



## Have You Signed Up for the Covid-19 Vaccine?

By Rev Dr Chuah Seong Peng

There have been many fear-mongering WhatsApp messages, stories, and speculations on the effectiveness and side effects of Covid-19 vaccines going around. These have led to confusion and fear among some people concerning the vaccines so much so that they have decided not to receive the vaccines. In Malaysia up to 14 April 2021, only 36.4% has signed up for the vaccination program with 434,301 who have received both doses and 671,589 receiving the first dose of the vaccines. This is unfortunate as mass vaccination of 70-80% of the population is required for herd immunity to combat the Covid-19 pandemic effectively, apart from observing movement control order and the precautions of hand washing, social distancing, and avoiding crowded places.

Is the vaccine safe and effective? The clinical trials of all the vaccines marketed have all achieved efficacy required by the WHO of above 50%. In fact,

many achieved much higher efficacy. The side effects while expected are generally mild and short lasting. The risk of severe life-threatening side effects that were reported was very small. Compare to the risk of fatality from the illness, the benefit of receiving the vaccine far outweigh them all.

### **Effectiveness of Mass Covid-19 Vaccination in Real-World Experience**

One of the best ways to assess the effectiveness of the vaccine is

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to look at real-world experience of the mass vaccination that have been carried out in the world. Let me share with you some of these results that have come out since. The most notable results are those from Israel and UK where mass vaccinations have been rolled out successfully covering a significant number of their populations.

The data from Israel Health Ministry on March 2021 is extremely reassuring of the success and positive impact of mass vaccination. Let me share some of them: With 55% receiving one dose, and 43% receiving two doses, they have achieved a vaccine efficacy (VE) of 97% against symptomatic Covid, higher than the 95% reported in phase 3 trials. The VE against asymptomatic Covid is 94%, which means it also helps to prevent transmission as it reduces significantly the number of people who can spread the virus quietly. There have been 55% less cases of Covid-19, 71% less Covid related death, and 44% less ICU admissions. If you are living in Israel and refuse to be vaccinated, the risk of being infected is 44 times higher and the risk of dying from Covid is 29 times higher.

In UK the successful roll out and uptake of the vaccines have also seen a drastic reduction to new cases and admissions and death from Covid-19. When we look at the recent report of the Covid-19 infection among our frontliners in Malaysia who have been vaccinated, the risk of infection was 0.003% compare to the risk of 0.17% for the general population based on cases reported at the same time, i.e. 3 per 1000 vs. 170 per 1000. Furthermore, they were all with mild symptoms or no symptom. It is clear that from these real-world experiences of mass immunization, the vaccine is safe, and we will reap the following benefits: There will be less Covid cases, especially severe cases. Hospital admissions and ICU cases and Covid related death will be significantly reduced, thus a great relief of workload and stress for our medical services and personnel.

### **Herd Immunity and its benefit**

From these real-world experiences, we can see that mass immunization is effective in combating the pandemic. But we must be mindful that to effectively stop the pandemic, we need to achieve herd immunity. Such herd immunity is also important to protect the children and adolescents below 18 who are presently not eligible for the

vaccine, those who have history of anaphylaxis, and allergy to polyethylene glycol and polysorbates who cannot be immunized, and people who refused to be immunized.

It is our moral duty as Christians and good citizens to respond positively to the vaccination program. Therefore, I urge everyone to sign up for vaccination if you still have not done so. At the meantime, let us continue to be vigilant as we pray and work against this pandemic that has caused much trouble and misery to so many people. Our good God and Father in heaven will soon take us out of this calamity as we keep well and close to Him.

## Reflections of an Octogenarian

By Dr Ngeow Took Fah

*The length of our days is seventy, or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass and we fly away. Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

*(Psalm 90:10, 12)*

This psalm appeals to me, a new octogenarian, for two reasons. It contrasts the brevity of human life with the eternity of God, and the temporal glories of man with the eternal majesty of God. It concludes that man's greatest problem is sin, not the fragility or brevity of his life.

Moses the psalmist suggests that we should pray for wisdom so that we can live those brief years well. To number our days is to make every day of our lives count for God. They may be days of pain and suffering. But if our afflictions draw us near to God, it is a day counted for Him.

As people age, they are a source of wisdom and learning gained over many years (Job 12:12). Wisdom gained by age will result in less doing and more being of us. In Titus 2:2, Paul considers what older men should be: sober, reverent, temperate, and sound in faith, in love and in

patience (NKJV). Such righteous elderly shall flourish like a palm tree, according to the psalmist. ‘They shall still bear fruit in old age, they shall be fresh and flourishing’ (Psalm 92:14).

Psalm 90 is a wake up call for me. Having reached this milestone of octogenarian age by the grace of God, I think it is opportune for me to look back and take stock of my life journey so far. What changes have I gone through?

My most cherished memory of my younger days would be in 1975, the day I returned from London and Glasgow after successfully finishing the gruelling membership examination of the Royal College of Physicians. Some colleagues regarded my success as legendary because I did not have the benefit of clinical attachment and had in fact gone on a Cosmos fortnight tour of Western Europe in between the two parts of the exam. Others tauntingly called it a manifestation of ‘diplomatosis’ since I already held two other equivalent postgraduate degrees.

In his book ‘Christian Behaviour’, C.S. Lewis saw pride as a vice of the utmost evil. He called it a spiritual cancer that eats up the very possibility of love, contentment and even common

sense. Unlike other vices, it is far more subtle and deadly. Pride is essentially competitive. It is through comparing with others that makes you proud, giving you the pleasure of being above the rest. It always results in enmity, not only enmity between man and man, but also enmity to God. A proud man so used to look down on others is unable to look up for something that is above him. Lewis suggests that the real test of being in the presence of God is when you either forget about yourself altogether or see yourself as a small dirty object.

Pride drives me to seek recognition. Soon I became restless and felt that Segamat hospital was too small for me. And I was about to complete my seven years bond with the Malaysian government. So I applied to the National University of Singapore medical school for a lecturer post. Against all odds I was called for interview and eventually was accepted. However, I made a shockingly foolish decision of rejecting the offer because I considered the terms unattractive. Many years later, I realized the cause of my blunder. I did not have the benefit of knowing and following Proverb 3:5-6, ‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your

ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your path straight'.

I went into private practice, first as a partner in a group practice and later as a consultant with a newly opened private hospital. I quit after two years when I had problems with the management and felt discouraged that the hospital was not getting good support from GP's.

Running my own clinic allowed me much leeway and ample time for reading and reflection. One thing I discovered was that my medical school in my time did not teach the students the art of effective communication with patients and winning their trust.

I began to examine myself and gradually gained insight into my own disposition. I became aware of my spiritual needs when I came across Jesus' teaching in my wife's Bible: 'What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?' (Matt. 16:26).

I was baptised in 2006 at the age of 65. As a Christian, I am exhorted to live a life that reflects Christ's character, values and deeds. The Spirit of Truth that indwells in me will transform me by the process of sanctification which will go on till I become Christlike, bearing the fruit of the Spirit and restoring the image of God in me.

These are the seven changes in me, in accordance with the scriptures.

1. I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances' (Phil. 4:11). The key to my contentment is not to envy what others have and to avoid making comparison. By God's grace I have earned and saved enough for my living expenses till God calls me home. 'But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it' (1 Timothy 6:6). 'Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have' (Hebrews 13:5).

2. I have learned to be patient with others and with myself. I listened to patients' complaints carefully and to my spouse when she narrated the same incident for umpteen times. I waited patiently for the traffic light to turn green even when the junction was clear of vehicles from all direction. 'A patient man has great understanding, but a quick tempered man displays folly' (Proverb 14:29).

3. I am pleased when my wife who has a bent for bargaining agrees with me not to argue with the seller about price. Let the man make a profit so that his financial burden may ease a little. 'Be kind and compassionate to one another,

forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you' (Ephesians 4:32). 'And the Lord's servant must not quarrel, instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful' (2 Timothy 2:24).

4. I have learned not to correct other people even when I know they are wrong, since further argument may ruin the relationship. 'Live in peace with each other' (1 Thess. 5:13). 'Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord' (Hebrews 12:14).

5. I will walk away from people who don't value me or think highly of themselves. 'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to have mercy and to walk humbly with your God' (Micah 6:8). 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble' (James 4:6).

6. I have learned not to worry about matters or circumstances beyond my control. Jesus said, 'Which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?' (Matt 6:27). 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God' (Phil. 4:6).

7. I have learned to live one day at a time. 'Why, you do not even

know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.' (James 4:14). 'Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth' (Proverb 27:1).

Dr R.Paul Stevens, professor of applied theology at Regent College, Vancouver, commented in the introductory notes of his study guide on Revelation chapters 14 and 15. 'Sometimes we put missionaries on a pedestal admiring them for their commitment but distancing ourselves from their work. If we consider any involvement in mission ourselves, we may see it as a leisure time occupation, something one elects to do if one has opportunity, inclination and time.'

His remarks tend to reverberate in my mind each time I go on my mission trip to Rompin. In HLCE, we have more than a handful of medical doctors among our members, young and old, in active practice or retirement, who are undoubtedly not short of opportunity, inclination and time for mission work. Yet, repeated appeals to them have been futile so far, despite the overwhelming response from the Orang Asli to our ministry.

To be committed to mission work, one should be clear about

mission motives. I agree with critics that, faced with lack of facilities for investigation of diseases and limited therapeutic options, there is not much a doctor can do for the orang asli. However, with these motives in mind, I was able to persevere with my mission work for the last five years.

1. Christ's love. Because Christ died for our sin, we also are dead to our old lives. We no longer live to please ourselves, but to Christ who rose from the grave.

(2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

2. Christ's judgement. We are saved to do good work. All believers are exhorted to offer their bodies as living sacrifices to God (Romans 12:1). They will face Christ on the day of judgement. He will reward those who have served Him faithfully.

(1 Corinthians 3:13-15)

3. Christ's ambassadors. God reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the message of reconciliation. Christ has committed to us the message. We are therefore His ambassadors.

(2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

At this stage, it is premature and presumptuous of me to claim 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith' (2 Timothy 4:7).

Meanwhile, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic which poses greater risk of fatality for the elderly, it would be logical for me to remain at home and pray that God will send me a replacement and grant me a second retirement. Amen

## **From A Pastor's Desk**

### **Yearning for Heaven**

*By Rev Dr Chuah Seong Peng*

We have just completed our study and preaching on the Book of Revelation. One of the things I appreciated and benefited most from the series is an awakening and a renewed sense of enthusiasm for heaven.

C S Lewis wrote, “If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.”

Rick Warren in an interview by Paul Bradshaw shared that “We were not made to last forever, and God wants us to be with Him in Heaven...and the purpose of life, in a nutshell is: life is preparation for eternity.

Heaven plays a vital role for our life. Without heaven, ‘self’ becomes the centre of our life and church will become a self-serving entertainment and therapeutic centre. The pervasiveness of such lives and culture in our world today tell us how elusive heaven has become in the mindsets of people including Christians. The way the people of the world live tells us many are living with the mindset of only one world, here

and now. Heaven is an afterthought. They pour out all their energies, investments, resources, times, and talents hoping to find safety, security, and satisfaction here. But as we know the reality of such dreams of true safety, security, and satisfaction will always evade them.

Why does heaven escape us? There are many reasons. Some of which are busyness of our life, worldly pursuits and success, and scepticism concerning reality of heaven planted by the prince of this world. But let us not be deceived or be distracted. Let us recapture the beauty and glory of heaven and live with hope of heaven in our hearts. We will have a transformed sense of identity and security here on earth as citizens of heaven whose eternal dwelling is with God in the city He builds and designs for us. We truly look forward to the new heaven and new earth where we will finally be home at last with all our loved ones and friends as we live out His kingdom purpose here.

**How do we know if one is seriously yearning for His return?**

According to John, all of us who have this yearning of heaven purify ourselves. 1 John 3:2-3  
“Dear friends, now we are

children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.<sup>3</sup> All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.”

John tells us, if you say you believe in the return of the Lord and eagerly looking forward to it, then there will be evidence in your life where you stay ready, purifying yourself to be like Jesus. Otherwise, it's just head knowledge. This attitude of yearning for heaven also has a great impact on how we live our life here for His kingdom. When we embrace heaven in our hearts, we live this life with a heavenly mind and be of earthly use.

According to CS Lewis, “If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most in the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this.”

As we live a holy life setting ourselves apart for God and His purpose, we will serve Him and others more sacrificially. Witnessing for God will become a top priority. Prayer will become more persistent and constant. Therefore, let us all live the holy

life surrendering ourselves totally to God with this yearning of heaven in our hearts.

Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!  
Amen.

# Retirement and the Christian Life

By Dr Alex Tang

The idea of people being ‘too old to work’ appeared around the 18th Century. Prior to that, too few people lived to be ‘too old to work’. It was the German Emperor, William I who, at the bidding of Bismarck in 1881, introduced the proposal for retirement in a letter to the Reichstag: “...those who are disabled from work by age and invalidity have a well-grounded claim to care from the state” (Wikipedia). The retirement age was for people over 65 years old. Retirement and retirement age became accepted during the Industrial Revolution in Europe. Fast forward to the present day when people are retired at their 50s and 60s. These people are still relatively healthy and productive. They usually live for another 20-30 years. Some go into second careers. What happened to the rest? The question is that what do they do during these 20-30 years? It is a long time to sit and wait to die but that is essentially what they are doing. What does the Bible teaches about retirement and is there a magic age for retirement?

Numbers 8:23-26 seems to mention this for the Levites.



23 The Lord said to Moses, 24 “This applies to the Levites: Men twenty-five years old or more shall come to take part in the work at the tent of meeting, 25 but at the age of fifty, they must retire from their regular service and work no longer. 26 They may assist their brothers in performing their duties at the tent of meeting, but they themselves must not do the work. This, then, is how you are to assign the responsibilities of the Levites.”

The working-age for Levites was from 25-50 years old. The Levites worked hard because they had to break down and put up the Tabernacle whenever the main camp moved. This will take strong and hardy men to perform the tasks. One commentary noted: “After a Levite had reached the mandatory retirement age of fifty, he was still free to assist his younger coworkers as long as he was able to do so (perhaps at the

great festivals), but he no longer was to do the hard and difficult work he had done in his prime.”<sup>[1]</sup> The general meaning seems to be that the Levite can continue to offer assistance beyond the age of fifty, but that he has no regular commitment, probably on a rota.<sup>[2]</sup>This is legislated for Levites but none of us is Levites.

However, the idea of retirement age and post-retirement service is good. When we are working at a job, we work to the terms of our contract which included stated working hours (unless you are flexi-time), the number of days of leave, and horrors, assessment by KPIs. These are necessary for some seasons of our life when we are building a career, marriage, growing a family, and developing a portfolio. However, there will be a time when we need to move beyond that, and that is when the idea of retirement become useful.

Retirement is the milestone where we move from a structured-life season to a more flexible semi-structured season of life. This season is when our careers have been established, our children have left home, our mortgages paid up (hopefully), and we are wearied by the routines of the structured life. This retirement, I have in mind, is not dictated by chronological

age but by kairos time. Kairos time is God calling us to move from one season of life into the next season. This new post-retirement period is when we have more time and resources to pursue a new avenue of service for God. It may be another call which is empowered now by our passion, our network and resources, and our lived-experiences. These are powerful combinations for our post-retirement vocation.

As we plan for our retirement from our jobs, we also need to plan for our post-retirement service. In order to plan for a smooth transition from our pre-and post-retirement seasons, we must prepare well in advance. The following steps will be helpful:

1. Understand the process. It will not be easy to move from a structured working lifestyle to a semi-structured post-retirement life.
2. Recognize the hand of God in your life and discern to know when it is the kairos.
3. Take time to step back and access your current situation. Are you ready to make the transition?
4. Keep track of what is happening. Is it the kairos

moment? Are you feeling increasingly restless with your structured life (not due to stress or burn-out)? Do you discern that you have achieved all that you want to achieve and feel it is time to move on?

5. Trust in God. These are the seasons of our lives. There is a time and place for everything.

Retirement and the retirement age is a dated concept in our contemporary society. As Christians, we should look at these as a gift of years from God. The years we have are a gift of the seasons of life which He has given us the privilege to experience. Let our retirement age be, not a fixed age but a milestone in our journey with God.

# The Resurrected Christ

*By Dr Alex Tang*

## **Summary**

The resurrection of Christ on Easter is about remembrance, renewal, restoration, and re-creation.

## **Introduction**

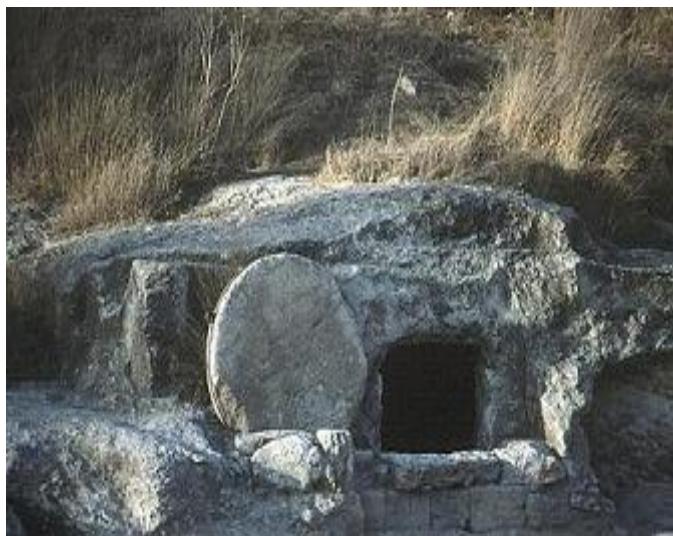
Easter is a day of celebration. We remembered the passion of the Christ on Good Friday; Jesus' secret illegal arrest at night, his trial by the Sanhedrin and the people, his questioning by Pontius Pilate, his whipping and humiliation by the soldiers, his rejection by his people who chose Barrabas instead of him, his judgement, his carrying the cross through the streets of Jerusalem, his crucifixion, his dying and death on the cross. And he was quickly and quietly buried before sundown on the Friday. All this happened more than 2,000 years ago. All this would have been forgotten except for one thing. Jesus claimed that he is God and that he will rise again from the dead. And it happened exactly as he said! The 4 Rs of Easter is

remembrance, renewal, restoration, and re-creation.

## REMEMBRANCE

Luke 24:1-8

*LK 24:1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the*



*Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered*

*into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " 8 Then they remembered his words.*

Why do you look for the living among the dead? That is the important question. Jesus has risen from the dead. Therefore all that he taught is the truth and we can trust him. We remember and celebrate Easter because it marks a new era in human history, and also in the history of the whole creation. The resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday marks the beginning of God's work of renewal, restoration, and re-creation. In Genesis, we read that God created the whole creation in 6 days and he rested on the 7th. On the 8th day, which is Easter Sunday, God begins his work of renewal, restoration, and re-creation.

## RENEWAL

### (i) Kingdom of God

Mark 1:15

*15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!"*

Romans 14:17-18

*17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking,*

*but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.*

The Kingdom of God is not a physical kingdom. It is not something we can see or touch. The kingdom of God is when God rules in our hearts. This kingdom has a now and later perspective. The kingdom of God arrives when Jesus walks the earth. It is already here on earth, in the hearts of men who are believers in God. It will also come again when Jesus comes again in the Second Coming to start God's Millennium Kingdom on earth. Easter gave a boost to the expansion of the kingdom of God. That is why it is a time of renewal.

### **(ii) The New Covenant**

Easter also marks the beginning of the New Covenant. The Old Covenant or the Mosaic Covenant was between God and the people of Israel, mediated through Moses. It was a covenant of Law. The Law is supreme on earth because it represented God. Break it and God shall break you. The New Covenant is between God and all people. It

is mediated by Jesus Christ. It is a covenant of grace.

Hebrews 9:15

*HEB 9:15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

[...Old Covenant.....Good Friday][Sabbath rest/Holy Saturday][Easter/Jesus resurrection...New covenant...]

Romans 6:14

*<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

No longer are we condemned by the Law. Jesus Christ by dying on the cross has taken on all our sins. We are declared righteous by the Law. It is a legal standing. Our slate has been wiped clean. We no longer have a criminal record. That is why on Easter, we are able to enter into the New Covenant with God. God is holy. We can only enter into a relationship with God only if we are holy. We are now holy because of Jesus Christ dying for our sins on the cross.

### **(iii) New Person**

2 Cor. 5:17

*17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

Not only our legal standing in God's court makes us holy, we also received a new nature. We are a new person, a new creation in Christ. Our old sinful human nature has been renewed.

The Old Covenant is about the Law. The Law says, "You cannot do this, you cannot do that." The Law is THOU SHALT NOT. The New Covenant is about grace. Grace says, "What will Love do?" "What will Jesus do?"

There is a personal friend who was a pastor of a large church. His first wife died of cancer so he remarried. Unfortunately his second marriage did not work out, in spite of all they tried to do to salvage it: counselling, prayers, and interventions of other Godly Christians. They divorced. My friend had a hard time because of this divorce. He resigned as a pastor and for many years was avoided by many Christians. Then he

remarried again. After his remarriage, he was offered and accepted a pastor post in a church in Singapore.

What does the Law say?

\*Deu. 22:13-21, 2-29 states that divorce was not permitted

\*God hates divorce (Mal.2:16)

\*Divorce is a failure of what God intends for humans (Mk.10:5-9)

\*Remarriage is committing adultery (Mt.5:32; Luke 16:18b)

The Law says sinner, sinner, and sinner!

Someone wrote to "Dear Chai Hok" column in April/May issue of Asian Beacon to ask. "Can a Divorced & Remarried Person be appointed as a Pastor?" I like Chai Hok's answer. Is murder a sin? Can it be forgiven? Yes. Is divorce a sin? Is it an unforgivable sin? Can it be forgiven? Then why don't we forgive that person and allow him to be a pastor. That is grace. That is renewal in this time of Easter from a covenant of law to a covenant of grace.

## **RESTORATION**

### **(i) Forgiveness of sin**

Matt. 26:28

*<sup>28</sup> This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

The dying of Jesus on the cross has won us forgiveness of God. Our rebellion had made God angry. Under the old law, “the wages of sin is death.” This means we will all die. I am talking about spiritual death. This spiritual death means spending the rest of eternity in hell. Jesus, who is sinless because he is also God, died for our sins and thus earned forgiveness for us. In Easter, we are reminded that we have already received forgiveness for our sins.

## **(ii) Reconciliation with God**

Romans 5:11

*<sup>11</sup> Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

Having being forgiven and declared holy, we can be reconciled with God. A relationship that is broken is now mended. God created humans higher than the angels. God created us so that he can be our friend. He wants a relationship with his

creation. Easter reminds us of the restored relationship with God.

## **(iii) Hope**

Titus 2:11-14

*TIT 2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. <sup>12</sup> It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, <sup>13</sup> while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

Easter is a hope of renewing our hope. Our hope is in Jesus, our God and Saviour. Our hope is that he will take care of us, heals our diseases, protects us from the wicked and disasters, protects our families, guides us in the right road, and in the end, eternal life with God.

Did you even have a broken relationship with someone you love? Because of some incident, that close loving relationship

you have is cut. You do not or cannot talk to each other. You feel hurt and anger. All those years of loving and close relationship experience in the past have been forgotten. How can that be? Can we forget what has gone before because of what happened now to sever the relationship? God asked, can a mother forget the baby she has breast fed. Easter is when relationship is mended, a broken relationship restored.

## RE-CREATION

### (i) New heaven and earth

Rev. 21:1-4

*REV 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order*

*of things has passed away.”*

That is our hope and that is God's re-creation. In Genesis, the perfect paradise or the Garden of Eden was closed to us by human rebellion. Now God is working to re-create a new heaven and earth.

### (ii) Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8

*8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

When Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to us. The Holy Spirit indwells us. The Holy Spirit is God. He empowers us with the power to do God's work.

### (iii) The Great Commission

2 Cor 5:19-21

*19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21*

*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Matt. 28: 18-20

*<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

God is re-creating his whole creation. This means the people and nature. What is exciting is that this time, he wants us to help him. We are called to be co-creators with God. Of course, we cannot create something out of nothing. We are not God. However, we are to work with the existing materials to help God re-create the world. We are called to “make disciples of all nations” and we are to be God’s ambassadors “for the message of reconciliation.”

## **Conclusion**

The resurrection of Christ on Easter shows God’s work on renewal, restoration, and re-creation. It is also a time of forgiveness. Picture in your mind someone who has hurt you, someone who has caused you pain. Someone you hate. Than say on this Easter day, as God has forgiven me, I forgive you. Sincerely forgive the person. Ask God to help you forgive that person. And set yourself on the road of remembrance, renewal, restoration, and re-creation.

Soli Deo Gloria

# **Teo's Update**

## **April 2021**

Dear friends,

Greetings! And trust this email finds you keeping well.

Time certainly has flown by quickly and in a wink of an eye, we now have been here for nearly 9 months already. We give thanks for the way God has helped us settle in well despite the pandemic and social restrictions imposed in the city and we are gradually getting more involved in work and ministry.

### **OM Work**

The pandemic has certainly affected the ability to mobilize and send out short and long term workers to the field. Recently, I was assigned an additional portfolio, apart from East Asia, to also process applicants from Canada, who wish to serve on the OM ship Logos Hope. We just accepted a young man who wish to go for a two year commitment on the ship, and another young man who wish to go for a few months towards the end of this year. The Logos Hope would soon be going for dry dock inspection and repairs at the end of April in one of the islands at the Caribbean. At the next changeover, the ship

would require a lot more personnel and we need to pray for more volunteers to serve on board. Due to Covid, a lot of the ship ministry had been affected as the bookshop and the programs could not be carried out. But we thank God that recently, when the ship was at St Vincent in the Caribbean islands, the ship was able to supply food and water to the residents who were badly affected by the volcano eruption. They were also able to help at the Bahamas by giving humanitarian aid and helping with rebuilding projects when a hurricane hit this area last year. I am also currently processing a young couple who are applying to go for a short term hiking mission trip to Nepal. We thank God that in Nepal, some of our colleagues have been able to hike to the villages and distribute tracts and Bibles and there has been a number of conversions! We continue to pray for the work of God to grow and expand despite the pandemic.

### **Refugee Work**

I continue to join the zoom meetings with the refugee community group and there are more of the refugees arriving in Canada. Recently I got to befriend two Afghan men and managed to call them on whatsApp. As I hear their stories, I find it is not easy for them as

they leave their family and children behind to come by themselves first to Canada with the hope of a better life, and then bring their family over at a later time. Do pray for opportunity to make meaningful friendships with them, and hopefully to meet them in person sometime soon.

### **Online friends**

With all the zoom opportunities, I signed up for BSF weekly Bible Study with a group of men; I also join a study group with a group from Leader Impact, which focuses on marketplace ministry. And there is also the Mentors Group which I am now helping as a small group facilitator. I am also half-way through an OM People Care Course and that helps in learning how to care for workers on the field. Most of these meetings are in the evenings and that is good for me too as it keeps me busy and gives me an opportunity to make some new contacts.

### **Spring has come!**

The weather here has become much nicer with the change of season. We managed to go and enjoy the cherry blossoms springing up and enjoy the walks by the trails nearby. We thank God for this new season of our lives. The work and ministry here is very different from our past service in China. We thank

God we still have the opportunity to keep abreast of the work in China through participating in some MSI Canada meetings here.

As we settle into a new season of ministry, a verse about seasons came to mind in Leviticus when God assured the Israelites – “If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit.” Yes, we pray God will continue to rain His blessings on each one of us in its season, that we may be fruitful in our lives and ministry in spite of the pandemic.

Thank you for your prayers and coming alongside us.

Continue to stay safe.

Blessings,  
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NB: Contributions to Sinews newsletter, via email to [spcheong88@gmail.com](mailto:spcheong88@gmail.com) (in Microsoft Word format), in the form of articles, testimonies and original photographs (with captions) are welcome, but we reserve the right to edit them in the interest of HLCE. Views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent that of HLCE or the editor.



## Easter Sunday Service

### April 4, 2021

#### Resurrection is True

*<sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, <sup>8</sup> and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.*



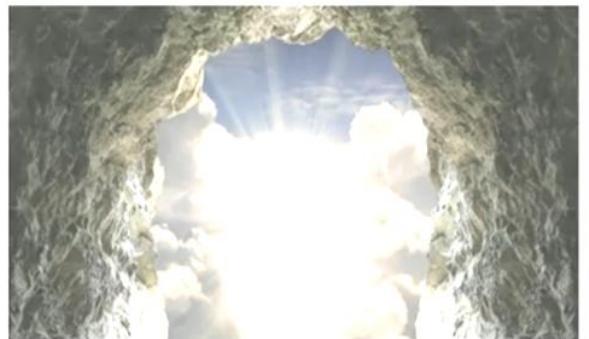
**The Empty Cross  
Our sins are paid in full  
Past, Present, and Future.**

**We live the new life with  
forgiveness of sin  
now and forevermore**



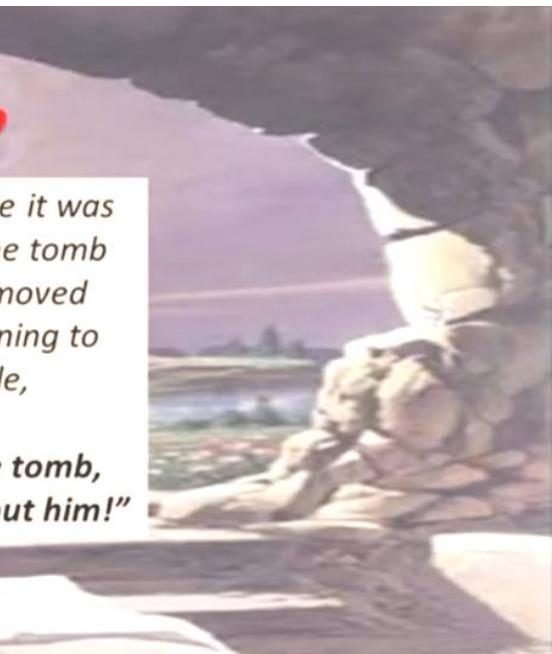
**Christ was  
Resurrected**

<sup>3</sup> For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,



**The Empty Tomb**

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. <sup>2</sup> So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"



**John 20:1-2**



**Place of worship/activities at  
Kpg Kerpal, financed by HLCE**



**Pastor Yohanes, Pastor Alak and their assistants Chan  
and Harony receiving 2 guitars donated by  
Elder & Mrs Tommy Leong on 13th April 2021.**



Pastor Yohanes,  
Pastor Alak  
and their  
assistants  
Chan and  
Harony  
receiving the  
Toyota Avanza  
donated by  
**Dr & Mrs Lee  
Thian Chai**  
on  
13<sup>th</sup> April  
2021.