



TOGETHER
ON THE EDGE
IN GOD'S MISSION

2021



CONNECT
COLLABORATE
RESOURCE

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What did not change and should not change in a changed Covid-19 World

By Rev. Chan Nam Chen (PhD)

AsiaCMS Executive Director

Coming now to two years, a virus that is still mutating has upended our world and our lives. Apart from the pain and grief, it has forced change and adaptation into every aspect of human life. Its impact has been, and still is, highly unequal.

For the developed world, the light at the end of the tunnel is now more visible. Large populations are vaccinated, and their economies have picked up. But for those living in the less developed and poorer parts of the globe, the infection is still raging; the toll is simply devastating. Apart from the loss of health and life, many of these countries will take years to recover from the social and economic ravage.

(cont'd)

Here at AsiaCMS, we are thankful to God that we were able to help ease the anguish for the most marginalized communities. We are thankful for donors around the world who gave. We are thankful for our Co-Mission Partners and network partners, who sacrificially served on the frontlines in South Asia and South-East Asia. Besides delivering much-needed immediate relief, they also developed a range of programs that empowered individuals and communities to address the many aspects of the pandemic. Through both words and deeds, they proclaimed the entirety of the biblical gospel.

Reflecting over the last one and a half years, many things have evidently changed. Yet some things do remain the same. The pandemic reminds us of painful biblical truths about the nature of the human heart and realities about our human societies. Much as there is beauty and goodness in human hearts created in God's image, we cannot ignore the dark side to it. This has not changed. At the same time, some things should not change. The pandemic also highlights core missiological principles central to how we are to serve God's mission in a changed pandemic world. These are constants.

Human realities that do not change

The pandemic sadly brings to surface the reality of human sin. This inevitably permeates all of life. Greed and selfishness worsen the already tragic impact of the pandemic. There are the usual ugly stories of corruption where immoral individuals skim from aid meant for the needy, and unscrupulous traders make obscene profits, often at the expense of those who suffer the most. In India, the media reports of Covid drugs, oxygen cylinders and oxygen concentrators being hoarded at the peak of the infection spike. There were stories of scams and a thriving black market that sold vital medicines and equipment at exorbitant prices, which only the rich can afford.¹

The pandemic also widens the disparities and injustices existent in our socioeconomic and political systems. The poor slide deeper into poverty, yet ironically, 'global billionaire total wealth has increased more over the past 17 months of the pandemic than it did in the 15 years prior to the pandemic.'² While millions in the developing world are still awaiting their first vaccine dose, leaders in more prosperous countries are already pushing for booster shots. A *World Health Organization* (WHO) leader bluntly states, 'We're planning to hand out extra life jackets to people who already have life jackets, while we're leaving other people to drown without a single lifejacket.'³

Mission principles that abide

For Christians seeking to serve God's mission, the pandemic reminds us of abiding or guiding mission principles. **First, *Christian mission is always about faithfulness to the context.*** In other words, we should be relevant, addressing the needs at hand. Hence, the pandemic forces us to critically rethink and ask afresh: *What are the needs in the situation? How may we best engage?* Then, regardless of our personal inclinations within the vast spectrum of God's mission - be it evangelism, church-planting, community development or social advocacy - we adapt and re-tool as necessary to serve the changed contexts.

Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder most aptly phrase this abiding principle of mission in context: *'To the extent that the Jesus community responds to the Spirit's call to continue Jesus' mission in new and perhaps unthinkable ways, it becomes the church... The urgency of mission is linked to the urgency of change, adaptation, and translation—in other words, to context. By being faithful to each context, the church continues to be called forth by its Lord to share and continue His mission.'*⁴

Second, how we think about, and do *Christian mission should always be holistic and integrated.* We cannot separate the spiritual from the physical and psycho-social dimensions of life. The preaching of the gospel cannot be divorced from the totality of what individuals and communities go through.

When communities and families are suddenly in forced situations of hunger, we need to provide food and basic needs. When prolonged lockdowns, joblessness and forced changes lead to emotional breakdowns and domestic conflicts, we need to provide resources to help people cope with depression and build psycho-social health.

Third, the pandemic reminds us, that *service in God's mission goes hand-in-hand with suffering and sacrifice*. This was painfully lived out during the Covid-19 spike in India and Nepal. Practically no one was exempt from losing loved ones to the virus. Amidst their work, some mission workers, pastors, and church planters also lost their own lives. They left behind ministries already short of leaders, and more painfully, financially dependent spouses, children and loved ones. This adds to the challenges of their families who were already living sacrificially.

But it is in these situations that we find the finest examples of sacrificial service and the precious outpouring of God's grace. A few months ago, we received news of the death of a missions leader and theological educator in North India who succumbed to Covid-19. It was a difficult time for his widow left to care for her children. Yet, in her grief, she resolved and committed herself to continue serving to help fill the ministry vacuum left by her late husband.

Fourth, *Christians can live out the global unity that we have in Christ*. Bible-believing followers of Christ are now located in every part of the globe. This is more than any other faith, and more than any other time in history. We transcend nations, denominational affiliations, ethnic heritages, and economic status.

The wonders of the internet, and the apps that go along with it have allowed us to find out about each other, connect, build relationships, collaborate on projects, and share resources. We are positioned to bridge the gaps; not merely to help each other, but to better serve our world together. This was powerfully lived out a few months ago in the needs and anguish at the peak of the Covid-19 crisis in South Asia. Among the global Christians who sought to help were Chinese Christians in China and Germany. They gave via intermediaries in Malaysia and France to help Christians and other marginalized communities in the remotest parts of North-East India and Nepal.

Fifth, the untimely demise of millions through *Covid-19 brings eternity into focus*. It raises the tough questions about what happens to those who die without faith in Christ. We are aware that nobody has the answers to every question. But as Christians, we cannot ignore explicit Bible assertions such as 1 John 5:12 - *Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life*. Or 2 Peter 3:9 - *The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance*.

Unbelievers coming to faith and becoming Christ-followers is a work of the Holy Spirit, spiritual in its essence, and a process that takes time. Christians have been accused, at times justifiably, of proselytizing unbelievers through unethical means and using aid as inducements to convert. Authentic Christian service to our world should never be conditional on conversion. That being said, we recognize that we have no power to convert. True conversion is only possible through the Holy Spirit; we can only bear witness of Christ.

In God's grace, may it be that we never lose the desire to see unbelievers come to faith in Christ. We must pray and do all we can. May all the peoples of the earth, from every background encounter Christ in ways meaningful to their very diverse cultural contexts. The prospect of a Christless eternity is all too real for too many.

1. <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/the-big-story/story/20210607-profiteering-in-the-pandemic-1807666-2021-05-28>

2. <https://inequality.org/great-divide/global-billionaire-pandemic-wealth-surges/>

3. <https://thehill.com/changing-america/well-being/prevention-cures/568528-who-blasts-plans-for-vaccine-booster-shots-as/>

4. Bevans and Schroeder 2004, *Constants in Context*, p.30,31.

Limited Yet Unlimited

By Rev Vinod Victor

Chairperson,
AsiaCMS Board of Trustees



With continued lockdowns and restrictions, we are missing the fragrance of each other; the warmth of hugs and the joy of sharing a meal together; chatting across the fireside about doing missions and being a missional presence. Yet, we are glad that the people on the edges are continuing to engage in God's mission in creative and fruitful ways.

The pandemic has impacted every aspect of life and has called for fresh expressions of faith responses. The methodology of mission is being redrafted and the curbs on "going out to all the nations" has challenged us to go online despite the limitations therein.

The pandemic has unleashed havoc all around us, resulting in agony, pain, tears and brokenness. It has made us realise that our primary task is to just be with people in their pain - to try to wipe their tears in any small way we can; to help others cope with their grief; and to accompany the efforts to rebuild life.

Paul, while commending the Philippian church for the timely support in times of need, shares a few insights in Philippians 4:10-20 that can help us navigate tough times in life.

First, is being content with what we have without complaining.

Despite feeling that much more could and should have been done, when we look back and take stock of the milestones crossed, we realise that the Lord has been gracious to us in ways incomprehensible to human wisdom. Jesus, who at Bethany came 'four days late but on time' told them - *Fear not, only believe* and reminded them if they trusted in God, they would witness His divine glory manifest.

Second, is learning the secret of treating plenty and scarcity with the same magnanimity.

This calls for prudent use of resources and re-defining traditional models of ministry. With the global economy impacted by the pandemic, we may not be able to find resources as is desired. However, that should in no way limit the scope and reach of what we are called and mandated to do. We must place on record, our appreciation to all our team members who travelled the extra mile to help communities wade the crisis in hope.

Third, is the assurance of the co-sojourner who strengthens us in our moments of vulnerability.

The going is tough but the going is with the One who is in control of the turbulent waters. Jesus keeps asking us - *O ye of little faith, why do you doubt*. Like the assurance of the prophet to his attendant, we must be able to boldly say - *He who is with us is much more than those against*. The ultimate triumph will not be for darkness and death but light and life.

Fourth, is the realisation that giving to the needy is a fragrant offering and a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

Missional engagement must be understood as being with the pain of the suffering people. Needs are varied at this point. From psycho-social needs to physical needs, the plethora of struggles that people experience has to be responded to. In small and limited ways, we have reached out and we must appreciate all the benevolent people who shared from their riches and poverty to wipe the tears of those suffering around us.

Finally, is the assurance that God will satisfy all our needs according to his riches and glory in Christ Jesus.

We just need to trust and obey. The pandemic is bound to stay with us for some time. It brutally exposes the structures of evil within which we live and witness. Like a prophet, it points fingers at ethical and moral constraints that people cope with. But we are also sure that the Lord will not only carry us through the agony of the times but also help us to be champions of mission engagement in new ways, as the world gears to understand what the 'new normal' would look like.

Yes, we are limited in many ways but at the same time, our possibilities and scope remain unlimited. Mission sometimes broadens to include structural changes and taking radical steps towards transformation, and this would require the gracious accompaniment of the epitome of justice - Jesus.

God Be With You.

AsiaCMS About Us

A photograph of several light-colored wooden puzzle pieces scattered on a light blue surface. The pieces are arranged in a way that suggests they are part of a larger puzzle, with some pieces fitting together and others slightly separated. The lighting creates soft shadows, giving the pieces a three-dimensional appearance.

Asia Collaborative Mission Services (AsiaCMS) is a trans-denominational mission movement based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and established in 2012. AsiaCMS is associated with the Church Mission Society in the UK and the global CMS network.

We now live in a rapidly changing world. With changed realities, it can no longer be business as usual for churches, Christian organisations and Christians engaged in God's mission.

There is a need for change and adjustments to some of the traditional mission approaches and priorities, especially for Christians in Asia who seek to be both effective and faithful according to Biblical mandates.

Our tagline,
Together on the Edge in God's Mission is formulated in the light of these realities.

To move ahead in the coming years, the breadth of God's mission and the changed global realities demand the cooperative efforts of all of God's people with all of their diverse strengths and resources. Therefore, AsiaCMS seeks to multiply the mission efforts of churches and Christian organisations in a 3-fold focus:

1. Engage the unreached and least-reached people groups with the Gospel.
2. Engage in spheres of mission that are often overlooked, but critical for national contexts.
3. Facilitate collaborations for fresh insights on Asian mission concerns by Asian Christians.

To break new ground in this 3-fold focus, AsiaCMS will:

- Connect people, organisations, and churches to meet needs;
- Facilitate collaborations for mission initiatives;
- Resource people and organisations through mission education, cross-cultural ministry training and support.

SOME OF WHAT WE DO:

Co-mission Partners

Our Co-Mission Partner Program connects mission workers with local and national churches, mission organisations and needs in the field. We value partnerships to pioneer new missional initiatives and provide resources for those who are serving in the mission fields.

Support & Training

We add to the efforts of churches, mission leaders and workers to sharpen their involvement in God's mission. AsiaCMS facilitates seminars, training programs and missions education from introductory to post-graduate levels.

Samaritan Strategy

In partnership with CMS-Africa where it has a proven track record, this adapted programme fosters wholistic community development. From foundations of renewed worldviews based on biblical perspectives, it empowers and walks with individuals, and communities as they rise to their God-given purposes.

God's Mission is from Everywhere to Everywhere

ACMS Board of Trustees

AsiaCMS Berhad is a company limited by guarantee in Malaysia. Its board of directors comprise Rev. Pax Tan, Andrew Khoo and Francis K. Tsui. They manage the legal and regulatory requirements to comply with Malaysian laws. We have a group of trustees to preserve, protect and promote the values, vision and principles of AsiaCMS. They have wide skills and missions experience, and provide guidance and governance for AsiaCMS to fulfil its mission and purpose. They are led by Rev. Vinod Victor as Chair.



Rev. Vinod Victor (Chair)

Rev. Vinod is an ordained minister in the Church of South India. He has long been involved in social outreach and mission work in India and further afield. His church is actively involved in social ministry and runs several homes for children.



Andrew Khoo (Vice Chair)

Andrew, based in Malaysia, is a practising Barrister specialising in human rights law. He is also a Lay Canon in the Anglican Church.



Francis K. Tsui

Francis was born and raised in Hong Kong. Francis works in finance but also has been actively involved in mission across Asia for many years. Prior to joining AsiaCMS, he served as International President of Asian Outreach.



Rev. Pax Tan

Rev. Pax pastors a local Baptist church. He has a long history of involvement with social action and leadership with the Malaysian charity Malaysian Care.



Rev. Aeduk Kim

Rev. Aeduk is the Rector of West Incheon Anglican Church in South Korea and is actively involved in various mission-related initiatives in the Korean Anglican Church.



Rt. Rev. Pradeep Samantaroy

Rt. Rev. Pradeep is the Bishop of Amritsar, Church of North India. He has a wealth of experience in senior church leadership and understanding of the church in Asia.



Dr Haroon Laldin

Dr. Haroon is a medical doctor, based at a mission hospital in northern Pakistan. He is also pursuing a doctoral studies in mission with a particular interest in engaging with other faiths.



Ms Juliate Keya Malakar

Ms Juliate is the Executive Director of Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), the lead ecumenical development agency of the nation. She has hands-on operational experience and expertise in managing different kinds of interventions in the developmental and humanitarian sectors.



Rev. Dr Lee Ii Ho

Rev. Dr Lee Ii Ho is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Korea in South Korea. He began his ministry as a Senior Pastor of a church in Busan. Dr Lee comes on board with a rich experience as a grassroots mission worker.

AsiaCMS Team



Rev Chan NamChen (PhD); Executive Director

Rev Dr Chan NamChen is the Executive Director of AsiaCMS. He holds a PhD in Intercultural Studies from Fuller Theological Seminary, focusing on Missions and Leadership in Cross-cultural situations. He has been in full-time ministry for over thirty years as a cross-cultural church planter, trainer and pastor. Dr. Chan has a passion to see churches planted; pastors, leaders and churches rising to their God-given commission; and a heart for raising leaders in mission.

Peter Nguyen (PhD); Regional Manager - Mekong Hub

Rev Dr Peter Nguyen is an ordained minister who is experienced in mission, pastoring, and church planting within the context of Vietnam. He has a PhD in Mission Theology and has served the church in the areas of mission theology, contextual theology, contextualization, East Asian religions, Vietnam and East Asian Christianity. He currently works with AsiaCMS to advocate a catalytic missiological training for the Church in the context of Asia, whilst also collaborating missional services among churches in the Southeast Asia region.



Stephen Edison; Regional Manager - South Asia Hub

Stephen manages the Co-Mission Partner's program for AsiaCMS and heads its ministry in South Asia. He has an M.Div, an MA in International Relations, a Post Graduate Diploma in Human Rights and International Humanitarian and Refugee Law, a BA (Hons.) in History and is currently completing his M.Div. He has worked extensively in the area of peace and reconciliation, and has a breadth of mission experience, including development. Stephen is based in Delhi, India.



Suzane Christie; Communications Manager

Suzane has over 20 years of experience in the publishing and media industry, both as a writer and editor. She holds a BSc in Communications. Prior to joining AsiaCMS, she was a freelance writer and editor and still contributes to several Christian publications.



Eddie Leong; Finance Manager

Eddie has been working in the field of accounting for more than 25 years in the commercial sector. He also serves as an assistant treasurer of a local church in Kuala Lumpur.



Low Chee Teng; Finance Compliance Office

Chee Teng is an accountant based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He has more than 30 years of working experience which includes serving as CFO of a public listed company. He now assists in the financial management of AsiaCMS.



Esther John; Safeguarding Manager

Esther's heart gravitates towards the wellbeing of children. She is a Mental Health and Psycho-social practitioner with expertise in Child Protection and Safeguarding. Based in Sri Lanka, Esther is also an independent consultant for the non-profit sector in Sri Lanka.

SUPPORT TEAM



Rhena Clouston; Programs and Partnership Coordinator, South Asia Hub

Rhena's passion is helping people to build relationships – primarily with Christ, but also within and beyond their communities. She is based in Bangalore, but she has an international background – India, Zambia and the UK have all contributed to her identity and outlook. Rhena provides support to the AsiaCMS Regional Manager for the South Asia Hub with hub-related projects and admin. She also assists with pastoral care of Co-Mission Partners in the South Asia hub.



Eleena Thomas; Administration and Operations Coordinator, South Asia Hub

With a background in Human Resources, Eleena enjoys meeting people and building long-term connections. She has a passion for children's ministry and is actively involved with her local church in teaching, coordinating and supporting this ministry. Eleena is also musically inclined and is a long-standing member of her church choir. She is currently based in Bangalore but has lived and studied in other countries, resulting in a good understanding of interacting with people across cultures.

Tim To; Administration and Operations Coordinator, Mekong Hub

Tim loves helping young professionals to grow in every area of society whilst reflecting God's glory. After graduating from the International Graduate School of Leadership, Tim explored several opportunities to work with various missional organisations, including YWAM. At AsiaCMS, Tim assists with administration and communications relating to programs and partnership within the Mekong Hub.



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AsiaCMS History

The origins of the Church Mission Society (CMS) go back to 1799 in London, UK, when a small group of Anglican evangelicals with a passion for worldwide outreach met to pray. They included John Newton, who wrote *Amazing Grace*, and William Wilberforce, who was a leader in abolishing the slave trade in England.

They founded the society with a purpose of sending missionaries to Africa and the East, with some early missionaries going to Sierra Leone, Kenya, China, India and Japan.

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When CMS was founded, China was closed to all missionaries, yet this didn't stop CMS from sending Robert Morrison as its first missionary to China in 1807. Travelling in defiance of the Chinese authorities, he distributed tracts wherever he could, but it wasn't until after the Opium War that five Chinese ports were opened to European missionaries in 1842 that mission began in earnest in China, setting up schools, founding dispensaries and appointing church leaders.

“We are a community of people in Mission”

When CMS began work in India the British East India Company would not allow missionaries in the areas which it administered. William Wilberforce (the first Vice President of CMS and famous campaigner for the abolition of the slave trade) led a movement for the revision of the East India Company charter to enable missionaries to preach the Gospel to the Indians.

By the time a Charter Bill was passed in 1813, CMS already had missionaries training for work in India and by 1814 the first two CMS missionaries arrived in Madras. CMS subsequently worked extensively in India establishing schools, printing Bibles and appointing church leaders.

CMS has a strong legacy of evangelism, church planting, mission schools and hospitals across Asia and Africa. Today CMS UK is still involved in sending mission partners overseas but also pioneering church work in the UK. CMS is committed to seeing indigenous CMS missions established globally - enabling local mission leaders to follow God's leading.


In 2008 it established CMS Africa as an autonomous mission movement based in Nairobi, Kenya. In 2012 AsiaCMS was established as an autonomous mission movement based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia under the first Executive Director, Dr Tan Kang San.

AsiaCMS seeks to draw on the experience and wisdom of the CMS community, but also has the freedom to evolve and develop an authentic Asian mission movement as we follow God's leading and respond to the needs within the Asian context.

Leaders of the global CMS community meet regularly for “Interchange” to encourage, network and support each other. The global CMS network consist of CMS Britain, CMS Africa, CMS New Zealand, CMS Australia, CMS Ireland, SAMS-USA, as well as AsiaCMS.

The power of community - A retrospect of 2021

By **Suzane Christie**
Communications Manager



She was a grieving widow in need of a miracle; there were debts to pay, mouths to feed. God's grace found her and through His prophet, God multiplied what little she had into abundance and gave her hope. This story in 2 Kings 4 is not an unfamiliar one - teaching us about faith and God's miraculous power. I revisited this passage recently and a word that did not quite catch my eye before, resonated this time around: *Neighbours*.

Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbours... (2 Kings 4:3) They weren't integral to this story or the doctrinal teaching of this passage but the widow's neighbours still played a part in **her** story; and however small, they were mentioned. It made me pause and consider this past year.

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When AsiaCMS began relief efforts during the second wave of the pandemic that hit South Asia hard, we found ourselves facing the needs of many widows. Their circumstances were vastly different but the grief and needs remained. And just like the one in Scripture, God's grace found these widows too and gave them hope. Again, neighbours or *community*, played a small part in **their** story.

Many of the pastors and mission workers who died from Covid-19 left behind young wives - some pregnant, young children, and elderly parents, all who depended on them. Through the support of our donors and partners, AsiaCMS could offer a little reprieve, to help with the initial transition following the death of their loved ones. Their journey is slow and their grief heavy but it is not without hope.

It is through the power of a *community* of people such as yourself, who offer financial and prayer support that allows us to walk alongside those who are hit the hardest during this pandemic. Our fundraising efforts this year have connected those who could give - directly to those who were in need.

In one instance, there was a need for oxygen concentrators in North India. Subsequently, a Malaysian donor, based in the UK, raised funds and sent them directly to a contact in Delhi to buy the needed concentrators.

In another instance, we connected churches and individuals so they could give funds directly to specific mission partners and pastors in India, who were either affected by the virus and needing financial help, or devastated by the loss of the sole breadwinner in their families. Missions is all about relationships and connecting people in this manner is what we seek to do.

We have been greatly encouraged by the responses we have received - not only from those donating funds but from those who wanted to connect directly with the people in need. Here are just a few short updates from several recipients of our South Asia Covid Relief.

The Freedom Project (TFPIndia)

TFPIndia works in over 10 underserved communities that are basically temporary settlements for those who have come to the city looking for jobs. The second wave prompted an enforced lockdown across Karnataka. For the families in marginalised areas, it meant loss of jobs again with no salary, no money to buy basic provisions and living in extreme fear at what the future holds. Most of the communities that TFPIndia works in are filled with migrants and daily wage labourers. The need of the hour was for dry rations, such as staples of rice, wheat flour, oil, salt, sugar and basic toiletries to tide them over this very difficult time.

During the lockdown, the team swung into action to mobilise any resource to help those who were alone at home and had lost their livelihood, or unable to access food because they were Covid positive. This included setting up a full-fledged and operational commercial kitchen to provide hot meals. A team of 18 staff cooked, packed and supplied food to the doorstep of over 120 persons all over Bengaluru. The food was packed in disposable containers and delivered hot before 12pm with minimal contact. During this time of panic and fear, TFPIndia's football coaches rose to the need and bravely travelled 25-30km every day in the midst of the lockdown to deliver food parcels to single parent families, elderly couples and those most vulnerable and unable to cook.



LEADS – Sri Lanka

In June this year, Sri Lanka was experiencing a tragic season amidst floods and the third wave of the pandemic. LEADS initiated relief work to offer support to 158 pastors, lay leaders and families across six districts throughout the island, who were struggling. Many of these churches and communities are within rural setting and most of the people are daily wage earners who work as masons, carpenters, and labourers. Several of the pastors also work part time and depend on livelihood activities at the village.

With the third outbreak of the pandemic, coupled with floods in one district, the lives of these beneficiaries were severely affected due to the unavailability of coping mechanisms and the lack of assistance from any organization, agency or the government. This caused LEADS to step in and provide emergency food relief so that those affected were able to sustain their living for the time being.



Sundar Dhoka Saathi Sewa (SDSS) - Nepal

As a registered, non-profit NGO in the Lalitpur district of Nepal, SDSS aims to provide health services to persons from remote areas of Nepal. When the lockdown in Kathmandu led to an overwhelmed health system and shortage of hospital beds, ventilators, and oxygen, SDSS collaborated with the local government and city officials to start an Isolation Centre. Within a month, the Centre provided free beds and medical aid to 155 patients who were in dire need.

This is Kanchi Maya, a 66-year-old from Lalitpur, who was the first patient at the Isolation Center. She came in gasping for air and in need of immediate medical attention. For the next six days, she received oxygen and medical care at the SDSS Isolation Centre. A week later, she recovered fully. This picture was taken on the day she was discharged, happily waiting for her son to pick her up and grateful for the support and medical aid she received.



Grace Community Services (GCS) - Nepal

In the remote village of Chepang within the Makawanpur district, there are 30 households living on top of the hill. Most of them are farmers who work their fields and hope to yield a harvest, despite challenges and harsh weather. Some of the young people have gone to the Gulf countries to work, while other adults and even youth go to the nearest market called Manahari, to find daily work at crosser factories, or as masons and to collect stone and sand at the riverside.

With the lockdown, the jobs stopped, and they were desperately in need of food for their family and children. Our partnering organisation, GCS was able to provide some relief in the form of groceries for whole families in the village. They provided a total of 40kg rice bags, soybean oil, soybean food, salt, sugar, and pulse which were distributed to 40 families, including several additional family members from a neighbouring village. In total, around 200 people from 40 households benefitted from this emergency aid.



AsiaCMS Programs We Support



South Asia Christian Youth Network (SACYN)



SACYN is a network of young leaders from South Asia with a mission to build connections. It is all about inspiring, preparing and strengthening young Christian adults to cross bridges to encounter and share their faith and lives with those who are from different circumstances, languages, cultures, ethnicity, nationality, lifestyles, faiths and backgrounds.

SACYN has had trainings and meetings in various countries in South Asia, which has helped to build bridges and nurture strong personal relations between the future leadership of the Church in South Asia. It has also been a useful vessel to train and equip young people in Asia on issues and challenges that are relevant to the Church and Christianity in Asia today.

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Over the past 14 years, SACYN has provided a forum for young leaders in South Asia to meet together annually. The mission of SACYN is to facilitate young people in churches to be personally challenged in their commitment to follow Jesus Christ and for each to find his or her role in being a part of God's mission.

SACYN seeks to strengthen and renew regional churches in their faith and their commitment to make Christ known in their engagement in practical mission for the Kingdom of God.

SACYN is committed to help a generation to fully live the kingdom experience and enable them to transcend all possible boundaries that separate people from people. Their vision is to encourage, motivate and enable South Asian young people from the region's churches to link up, overcome barriers and work together for the Gospel and Kingdom of God - a vision for a future South Asia that is different.

Over the course of the pandemic, SACYN continued to provide an avenue for fellowship and friendship between Christian youth leaders, through monthly webinars. These webinars allowed leaders to gather virtually to encourage and learn from each other through a range of topics such as: peace and security, social media and responsible online presence, substance abuse, artistic expressions, and many others.

Mekong Indigenous Missional Initiative (MIMI)

This is a new initiative that began in 2019, offering both online and onsite missiological training programs, which are accredited in collaboration with the Union University of California (UUC). This initiative is focused on churches in the Mekong Region.

Designed to transform the missional paradigms and mission practices of churches in the region, it will accelerate indigenous missions and cross-cultural church-planting by local churches.

In 2019, we took a step of faith in initially allocating US\$17,000 for this new thrust, in order to support an annual missions conference for key pastors and leaders (that was held in the first quarter of 2019 with nearly 100 participants), six missional training modules, and networking with local churches. This initiative has expanded from its beginnings. MIMI has the following components:

- a) Missions conferences to inspire and teach key pastors and leaders for indigenous cross-cultural missions.
- b) A training program that consists of 6 modules for cross-cultural church planters.
- c) Support of local initiatives.



The Responsibility of Safeguarding

By **Esther John**
Safeguarding Manager

“Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

Psalm:82: 3-4.

Children and some categories of people are considered vulnerable as they are more susceptible to abuse, violence and harm. In each of our working areas, we either come across or work with the most vulnerable. In such contexts, there are possibilities that our own work or working methods may cause harm to children and those at risk, either intentionally or unintentionally. Thus, it is our responsibility to ensure that the most vulnerable are safeguarded from abuse, violence, and harm within our context of work and ministry.

AsiaCMS has begun the journey of introducing and implementing systems that will safeguard the most vulnerable across its working contexts. Thus, the vision of AsiaCMS on safeguarding is:

- To safeguard and protect children and adults-at-risk from exploitation, abuse, and harassment.
- To ensure AsiaCMS stakeholders and personnel adhere to the safeguarding code of conduct across all activities of AsiaCMS.
- For AsiaCMS to be a model for safeguarding amongst mission organizations.

In upholding the biblical mandate of caring for and defending the rights of the most vulnerable, and in abiding by the legal mandates (*UN CRC and Universal Declaration of Human rights*), AsiaCMS has formulated a safeguarding policy for all its stakeholders, including our Co-mission Mission Partners. Our aim is to implement the policy towards the end of 2021 and all Board of Trustees, staff, consultants, volunteers and Co-mission Mission Partners of AsiaCMS will be required to sign the policy.

What is safeguarding and who are vulnerable persons?

Safeguarding means preventing an incident of abuse, violence, or harm against a vulnerable person whom we work with or within our working context.

Vulnerable persons can be classified as a Child (*any person below the age of 18 years*) and Adults-at-risk (*any person aged 18 years or above who due to his/her illness, physical or mental health or disability is unable to care for self, and hence needs care and support*).

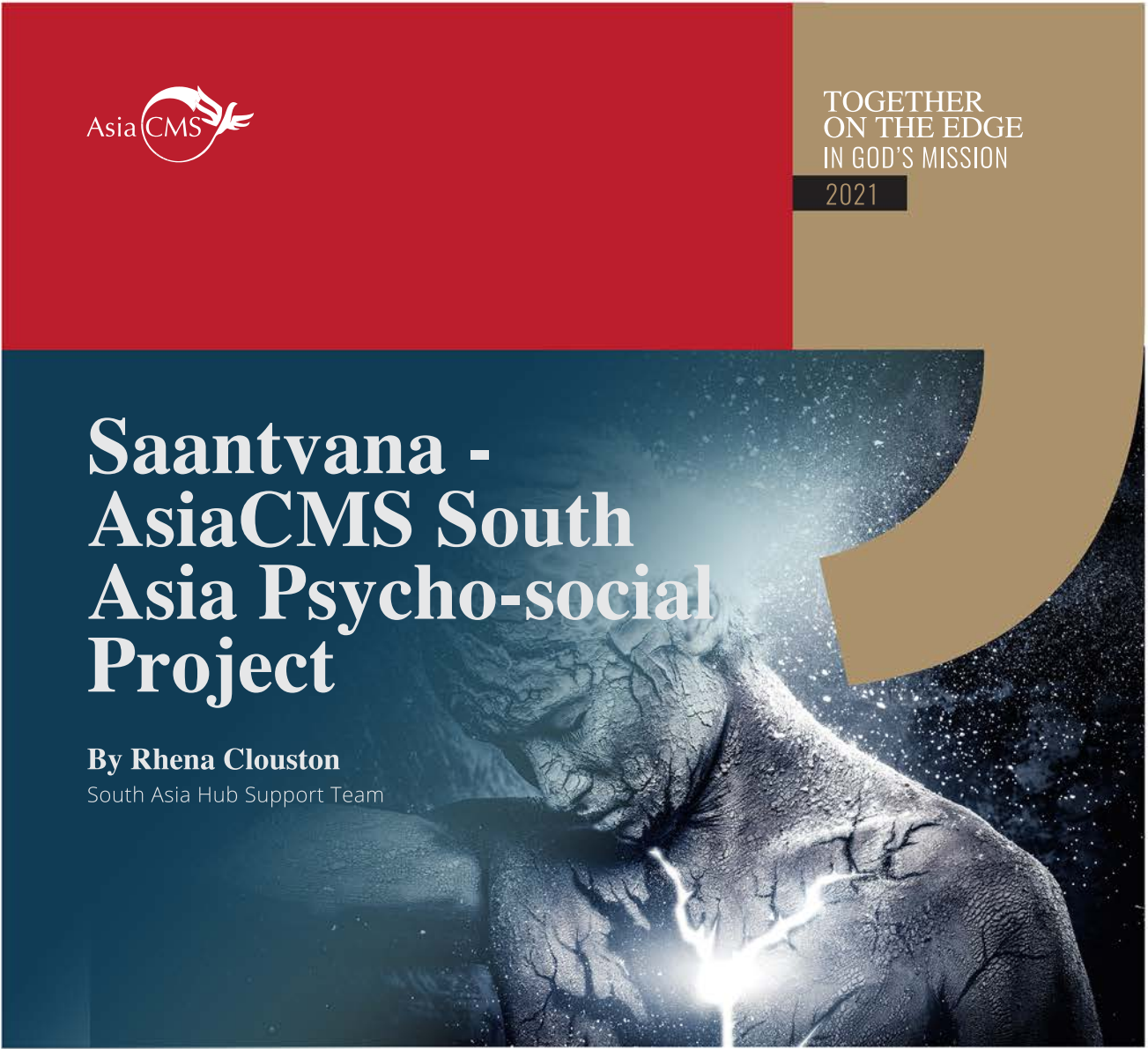
What is a safeguarding policy?

It is a document formally approved by the organization's Board of Trustees that contains the rationale of safeguarding in the context of the organization and a Code of Conduct, which will serve as a practical guide regarding the best practices for safeguarding children and adults-at-risk.

What is our responsibility?

We need to sign and adhere to AsiaCMS' safeguarding policy and do our best in preventing any form of abuse, violence, or harm within our work context. It is also our responsibility to report any known incidents of violation of the policy to relevant officials, as per the reporting protocols.

Safeguarding children and adults-at-risk is the responsibility of each of us and as a Christian mission organization, we ought to be accountable to God for those He has entrusted us with. Let us together build a culture where the most vulnerable are safeguarded and model the biblical mandate of safeguarding.



Saantvana - AsiaCMS South Asia Psycho-social Project

By Rhena Clouston

South Asia Hub Support Team

With the start of the pandemic in April 2020, AsiaCMS began providing food and dry rations to meet some of the needs of the poor and migrant labourers in South Asia, who were the most affected. By August that year, we realised that the response to the COVID-19 situation required more than dry rations and cooked meals. The consequences of sudden lockdowns, loss of livelihood, lack of physical contact, displacement of families and the rising death rate had led to emotional and mental stress and related health issues. As time went by and the number of cases and deaths receded, we were left with post-Covid mental health challenges.

Our focus then shifted to the psycho-social sphere, as we began trying to work out how we could help people identify, accept, and begin to heal emotionally, as well as prepare for whatever the future might look like. From within the AsiaCMS community, we gathered a team of counsellors, a social worker, a graphic designer, and a videographer to create three self-assessment tool kits:

- Self- Awareness & Self-Care
- Loss & Grief
- Building Resilience



These tool kits deal with the areas of mental health and emotional wellbeing, and help people cope with the loss and grief they may have experienced during the ongoing pandemic. The tool kits also provide contact details for counsellors in Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, so that people can reach out for help if they feel the need to. The tool kits are designed to help individuals become aware of and identify their mental and emotional needs. This process then enables them to set up support networks and begin the journey towards returning to a place of wholeness and peace, despite the situation around them.

In the 'Building Resilience Tool Kit', there is a line which says, ***"The only certainty of these times is its uncertainty. Building our resilience or ability to cope with and bounce back from the adverse scenarios we face is a survival skill required..."***

There is no going back to how things were in the past; we simply must learn to adjust and live in the 'new normal' with courage and resilience. Even as these tool kits were being developed, Karuna Sharma, one of our counsellors and content writers, used the Self Awareness and Self Care Tool Kit with a group of women in her community, in Nepal. Here is her experience:

"Using the tool kit in the small group was impactful. The Self Awareness and Self Care Tool kit was the first tool kit that was developed during the Covid-19 pandemic. This tool kit was used in a small group of young women. Reading the stories of Aisha and Anand led them to think about their own stories and share with the group. They understood the importance of being aware of self and taking care of self, as this concept is usually not promoted in South Asian communities. People are often told to take care of others, without really giving self any time. The young women became aware of some essentials that they can use to take care of self. They even decided that they will follow certain steps which can help with self-awareness and self-care."

This story got us thinking about how we can take the tool kits to wider communities. The team then added a Workbook component to the existing tool kits. These workbooks contain a Facilitator's Guide that enables anyone with the desire to work with a group, to facilitate discussions between individuals. This allows the learning process to go beyond individual use. We can learn so much from the experiences of others and their stories. This makes us realise that we are not alone; the pandemic has affected all of us in some way and continues to do so. We can learn to survive and maybe even thrive, not just as individuals but as a community. We at AsiaCMS are so excited to put these tool kits and workbooks into your hands, to assist you to serve the community you belong to during this season.

For more details and to download the free tool kits, please visit Saantvana at: <https://saantvana.org>

AsiaCMS Our Presence



(cont'd)

Our Co-Mission Partners are spearheading initiatives in building national capacity and providing leadership in critical spheres of mission. These include building theological and leadership capacity, reaching least-reached people groups, church planting, engagement with the rural and urban poor through community development, education and ministry thrusts in arenas of child protection, peace and reconciliation, human/sex trafficking and drug rehabilitation.

- India
- Indonesia
- Laos
- Malaysia
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand
- Vietnam

Our Aspirations and Vision

We aspire to extend our presence to walk alongside national churches and indigenous movements in furthering God's mission. We seek to establish strong regional hubs in South Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia, China and Central Asia to facilitate God's mission in these countries

- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- China
- Myanmar
- Philippines
- South Korea

AsiaCMS Co-Mission Partners



“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others” - 2 Timothy 2:2

AsiaCMS focuses on partnerships and supporting indigenous Asian mission movements. Our Co-Mission Partners across Asia are co-sent; they are selected and placed by either a local mission agency or church, and we walk alongside them in partnership to offer resource, training and support. We believe in supporting local mission and want to support what God is doing in the region through our co-mission partners. These are just some of our people out in the field and the ministry they are involved in. AsiaCMS also has several other Co-Mission Partners who serve in more security-sensitive countries, who are not featured here.



Rev Hemkhomang; Churachandpur, Manipur - Church Leadership Training

Rev Mang serves in a theological college that strives to equip lay leaders of the church who have never had any theological training. Most of their local churches are under the care of untrained lay leaders; that's why this training is crucial. They also train young people who are prospective leaders in the church and in society. His call is to train and equip leaders with a servant's heart for the church and God's kingdom.

He was born and brought up in a devoted Christian family of 10 members. His parents were illiterate with no proper employment at hand and so, Rev Mang grew up in severe poverty with no proper education. However, his parents had a strong desire and commitment to serve the Lord with whatever means they had at their disposal. So, when he was about 10 years old, his parents dedicated him into full time ministry under the guidance of a pastor.

Since then, Rev Mang was constantly in the prayers of his family and church so that someday he would serve the Lord full time. Then, in the year 2000, he heard and responded to God's call. Subsequently, he completed two stages of theological training from 2002 to 2010, first for his Bachelor of Divinity and then, master's in theology. His theological trainings have given him a strong desire to serve among the poor and downtrodden, and this commitment has led him to where he is currently serving.



Rev Shirish; Guwahati, Assam - Christian Education

Rev Shirish's call is to be a Christian educator and for the last decade, he has responded to this call as the residential Christian Educator with The Association for Theological Education by Extension (TAFTEE). He is involved in promoting and assisting the local churches in Christian leadership and discipleship. As a pastor and teacher, he engages in opportunities to proclaim Christ in various private and public sectors of India. He is also involved in pioneering work in new regions and areas of North India, where many churches, mission organisations, schools, and universities provide an opportunity for gospel ministry.

After graduating with a BSc and MSc in Chemistry, he worked as a chemist in a multinational company, whilst serving as a lay pastor in the church. He then completed an MBA before stepping into fulltime ministry in the year 2000. While he was studying for his M.Div at SIACS, Bangalore two years later, he felt a special burden in his heart for missions in North India.

During a three-year tenure and several exposure trips during the summer ministry in North India, he confirmed the need, desire, and passion for doing missions. Completing an MTh (Pastoral Practice & Applied Theology) at TAFTEE opened the doors for him to be an interdenominational and inter-cultural missionary and enhanced the call as a missional leader.



Peter Christopher & Vasantha Peter; Bangalore - Integral mission: Value Education and Counselling

Peter and Vasantha have a heart to share kingdom values to school children in a systematic way - through films that are thought-provoking, contextual, and relevant to the times. They believe in the idea of rebuilding their nation with biblical values.

Based in Bangalore, Peter conceptualizes, directs and produces thematic films and video series. He has also directed several films, documentaries, video series and educational videos for NGO's and colleges. Vasantha provides individual counselling, teaches counselling psychology for colleges and leads a team of counsellors for India's first pregnancy helpline.

Their vision is to create a systematic and adaptable video platform for schools to subscribe and use as part of their mandatory value education curriculum. The thematic series of video lessons along with worksheets can be used to engage children to reflect, think and take action to become responsible citizens with the foundations of Kingdom Principles.

SOUTH ASIA HUB

NEPAL



Dr Saggu Abraham; Kathmandu - Theological Education

Dr Saggu Abraham was the founding Dean of the Nepal Theological Academy in Kathmandu and is the Director for a consortium, which provides an ATA-recognised M.Div. in Nepal for the first time. He holds a B.Th., B.D, M.Th., M.A (Phil) from various universities and a PhD in Old Testament from the University of Mysore. Dr Saggu is currently working towards identifying and training a local Nepali leader to take over the role. Nepal is a country that enjoys fast church growth but in need of higher theological education.

Dr Saggu once served at SAIACS as Registrar, Academic Dean and Director of D.Min studies between May 2007 and December 2014. He was the Secretary of Parivarthana Trust in India for 10 years. He has been involved in theological education for the last thirty years, including initiating and implementing new academic programmes in two leading seminaries in India. He was part of the ATA India on their executive committee.

He desires to see more local missionaries reach out to the unreached Nepalese with the gospel and that soon, there will be Christ-like first and second-level leaders trained for leadership roles in the denominations, mission agencies and theological institutions in Nepal.



Ashish & Karuna; Kathmandu - Theological Education

Ashish and Karuna both serve on the faculty at the Nepal Theological College. They have a similar call to minister for the Kingdom of God through teaching, preaching, counselling and music ministry.

Ashish has completed his B.Th., Bachelor of Divinity and M.Th. in Missiology. He has a deep interest in cross-cultural mission and believes that higher education or professional skills will bring more quality to cross-cultural mission. He is currently involved in teaching and preparing youth for future ministry. He conducts workshops, seminars and gatherings for churches and uses Music and Media as a tool to promote missions.

Karuna has completed her B.Th., Bachelor of Divinity, and M.Th. in Christian Counselling and is currently pursuing her PhD studies from The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies in the UK. She is also involved in developing the counselling field, teaching methods of counselling, providing trainings as required, conducting seminars and workshop for leaders and organizing follow-up meetings for sharing and reflection.



Jiwan Bharati; Pokhara - Communication & Administration

Jiwan works in the field of administration for a mission outreach organization which he joined in 2008. He joined as an office assistant and has grown into his current role where he collates valuable information, such as stories concerning the challenges of church planting and fellowship, as well as details of situations faced by Christians in Nepal.

Jiwan's gift is to encourage people to open their hearts and share their stories. These stories are subsequently shared with the board of his organisation, who then assess the situation and endeavour to address the difficulties.

Jiwan's call into mission followed the footsteps of his father who served God in ministry. He joined a DTS school and worked there for three years as staff and student. During his time there, he equipped himself with the Word of God and engaged with various cultures.

Jiwan is also involved with the local church, working with youth and pre-teens, sharing challenging stories from his own life. He has a heart to reach people from the Tibetan tribes and to minister among communities in the north of Nepal.



Indira Thapa; Kathmandu – Leadership & Missional Training

Indira has been leading NMCN for a year, which is the national Christian indigenous, interdenominational and non-profit social organisation based in Kathmandu. Indira grew up in Christian family but personally accepted Christ as her Saviour when she was 14 years old. Since then, she committed her life to God and became involved in various spheres of God's mission through different works.

She began working in NMCN in 2005, and it was there she first felt that her missional journey for God's kingdom had truly begun. She became inspired to do something that would make a difference in the lives of people and for them to know Jesus. This led her to go to Bible College with her husband for further theological education.

They both attended the International Graduate school of Leadership (IGSL) in Philippines for three years. After graduating from IGSL, together with her husband, Indira started to teach in a Bible College and began conducting Bible study and discipleship with young people.

She helps in their local church ministry, all the while experiencing God working through them to reach out to others. Indira is grateful for God's faithfulness in every step of her life, which gives her strength to keep working for God kingdom and being a part of God's mission.



Gopal & Susma Tamang; Butwal – Leadership Training

Gopal and Susma work within the area of Leadership Training in Nepal - under the Leadership Training Department of the National Churches Fellowship of Nepal (LTD-NCFN). Gopal is the Training Coordinator involved in equipping and training local church leaders.

Susma assists her husband during trainings seasons and is also involved in personally staying engaged with the students, providing them guidance and counsel.

The couple networks with church leaders across all denominations, keeping them informed about available training courses.



Anila Justine; Karachi - Drug Rehabilitation

Anila works in the area of drug rehabilitation, as drug addiction is a serious issue in Pakistan. According to estimates, there are more than half a million chronic drug users in Pakistan. Young people are especially at risk of experimenting with soft drugs that are easily available and gradually become hooked on hard drugs as well.

Families suffer socially, spiritually, and financially due to a family member's drug seeking behaviour; and they adopt much unhealthy behaviour. Individuals and families trapped in the vicious cycle of drug addiction need professional help and counselling to break the cycle of dependency.

Anila is actively involved in counselling individuals and families who suffer from drug addiction. She also helps IBTIDA run a residential rehabilitation facility in which men and women stay for longer term rehabilitation before gradually re-entering mainstream life. The project emphasises individual spiritual growth and helps people of all faiths from Karachi and surrounding areas to come off drugs, believing that the best way to stay drug free is through transformed lives.

Besides serving in the residential centre, she reaches out to different communities with a message of prevention to help young people stay off drugs. Anila is passionate about sharing the love of God with those who are struggling with drug misuse and need someone's help to overcome the complexities of drug-related issues.



Dr. Qaiser Julius; Lahore - Theological Education

Dr. Qaiser is the Director of Open Theological Seminary (OTS), providing leadership to the institution, whilst also assuming teaching and preaching roles. He represents OTS on different platforms, nationally and internationally; teaches Hermeneutics and New Testament Greek at the Gujranwala Theological Seminary; and helps the Langham Expository Preaching program in Pakistan as a volunteer coordinator.

Dr. Qaiser's call is to the field of theological education and under his leadership, the Open Theological Seminary (OTS) has grown to enter a new phase with new initiatives such as a Master Program in Christian studies. Dr. Qaiser's journey began during his time in university when he met a Campus Crusade for Christ ministry worker, who invited him to join their Bible study group.

This led him to come to know Christ personally and he joined the Campus Crusade's one-month NEW LIFE Training in Karachi, which changed his perspective completely about ministry. It was then that he felt a calling from God, which slowly took root in his life and led him to begin thinking about full-time ministry work.

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After a year on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ, he spent a few years on his theological education at the Gujranwala Theological Seminary, where he completed M.Div. He then worked as a pastor for a small congregation, which provided great experience for his future ministry work in theological education.

It was during his pastoral ministry that he received an invitation from the Open Theological Seminary, which he accepted and within a short period of time with OTS, Dr Qaiser realised that was the place and area of ministry where God wanted to use his gifting. He joined OTS in 1999 and since then, God has been using his skills in different capacities within the institution.

SOUTH ASIA HUB

SRI LANKA



Nevedita Jeevabalan; Colombo - Children's Ministry

Nevedita has a heart to reveal God's love to children who have experienced trauma and abuse. Currently, she manages all aspects of the Child Protection Department of LEADS, a community development organization. This includes therapy centres in Colombo, Badulla and Jaffna; respite centres in Colombo and Jaffna; and provision of technical support to all programmes on child protection.

Most children who are referred to LEADS for assistance have been either sexually abused, abandoned at a young age, or experienced various traumatic situations. Throughout their lives, they may have never encountered a loving, trustworthy adult. Nevedita believes that the greatest difference she can make in the lives of these children is to be an ambassador of God's love, especially in her home country of Sri Lanka where the need is great.

Nevedita has a background in Psychology and she has gained experience working under the Council of National Mental Health Institution in Sri Lanka. She has been working at LEADS for the past 14 years and has grown in her role to also equip others who could work in a similar capacity.

Nevedita's passion is to help the disadvantaged, the voiceless and traumatised children of Sri Lanka. She longs to see conditions for children improve and adequate care and justice is made available for them.

(cont'd)



Russell De Alwis; Colombo - Integral Mission and Church Relations

Russell began working with LEADS as a Child Protection Officer. He is passionate about bringing children freedom from abuse and oppression, whilst educating and creating public awareness on how children should be better protected.

He has always had the heart to serve God through missions - serving communities who do not know Christ. During his theological education and learning more about Integral Missions, Russell gained more depth and understanding on how he can do this. Since 2018, he has been serving as the Church Relations and Training Coordinator at LEADS.

Russell's work involves building connections and establishing a network of church and seminary leaders across Sri Lanka. He teaches and encourages local church leaders to engage in Integral Missions, such as demonstrating God's love through helping people who are in need in their respective communities.

MEKONG/NUSANTARA HUB

INDONESIA



Ria; Jakarta - Urban Poor Outreach Programme

Ria is the Executive Director (CEO) of Indonesia Care, an Urban Poor Ministry that was formed in the mid-2010s. Her passion is to mobilise churches and equip them to work together for urban poor development. Ria's heart is to bring the peace of God to the poor and empower them through economic, health, and education development programmes. Through Indonesia Care, Ria works towards mobilising and collaborating with local churches to doing urban missions. Their aim is to bring transformation to the lives of the poor by empowering them through sustainable projects.

Since the mid-80s, Ria was called by God to serve in various student ministries on her college campus. The vision and hunger to serve the students in Indonesia only grew bigger over time. In 1988, after her graduation, Ria began serving through FES Indonesia (Perkantass), and became involved in pioneering student fellowships in Sumatra, Kalimantan and Papua.

Subsequently, she began serving in OMF International in the year 2000 to help prepare and equip Indonesians to serve as missionaries in East Asian countries. Through all those experiences, Ria's burden to serve and develop her homeland only grew stronger and deeper, eventually leading her to her current ministry with Indonesia Care.

Ps J; – Community Development

Ps J works amongst an unreached people group in one of the Indonesian islands. Whilst studying in Singapore for his Masters in Missions program, he received a revelation from God that he will serve and reach out to the unreached ethnic group.

He had a vision of a fisherman in a boat and on top of the fisherman there were seven lights, which spoke of the perfection of the Holy Spirit. This vision really encouraged him and strengthened his calling to reach the unreached ethnic group.

His ministry helps poor people in rural areas within the island and they help the community by providing education - starting from kindergarten, with a free tuition centre. With so many children who are orphaned around them, they also adopt these children and provide them with accommodation and free education.

Every year they give out scholarship for 40 children to attend their kindergarten, which includes free uniform, school fees, books. The ministry is also helping a few of the older orphaned children to attend a local primary and high school by providing them school fees, uniforms, accommodation, and other basic necessities.

MEKONG/NUSANTARA HUB

LAOS

James Pham; – Church Planting

James hails from one of the neighbouring countries in the Mekong region based in Laos. His primary area of missions is to share the gospel and plant new churches for his native countrymen who are living in Laos.

He was born and raised somewhat in poverty, but God saved him and led him to pursue a life in ministry. James is grateful to have led a life immersed in the Word of God and having had the opportunity to learn and eventually teach the Word, lead a small group in worship and be involved in missionary training.

Over the past three years, God has blessed him in his preparation for this ministry. He now fluently speaks the Lao language and has fully acclimatised to the local climate and culture. This has allowed him to be more effective in preaching in the local language and reaching out to the people in Laos.

His vision is to share the gospel and goodness of God with as many people as possible, plant new churches, promote unity among different groups of people from his native country and also support the Lao church. James also plays a role in supporting training programmes for the Lao and his native churches in Laos.



Isaac Goh; Sabah – Cross-cultural Mission Training

Isaac and his wife were sent to Sabah from their island hometown in Penang, Malaysia to begin Micah Centre - a cross-cultural mission training school. The focus is to mobilize urban churches and equip young people to empower the rural indigenous community in Sabah through transformational development.

As the principal of Micah Centre, Isaac recruits, trains, and sends trainees out for various mission work within the rural indigenous community. He connects with local churches, particularly urban churches to give support and resources for community development projects.

Isaac also preaches and teaches in the local churches during his visitations to the rural community, especially in the area of leadership empowerment. Along with his team, Isaac also provides the rural community with education, as well as economic and spiritual empowerment.



Helen Avadiar-Nimbalker; Chiang Mai – Integral Missions: Trauma Counselling and Rehabilitation

Helen is a Malaysian based in Chiang Mai, with a heart to see God's people live an abundant life free from oppression and bondage. Helen has been an advocate against human trafficking for many years and was involved with various projects related to the cause in Malaysia, including organising Malaysia's first Walk For Freedom in 2017, in partnership with A21. Her passion is to now delve deeper in the area of human trafficking and exploitation providing rehabilitation, counselling and inner healing to survivors.

Since beginning her ministry in Chiang Mai in 2018, Helen has spent much of her time equipping herself in learning the Thai language, understanding the local culture, establishing a community of Intercessors to pray for the cause of human trafficking, whilst completing her higher certification in Trauma Counselling. She has also been building friendships with many of the women who are trapped in the sex industry.

Along with her husband Vincent Nimbalker, Helen developed a Transformation Program and opened Baan Romyen - a Center for Women that provides employment opportunities for women who are at risk, vulnerable, exploited or impacted by trauma and for those who choose to leave the sex industry to start their lives over. So far, 14 women have left the sex trade and have accepted Christ, and there are many more who are actively engaged with helping Helen reach out to others through the transformation program.

Peter Bui; Cross-cultural Missional Training and Church Planting

Peter is involved in cross-cultural missional training to reach the least and unreached people group. His primary area of missions is to train those who are able to train others to plant new churches to reach the unreached people group in Vietnam. Peter also works with various church leaders to train young church leaders for evangelical missions within the region.

Peter heard the call of God when he was only 20. He followed his call wholeheartedly and began evangelizing to local communities whilst pursuing his theological education. Upon graduation, he moved to a neighbouring city and began working in the mission field. He has a heart to the Gospel reaching the unreached beyond the borders of his own native country.

By prioritizing cross-cultural training of local leaders of specific unreached communities, Peter is able to teach these leaders how they can influence and reach their people with the Gospel. He also spends adequate time providing pastoral guidance to various local church and evangelical missions centres. He is also involved in training local church leaders to plant churches across the borders within the Mekong region.

Mint T; Communication & Administration

After graduating from college, Mint worked in a mountainous region where God showed her the desperation amongst people who do not know Jesus. At that time, she felt “too small” to do something big for God. She prayed for a further training and God answered her with an opportunity to study at the International Graduate School of Leadership, which changed her perspective about leadership as she learnt the finer qualities of serving.

Mint currently provides administrative support at a notable Christian University in the Mekong region. Her daily work is primarily to assist students through the Registrar and Admissions office. She also gives discipleship training to the young people within the community and offers online counselling to young single Christians via social media.

Mint has a heart to reach out to young Christian professionals who face various challenges at their workplaces and teach them to first seek God, know God and make Him known through their respective line of work. Mint challenges young people to live out for Christ, equipping them to become leaders who will serve and walk with God.

She also teaches leadership lessons to raise up the next generation leaders. Mint has a strong desire to tell the world about God's love, forgiveness and healing, believing that the young generation will be a catalyst for change if they themselves are changed through the transformational power of Jesus.

Dark Valleys and Green Pastures

By **Stephen Edison**

Regional Manager – South Asia Hub

In 2020, the whole world faced the start of the ongoing season of uncertainty and fear with the emergence and subsequent global spread of Covid19. Lockdowns brought the global economy to a standstill, adversely impacting the lives of those economically weakest and most vulnerable among us.

In South Asia, things seemed to improve as we stepped into 2021. However, just a few months in, India and the region was hit by a second wave that caused more deaths and devastation than in any other part of the world.

(cont'd)

We continue to live in a time of fear and uncertainty. Besides the health risks, this pandemic also takes a toll on us emotionally and spiritually. Green pastures and still waters seem to be a distant memory for many, and dark valleys and storms seem all around. Yet, we can testify that through it all, the Shepherd of our soul has walked alongside us, His rod and His staff comfort us (Psalm 23: 1-4).

The book of Genesis in the Bible ends on a high note; Joseph saved Egypt from the devastation of the famine that swept across it. He was instrumental in the survival and relocation of his family to the fertile Goshen valley, which ensured their wellbeing, prosperity, and growth in numbers.

The book of Exodus picks up the story of the Israelites a couple of centuries later, where the situation has changed! The Egyptians had forgotten Joseph and the deliverance of the Israelites from the famine. Exodus 1 sheds light on the Israelites' desperate situation of oppression, injustice, and persecution on the eve of the unfolding of God's plan for their deliverance.

In South Asia, even as the pandemic situation continues, we are experiencing socio-political challenges for minority groups, which includes Christians in each country. We are witnessing increased fundamentalism and intolerance, building on the perception of marginalization among the majority in each country. Within this year, democracy in Myanmar, and most recently Afghanistan, was overthrown.

As we live through these realities, we can draw strength from the reflections in Exodus 1.

He works through His people: In Exodus 1:15-20, we encounter Shiphrah and Puah, Hebrew midwives, ordered by the Pharaoh to commit murder, as the Israelites grew in numbers even in slavery and persecution. Two ordinary women were faced with the choice of being faithful to God or obey the most powerful man in the kingdom. Disobedience to the Pharaoh would have cost them their lives, but they chose to obey God. It was this choice that ultimately saved the lives of many babies, including Moses, whom God would use as His vessel of deliverance.

As we read through the Bible, we see many instances of the Lord working powerfully through the choices and obedience of His people. Often these are ordinary people of little importance from a worldly perspective, whom God uses to be His light in the face of overwhelming darkness.

The AsiaCMS South Asia Hub team has been deeply encouraged by similar courage and faithfulness of our Co-Mission Partners (CoMPs), project teams and networks such as the South Asian Christian Youth Network (SACYN).

Our CoMPs, even at the cost of exposing themselves to the virus, continue to minister and serve their communities in the hour of need. As physical travel and gatherings became restricted, online platforms emerged as avenues through which our partners were able to continue their ministry and, in some ways, even improve the way they do mission.

Monthly SACYN webinars enable Christian youth leaders from every country to come together virtually to learn, encourage, and strengthen their bonds of friendships and fellowship, even as the strain between and within countries grow.

Resources and toolkits developed by the AsiaCMS Psychosocial Project team has been a blessing to many, encouraging them to care for their emotional well-being, cope with grief and loss and develop resilience.

God is in control: Like the Israelites, we may feel that we are powerless in the face of challenges in our lives. We can be assured that God is in control. It is not always easy to find answers to questions of 'Why' as we go through the inevitable storms in our lives, but we can trust that He is at work. He walks with us and understands what we go through - His promises are true.

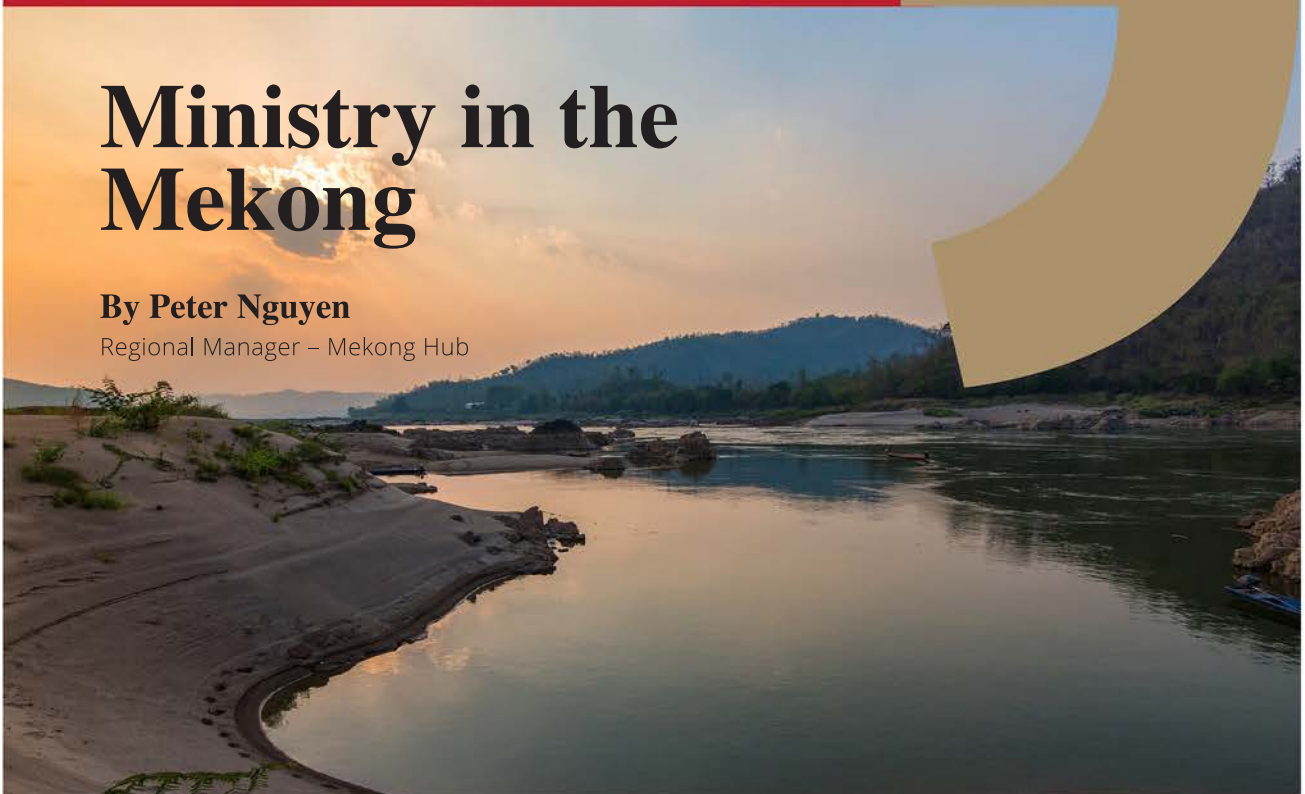
The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged

(Deuteronomy 31:8, NIV).

Ministry in the Mekong

By Peter Nguyen

Regional Manager – Mekong Hub



As the pandemic spread throughout Asia from 2020, the Mekong region, which includes Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, suffered a series of lockdowns. Then in April 2021, the new Delta variant hit the region badly, especially in Vietnam where hundreds of thousand Covid-19 active cases and thousands of death were reported.

Nevertheless, despite the harsh challenges brought about by the Delta variant this year, we remain thankful that by the grace of God, the AsiaCMS Mekong region was able to move forward with some of its significant programs. Here are those activities:



Vietnam Indigenous Mission Initiative (VIMI)

- The VIMI program for North Vietnam completed all six of its training modules. This training is a catalyst for churches to focus on outreach to the unengaged, the least and unreached groups in the country. Immediately after the first AsiaCMS Missions Conference in Hanoi, we kicked off the 1st training module in April 2019 and concluded the 6th module in January 2021. After almost two years of training, 23 trainees completed the VIMI program and were awarded an AsiaCMS VIMI Certificate of Completion, while 15 of them also received a Certificate of Basic Christian Mission from the Union University International. We are grateful to God for making this possible during the pandemic!
- The VIMI program for the Central and South Vietnam began in September 2020. No different from the one in Hanoi, this too is a catalyst training for churches in the Central and South. There were 34 people who attended the 1st training module in September and in March this year, we were able to start our 3rd training. However, as the Delta variant began to spread in April, we had to suspend all training activities in the South of Vietnam.

Mekong Mission Training in Laos

- This training focused on further equipping 10 to 15 Vietnamese pastors and leaders in Laos for missions, including our current Co-Mission Partner and his wife, particularly in evangelism and church planting among the Vietnamese. The group was challenged to reach out to the Laos people, especially the remaining 70+ Unreached People Groups (UPGs) in the country. AsiaCMS' Mekong region also had the privilege of the Bishop of Lao Evangelical Church training the Vietnamese pastors/leaders in Laos on Multiplying Discipleship Churches (MDC) in Vientiane in March 2020.

Indigenous Church Planting Movement

- Our Co-Mission Partners have been working with UPGs in the Mekong region - providing them discipleship training and subsequently, sending them out to plant churches among the UPGs, where there is no existing church. From those new church plants, the indigenous will carry on a movement of planting more churches within their people group, as well as sending out their own missionaries to neighboring UPGs. Here is a recent testimony of our partner who works with an UPG in the region:

"After about a year of praying and making few trips to reach this people group, I thank God in February this year, the first person from the group decided to accept Jesus. It is truly a great joy that God has given us have the opportunity to share the Gospel to a group of people who do not yet know Jesus. What is more joyful is, this new believer returned to his homeland and began to share the gospel with others - we thank God there are now a total of five new believers in this group of people. These new believers still have difficulty in learning God's Word and meeting together to worship God. So we need to always remember and pray for these people to increase in their love for God, and their understanding of God's word. We appreciate prayers for their lives to become better and there will be many more people who will begin to believe in Jesus."

Reaching the Unengaged Groups

- Our Co-Mission Partners also reach out to unengaged groups in the region. This includes providing ministry to specific communities in Vietnam, who are hearing-impaired and can't speak; and, providing after care program for under-privileged women in Thailand, who are trapped in the sex industry and survivors of trafficking.

Covid-19 Relief

- Through our CoMPs in the region in 2020, as well as three local churches and two local Christian ministries in 2021, we were able to bless those in need, who were struggling with basic necessities. Here are a few pictures from our Covid-19 Relief efforts in the Mekong region.





TOGETHER
ON THE EDGE
IN GOD'S MISSION

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