

SIM *now*

East Asia Edition

Serving Through Incarnation

Philippians 2:5-7

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”

SIM
Serving In Mission
国际事工差会

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Serving Through Incarnation

Michael Chay, Director, SIM Singapore

Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.”

Living an incarnated life means dying to our old ways and learning to live in new ways modelling after Christ. The current Pandemic forces us to review the ways we live and do ministries. Zoom by default has become the new way of ministry. Digital mission is now the new normal reshaping the future of Mission. But it has compelled us to reskill, build new capabilities, and to be at ease with technology to be fully geared to serve our Master, just like the stories of our members in this issue, re-inventing the way they do mission.

One of the outcomes of this new normal is waiting. Lock down, circuit breaker, and movement restrictions are phrases we are immune to, these days. True, all these limit our freedom to travel and minister as we used to. Many of our missionaries are waiting to go, but borders are closed. Waiting is always agonizing as there are lots of things to be done in countries, where our members are serving. Paul waited three days (Acts 9:9) for his eyes to be opened after encountering Christ on the Damascus road. In blindness, God allowed him to reflect to know who He really was. That was part of God's preparation of Paul for his incarnational ministry in the future. He had to wait to become sensitive to God's leading.

Personally, I waited too, praying for six years asking God to use me in a mission related ministry outside the church. Though I have served in church as a lay person since youth days, I simply wanted to be involved in mission. When finally, God opened the door for me to serve in Mission I could not comprehend why God placed me in my current leadership role. Amidst apprehension and fear, however weak and inadequate I felt, I surrendered myself to His will as submission is not an option when God calls. Obedience is my incarnational posture as a servant.

During my recent commissioning service at Bartley Christian Church, the worship leader led a song that echoed very loudly:

**“No turning back, no turning back.
The world behind me, the cross before me;
No turning back, no turning back”.**

Like an athlete who throws himself forward in the race with all his energies, strained to the very utmost, God expects nothing less of us but to lay hold of what lies ahead of us in our service for Him (Phil 3:13). This is serving through incarnation, and I am confident you will hear the same conviction reverberating in the stories in this issue of SIMNow.

On behalf of SIMEA colleagues, I wish all of you a most Blessed Christmas and a Shalom New Year.



Bible Study: Mission as Incarnation (Philippians 1:12-2:11)

Dr Gilbert Soo Hoo, Theological Education Consultant



Missions as Incarnation Phil 1:12—2:11

Christ and Paul modelled incarnational missions. Imprisoned, Paul rejoices that the gospel advances (Phil 1:12-26) before exhorting readers to emulate conduct worthy of the gospel (Phil 1:27-30). Paul charges them to “stand with one spirit by striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil 1:27c). The verb “stand” echoes his admonition to resist the devil (Eph 6:11, 13-14). The theological passive “it is granted to you” to suffer Paul’s type of conflict (Phil 1:29-30a) depicts God’s will.

Paul’s Christological hymn

The power of incarnational missions emerges in Paul’s Christological hymn (Phil 2:6-11) declaring Christ’s incarnation and exaltation. The thrust of the first portion (Phil 2:6-8) is Christ becoming a humble servant suffering a cross-death. The dramatic contrast between his divine stature (Phil 2:6) and criminal condemnation (Phil 2:7-8) captures the magnitude of his sacrifice. The verb, “he emptied” (Phil 2:7), expresses his willing humiliation.

The second portion of this Christological hymn (Phil 2:9-11) begins with the inferential “wherefore,” connoting the consequence of Christ’s humiliation—exaltation in position and

name. The purpose (“in order that,” Phil 2:10) is universal acknowledgement of him, leading to the Father’s glorification.

But this hymn only serves to support Paul’s major missional thrust. A relative pronoun, “he who” (Phil 2:6), introduces the entire hymn as a description of “Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5). This verse exhorts: “Bear this in mind which is also in Christ Jesus.” The pronoun “this” refers back to Phil 1:27—2:4. Believers should possess Christ’s attitude. He completed the Father’s mission; so should we in our God-given mission.

Our mission is similar to Paul’s (Phil 1:27-30) in the manner specified by Phil 2:1-8. Paul further infers our mission objective (Phil 2:10-11). We stand as a corporate witness “for the faith of the gospel” (Phil 1:27c). We may encounter opposition. Like Paul, we are not deterred. Like Christ, our mission may demand great sacrifice. We submit to the Father’s will and align with God’s desire for all to revere Christ (Phil 2:10-11). Hence, global missions leads to global worship where every knee bows and every tongue confesses Jesus Christ as lord.

Fourfold series of conditional statements

This objective can only be attained by following Paul’s instruction about the manner of missions (Phil 2:1-8). A fourfold series of conditional statements repeats “if there is any” (Phil 2:1). The indefinite “any” depicts an unspecified situation rendered as “whatever encouragement, comfort, fellowship, affection and compassion is possible exercise it.” Paul exhorts manifesting these characteristics in interactions with each other. He warns against threats undermining unity and urges placing others’ needs ahead of one’s own (Phil 2:3-4). This reflects Christ’s incarnation (Phil 2:5-8). Missions requires a servant’s mentality in serving one another. Missions exalts Christ and glorifies the Father.

**We stand as a corporate witness
“for the faith of the gospel”
(Phil 1:27c)**



Livelihood Program

Imitation of Christ

Leny Apostol, Philippines

Growing in Christlikeness

The current lock downs have helped us to spend more time with God in prayer and His Word. Quiet moments of waiting take us through the journey of self-discovery and God discovery. They have opened the way for me to and my teammates to see how much we still need to grow in the character of Jesus to serve like Jesus. True, God has been using the current pandemic times to shape us into Christ like vessels so that we can serve in the best holistic way possible. The desire to please God and serve His purposes, to imitate Christ, and to reach out to people through any available means so that they may be delivered out of darkness are more important to us than anything else in this world.

**As our identity
in Christ grows
and develop, we
become more
God-conscious**

Becoming God-conscious

As our identity in Christ grows and develop, we become more God-conscious. We find an excellent description of it in Philippians 2:5-8.

Being consistent with his message in Philippians, Paul says in I Corinthians 2:16, "But we have the mind of Christ." As humans we operate on three basic instincts of life. These are: security instinct (our need of food, shelter, work, and protection), social instinct (our need of family, friendships co-workers and companionships), and sexual instinct (need of opposite sex, be romantically involved, and get married). The thing that is more powerful that surpass all of these, is God-consciousness. We become more sensitive to God's leading, and we prioritize what God wants, and that is to be like Jesus. This now becomes our number one instinct in the "new normal" to live like Jesus among the people in need.

Virtualization of ministries

The world is in panic. When we look around, we realize peoples' hearts are filled with fear, anxiety, and discouragement. Serving God has become more challenging amidst the global pandemic. With our submission to government restrictions as obedient people of God, plus our own responsibility of keeping ourselves and our families safe, the usual expressions of physical care among believers have been altered. Nevertheless, our sincere attempts to reach out to people and lead them to Christ continues physically as and when possible or through phone communications. Thus, the use of social media and other means of communications enable us to continue serving. We are embracing what is called as "virtualization of ministries" as part of the new normal.

Incarnation, Challenges, and Opportunities

Isaac and Rebecca*, Southern Africa



Life of Incarnation

As a young missionary couple, we were first sent to serve in a rural place in a creative access nation in South Asia where there were no Christians. It was a rough start, as we had difficulties in even finding a house to rent as villagers were afraid to rent their houses to Christians especially missionaries. By God's grace, we did eventually find a house in a village, although even basic facilities were absent. We became one among the people, by learning their local language and adopting their culture including food, dress, etiquette, etc. We later started to conduct various programs in villages to spread the Good News. Consequently, many heard the Gospel and received Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Life of new opportunities

During the recent lockdown days, we found the need to entirely reboot our lives all over again as we began to reflect upon our ministry and new strategies of Evangelism and Church planting. We felt deeply that the message of salvation must be accompanied by social reformation and personal piety. We understood that we need to focus on making disciples for Jesus Christ. The pandemic ushered in not just challenges but opened new doors to proclaim the Gospel with new strategies

and new skills. Thus, we are confident that our commitment to world evangelization during the ongoing pandemic, would shape the future of our mission work, leading us beyond the local and familiar, to global shores.

Life of new beginnings

When we realized that the Lord had plans to send us to serve among an unreached people group in Africa, we were so excited. All arrangements like getting vaccinated, purchasing of air tickets, packing of bags went relatively smoothly. Then, suddenly, borders were closed, and our plans became uncertain. One of the key lessons we learned during the days of waiting was that to do ministry like Jesus Christ, we need to go through disappointments, discouragements etc. Now, two years later, years marked with patient waiting, we have at last, arrived in our new field in Africa. We are aware that we may have to learn again a new language, a new culture and face new challenges in this new country, but we are entirely confident that through a life marked by the reality of Christ's incarnation we can overcome.

God sent His son who was not only incarnated into human flesh, but He was incarnated into human culture and sufferings

Serving in Mission

Albert and Sangpuii, Bolivia



Sangpuii' s praying for Carlos and his family and Emilys and her kids

Like everywhere else in the World, Covid-19 pandemic has limited but not stopped our ministry in Bolivia. We have had to re-strategize all aspects of our ministry, halting temporarily our Venezuelan Bible study, University ministry and mission school activities but continuing with new ones. While lockdowns have made things difficult, it has enabled us to reach out to our immediate non-Christian neighbours.

“ We have had to revise and re-strategize all aspects of our ministry “

Serving those who serve

Ministry through virtual meetings is now the new normal. We are especially thankful to God for providing Sangpuii the opportunity to offer Medical English course (Via Zoom) to a group of doctors, which provides a platform to form relationships without the need to travel.

Caring for the unloved

The onslaught of the pandemic has been particularly severe on the Venezuelan refugees as they are already living from hand to mouth even in normal circumstances. Keeping in mind Jesus' love and compassion for those in need, we have started reaching out to the Venezuelan families with small children living and begging on the streets. They need basic necessities like food, money, clothes, medicines, blankets, and utensils etc. Since we have no project or funding, we have mostly relied on our own resources and one-time gifts of friends whose hearts God has moved to give towards the immediate needs presented. We offer our friendship by talking to them, listening to their stories, praying with them on the streets and sharing the Word of God. We are thankful to God that we can at least plant seeds of hope in them which we believe God will make to grow in them in the future.

Sharing with the needy

In conclusion, we wish to testify of God's miraculous provision when we are ready to share with those in need, what we have kept for ourselves. After saving money for more than five years we were getting ready to look for a cheap car. At that moment God put the Venezuelans in our hearts. In obedience to God, we spent our savings as a tool to witness the gospel to them. However, God, in His love, moved the hearts of our relatives without the need for us to ask, by supplying them with exceptional means to help us buy a car, showing us that “our God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or imagine”(Eph.3:20).

Christ-like Lifestyle

Tan Teck Jin, Ministry Director, SIM West Malaysia

While reflecting on the sudden demise of Rev Lily Hsueh, our thoughts turn to focus on either certain aspect of her "legacy" or her visible signs of accomplishments in ministry. However, these memories talk more about what she was doing, but less about who she was. By looking through the lens of what she accomplished during her lifetime, as well as through some of our personal encounters with her, we can understand more about who she was and what fueled her to serve wholeheartedly and be faithful in all the tasks assigned to her by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is evident that her understanding of the biblical concept of Christ's incarnation ministry has influenced her lifestyle and ministries profoundly, as evidenced by her incarnational Christlike lifestyle.

Servant

Rev Lily accepted Christ at the age of 14 and went into full-time ministry when she was 32 years old. Many of us who knew her can testify that she had truly exhibited the unselfish love of Christ throughout her life as a servant of God. She often sought to do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility counted others more significant than herself.

Dedicating herself to the incarnational ministry of intercession, she constantly requested prayer letters from others, and committed to pray for them regularly.

Intercessor

Dedicating herself to the incarnational ministry of intercession, she constantly requested prayer letters from others, and committed to pray for them regularly. Her longing to simply be in God's presence was influenced by Christ's kenotic gesture of praying to God the Father for the salvation of many. She learned to focus less on herself, but to pray to God to meet the needs of others.



With a Nigerian seminary student

Missionary

Jesus' incarnation and kenosis have deeply influenced Rev Lily's understanding of God's mission, and her active involvement in global missions. Together with her husband, she joined SIM at the age of 48 after serving the churches and theological institutions. They went to serve in Africa before returning to Singapore & Malaysia with a new mission to mobilize more local churches in South-East Asia to be involved in global mission. Just as Christ who emptied himself to accomplish God's mission, Rev. Lily emptied herself of all her earthly possessions so that more missionaries can bring the Gospel to places where Christ is least known.

As a way of following her legacy, we invite you to support mission work and special needs of missionaries by contributing towards Rev & Mrs Hsueh Yu Kwong Memorial Fund.



In remembrance of Rev Lily Hsueh

Henry Teh, Founding Chairman, SIM West Malaysia Council

Mrs Hsueh (Rev Lily Ho Swee Hoo) who was born in China on August 10, 1933, moved to Myanmar with her family when she was one year old.

Pastor

She dedicated her life to the Lord during her high school's gospel rally. She studied Social Work at Delhi University, India and returned to Yangon to work in Myanmar Methodist Church's Service Centre and Social Work Department. After studying in the seminary from 1965 to 1967, she served the Mandalay Myanmar Methodist Church as a pastoral worker for three years.

In early 1969, she moved to Taiwan and married Rev Hsueh Yu Kwong on March 20, 1971. They joined the Taiwan Campus Evangelical Fellowship for three years. When they returned to Rev Hsueh's home country, Malaysia in 1974, Rev Hsueh taught in Christian Training Centre of the China Inland Mission. Mrs Lily Hsueh was sent to the Banting Methodist Church for three years.



Missionary

The Hsuehs were two of the first four full-time lectures of Malaysia Bible Seminary in 1978. They joined SIM in 1981 and became the first elderly Chinese missionary couple to go to Africa (Rev Hsueh was 62 years old, and Mrs Hsueh was 48 years old).

Mobilizer

In 1982, they returned to Malaysia and in 1983 served as SIM East Asia office representatives in Singapore.

In 1984, they initiated the Chinese publication of SIMNow magazine – Mission Vision. In 1997, they retired in Klang, Malaysia. They donated their single-storey terrace house to the Malaysia Bible Seminary. Through the contributions from those who loved the couple, SIM bought a double storey terrace for their retirement. Through the efforts of Rev & Mrs Hsueh, SIM established local councils in six East Asian countries and regions, and held the first SIM East Asia Regional Council Meeting in 1991.

Incarnational Servant

Passionate about promoting missions, Rev Lily Hsueh published six Chinese books authored by Rev Hsueh. She actively involved in Taiwan Youth Mission Conference, SIM East Asia Regional Council, West Malaysia Council, and Klang Chinese Methodist Church's Hokkien worship and visitations.

Mrs Hsueh was called home to be with the Lord on 15 July, 2021, at the age of 88. She was buried next to Rev Hsueh's tomb. The memorial service was held on 10 August physically and streamed live through Youtube. Over 500 people joined online to participate including her relatives from US and Taiwan. (Scan QR code and watch the Memorial service video).

Mrs Hsueh's life-long dedication is a beautiful incarnational model of missions. In remembrance of her, SIM East Asia established the "Rev & Mrs Hsueh Yu Kwong Memorial Fund" under SIM East Asia office based in Singapore.

Rev & Mrs Hsueh Yu Kwong Memorial Fund founded in 2005. An initiative of SIM to partner with the Christian community in proclaiming God's redemptive plan for all peoples and generations. The Fund supports programmes directly related to SIM East Asia's mission endeavours such as mission education, mobilisation, missionary training and care as well as ministry expenses.



Messengers in Word and Deed

Dr Toh See Kiat, Canada

The incarnation of Christ is almost inimitable. What is the place for Christians living incarnationally in view of Jesus' matchless Incarnation as message? For me, the closest form of incarnational attempt at being faithful messengers in word and deed are in the international student's ministry in Toronto for which He has commissioned both Dorothy and me since 2008.

Involving wholistically

We have done this by letting students stay with us and by becoming involved in their lives wholistically. This means being family to them, besides being teachers, mentors, counsellors, and role-models. This means feeding them spiritual and physical food, assisting them with their relational issues, solving problems in their studies, clothing them; being sad when they are sad and being happy when they rejoice. As we live our lives amongst them – they learn to cope with life, and they learn the joys of following Christ.

Ministering from far

Unfortunately, because of Covid-19, we had to leave them in Canada while we sheltered in Singapore. But that did not stop us from ministering to them

from far as technology allowed us – preaching and teaching via Zoom, Facebook Live and YouTube; and counselling and encouraging via messaging apps, emails and social media. High tech allowed us to reach our flock scattered all over the world. Nevertheless, high tech could not replace high touch – being able to connect physically and face to face with our flock. The incarnational aspects of ministry were missing as we were not able to laugh and rejoice with them in the same room. Worse, we were unable to cry with them in their pain. We eagerly waited for Canada to open so that we could have the fellowship that we had missed for 17 months.

Christ-centered Service

Despite the pandemic, our Canadian co-workers were pressing on to minister in person – distributing gift cards and food packages to those in need, visiting those who needed comfort, calming fears and encouraging all to spend the lockdown time in communion with Christ and praying with those in need. The first task when we returned to the field was to gather the scattered flock. Our service is centered in Christ who did not count equality with God **“but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the like of men”** (Philippians 2:7).



International fellowship in Toronto

Regional Council Meeting 2021

Alexander Quong, Operations Manager



The 30th SIM East Asia Regional Council Meeting from 17 to 19 November 2021, was for the second year running held through Zoom due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Rev Dr Caleb Chian, Chairman, SIM East Asia Regional Council, opened the meeting with an exhortation on the topic **"The Last Prophecy"**, based on Jesus's words in Matthew 24:14 – "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.". Rev Caleb reminded that while the pandemic led many to think about the end times, the real end times would come only when the Gospel is preached to people of all nations. Hence, we should persevere in carrying out the Great Commission.

Missionary and former SIM Deputy International Director Dr Howard Brant delivered the keynote address. While speaking on the topic **"Keep Moving on"** from Acts 18:9-10,18, he explained how Missionary Paul who experienced extreme pressure and opposition from all sides, was discouraged and described himself as being "in weakness, fear and much trembling." Yet God intervened and encouraged him through a vision, saying "Do not be afraid but keep on speaking and do not be silent." Dr Howie encouraged SIM East Asia to keep moving on amidst the challenges.

Leading the morning devotion on the second day, Global Director for Regional Development, Chris Crowder, encouraged SIM East Asia to grow into **"Empowered Teams with a Clear Vision"** for His mission. Ken Mariko, serving in Tanzania, and Biulanty Thabah, serving in South Sudan, who attended the meeting as missionary representatives, shared the Word during the morning devotions too.

Regional Director Watson Rajaratnam highlighted on how, as per our theme for 2021 **"Advancing Amidst Adversities"**, SIM East Asia continued with its efforts to equip and send missionaries to different parts of the world. Praise God for the 22 appointees who have been processed and are waiting to be sent out. Presenting SIM East Asia's five-year strategic plan, Watson explained that SIM East Asia missionaries will focus on **"frontline mission"** by bringing the Gospel to those who are living and dying without Christ, **"discipling"** new believers, **"producing missional churches"** and **"turning mission fields into mission forces"**. The key priorities of SIM East Asia for the next five years are, **"being a blessing to churches and improving our services to them"**, **"fine tuning our missionary recruitment, and sending processes"**, **"strengthening our member care for missionaries"**, and **"intensifying our succession plans"**. SIM East Asia's theme for 2022 is **"Moving on in Mission"**.

Regional Council meeting 2021 was a time of reflection, learning, prayer, fellowship, and encouragement. Glory be to God!

Christmas Greetings

Dear Partners and Supporters in mission,

Thanks be to God for Jesus, His indescribable gift!

The very thought of that incomparable gift reminds of the incarnational birth and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ which is recorded by Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:5-11. It is one of the most important Christological passages in the whole New Testament which explains beautifully how God became a man in the person of His Son, lived among sinners and died for them. Paul explains that Christmas to Christ meant "sacrifice" (v 6 - He was in the form of God but did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped), "service" (v 7 - He emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant) and "submission" (v 8 - He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross). Christ here presents for His Church and every Christian, an example to emulate on how to be involved in His missional service during their lifetime on this earth.

Praise God for our missionaries from East Asia who have submitted themselves to God's heavenly call and have been sacrificially serving in different parts of the world, amidst the current pandemic. It is heartening to read that their incarnational ministry has brought many to the saving knowledge of Christ and many tongues have acknowledged that Jesus is Lord. Here, we wish to acknowledge the fact that this has been possible only because of your strong partnership with us in His mission, your earnest prayers, and generous

giving. Thus, they are your ambassadors on the mission fields. **"We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you"** (Colossians 1:3).

We are humbled to know that the Lord of the Harvest has given SIM East Asia the privilege of serving His church, equipping His chosen vessels, and sending them to be involved in Christ's incarnational ministries in different parts of the world.

Blessed Christmas and a fruitful New year to you and your families!

Thanks.



Your brother in His Service
Watson Rajaratnam,
Regional Director, SIM East Asia



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