



馬來西亞基督教衛理公會 砂拉越華人年議會  
**SARAWAK CHINESE ANNUAL CONFERENCE (SCAC)**  
**THE METHODIST CHURCH IN MALAYSIA**  
**PERSIDANGAN TAHUNAN CINA SARAWAK GEREJA METHODIST MALAYSIA**

NO. 18, 1/FL., ISLAND ROAD, P.O.BOX 155, 96007 SIBU, SARAWAK, MALAYSIA. TEL: 084-332707, FAX: 084-313470, email: scacpresident@gmail.com

Dear Pastors, Brothers and Sisters,

Date: April 16, 2020

Shalom.

In early March this year, pandemic Covid-19 gradually went out of hand and in the night of 14<sup>th</sup> March (Saturday), Executive Board and I had to make a decision unanimously to temporarily suspend all worship services and church activities. The notice was issued at 10:30pm and many pastors and church members were caught unprepared. Even my own sermon prepared for the following day was not to be preached. Nevertheless, Government imposed the Movement Control Order (MCO) 2 days later, for one month till now.

How have you all been getting on in the past one month? Looking back, I have the following thanksgivings to offer:

- 1) Thank the Lord that Masland Methodist Church had started direct broadcasting their 9:30am worship online a month earlier. The church team had made it possible in the last month to broadcast every Sunday worship services in 3 languages. Thousands of families, including many outside Sarawak and overseas, could worship together online. An 80 years old disabled sister called to give thanks, "Praise Lord, I have been unable to attend services for years, but now I can worship with everybody, how joyful it is!".
- 2) Thank the Lord that the Pastors' School cum Family Discipleship Seminar was scheduled and held in early March. It ended before the outbreak of Covid-19 in Malaysia and USA. The speaker could come to train us in time for FD before MCO and return to USA safely.
- 3) Thank the Lord that we were forced by MCO to learn the use of internet for various ministries, among them were the prayer meetings on Thursday evenings (I attend Wesley Church prayer meeting. Attendance jumped from the usual 30-40 to 80-90), weekend fellowships, Bible study groups, discipleship courses, Sunday Schools and conferences etc. I also learned to teach theological school students via internet, held conferences with 11 District Superintendents and read a book together, family worshipped daily with my children and grandson who live in other places, prayed and shared together with more than 15 leader couples of Marriage Enrichment Retreat (MER) from within Malaysia and abroad, and even conducted a tomb festival service with my siblings all over the world for the first time.

- 4) Thank the Lord that under the leadership of the Chairman of our Board of Christian Social Concerns, and the offerings and coordination of District Superintendents, Local churches, chairpersons of social concern committees together with brothers and sisters, we are able to work together to proactively care for the needs of various sectors, be it the needs of facilities for frontline workers in the hospitals or to the community and general public. We also take heed of MCO and stay at home to play our part to help contain Covid-19, as we are the light and salt of the world, and let Glory be to God, peace to people. We are thankful and should salute to all those friends, brothers and sisters who work at frontline.
- 5) Thank the Lord that we have arranged preachers for online services in May, including the Holy Communion service on the first Sunday of May. Bishop and Presidents have agreed on the online Holy Communion. Each family is to prepare own grape juice and bread for a meeting with our Lord "in the cloud", in remembrance of His death till He comes.
- 6) Thank the Lord that the Word from Lord Jesus is real about cults and heresies during this extraordinary period of time. Jesus said, "For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many" (Matthew 24:5). Thank God that many pastors and church members are vigilant on cults, especially the "Eastern Lightning" who had set up their website named 'Methodist Church in Malaysia' and other denominations, recruiting people online. Church members are hereby reminded not to forward their messages and video clips and never enter or join in their website. If you have joined their group, please withdraw immediately, as to heed what Apostle John has said in 2 John: "7 Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. 8 Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. 9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. 10 If Anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. 11 Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work."

For the coming month, please continue to pay attention to the following:-

1. Special Sunday organizing and offering: There is no need for fellowships or church organizations to worry about them during this extraordinary period. The suspension is only temporary until further notice.
2. Offerings for regular Sunday services: We are so used to making offerings only when we see the offering bags during church services. At this time when we are staying at home, how should we make our offerings? Our worry is not so much on the shortage of church income, it is rather on whether brothers and sisters have discharged your responsibilities in offerings to God. Apostle Paul taught, "1 Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money

in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made" (1 Corinthians 16). Paul taught us a) to offer regularly: "the first day of every week" which is Sunday; b) each of us has to offer: "each one" means everyone, whether men or women, old or young, poor or rich, will need to offer; c) to offer according to our income: "in keeping with his income" means you may have a reduced income during this extraordinary period and you just offer based on your reduced income, do not worry that the Lord may not be pleased, because the offering of two very small copper coins from the poor widow (Luke 21:2) was actually her 100% offering; d) to set aside your offering and keep it: "saving it up" means you will still make your offerings each week and keep them till when opportunity for offerings arise, or immediately through e-banking or electronic payment.

3. For kindergarten's teachers and students: we have issued a memorandum a few days back, requesting the management to continually pay salary to teachers and staff as usual. School fees will not be imposed but students are welcome to contribute voluntarily. If there is financial shortage, the local church concerned will assist, failing which our Annual Conference will offer help.
4. Pastors' salary and allowance: Pastors are encouraged to make voluntary and sacrificial offerings to support our Conference and social work. Unused travel /petrol allowance may be returned.
5. Board meeting arrangements: Various board meetings scheduled in May will be conducted via internet.
6. Pastors, brothers and sisters will need to take good care for senior friends, brothers and sisters, pastoring them through phone calls, short messages or other means. Pastors and leaders can help families set up family altars to do family discipleship.

Dear brothers and sisters, during this extraordinary time, let us experience our heavenly Father's extraordinary care, our Lord Jesus's extraordinary grace of salvation, the extraordinary presence of the Holy Spirit, and also experience the extraordinary power of the Gospel.

"<sup>1</sup> Now brothers (and sisters), I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. <sup>2</sup> By this gospel you are saved. If you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. <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 has raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve" (1 Corinthians 15).



President Rev Dr Tie King Tai & Board of Executive SCAC