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The President's Gallery

赶快工作，夜来临

Work, for the Night is Coming

尽管多国采取的边境管制措施，德尔塔变种病毒依然传播到许多国家。病毒的迅速蔓延使新加坡再次进入高警戒解封第二阶段；而国庆庆典有史以来不得已必须延期。

接触者追踪是管制疫情其中一个关键的手段。要使这措施有效，时机的掌握是极其的重要。我们需要尽快识别潜在的感染群体，并快速对他们进行隔离和检测，避免病毒的扩散变得无法控制。

当灾难来袭而救援队寻找生还者时，平常都有个72小时的空窗期，在此之后找到生还者的几率会很低。救援行动不仅要勤奋和专注，也需要有强烈的紧迫感。没有一刻可浪费，这问题至关生死。

借着约翰福音9:4所写，让我以“赶快工作，夜来临”这个主题与大家分享三点，彼此勉励。

1. 认真做上帝的工

卫斯理·约翰给教会侍奉者的12项条例之一是“要认真。让你的座右铭是：向主圣洁。避免轻率，开玩笑和愚蠢的谈话。”

要认真。我们要认真去做上帝所托付于我们的工作。弟兄姐妹，我们需要认真的问问自己，上帝的诫命是真的吗？地狱是真的吗？大使命是真的吗？耶稣的死与复活是真的吗？我是真的相信我所信的吗？若是，别人可以从我们的生活和行为上看见我们是认真的吗？

耶稣说：“趁着白日，我们必须做差我来的那位的工；黑夜来到，就没有人能做工了。我在世上的时候，是世上的光。”（约翰9:4-5）我们不只要做上帝的工，还要迫切的去做。

会长摄于2021年5月新加坡，贝雅士蓄水池下段。

Photo taken by President at Lower Peirce Reservoir, Singapore, May 2021.

有谁会想象得到这波疫情会几乎使整个世界停顿了下来，而上百万的人会在这短短的两年内丧失生命？弟兄姐妹，**传福音的时刻是有限度的，时间一到我们就不能做了。**

“让你的热情点燃吧，人们将从千里外来看你燃烧”是一句很多人常归于卫斯理·约翰所说的格言。虽然我们无法确认这句话的源头，但这话确实描述了卫斯理对传福音的热诚和迫切性。

卫斯理曾受到批评者甚至一些朋友的提醒，劝告他不要过度的热心。然而他其中一个回应是：

我厌倦了除了爱的火焰之外的所有热情……我真诚地感谢你在这方面提醒我，以免我过于热烈。我始终存在这一点，但我每天都会经历另一个极端的危险。今天我面对更多的试探，就是成为一个不冷不热、浮躁，躲在学术丛林中的哲学休闲者，而不愿成为巡回传道人。事实上，我现在所做的与我所确信我应该做的是如此的少。
- 致约翰史密斯先生的信

2. 关切失丧的灵魂

马太福音9:35-36让我们看到耶稣对失丧的人的热诚。祂走遍各城各乡，教导人，宣讲天国的福音，又医治各样的病症。祂怜悯人群，因祂看他们为困苦无助的人，如同没有牧人的羊。

耶稣也把门徒看为收庄稼的工人。太9:37-38这么写：“要收的庄稼多，做工的人少。所以，你们要求庄稼的主差遣做工的人出去收他的庄稼。”

谈到庄稼，有三点是肯定的：

- (1) 庄稼不会自己聚集，需要有人收割；
- (2) 庄稼含有极大的价值；
- (3) 收庄稼是有时间性的，需迫切的行动。

熟了的果实需要及时的收割，不然就会坏掉。没有时间可以浪费。上帝国度里的工人，祂禾场的工人，应该晓得庄稼的价值并拥有上帝怜悯的心和迫切性！

3. 让使命驱动

¹⁸耶稣进前来，对他们说：天上地下所有的权柄都赐给我了。¹⁹所以，你们要去，使万民作我的门徒，奉父、子、圣灵的名给他们施洗。²⁰凡我所吩咐你们的，都教训他们遵守，我就常与你们同在，直到世界的末了。(太28:18-20)

没有任何的事可高过上帝的使命。耶稣很明确的吩咐了祂要我们，祂的门徒，在这地上去做的事情。大使命应该是我们的关注，也是我们一切所做的中心。在所有的策划和实行中，我们应该问：这事如何帮助我们使人作基督的门徒？

卫斯理呼吁领导者集中精力，关注于这传福音的工作。视察到了其中一位领导者对这工作的不冷不热时，他失望地对他表达：“我为你感到担忧，为你满足低于你蒙召所应有的圣洁和功能的生命，我感到惋惜。”

关注是重点。我们容易分心；有时我们会在教会的种种活动中，忽略了这大使命。我们要关注那单一的呼召，使人作主门徒，这该是所有门徒的生命样式。

总结

让我们把握我们的时间，认真做上帝的工；关切失丧的灵魂，不要被其他的事情给混淆了我们的专注点。**我唯有一个呼吁——你愿为你个人的复兴祷告吗？**

祈求，为你不单能忠心的侍奉上帝，还要带有一股强烈的迫切性，并且不拖延上帝对你的托付。祈求，好让你能带着兴奋、喜乐和尊荣来做上帝的工。

听，我们的上帝在说话，祂在呼召祂的工人。你愿意等候祂的呼唤，寻求祂的旨意吗？你愿意回应说“主啊，我在这里，请差遣我。”？

你是否也愿意为你的孩子或孙子们祷告，盼望上帝能呼召他们，我们的下一代，进入全时间侍奉？可能是牧者，可能是宣教士（本地或国外），可能是学校或其他基督教机构的事工同工。

耶稣说：“要收的庄稼多，做工的人少。所以，你们要求庄稼的主差遣做工的人出去收他的庄稼。”

弟兄姐妹，我们需要工人，我们需要很多工人。禾场很大，要收的庄稼多，可收割的时间有限；我们没时间可浪费，赶快工作，夜来临。

In spite of border control measures, the Delta variant of Covid-19 still found its way into many countries. Its rapid spread sent Singapore back to Phase 2 (Heightened Alert) and for the first time in history, our National Day Parade had to be postponed.

One of the key strategies used to deal with the pandemic is Contact Tracing and for it to be effective, timing is of utmost importance. We need to identify the potential infected groups as fast as possible, and get them quarantined and tested before the spread grows uncontrollable.

When disasters strike and rescuers search for survivors, there is a window period of 72 hours, after which the chances of finding survivors would be low. Rescue Operations need to be armed with not just diligence, but also a strong sense of urgency. It is a matter of life and death.

Taken from John 9:4, I want to share three points with you on this title “Work, for the night is coming”.

1. Be Serious in God's Works

One of John Wesley's *Twelve Rules for Helpers* reads: “Be Serious. Let your motto be, “Holiness to the Lord.” Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.”

Be serious! God's Kingdom workers need to be serious in the work we have been entrusted. Dear brothers and sisters, we need to be honest and ask ourselves: Is God's commandment for real? Is Hell for real? Is the Great Commission for real? Is Jesus' death and resurrection for real? Is your faith for real? If yes, can people see that we are serious from the way we live and behave?

Jesus said, “**As long as it is day, we must** do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” (John 9:4-5 NIV) We need to do the works of God and we need to do it with a sense of urgency.

In light of Covid-19, who would ever have imagined that the world would come to a near standstill and millions of people would die in such a short span of time? Brothers and sisters, **the time we have to evangelise is indeed limited and there will come a time when we will no longer be able to work.**

“Catch on fire with enthusiasm and people will come for miles to watch you burn” is an aphorism often attributed to John Wesley. While we cannot verify that Wesley did in fact write those words, they do accurately reflect his passion and sense of urgency for evangelism.

Wesley had once been cautioned by his critics, and even some friends, against being too zealous. In response to one correspondent, Mr John Smith, Wesley wrote:

I detest all zeal which is any other than the flame of love... I sincerely thank you for endeavouring to assist me herein, to guard me from running into excess. I am always in danger of this, and yet I daily experience a far greater danger of the other extreme. To this day, I have abundantly more temptation to lukewarmness than to impetuosity... (to be) a philosophical sluggard, than an itinerant preacher. And, in fact, what I now do is so exceedingly little, compared with what I am convinced I ought to do.

2. Be Passionate for the Lost Souls

Matthew 9:35-36 shows us Jesus’ passion for the lost. He went through all the towns and villages, teaching, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness. He had compassion for the crowd whom He sees as people who were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus also spoke of His disciples as workers in the harvest field. Matthew 9:37-38 reads: “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.”

At least three things are true about a Harvest:

- (1) it will not gather itself;
- (2) it has great value; and
- (3) the time for harvest is limited and it therefore requires urgent action.

Ripe fruit must be harvested as soon as possible. Left alone, the harvest does not become riper; it spoils. There is no time for delay. God’s Kingdom workers, harvesters in His farm, should know the value of the harvest and be marked by God’s sense of compassion and urgency.

3. Be Driven by Mission

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matt 28:18-20)

There is no greater cause than the mission of God. Jesus is very clear on what He wants us to do on this earth before He comes again. The Great Commission has to be the focus and centre of all our endeavour. In all our planning and doing we ought to ask: How is this helping us to make people a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Wesley called leaders to focus with intensity on the mission. Writing to one of his leaders, he expressed his disappointment about the apathy he observed in him: “I am concerned for you; I am sorry you should be content with lower degrees of usefulness and holiness than you were called to.”

Focus is the key. We are easily distracted; often, the many activities of the church may cause us to overlook this Great Commission. We need to focus on the One Call to make disciples; it ought to be our lifestyle.

Conclusion

Let us seize the time we now have and be serious in His work; be concerned for the lost souls and let not other things take away our focus on God’s call. **I have only one appeal— will you pray for your personal revival?**

Pray, that you will serve Him not only faithfully but also with a strong sense of urgency, not procrastinating in the works that God has entrusted to you. Pray, so that you may be filled with excitement, joy and honour as you do His work.

Listen, God is speaking and He is calling His workers. Will you wait on His voice and discern His will? Will you say to Him “I am here, Lord, send me”?

Will you also pray that God will call your children or grandchildren, people of the next generation, into full time ministries? They may be called to be an Ordained Pastor, a missionary (local or overseas), or a Christian ministry staff serving in schools or in Christian parachurch organisations.

Jesus said: “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (Matt 9:37-38)

Dear brothers and sisters, we need workers, we need many workers. The farm is huge, the harvest is plentiful, and the time for harvest is limited; there is no time to waste, work, for the night is coming!