

# Faith Journey 信心之旅

A quarterly newsletter of Faith Methodist Church

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The views expressed by the authors are not necessarily the views of the church.

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For non-Muslims only

## The Pastor's Message

# What is a Church and who is the Church?



As I write this, the MCO has been in force for 29 days. As your pastor, I have not seen all of you for Sunday Worship for 4 weeks now. The question must be answered as to "are we still a church"? Of course we are! But it makes me reflect on the identity of the church and my own calling as a Pastor.

The church came into existence in the book of Acts after Peter's powerful sermon on Pentecost. The Bible tells in Acts 2:42-47 that they *"devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ... everyday they meet together in the temple courts.... broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts."*

It was only in Acts 5, after the incident with Ananias and Sapphira that the word "church" was used. Vs 11 – *Great fear gripped the entire church.*

The word "church" (in Greek *ekklēsia*) appears 114 times in the letters of the Apostles Paul and John. The word was used only once in the Gospel when Jesus told Peter *"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. (Matthew 16:18)*

And since then, no powers of evil, no wars, no disasters, no plagues had been able to overcome the church. In the history of the Christian Church, we had faced 2 World Wars and numerous plagues, churches had been bombed and burnt, pastors and Christians killed or imprisoned, and the Bible set on fire again and again. Yet, as in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the rock that was not cut by human hand destroyed all the kingdoms (Daniel 2:35b) became a kingdom that will never be destroyed or conquered (vs 44)

And so even in the midst of this current pandemic, we are assured that the church will go through this with our Lord and Master.

On Good Friday as I preached to an empty sanctuary with a heavy heart, the Lord showed me on Easter Sunday that as the empty tomb is a symbol of His Resurrection, the empty sanctuary is a symbol of His commission.

We have been sent to the world! Jesus had already told us to be the salt and light of the world. And so, dear members of FMC, we are still the church, we are the church commissioned and sent.

### **The call to be the church and the mission of the church has not changed.**

We don't know how long it will be before most of us can come back to church to worship. But when we can't go to church, we can be the church!

Jesus said "where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:20) and so wherever we are, at home or in our places of work and studies, we are the church.

Anywhere when a group of God's children are gathered, someone should teach the Bible, everyone to worship and pray and there is the church.

### **Church hasn't been cancelled. Church can't be cancelled. If the gates of hell can't shut the church down, neither will COVID-19.**

The message never changes. The mission never changes.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, we are still the church and we continue to be the Faith Methodist Church; preaching, sharing, and living our faith wherever we are.

*The LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
the LORD turn his face toward you  
and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)*

Your Pastor,  
Rev Lenita Tiong §



# 什么是教会？谁是教会？

当我写下这篇文章的时候，我们已经进入行动管制令（MCO）的第二十九天了。身为你们的牧者，我已经四个星期没有见到你们了！有个迫切需要回答的问题是，“我们还是个教会吗？”我们当然是！然而，这也促使我反思教会的身份和我自身作牧师的呼召。

自从彼得在使徒行传记载的五旬节大有能力的讲道后，教会就开始存在。圣经在使徒行传第2章42-47节说，“都恒心遵守使徒的教训，彼此交接，掰饼，祈祷……他们天天同心合意恒切地在殿里，且在家中掰饼，存着欢喜，诚实的心用饭。”

在使徒行传第五章，经过亚拿尼亚和撒非喇事件过后，“教会”这个词才开始被使用。第11节 - “全教会…都甚惧怕。”

“教会”（在希腊文里称为ekklesia）这个词在使徒保罗和约翰的书信里提了114次。在福音书里，“教会”只有在耶稣告诉彼得说，“我还告诉你：你是彼得，我要把我的教会建造在这磐石上，阴间的权柄不能胜过他。”（马太福音第16章18节）

从此以后，再也没有任何邪恶的势力，战争，灾难，瘟疫能够占领教会。在教会的历史中，我们经历过两次的世界大战和无数次的瘟疫，教堂被炸毁，烧毁，牧者和基督徒被杀害或囚禁，圣经甚至一次又一次地被焚烧。然而，在尼布甲尼撒（巴比伦王）的梦境里，那一块非人手凿出来的石头打碎灭绝那一切国（但以理书第2章25b节），成立另一个永不败坏的一国（44节）。

所以，即使在当前的肺炎大流行的时刻，我们确信，上帝必然与我们众教会一起度过这个难关。

受难节那天，当我带着沉重的心情在空无一人的圣堂传讲信息时，上帝在复活节向我表明，空墓是祂复活的象征，而空荡荡的圣堂是祂差遣我们的象征。

我们已经被差遣送到世界！耶稣已经告诉我们，要成为世界的光和盐。所以，我亲爱的信心堂会友们，我们仍然是教会，是被委托和差派的教会。

## 教会的呼召和使命永不改变

我们不晓得还有多久才能回到实体教会敬拜。但我们确实知道，虽然我们不能到教会，我们仍然是教会！

耶稣说，“因为无论在哪里，有两三个人奉我的名聚会，那里就有我在他们中间。”（马太福音18:20）说以，无论我们在何处，在家或是在工作和学习的地方，我们就是教会。

不论在何处，只要上帝的儿女聚集，有人教导圣经，每个人一起敬拜和祷告，那里就是教会。

**教会并没有被关闭。教会不会被关闭。如果地狱之门不能关闭教会，新冠肺炎也不能。**

主的信息永不改变。主的使命也永不改变。

所以，我亲爱的弟兄姐妹，我们仍然是教会，我们的信心堂也会持续下去；传讲，分享和活出我们的信仰。

耶和华赐福给你，保护你。

愿耶和华使他的脸光照你，

赐恩给你。

愿耶和华向你仰脸，

赐你平安。（民数记6: 24-26）

你的牧者，  
张小娟牧师

# Getting to know Rev Lenita Tiong

By Ting Su Hie

**R**ev Lenita Tiong hails from Sibu. She studied in Methodist primary school and secondary school but her Form Six education was in Tanjong Lobang Secondary School, Miri. From there, she went on to National University of Singapore (NUS) for her Bachelor of Science Mathematics degree. While in NUS, she felt homesick as it was the first time she was so far away from home. Somebody shared the gospel with her and she accepted Christ.

Although she had grown up in a Christian home, it was a traditional set up where the family went to church every Sunday but did not understand the meaning of being a Christian. Through the NUS Varsity Christian Fellowship, Rev Lenita grew a lot. To this day, she is thankful for this part of her life.

## God called

This was also the time when the Lord called her to serve him as a missionary. She was in Year 2 of her studies and her reply to the Lord was "No, Lord, send someone else. I will earn lots of money and I'll support missionaries." Isaiah 6: 8 to her was "Here I am, Lord, send him." The real version in the Bible says, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"

After graduation, she started working in Singapore as a computer analyst to serve her scholarship bond. Once at a Missions Conference, the Lord's call was loud and clear: "The field is white with harvest, and the workers are few." (Matthew 9: 37 says "Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.'")

She planned to go for theological training after she completed her bond but her Dad was against the idea. She struggled between obeying her heavenly father and her earthly father.

## Waiting for Dad's blessing

She finally decided to come back to Bintulu to work. She took the job of an administrator and was paid RM800, which is low for a graduate but it was alright with her because she did not intend to stay long at the job. After one year of working, she asked her father if she could go for theological studies. "No," he said. So she continued to work.

After five years, he said, "you may go." Rev Lenita was relieved to have her father's blessing. With a joyful heart, she went off to Trinity Theological College (TTC), Singapore to pursue a Masters degree in Divinity.

## Serving as a pastor in Sibu

The two years went by more quickly than she expected. When she graduated, she was in her mid-thirties. Her first posting was in a Chinese church in Sibu under the Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference (SCAC). She said,

"my mastery of Chinese was only 10% and I could not read Chinese characters. I had only learnt Mandarin as a subject up to Form Five as I was in the English medium in Methodist primary and secondary schools. I took Mandarin tuition and have a dual language Bible with Chinese and English verses on the same page. When I need to preach in Mandarin, I use simpler words. For example, if I had to say redemption, I would say 'Jesus died for us' in Mandarin."

In Xin Fu Yuan Methodist Church, Brooke Drive, Rev Lenita had to preach at the second service in Foochow. Thank God, she survived that period. Then her second appointment was at the in Tien Tao Methodist Church, Sungai Merah. For the second service, her sermons in Mandarin were translated to Hin Hua. One and a half years later she resigned from SCAC.

## Working in TTC, Singapore

When the principal of TTC learnt that she wanted to leave SCAC, he asked her to work there as his personal assistant. She did. The Lord knew what He was doing.

At TTC, she learnt all about theological education, course curriculum and accreditation etc. After three years, she was back again on Sarawak soil again. Rev Ting Daik Chuong who was the President of SCAC then had asked her to come back to Sarawak and so she rejoined SCAC. This time she was posted to Wesley Methodist Church, Sibuluan, an English speaking church.

### **Serving as a missionary in Cambodia**

From there Rev Lenita went to Cambodia as a missionary. There were many incidents of culture shock and once when she went to a village for ministry, she was shocked to see the villagers surrounding the house she was staying in. They had come to just see her as if she was an alien. She had to learn the Khmer language and culture and according to her, there are many more stories to be told.

Rev Lenita helped to establish the Cambodian Methodist Bible School using what she had learnt from TTC. She designed the curriculum, course description, credit hours, and arranged for full time and part time lecturers.

Since she knew the staff and faculty from TTC, she could con-

tact them for help whenever she needed advice. Because of this, she was able to arrange for membership and later accreditation with the Association of South-east Asian Theological School.

### **Looking after Mum**

In the year 2006, her father passed away. Her Mum was grieving very badly and Rev Lenita decided to come home for a few months to be with her in Bintulu. The few months turned into years because her Mum had a stroke. She then made the hard decision not to go back to Cambodia, as she wanted to look after her Mum.

So back to the pastoral ministry she went. This time it was Wesley Methodist Church again where she spent four years. This was followed by Trinity Methodist Church (2 years), Grace Methodist Church (4 years) and Faith Methodist Church in 2020. Rev Lenita said,

"To my congregation who feel hurt and disappointed, I would like to say some encouraging words to you. Wherever you are, whoever you are with, God has put us there for a purpose. God has a purpose either to build you or someone else up. If we have this perspective, then we should resolve it with the one who is responsible, that is, God. Often we take it out on those who are not responsible."

For example, children who look after their aged parents

may find that their parents take out their anger on them.

She has experienced many blessings looking after her Mum. She learnt a lot of patience and skills in caring for her, such as carrying her, knowing medical conditions and medical terms. She also learnt about air splint, that is, a splint which is filled with air to keep the arm straight. Thank God for this because her mum's arm can be straightened and is not in a fixed position like many stroke patients.

Rev Lenita is thankful for Karen, her Cambodian helper who helps to look after her Mum. At the same time, Karen learnt multiple Malaysian languages during her stay here; English, Malay, Chinese and Foochow. Rev Lenita concluded with this:

"I often liken my life to swimming. After swimming for a while, I would turn around and look back and see how far I had come. In life too, I looked back and saw many lessons learnt amidst the loops and ups-and-downs. I am thankful to my Heavenly Father for His hand in my life. I am thankful that I am here in FMC and look forward to journeying and growing together in God's word and ministry of the church." §

# God's Grace in my Recent KL trip during MCO (Movement Control Order)

By Sew Boon Lui

**I'**m a Metastatic Breast Cancer survivor and patient. I was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 2006 - the greatest blow to my life at that time, as my children were only 5 and 9 years old respectively. I cried out to God for His mercy and healing to be upon me so that I could see my children growing. Thank God that through all the necessary treatments (surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy plus 5 years of oral hormonal medication), God sustained me and my cancer went into remission.

11 years later, in June 2017, I experienced unexplained chest pain and an occasional dry cough with difficulty in deep breathing. Upon further investigation and diagnosis, I was told that my cancer had invaded my right lung, liver and some parts of my spine. It was certainly a shocking news to me and my family - another life storm that I had to weather through! This time I was much more assured that God had His purpose and He would still see me through, that I should just cling onto His promises! True enough, I was blessed to have Targeted Therapy drug that worked for me and put my cancer under good control since then.

On Oct 2019, my doctor discovered that one of the tumours in my liver had increased in size, while other smaller tumours had remained stable. Immediately I went through an ablation procedure hoping to kill this particular tumour. However, on 12-March this year, CT-Scan result showed that this tumour was growing again aggressively and needing immediate treatment! My oncologist recommended me to explore an advanced targeted radiotherapy - SBRT treatment which I could only seek in KL/PJ private hospital.

So I bought my air ticket to fly out on 19-March, after doing one round of PET/CT SCAN in Kuching to ascertain my medical condition. And then the MCO kicked in on 18-March. Would my KL trip be affected? I thought in my heart. Then I was assured that with medical treatment needs supported by my doctor's letter, the immigration would allow me to travel. True enough, by God's grace, I managed to receive my treatment in a private hospital in PJ last week!

I have experienced so much of God's presence, guidance and leading throughout this very unusual treatment trip to KL. God had placed in my heart His extraordinary peace which was far beyond my comprehension:

- I thank God that even though my 7:10am flight on 19-March was canceled, I was able to catch the later morning flight on that same day to KL.
- I thank God that even though my 19-March appointment had to be postponed for 2 days till 21-March (because the hospital needed me to do COVID-19 test with throat swab & nasal swab. Results were negative - PTL!)
- I thank God that Dr Tho in the private hospital assured me that SBRT treatment would be suitable to tackle my tumour and he would help me get my treatment completed by Saturday/28-March.
- I thank God for my 10 comfortable nights stay in a hotel room all by myself (I have been advised to isolate myself, not even meeting with my sister or any friend in case of cross-contamination), my transport to the hospital was made easy through a short 5-7 min-drive (mainly using hotel transport service); food wise, I had enough variety through room service and occasional tapao'ed food from the kopitiam across the road from the hotel.



- And thank God for the technology - I managed to keep in touch with my family members (son in Manchester, daughter in Penang, hubby in Kuching) through video call regularly; and I was also able to join two live-streaming Worship Service by Sibu Masland Methodist Church and 3 virtual prayer meetings during my stay in KL/PJ. It was so heartwarming to experience our closeness in spirit even though we were geographically and physically far from each other.
- I thank God for a few brothers and sisters who had been praying fervently for my trip and my treatment with constant caring messaging. God's love has been so much experienced through these caring group of prayer warriors!
- I thank God that even though I experienced soreness at my lower back after the first SBRT session, the soreness disappeared the next morning after a good night rest. And amazingly the soreness got less and less after each session!
- I thank God that even though many flights have been halted due to MCO and I had to pay for an expensive airfare for the only flight available on Sunday (29-March) afternoon, I managed to fly home safely with the plane less than half full.
- I thank God that though I needed to be on 14 days Stay Home Notice (SHN) imposed by Sarawak Government till 12-Apr, there's not much difference from everyone else since we are all under MCO till 14-Apr, at least!

I hope that what I've experienced during my recent KL trip will be a testimony to God's glory and His amazing grace and mercy.

Yes, we tend to feel worried and anxious with all the uncertainties amid this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. We just have to keep reminding ourselves that God is still in control and He will take care of us all. Trust and obey, as there's no other way. Glory be to God. Amen.

30 March 2020 §

## 数算主典 - 我在 行动管制令期间 的吉隆坡之旅

我是一名晚期乳癌患者和幸存者。我是在2006年，初次被诊断出乳癌 - 那是我当时人生中最大的打击，因为我的小孩只有五岁和九岁大。我向上帝呼求他的怜悯和医治，让我能够看到孩子成长。感谢主，经过了多番的疗程（包括手术，放疗，化疗和五年的口服荷尔蒙药物），上帝眷顾我让我的癌症得到缓解。

过了十一年，在2017年的6月，我经历了难以解释的胸痛，偶尔的干咳还有深呼吸的困难。经过一番的调查和诊断，我被告知我的癌症已经侵袭了我的右肺，肝和我骨头的某些部位。这对我和我家人来说是个晴天霹雳的坏消息 - 是我人生中另一个需要撑过的暴风雨啊！这一次我确信上帝有他的旨意，我只需抓紧上帝的应许，他一定会陪我度过这个难关的！确实，我很蒙福，我能够使用一种靶向治疗药物来帮助我，把我的癌症控制住了。

2019年10月，我的医生发现到我肝里的一颗肿瘤增大了，虽然其他的小肿瘤维持不变和稳定。我很快就被安排进行一项消融手术，希望能把这颗肿瘤除灭。然而，在今年3月12日，CT扫描结果显示了这颗肿瘤再次生长，必须赶紧接受治疗！我的肿瘤专科医生推荐我咨询一项先进的放射疗法，叫SBRT，但我得飞到吉隆坡寻求治疗。



所以我做了一轮的PET/CT扫描以确定我的症状，买了三月十九日的机票。没料到行动管制令竟然在18日开始实行了。我还能去吉隆坡吗？我心里想。过后我确定了有医生给我的支持信，说明我需要医疗，移民厅官员就会允许我起飞。真的，藉着上帝的恩典，我终于能在上周到八打灵再也的一家私人医院接受了治疗！

在这次特别的吉隆坡之旅，神确实让我经历了他的同在，带领和医治。神也让我心中充满了他赐给我无比寻常，难以言喻的平安：

- 虽然我十九日清早七点的航班被取消了，我感谢主让我能够搭上当天下一趟班机前往吉隆坡。
- 虽然我十九日和医生的预约被延迟到两天后的21日（因为医院需要我先作COVID-19测试。成绩出来是阴性 - 赞美主！感恩我在21日终于见到医生。
- 感谢主，陶医生向我保证SBRT疗法将适合解决我的肿瘤，医生也会帮助我在一周内，就是周六（28日）完成我的疗程。
- 感谢主，在我过去十晚在旅店房间有舒适的睡眠，虽然我是单身在外（医生的忠告，要我自我隔离，连住在吉隆坡的姐姐或任何朋友都不碰面，以防交叉感染。）我到医院的交通也很方便，只要5-7分钟的路程（主要是旅店提供的交通服务）；食物方面，我在旅店的客房服务有足够的食物选项，偶尔也可到旅店对面的小店打包餐点。
- 感谢主赐予的信息科技，让我在吉隆坡时，能够随时和家人（儿子在英国，女儿在檳城，外子在古晋）通过视频保持联系；也能够参加两个周日的诗巫福源堂的直播主日崇拜，还有三回的虚拟祷告会。这些都非常令我感动，能和大家在灵里能有亲密相通，尽管我们在地理位置上彼此相距遥远。
- 感谢主赐予我好几位弟兄和姐妹在我的吉隆坡之旅热切地为我的旅程和疗程代祷，也常常给我关怀的讯息。上帝的爱就在这群祷告战士身上彰显了！
- 感谢主，虽然我在第一个疗程后经历腰背酸痛，我在第二天清早起身时，疼痛就几乎完全消失了！更奇妙的是，酸痛感在接下来的每次疗程后竟然减轻了！

- 感谢主，虽然很多航班因为行动管制令的缘故已经停飞，我也得付上一大笔的费用购买29日周日的机票，我终于能够在当天日下午坐了还不到一半搭客的班机平安回到家。

- 感谢主，虽然我得遵守砂州政府规定的14天“留在家里的通知”（SHN）至4月12日，这和其他人需要遵守至14日的行动管制令并没有太大的差别！

希望我这趟吉隆坡之旅所经历的一切将成为神的荣耀和他奇妙恩典和怜悯的见证。

是的，我们总会因着这次前所未有的COVID-19大流行的不确定性感到担忧和焦虑。我们只能继续地提醒自己，上帝仍然掌权，他必看顾保守大家。继续信靠和顺服，这是我们唯一能做的。荣耀归给主。阿门。

主内，  
文蕊 上  
2020年3月30日

# Master over all uncertainties

By Edmund Sim

**E**vents that unfolded in the last few months have many Christians in this country laden with worries and insecurities.

First, the deadly spread of the COVID-19 virus epidemic. What started as a localised incident in Wuhan China ramified to 202 countries. Worldwide, the number of cases is 856,917 with 42,107 deaths. Even in Malaysia, there are 2,766 confirmed cases and 43 deaths.

Second, and specific in our own nation, the political turmoil in our government, accompanied by the replacement of our prime minister. To many, this political drama is a confusing twist to an unusual change in our government that has left us in a state of uncertainty regarding the stability of this country.

Amid these atrocities, many Christians begin to question the plan of God. Like them, I was worried whether Christ is paying attention to all these problems. I was even wondering whether this is all a test from Him. If it is so, it would be a very difficult test for the average Christian to pass. God should not test us this way, I reckoned. For we are weak, and will surely fail. Just as how Adam and Eve failed Him since the beginning of mankind.

## Peace

As I ponder wearily upon all these, the following verse in the Bible came to mind. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33 (NIV)

I am reminded that we will constantly face troubles as long as we remain on earth. As

Christians, we are not supposed to rely on and trust humans and governments to be the purveyors of peace and security. Of course, Christ never promised us that our life on earth is to be peaceful all the time. However, He assured us that as long as we find peace in Him, we shall have peace in this world. For Christ is the Master who can and has already overcome all adversities and uncertainties.

This is a very difficult thought to grasp, and a near impossible attitude to embrace. How can we feel and find peace amid these tumultuous worldly events just by looking towards Christ? Some may even criticise this move as a form of escapism. Then, I look at my life and personal walk with God over the past several years, and this verse begins to make sense to me.

In the past 10 years, two major events unfolded in my life. First was my career. I was sidelined for promotion despite having met the requirement both in merits and seniority. The frustration from this have consumed me so much that it affected my physical and spiritual health.

## BM Boulevard Fellowship turned out to soothe the hurts from my workplace

Then some years ago, FMC started a ministry where we could fellowship with our indigenous brothers and sisters at a shopping mall every Saturday. This is the Bahasa Malaysia Boulevard Fellowship programme. When I volunteered for this ministry, little did I know that it was a therapeutic avenue for me physically and spiritually.

Every Saturday evening when I worship, pray, and learn the Bible together with my native brothers and sisters in Christ, I was uplifted in spirit and joy. All the negatives that I absorbed from Mon-

day to Friday at work disappeared just like that on Saturday.

When I walk with and for Christ, I was rewarded with peace. So, every week I would look forward to the Saturday evening where I find exceeding joy among my Christian brothers and sisters. Most importantly, I was able to not allow my career to dictate my happiness, rather my focus on Christ became my joy.

Unbeknownst to me, Christ was working on my career. In July 2019, the university top management finally promoted me to a full professor. From this, I learnt that Christ has not forgotten our pain and suffering. However, He wants us to focus on Him, and trust in Him first. We cannot allow our secular lives and desires to overwhelm us, to consume us until it became our god other than the true God Himself.

Yes, many of us unintentionally make our earthly needs to be our god rather than recognising that Christ is the true King. We fret over our financial well-being, career advancement, romantic happiness, and many other matters. We prayed but silently we doubted Him.

Christ is not like us. He has given me peace every week for several years that, when I looked back, I realised that it is my walk with Him every Saturday for those years that I survived 10 years of waiting, 7 promotion applications, and 4 interviews to reach my career dream. Isn't Jesus Christ the greatest of all?

### **How can I have peace when I might have arterial blockage?**

The second major event in my life pertains to my health. In 2010, I realised that I have a high blood pressure problem, and was diagnosed in 2013 to be suffering from Stage 1 hypertension. Since then, through various personal efforts in lifestyle adjustment that includes dieting, food restriction and physical exercise (jogging), I was able to improve my health conditions albeit painstakingly. However, it did not last.

Lifestyle change was hard to maintain when we are doing it using our own will power. In October 2019, I was told by the doctor that my hypertension problem had worsened to Stage 2, and was then put on anti-hypertensive and cholesterol lowering medication. A week ago, I was informed that there is a possibility that I have arterial blockage. This news was hard for me to accept.

When God has taken care of my career, my health turns out to be the next trouble. When is it going to end? Sensibly now, I should be thinking why God cannot grant me peace and joy forever without any moment of trouble at all. We all like to have it that way, isn't it?

As a Christian, I now know that eternal joy and peace from Him is not possible when we are still on earth. I know now that, like before, I cannot let my personal problem overwhelm me. I can still find joy and peace by my walk with and for Him every day, and not just on Saturdays.

Christ is neither a stranger nor indifferent to our worries, pain and sufferings. He has suffered greatly on the cross well beyond what mankind can endure in order to save us from eternal damnation. He has overcome all the pain, madness, cruelty and injustice for us. So, how can he not understand our pain? We cannot escape the reality of secular life but we can hold on the promises that He will always be there to walk with us throughout our journey in earth.

I have learnt to let Him take control of my life, and focus on Him at all times. For me, serving Him gives me the greatest peace and joy. Joining ministry is not escapism from our worldly troubles, but letting Him use us for greater things than just our own self-concerns. It works for me, and I know it will work for you too. Remember, we are not the master of our own peace and security. In a world full with persistent uncertainties, look to Christ for hope and wisdom. He has not failed us, and He never will, if we believe in Him. After all, Christ is the true Master over all our uncertainties, and He has overcome it all. (1April 2020) §

# New Normal during MCO

By Ting Su Hie

**W**e enjoy the enforced stay-at-home MCO order. We usually do not like to go out, and so far we have only made two shopping trips to Boulevard in the last two weeks.

During both trips, we met some members of the BM Boulevard Fellowship. The feeling is like that of meeting old friends. One of them said that she *rindu* the Fellowship. I told her that I have been praying for her and the others who have passed through our Fellowship over the years.

I have never spent so much extended time at home, and because of that, I managed to do a lot of things that I never had time to do. A lot of things.

The first place was my garden, inside my house compound and outside, along the road. Small things, a little a day, like pulling out the weeds in different corners of the garden and trimming the dead leaves off the sugarcane plants. Today I might try sawing off that jambu branch that I had been eyeing for a year.

I also managed to scrub off the ugly greenish, blackish and orangey mould off tile surfaces here and there, over several days. This got my son and I to the point of wanting the paint the garden wall. There were some left over white paint from

a few years ago. It was back-breaking and for once, I saw him standing still with no energy to go on after 3 hours. The paint was only enough for a small section of the blackish wall. You can see it in the photo here.

I also managed to clean out the gutter—really dirty job. Scary too to be perching at the top of the ladder. I have a compost bin in my gutter! The material came from starfruit, jambu and rambutan leaves. A whole year of compost material which was not cleared because of my many weeklong meetings in KL which sometimes stretched over weekends.

I have never done so much cooking in my whole life! Thank God, because of our healthy lifestyle, it is a set menu and no head-ache at all. Oats in the morning. For dinner, it is one fish and one vegetable dish. Lunch is free-n-easy.

For the first time, I figured out how to fry yam cake (made by my neighbour from yam I harvested) - the way that the shops do it, crispy. Actually I have lousy cooking skills, but probably will be better by the end of the MCO. During this time, I also got my son to cook with me, telling him that he might have to do this when he goes to university next time. He volunteers to do washing up after meals, which is really nice.



Sawn off a starfruit branch that reached the height of my house so that it can regrow new branches lower down

We continue our meal-time and night prayers, BUT it took me a while to get back to the habit of reading the Bible in the morning before I work at the dining table. I used to do this in the office. I finally did.

I have never written so many papers in such a short time. I have submitted four papers and am writing my fifth. It would have taken me the whole year during normal work life because there are so many things to do, some necessary and many not. I get so engrossed in the papers that I enjoy the occasional 4am-10pm sojourn into the different worlds of each paper.

All three of us do our work in the living room: my son doing his revision, and Edmund writing his paper too. So we have plenty of family togetherness. (12 April 2020) §



# 你的存在绝非偶然

范長莊稿

我是你的創造主，甚至在你出生之前，我已經眷顧你。人的出生，非偶然的事，全然掌握在神聖手中的計劃。你的父母也許沒有計劃生育你，但神却是早已計劃要有你。你的出生不會讓神感到意外及而是祂意料之中的事。

**第一**，你的母親孕育你成為胎兒之前，神的意念中早已有你。是神首先想到你，因神要創造你！有主必成就神在你身上的目的。

**第二**，神設計了你整個身體，有關你的種族，膚色，髮色和任何一項的特徵，都是神特意為你選定的。因為神是按照祂的意念造出你的身體，也選定了你擁有的天資稟賦和性格的特質。

**第三**，神是為了某個目的而造你。所以神已決定你要何時出生以及要活多久。神為你籌算一生的日子，為你定明生日與死期。聖經說：在我出生以前，你已經安排了每一天。每個日子都記載在你的名冊上了。

**第四**，最為奇妙的是，神已決定你是怎樣的人，你的身材面貌及生長的过程，不論你出生的環境如何，父母又是誰，神造你的時候已經計劃好了，更不計較你父母是好是壞，神是

知道那兩個人正好擁有合適的基因，可以造成神計劃中的你，是擁有神要造你的基因。

**第五**，神在創造世界之先，已經一直在想着你，神正為地球所設計的環境，是正適合讓我們居住。神定意愛我們。在祂所有受造之物中，神把人視為最為寶貴。聖經說：神定意要藉着真理的話語，將生命賜給了我們，以致我們在祂所有萬物中成為珍貴的，神是何等的愛和看重我們的。

**第六**，神是愛，祂把你選出來，然後才去愛你。神親口說過：你一出母腹，我就抱着你，自你出生，我就一直照顧你。即使你年老了，頭髮斑白了，我還是一樣要照顧你。因我造了你，也一定要會照顧你的。

所以弟兄姐妹們，只管好好的過生活，神就會照顧你們一生一世到終老。阿們！

羅12:2說，只有按着神是怎麼樣的，以及祂為我們做了什麼來演繹自己，我們才能準確地了解自己。

以下是凱爾夫寫的詩作為我們的總結：

你因着某個目的而成為你。  
你是一個複雜計劃的部份。  
你是寶貴和完全獨特的設計，  
你為家中獨特的女人或男人。

你因着某個目的而擁有現在的樣子。

我們的神不會出錯，  
你在母腹中，祂將你編織成形，  
你正是祂所造的人。

你父母是神所選定的，  
不管你有何想法，  
他們是按神的計劃所特別預定的。  
你們已蓋上造物主的印記。

不，你面對的創傷不是容易受的，神也為了你如此受傷而流淚。

但祂容許創傷塑造你的心靈，  
讓你能成長，酷像祂的形象，  
你因着某個目的而成為你，  
是造物主用祂的杖來創造你。

親愛的，你成為你，  
是因為有一位神！

我們知道神造我們成為一個獨特的人，  
我們的性格，因着背景和外貌等，  
有那些地方是我們難以接受的嗎？

我們是從神而來，來到這個世界，有一天我們要離開這個美麗的世界回到神那裡去。到時與神見面時，主在記錄冊子所記錄的好人好事為神滿意，祂就接收我們到天上快樂無比的樂園裡享受着永恆的生命。§

# 如何与神建立深厚的友谊

范長莊稿

箴言3/32祂向敬虔的人伸出友谊之手。

雅各4/8 上 你亲近神, 神就必亲近你。

我们与神的关系, 就如人与人之友谊一样, 必须由我们主动去建立的。因为我们有一颗渴望的心愿意投入时间与精神, 选择与神有多亲近就可以有多亲近的。我们要学习与神坦诚分享我们的感受, 凭着信遵祂而行。关心神所看重的事, 同时渴求祂的友谊, 远胜于一切。

## 1. 首先我们必须坦诚面对神。

我们务要对神要绝对的坦诚, 不隐藏任何的过错, 受骗, 灰心, 失败, 受挫及不良行为等痛苦的经历, 愿意在神面前坦诚和直率公开向神表白, 向神倾吐苦情, 陈述一切的困苦, 这是与神关系进深的重要基石。神不期望我们是完美的人, 却要对神有绝对的坦诚。但是神的恩典, 耶稣基督永远是罪人的朋友, 以致于我们才能与神建立了深厚的友谊。

## 2. 我们必须愿意凭信心遵從神。

耶稣基督表明顺服是与神建立亲密关系的必要条件。所以祂说: 我们若然遵守神的命令, 就是祂的朋友。神已赦免了我们的罪过, 为我们解除罪的枷锁。我们也因着爱而顺從神, 带来了极大的喜悦。耶稣说: 父怎样爱我, 就怎样爱你们, 你们就常在我的爱里。你们顺從我就可以在我的爱里。正如我顺從父, 就常在他的爱里一样。我将这些话告诉你们是要你们充满我的喜悦, 而你们的喜悦就要满溢。

## 3. 我们必须愿意看重神所看重。

这正是朋友之间最关心对方所看重的事。我们与神的友谊越亲密, 就会更加关注祂所关心的事。令神难过的事也会令自己难过, 令神快乐的事, 也会令自己开心。神最关心的事即是要救赎祂的子民。祂也渴望寻回所有走迷的儿女。耶稣正是为此而降生了。我们成为神的朋友必须关心身边的每个人, 他们都是神所关心的人。

## 4. 我们的心必须渴望与神为友高于一切。

大卫渴慕认识神高于一切。祂说: 我要求的就是能够有幸在祂的殿中默想祈求, 在祂的面前渡过每一天, 在祂无可比拟的完全和荣耀中欢喜快乐。大卫看重神的爱胜于生命。事实上我们能否与神建立亲密的友谊是在于选择, 并不是突然发生的。我们必须克意寻求这样美好的关系, 不断祈求直到得着为止。因此我们渴望更亲密的认识神永胜过别的一切。

## 5. 我们一生中最重要的人际关系。

世上再没有任何事物比与神建立友谊更为重要。这是延续到永久的完美关系。保罗对提摩太说: 有些人当中已错失人生最为重要的事, 竟然不认识神。但是我们选择与神有多亲近, 就可以有多亲近的关系。

乐龄团契 §

# Interesting Questions



## Are people ever reincarnated?

No. Reincarnation is a myth, an idea entirely foreign to what has been revealed by God. The Bible teaches that it is appointed to man to die once and then face judgment (Hebrew 9: 27). Ultimately, we will go to heaven, to be with God forever, or to hell, which is eternal exile from God's loving presence (Matthew 25: 31-46).

Reincarnation denies the need for a saviour. Titus 3:5 says that we are not saved by works of righteousness, but by the renewal offered by the Holy Spirit. Reincarnation is a philosophy that says we have to continually "work" to improve ourselves, allowing us to come back to life as something better than before. According to this philosophy, the death of Christ for our sins has no meaning because our salvation is totally dependent on our continued work.

Reincarnation also denies the dignity of the person as a unique individual being. You are not really unique if you are the reincarnation of George Washington, and before that, Cleopatra. You are just a recycled person, not the unique "one time" creation made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1: 26-27).

Adapted from Pinto, M. J. (2003). *Did Adam & Eve have belly buttons?* West Chester, Pennsylvania: Ascension Press (pp. 243-245).

## Is there life on other planets?

There is no biblical evidence for or against life on other planets. However, if there is life "out there," our God is the God of whatever life exists, for there is only one God (Isaiah 45: 5).

Because God has given us no revelation on this matter in the Bible, many speculative questions can be raised regarding life on other planets.

What type of beings are they? Nearly all scientists who believe that intelligent extraterrestrial life exists say that this life is almost certainly not humanoid—that is, it would be radically different from human beings and, indeed earthly life in general. These scientists, then, would say that modern science fiction's portrayal of "human-looking" alien is certainly inaccurate. In their view, no creatures like "ET" are out there.

C. S. Lewis wrote a space trilogy which considers some of the implications of extraterrestrial life. This might make for good reading if you are seriously interested in the question. The books are *Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength*.

Having said all this, it is extremely unlikely that there is life on other planets. Why? Because of the way God chose to interact with we humans here on earth. The Second Person of the Trinity became man (John 1: 1-18). This is a monumental, singular act. It is the ultimate affirmation of human life. It seems highly unlikely that the one true God would allow another race to exist in light of this definitive act. §



# BM Boulevard Fellowship



Gloria (seated, 2nd left) joined us faithfully every Saturday until she was called to go for medical officer training in Johore early this year. May God touch you to pray for our Indigenous brothers and sisters to keep their faith.