

向东服务

Serve the East

JUNE 2021



TOGETHER WITH GOD'S CHILDREN, WE SERVE THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, THE MARGINALIZED GROUP IN OUR LAND.

MINISTRY STRATEGY

EMPOWERMENT

To empower indigenous churches in economy and education.

AWARENESS

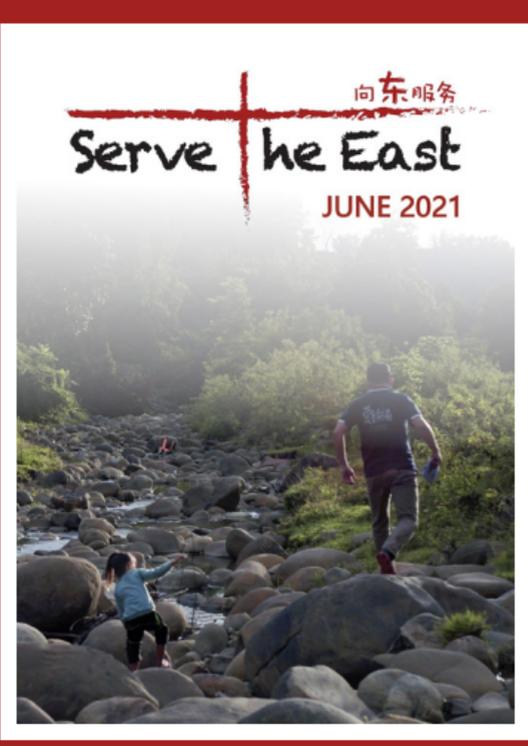
To share the vision of 'Yuan-Han Journeying Together' with Chinese speaking churches

SUPPORT

To link the Chinese speaking churches together in supporting indigenous churches

TRAINING

To equip Chinese speaking churches to involve in caring mission



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CONTENT

STORY & ARTICLE

01 | It's God's Calling!

WORDS OF CEO

02 | "The Indigenous and Chinese (Yuan-Han) Journeying Together" New Discoveries on the Ancient Path (1)

MICAH NEWS

03 | How to conduct Micah Training during the Pandemic?

STE UPDATES

04 | Virtual Interaction cum Prayer Meeting

PRAYER REQUEST

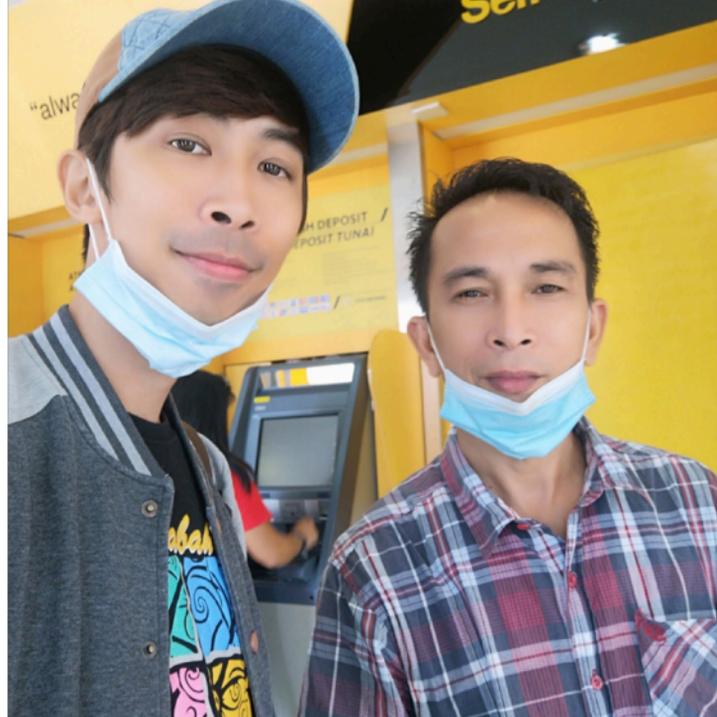
05 | Pray for us

It's God's Calling!

 Isaac Goh

The shortage of pastors is a long-standing problem for most Indigenous churches in the interior of Sabah. The believers are left without shepherds, their knowledge of Word of God shallow and their spiritual growth stunted, resulting in some abandoning their faith easily.

Three years ago, I met an indigenous pastor named Pastor Janis. Hailing from a village in Ranau, he was serving in a local SIB church there. Pastor Janis is a pastor who takes his ministry seriously, diligent in teaching the truth and making disciples. After completing his seminary training in Christian Studies two years ago, he wanted to continue with getting a master's degree in Pastoral Ministry. However, his plan was unexpectedly derailed when a blockage was recently found in his heart, for which he had to get a surgery. Already feeling the financial strain in the family, together with the burden of raising his young child with learning difficulties, his academic pursuit now seemed like a distant dream.



Isaac & Pastor Janis

I asked Pastor Janis why he is so persistent in getting his theological degree – he affirmed that God has called him to remain in the villages to teach the Truth.

Pastor Janis was actually offered a pastoral position from a BM church in the Peninsular, which promised him a good pay and benefit. But he is determined to obey God's call to remain in the Sabah interior, to teach the people the truth of God.

He witnessed many Indigenous churches without pastors, like sheep without a shepherd, many have gone astray. As there is no one to give them spiritual guidance, they are prone to abandon their faith when trials and temptations come. Pastor Janis is determined to further his study to equip himself with theological knowledge and pastoral skills, hoping that he can be more effective in teaching them the Truth and make them disciples of Christ, and to help the Indigenous churches grow healthily.

The total cost for his part-time Master in Pastoral Ministry is about RM 9,000. Through social media platforms, we launched a fund-raising drive to raise support for Pastor Janis' theological study needs. We thank and praise our Lord for His faithfulness – in mere three days, the required fund was raised!

We are very thankful to the Chinese churches for their willingness to support Pastor Janis, to help him overcome the financial challenges, that he can hold true to God's calling. We believed this is indeed pleasing to God.

"If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it."

(1 Corinthians 12:26 NIV)

“The Indigenous
and Chinese (Yuan-Han)
Journeying Together”



New Discoveries

on the Ancient Path

(Part 1)



✍ Rev. Andrew Wong

In 2021, amidst the growing pandemic, we had our virtual class opening ceremony for Micah Centre. The message for the students and faculty during the ceremony was “The 10 Great Discoveries during the 10 months in Micah Centre”, but the lesson was very apt for the churches, in preparing the Chinese Christians to serve the Indigenous brethren. Hence, in a 4-part series, I shall be sharing with you in this column the 10 **Great Discoveries we learned** along the co-journey of the Chinese and the Indigenous. As it is said in Jeremiah 6:16, “This is what the Lord says: “Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls...”

How grievous is the context of prophet Jeremiah’s message! The people of God refuse God’s teachings, yet it is their enemies who are following His commands. From verses 9-15, we see that the people keep on living in sin, and there are two reasons – first, they “will not walk” in the good way (v.16); and second, they “will not listen” to the warning from God (v. 17). Neither are they willing to learn from history, nor are they ready to face the present reality – all they want to do is to numb themselves in their shallow comfort of self-indulgence. The ancient path is none other than the law of Moses and the way revealed by the prophets in their prophecies, a path that is long testified as true by the people of God, the only way to find rest for their souls (v.16).

And if we are to call on the ancient path of the “Yuan-Han journeying together”, and if we open our spiritual eyes and ears to see and hear along the way, with a humble spirit submitting to God’s guide, it will not be a great trouble for us to make the following great discoveries:

Great Discovery No. 1

It is only through solitude that you can truly know this God – whom you have always believed in, whom you worship, whom you follow.

Looking back, it was with a simple, obedient heart that HISTEAM followed the call of the Holy Spirit to Serve the East (Sabah). Giving ourselves a duration of one whole year, we silently visited the land of Sabah, from the urban cities and towns to the rural villages in the interiors, to observe and witness the works of God through the ministry our many forefathers – the “Word made flesh” – in this land. And indeed that was what we see, the very evidence of God’s wonderful works realising in the communities of the Indigenous people. We could not stop praising God in wonderment for the great things that He has done in the land of Sabah! And it was then our hearts are comforted, to find the rest for our souls.

...to be continued

How to Conduct Micah Training

During the Pandemic ???

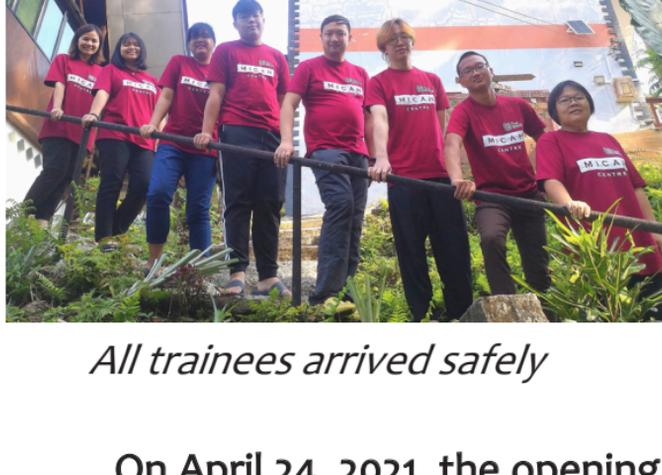
The 4th Training Year in
Micah Centre had begun!

 Timothy Lee

In March 2020, Covid-19 pandemic broke out in our country. The government announced the implementation of the “Movement Control Order” for the first time, the people were thrown into a state of nervousness and uncertainty. The staff team of Micah Centre held several emergency meetings to discuss the challenges and solutions in commencing the third training year. Initially, the team prepared for the worst – to suspend the course entirely or at least to conduct the training through alternative means available to us. But God made a way for us! Not only did the third batch of trainees complete the entire course successfully, but in April 2021, we officially commenced the fourth session of Micah Centre, with 8 new trainees enrolled for the training.

During the pandemic with the MCO in place, the freedom and ease of movement was heavily restricted; the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for pandemic prevention were constantly changing, and the trainees faced endless travel arrangement challenges on their journey to Micah Centre in Sabah.

In April, all the 8 trainees were due to fly into Kota Kinabalu from their respective hometowns. The first trainee to arrive was from the Peninsular; he was refused entry due to noncompliance with Sabah’s new immigration policy. The staff team received the news and was greatly distraught, we were all on the edge. We broke out in prayers and called for intercession, and the team also looked for avenues for the trainee to avoid being sent back to the Peninsular. Thanks be to God, after nearly 10 hours of anxious dealings, the trainee finally passed the immigration screening and was allowed entry into Sabah. A few days later, the rest of the trainees also arrived in turns, passing the checkpoint with little issue, all ready to begin their Micah journey.



All trainees arrived safely

On April 24, 2021, the opening ceremony for 4th session of Micah Centre was held virtually; the 8 trainees came to meet with other church and ministry leaders and partners for the first time. The trainees introduced themselves in Bahasa Malaysia and presented a hymn in the Malay language. Led by their mentors and witnessed by the 70 attendees, the trainees affirmed their commitment to obey God’s command in Micah 6:8 – to serve and walk humbly with God in their journey with the Indigenous people. At the end of the session, everyone was united in prayer for the trainees’ upcoming training. Before closing, Bro. Isaac Goh, the principal of Micah Centre, urged all attendees to always remember the institute in their private prayers, as the ministry is in great need of spiritual support in prayers from the body of Christ.

With the conclusion of the virtual opening ceremony, the 4th session of Micah Centre training was officially begun. The first challenge for the trainees would be learning the Bible in Bahasa Malaysia. For those who are not familiar with scripture or not proficient in the language, a huge breakthrough awaits!



Learn to use the Malay Bible



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Prayer Meeting

It has been a year and a half since the start of Covid-19 pandemic, and during this period, our country has implemented numerous Movement Control Orders (MCO) to combat this outbreak. As our movements are being restricted, our mission trips to rural Sabah are also being brought to a stop. However, even as our chances to interact with the Indigenous there in person are reduced drastically, our determination to show our concern and to serve the communities remain as high as ever.

On 15 April 2021, we organised our first ever virtual “Serve the East – Yuan-Han Journeying Together” Prayer Meeting and Fellowship. We gathered members who had previously joined the Sabah Mission Trips, as well as those who have been supporting Serve the East ministry, for a discourse on how to continue loving and serving the Sabah Indigenous communities amidst the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. By God’s grace, we had 21 attendees from different denominations of churches joining this online meeting.

We started the meeting by sharing the vision and updates of Serve the East ministry, to help us recall the focus of our ministry. In the discussion sessions led by our co-workers, all the participants were very enthusiastic to pitch in ideas on how to show concern to the rural indigenous communities while we are unable to be with them in person. As not every village is equipped with telecommunication facilities, at the moment we can only reconnect with some of the Indigenous people, to show our love and care for them.

While the MCO has restricted many of our works in the church, we are convicted that the power of prayers surpasses any geographical restrictions.

We also interceded for the challenges encountered by Sabah Indigenous churches: the difficulties in online learning due to poor telecommunication infrastructures; the lack of spiritual leaders and pastors to lead the sheep; the threat of Islamisation and the impact of the controversy surrounding the usage of the word “Allah”. Though the meeting was virtual, the participants could still experience the strong presence of Holy Spirit. While the MCO has restricted many of our works in the church, we are convicted that the power of prayers surpasses any geographical restrictions.

Many attendees expressed that they got to know more regarding the situation of Indigenous communities through this virtual prayer meeting, and they will be sharing these updates with their own churches so that more people can pray for the communities. At the same time, we will be holding this virtual “Serve the East – Yuan-Han Journeying Together” vision casting meeting once every 2 months, that the Chinese churches can be continually updated on the needs and news of the Indigenous communities. We hope that through meetings like these, we can bridge the gap between the Chinese and Indigenous churches, strengthen their relationships, and to serve this as a platform to mobilise churches for cross-cultural mission.

PRAYER REQUEST

*Pray for us***RURAL COMPANIONSHIP CLASS**

Updates Due to distance, we continue to provide guidance and show our care through the internet for the two local Indigenous sisters running the class, in order to empower them in educating the next generation.

Prayer Pray that God will grant the two local teachers faith, wisdom, and creativity to run the class. In the absence of resources, they can guide the children in the village with love, to help them grow in knowledge, wisdom, and character.

VIRTUAL VISION CASTING-CUM-PRAYER MEETING

Updates Visitation trips and mission trips to the interior of Sabah had to be suspended due to the Covid-19 situation. But through the virtual vision casting-cum-prayer meeting, we continue to reach out to Chinese churches to deliver the vision of “Yuan-Han Journeying Together”, that more may notice and care for the needs of the Indigenous people.

Prayer Pray that God will guide us in the preparation and organising of this online meeting that will be held once every 2 months. May all the attendees grasp the vision of “Yuan-Han Journeying Together”, and more Chinese churches will be raised up to actively care for the marginalised and needy Indigenous communities in our land.

PRESCHOOL MINISTRY

Updates The current Covid-19 situation has badly affected the economic situation; yet the Indigenous people in the rural areas are still in need of external support. Through “Serve the East”, Chinese churches and individuals have pledged to support the salary of the teachers serving in the preschools in the rural areas, so that the preschools can continue to operate.

Prayer Pray that God will grant the teachers wisdoms and strength, that in the pandemic, they are still able to teach the Indigenous children, while abiding the SOP to protect themselves and the children from the coronavirus. Pray for God’s guidance and provision as HISTEAM is raising the funds to support the teachers’ salary.

MICAH CENTRE

Updates There are 8 new trainees, aged between 18 to 44 who came from all over the country were enrolled in Micah Centre for their training this year. The trainees have arrived safely at our training centre in Sabah on 21 April, to begin their cross-cultural mission discipleship training.

Prayer Pray that each trainee will be moulded by God through this training programme, that their lives will be transformed, and that they can understand God’s plan and will in their lives. Pray that God to grant wisdom to our staff who are serving as their mentors, that they can teach, guide, and journey with the trainees throughout their training.