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心灵相簿

The President's Gallery

要收的庄稼多，做工的人少

The Harvest is Plentiful but the Labourers are Few

2020年将是人类历史中重要的一年。新冠疫情突然临到，让世人措手不及。它迅速传播，几乎所有区域都受波及。全球经济活动几乎停止。生意模式被逼转型，人们被逼居家办公，学校转换为居家学习，宗教场所关闭，这一切打乱了生活节奏。许多生理和心理问题都陆续涌现。

在这迅速万变的疫情中，我们更急于寻找那永不改变，能使我们有所依据的立足点。我们从三方面来思考：

(一) 未来多年的社会改变全积压在2020年出现

居家办公和线上会议不是什么科技革新。将来会有更多的员工与公司，采纳和运用这个模式。虽然有些人持有抗拒的意识，认为还是“老歌好听”，但新冠疫情轻易改变一切，我们一下子成了线上族群。疫情让我们提前感受到未来的世界。

在历史中，教会也经历许多的改变。最大的是从棕树节到复活节。棕树节是一个欢庆等待救主到来的日子，但却带来了耶稣受难节。对门徒来说这是一场大灾难。但是奇妙的事发生了，耶稣复活了！上帝完全改变了他们的观念，耶稣击败罪的权势并战胜死亡！门徒的人生从此不再一样，开启了新约教会的时代。

罗马书 8:28 “我们晓得万事都互相效力，叫爱神的人得益处，就是按他旨意被召的人。”

我们不要一直盼望回到新冠疫情前的状况。我们需要思考基督教信仰如何创造一个后新冠疫情的模式，使教会能继续成为主的见证，并变得更壮大。让我们带着敬虔的态度，寻求上帝的旨意。

(二) 教会崇拜场所关闭带来的反思

教会场所因疫情而需关闭，我们被迫回到根本的问题：什么是教会？教会是教堂吗？没有在圣殿的线上崇拜可算为崇拜吗？线上的群体是教会吗？奉献是否一定要到圣殿？没有实体的聚会，教会在哪儿？

这突然的停顿是有其益处的。它让我们安静和诚实地审视我们的教会观，再次专注于教会最根本与重要的任务，比如耶稣的大使命，约翰卫斯理强调的基督徒的成圣等。

耶稣给我们的大使命：去使万民作门徒（太28:18-20）这是地上教会存在的根本！教会要培育主的门徒，把福音传到地极。没有实体崇拜，教会依然真真实实的存在，因为我们是大使命的群体。

(三) 人们需要主

新冠疫情让人体会到生命的脆弱和短暂。虽然人类的医药科技发达，然而面对新冠病毒我们束手无策。我们需要全球的力量，共同设法控制疫情。我们终于了解到世人所依赖的保障是那么不堪一击。在人心惶惶的当儿，谁能把希望带给他们？谁能向他们分享福音？弟兄姐妹，人们需要主。

马太福音 9:35-38 耶稣走遍各城各乡，在会堂里教训人，宣讲天国的福音，又医治各样的病症。他看见许多的人，就怜悯他们；因为他们困苦流离，如同羊没有牧人一般。于是对门徒说：“要收的庄稼多，做工的人少。所以，你们当求庄稼的主打发工人出去收他的庄稼。”

上帝爱世人，没有一个人是在上帝恩典之外，因此每一个人都可以被拯救。每一个都应该得到上帝在耶稣基督里所赐予世人的饶恕。约翰卫斯理无论在何时何处都传福音，因为他知道那就是见证真理的福音。

让我们在万变中扎根于不变的真理，勇敢面对前面的挑战以及其所带来的改变，上帝必保守看顾祂的教会。

会长摄于2020年6月新加坡，滨海湾。
Photo taken by President at Marina Bay, Singapore, June 2020.

2020 will be a significant year in human history. The sudden onset of Covid-19 and its rapid spread to nearly all continents, caught many unprepared. Global economic activities ground to a halt. Businesses were forced to change their mode of operation, people were compelled to work from home, students shifted to home-based learning, religious sites were closed, and our usual routines were disrupted. Physical and psychological issues emerged.

Despite these volatile conditions, let us look to that which is unchanging and dependable.

1. Future transformations of the society have now been compressed and manifested in 2020

Working from home and videoconferencing are not new technological revolution. More will eventually adopt these. However, some will remain resistant. This pandemic has given us a foretaste of what the future world would be like.

Historically, Churches have also had their experiences with big changes, the biggest one being that of Palm Sunday and Easter. Palm Sunday is a day of celebration to welcome the Saviour, but it led to the crucifixion of Christ. To the disciples, this is a huge disaster. But a miracle occurred – Jesus resurrected! Jesus overcame the power of sin and defeated death. The disciples' views, along with their lives, were completely changed, and that spelt the beginning of the New Testament church.

Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

Rather than hoping for life to go back to the way it was pre-Covid; think about how a post-Covid-19 world could allow the Church to flourish and be a witness for God. With a heart of reverence, let us seek the will of God.

2. Reflections on the closure of church premises

The closure of church premises brings us to question the fundamentals: What is church? Does church refer to the building? Is worship that is held online, and not in a sanctuary, still considered worship? Can an online community be the church? Must offerings be collected only in the sanctuary? Without a physical gathering of the congregation, where do we find the church?

This abrupt pause has allowed us to quieten down to evaluate how we view the church, to refocus on the indispensable works of the church, for instance, Jesus' Great Commission and Christian sanctification emphasized by John Wesley.



Jesus’ Great Commission was to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18-20). This is the fundamental purpose of the church – to make disciples and bring the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Without physical church gatherings, the church remains in its truest form – as a people of the Great Commission.

3. People need the Lord

The pandemic revealed to us the fragility and brevity of life. Despite the advances of medicine, we are still at a loss in containing this virus. Amidst great anxiety, who can bring us hope, who can share the great news of the Gospel to the people?

My dear brothers and sisters, people need the Lord.

Matthew 9:35-38 *Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and*

healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

For God so love the world, no one is outside of the grace of God. Everyone can receive salvation in Christ, through whom the forgiveness of God has been given. John Wesley faithfully preached the Gospel wherever he went for he knew that this is what is meant to be a witness of the Truth.

In the face of an ever-changing world, let us root ourselves in the eternal Truth and be brave in dealing with the challenges and changes ahead. God will keep watch over His Church.

