and Challenges

Over the last few years, the membership growth rate has been around 2-3%. The membership in Peninsular Malaysia currently stands at 3390, comprising 64 Indian members, approximately 110 indigenous people, approximately 200 natives of Sabah and the rest mainly local Chinese and some other nationalities. Nationwide, there are 28 Churches, 4 Prayer Houses, 8 Evangelical Centers and 5 Indigenous People Pioneering areas.

Over the years, the Church has tried to instill a spirit and culture of outreach in her members, and stir up the individual churches to focus on evangelism. However, we still have some way to go. There is a clear lack of dedicated evangelists to focus on outreach. Therefore, although there are many opportunities in the pioneering areas of the Indigenous people, only a handful of full-time workers and volunteers are actively involved in the work.

Praise and thank the grace of God, the Internationally Assembly currently arranges for workers from Sabah, Indonesia, India, Myanmar and Taiwan to assist in our pastoral and evangelical work. In addition, the General Assembly of West Malaysia has recently been more willing to allow more full-time divine workers to dedicate themselves to this out-reach ministry locally and abroad. To complement this, GA has commenced training more local ministers to take greater ownership of pastoring the local flock. But we must not rest on our laurels. Even as the White Horse goes out conquering and to conquer, the devil infiltrates and instigates. Our churches today have to battle complacency, immorality, compromising of the truth and lost sheep.

Religious education (RE) and training have long been emphasized by the Church to ensure a smooth transition of workers from one generation to the next. Over the last few years, the Education Affairs (EA) unit has been training RE Teachers and RE Counselors to nurture

students both inside and outside the classroom. The Unit envisioned 7 strategic domains to be developed, namely Education, Training, Counseling, Pastoral, Fellowship, Mentoring & Commissioning. The Youth Affairs unit has embarked on systematically training youths to be grounded in the Truth, in Hermeneutics & Apologetics, and be equipped with Church Management techniques. Many opportunities are given to tertiary students and youths to serve in the Church. Under a Mentoring scheme, graduates from the Short Term Theological Training Course are also sent to shadow fulltime divine workers over a period of time. However, the threats of immorality, disinterest in Church (and church matters) as well as the alluring pleasures of the world are significant threats to the Church's efforts to develop its next generation of workers.

IV. Manpower Deployment Strategies

There are two particular challenges in the area of manpower. First, many of West Malaysia's 10 fulltime divine workers (9 Preachers, 1 Elder) are deployed overseas in support of IA work. Second, the recruitment of preachers has not had encouraging results in recent years. To address these challenges, West Malaysia has adopted the following strategies:

(1) Deploying National Reserve Volunteers

- Retired or available ministers and brothers are assigned to various churches for a specific period of time, to assist in the pastoral and evangelical work of the church

(2) Transferring Pastoral ministry to local Ministers and Church Board members

- Deploy local worker to pastoring roles so that members recognizes him as their shepherd. (E.g. worker to conduct Family Altar/Cell Service on a regular basis for each family in a designated area, etc.)

(3) Strengthening the respective regions

- Facilitate greater collaboration between Churches and sharing of workers and resources.
- Tap GA to coordinate inter-region resource facilitation should the need arise

V. Outlook

Though the Church in Malaysia is still lacking in many areas, our gracious God has shown us that His grace is always sufficient for us. We see what we have and not to see what we don't have. Our limited resource is never a reason to say no to our brethren abroad or pioneering countries, for this is what family is all about. So we are always happy to respond to Macedonian calls. To this end, we pray that more youths and workers can be stirred up to take

up the Lord's commission of evangelism and pastoral care, to fulfill the purpose that God has put us in this Peninsular.

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Church News

News Report on the Current Situation in India

Malaysia GA

Statistics

1. Number of Churches - 14 Churches; 3 Prayer House; 4 Places of Worship
2. Number of Believers - 1434
3. Number of Ministers - 10 Deacons, 4 Deaconesses; 5 Preachers
4. Number of REU students - about 465 (with 40 Teachers)

Organization

India Coordination Board (ICB) remains weak. Here in India we lack committed & spiritual leaders that the churches are able to look up to. Although efforts are put into development of these leaders through trainings and seminars but leaders are not developed intellectually. It is the spirit in a person that counts. Stronger and more developed churches are not able to receive assistance from ICB. Further these leaders are not exemplary that the churches can look up to. Only weaker and newly established churches look up to ICB for assistance and advise.

Pastoral & Evangelical

India Mission Committee members and volunteers made eight visits to India. Pastoral & evangelical works were carried out by the local churches with support from ICB.

Although their plans and system may not seem to be good, but they are not lacking in the spirit. Visiting & concern for its members are what the churches have been doing.

Evangelism is in the heart of the church and its members. It is just part of their life to testify of Christ. 51 were baptized for the year 2016-2017 (3.7%).

Youths & Educational Affairs

We have been spending a lot of efforts in the development of children and youths for the past 20 years with a hope that we will have a local generation of capable and spiritual members who will be able to take over the responsibility of the ministry in India.

We thank God, we were able to set up systems and pass on some of the development work to the local churches. Recently we have assisted them to set up the National India Youth Committee, explaining to them the purpose of the committee and the organizational structure and its function and plans.

Training

Training remains the main aspect of our work in India. We have said earlier that we have literally let our members in India know how they are to grow up spiritually & to prepare themselves for the work ahead. But knowledge itself does not seem to change their spirit and heart. We have to review this & look into correcting our flaws. Recently, we are posting our senior ministers to India to lead them in the work. In addition to giving lectures, we need to lead them and show them by example.

Financial

This year, India Coordination Board is responsible for 100% of the Training Center maintenance cost, 50% of STTC Training expanses & 50% of the preachers' and full-time workers living allowance.

ICB is still financially weak. They are not able to fulfill their financial commitment presently, especially the 50% of the Preacher's and Full-Time workers living allowance. Many local churches are involved in financing their own building projects and divine work. We hope after fulfilling their own commitment, they can offer more to ICB.

Though some local churches can be financially self-sufficient but their support to ICB is weak. Most look into their own needs above that of ICB. But we must say they have spent their finances in divine work as well. We hope after the local churches have settled their own needs, they will give strong support to ICB. At the meantime, we need to support them and help them to manage their finances.

Pioneering work in North India

We have been visiting NE India for some time. Prospects changed from time to time. We have identified that this is because we do not have a worship point & resident leaders. Our infrequent visit added to the problem as well.

West Bengal

In Kolkata, evangelism is carried out with a Bengali family and we are continuing contact with the Chinese community at the China-Town. We are utilizing the assistance of volunteer workers for the work in these pioneering areas.

Due to political unrest in Darjeeling, no visits were made this year. Contacts were maintained through the internet.

Imphal, Manipur

Contact with Ps. Alexander started 7 years ago. He accepts the beliefs of our church as truth. We will be looking into their baptism soon.

North India

We have some members from the south who have moved to Delhi & Bombay. We hope to be able to organize ourselves to look into pioneering into these areas as well.

Church Building

Four churches were dedicated to the Lord. They are Thirunilai, Ariyalur, Cheenthalar and Munnar Church.



Thiruvothiyur church which sits on the Indian Government Railways reserve land was demolished due to the extension of railway track. The government compensated a land that is 70 kms away. ICB is presently looking for building to be leased for church services. At the meantime, the congregation gathers in members' homes for worship.

100 Years Centennial Thanksgiving Service

A delegation of 35 members from India came to Malaysia in June for this thanksgiving service. There were two Preachers, a Deacon and two Deaconesses in the visitation group. 13 of the members also visited the Churches in Singapore.



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Intercession

1. Please pray for IA work assignment as below:

Date	Location	Program	Personnel
1/15-1/22	Australia	Divine Worker's Training (Melbourne / Brisbane)	Peter Shee/ Joel Chong
1/18-6/9	New Zealand	Pastoral Visitation (Auckland / East Auckland / Christchurch)	PH Liu

1/19-1/29	Cambodia	Pastoral & Evangelical	Fu-Ming Tse/ Joshua Phoong/ Ching- Rong Chen
2017/12/31- 2018/1/4	US	College Youth Spiritual Convocation (Elizabeth-2017/12/30-2018/1/5)	Tony Kuo
1/8 – 2/6		e-Learning Project	HH Ko
2017/12/31- 2018/1/5	UK	Africa Ministry Training Course (London Church)	HH Ko/ Steve Hwang
		AMC Meeting (London Church-1/4)	Africa ministry Workers
1/6-1/7	France	Pastoral Visitation	Steve Hwang
1/4 – 1/14	Spain	Visit & Concern (Madrid / Albacete / Barcelona)	Samuel Kuo
2017/12/1- 2018/1/25	Argentina	Chinese Teacher Training / RE Teacher Workshop	SL Chuang
		Short-Term Theological Class (1/6-1/19)	Daniel Chin/ CM Chu
		Student Spiritual Convocation (1/21-1/23)	
1/1-1/3	Greece	Spiritual Convocation (Athens)	Samuel Kuo
2017/12/30- 2018/1/1	Russia	Pastoral Visitation / Spiritual Convocation	DT Zhan
1/19-1/31	Benin	Pastoral Work	Stephane Pelard
2017/12/27- 2018/2/26	South Africa	Pastoral Ministry / Johannesburg Spiritual Convocation (1/12-14) / Pastoral Visit PE / Cape Town Church Dedication & Spiritual Convocation (1/19-21)	Luke Chan
1/1-3/7			Min-Hsiung Chang

1/8-1/22		Worker Training (1/9-11) / Johannesburg Spiritual Convocation (1/12-14) / Workers Training (1/16-17) / Cape Town Church Dedication & Spiritual Convocation (1/19-21)	Steve Hwang/ John Huang
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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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