

247@NECF PRAYER GUIDE

July 2015

As Christians, we no longer believe in coincidences or "luck" or similar ideas because we take the PROVIDENCE of God seriously. What has been taking place in the last 18 months have been quite unprecedented, not just in terms of the number of things happening, but the fact that they are happening one after another. Allow us to list them:

- 2014: THREE Air disasters within 12 months
- Dec 2014: Floods in Kelantan, and other states
- Especially in 2015: Crashing Oil prices, slowing economy, and Ringgit sliding back to the lowest level since 1997/8
- The swing toward religious conservatism in line with a more dogmatic interpretation of Islam within PAS in the 3–5 June elections, which clearly will push the party toward more assertive action in the direction of more reactionary practices like Hudud and, very likely, championing more restrictions in religious freedom for all.
- Intensification of in-fighting with top leadership on both sides of the political divide has split down the middle, increasingly incoherence and possibly paralysis which is extremely dangerous for the country.
- June 5th, 2015 earthquake and continuing rumbles in the Ranau area.

Hence, this month we issue a special call for prayer and intensification of our 24/7 efforts all round.

A. KEY EVENTS TO COVER IN PRAYER

No	Event	Date	Highlights
1.	30 Days Ramadan	June 18 to July 17, 2015	Praying for increase in prayer for the Muslim world and for growing love for them.
2.	Kinabalu Prayer Gathering	July 10-11, 2015	Combined prayer gathering at Kinabalu Park organised by the Sabah Council of Churches in solidarity with those affected by the Ranau earthquake.

B. ITEMS FOR PRAYER

1. SABAH EARTHQUAKE

a. RESTORATION of the Christian Faith amongst the Indigenous People

- i. Immediately following the first earthquake on 5 June 2015, we see some indigenous peoples who are now followers of Christ, begin to slip back into the beliefs of their forefathers. Their faith has been shaken by the tremors. Tales of the old and mystical beliefs of their childhood days suddenly came flooding back. We pray for the strengthening and restoration of the Christian faith amongst the indigenous people. Let their faith and belief system be realigned back to God. Let them see that their help is from God.

Psalm 121:1-2 (NKJV) I will lift up my eyes to the hills — From whence comes my help? My help comes from the Lord , Who made heaven and earth.

The mountain is one of the many creations of God, and God is in control of the earthquake. Our God is the Master

Creator. He resides in ALL His creations. God is still in control and in charge! Let God be God!!

b. HEALING from Fear and Trauma

- i. Attempts are being made by some indigenous groups to appease the mountain with sacrificial rites, and the social media has picked this up, circulating pictures of the ceremonies. This is inciting further fear among the people of the land who have yet to recover from the shock and trauma of the recent earthquakes.
- ii. Apart from this, dwellers of Kundasang and Ranau vicinities – the epicentre of the quake – are facing evacuation and dealing with physical losses ie. losing their homes/property, loved ones and sources of income. They are also facing daily problems such as shortages of fresh water supply, shelter and basic daily provisions.
- iii. All these are wearying the people down physically, emotionally, mentally, financially and spiritually. On top of all this, there is the fear of another possible quake which could further devastate the current grim situation.
- iv. As we pray for these needs, let us declare Psalm 46:1 over them. That they will hold fast their faith in God for He is their refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble.

c. RIGHT Focus

- i. The media is publicising the acts of the nudists instead of highlighting the effects of the quake. The real plight and needs of those affected are not given proper and thorough coverage, while the limelight given on the heroism of our local Malim Gunung (Mountain Guides) was quickly dwarfed by news of the charges and sentencing of the nudists.

- ii. Ideally, responsible reporting should focus on the heroic acts, wise and speedy responses of:–
 - 1. The mountain guides up on the mountain
 - 2. The off duty mountain guides who responded to the call to climb up the mountain to help their fellow mates
 - 3. The ground staff of the Kinabalu Park who have been extending their assistance
- iii. We pray for wisdom in accurate reporting from the various news agencies and, for the government to identify, acknowledge and reward the deserving individuals and groups.
- iv. Also for the Government and NGOs to handle the aftermath of the relief efforts efficiently and without bureaucratic delays and for funds to be channeled to the right people groups and places.
- v. In addition, precautionary systems must be set up by the government and all relevant authorities as soon as possible.

d. REBUILDING efforts undertaken

- i. Apart from the mountain climbing facilities, treks, trails and public amenities on the mountain being destroyed, the tremors have also caused the loss of homes due to mudslides as well as damages to the foundations of some of the buildings, bridges and main road linkages.
- ii. We pray for resources and funds to flow in speedily to the relevant agencies and places without delay and the rebuilding master-plan to be charted and executed speedily.

e. THE CHURCH in Sabah and Malaysia to hear what God is saying

- i. It's time for the Church in our states and nation to wake up. God is waking up all because the HARVEST is here. Malaysia is at a tipping point in this season. Let's unite together to:-
 1. Give towards the needy.
 2. Minister to the needy – attend especially in the areas of trauma and fear and their spiritual needs
 3. Teams are being sent up by churches to do this as the need is so great.
 4. Prayer together for God's Kingdom come and His will be done not only in Sabah but Malaysia. Pray that many will attend the KINABALU PRAYER GATHERING from July 10-11, 2015, which is organised by the Sabah Council of Churches.

2. SARAWAK PRAYER

- a. We believe that Sarawak Church is positioned to play a key role in what God is doing in this nation. This position is for the whole church body in Sarawak. Amos 3:3. 'Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?'
- b. No man can bring the kind of unity that God requires for Sarawak unless God Himself does so. Not only just talk about unity, but experiences of this unity in tangible manner.
Therefore, we propose this prayer emphasis on unity as follows.
 - i. That God will powerfully touch the hearts of key leaders of the churches in Sarawak to come together, setting aside any obstacle to such attempt.
 - ii. To ask God for His plans on how this unity movement could be birthed and sustained. Ask for open heaven for this.

3. KELANTAN REBUILDING POST-FLOOD CRISIS

- a. According to Parliamentary answer in June, the Federal government has built only 33 houses up to date, out of the 1824 houses that require rebuilding post-flood crisis in December 2014.
- b. Continue to pray for initiatives like the *Gabungan Impian Kelantan* led by NGOs and political parties, who are working towards shifting and rebuilding entire communities, moving them to higher ground.
- c. Pray that donors will continue to give generously towards this massive rebuilding. Pray that the Federal Government will avail more resources and funds to flow in speedily to the relevant agencies and places to be implemented urgently, regardless of political affiliation.

4. PRAY FOR MH370 TO BE FOUND

- a. In April 2015, Australia, Malaysia and China had agreed to double the search area to 120,000 square kilometres and extend the effort to another year if the plane was not found. However, as the Southern Hemisphere heads into winter, and as the search operations are at the end of their search in the current 60,000 square kilometres, Australian officials were quoted in reports as saying that the hunt for MH370 will not be expanded beyond its current area without new leads. The Joint Agency Coordination Centre (JACC) had said in news reports it would not expand the search without new data.
- b. Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Lai, however, assured that the search area for the missing MH370 will be expanded to another 60,000 square kilometres in the southern Indian Ocean, denying reports that the search had been stopped, saying that the authorities were committed in its effort to find the plane. However, he added that should there be no new leads by the end of the additional search zone, then the search may not continue.
- c. Let us continue to pray that the plane will be found, so that families affected may be comforted and will receive closure to

this unfortunate episode. Pray that the Malaysian government will remain committed to finding the plane, as promised.

C. MONTHLY PRAYER FOCUS

1. EDUCATION

a. St Mary's Labuk, Sandakan Cross Issue

- i. Muslim teachers & parents had asked the school to remove the cross from the school new building. We praise God for the quick intervention by the Deputy Education Minister, Mary Yap, and the Sandakan Education Department, that the issue was settled and the cross remained based on the ministry circular 1/2013 that the ethos and the character of mission schools were to be retained.

b. Handling needs of non-Muslims students during Ramadan

- i. Pray that Muslim teachers will not impose harsh rules on non-Muslims students who are not fasting during this month of Ramadan, but respect the rights of students to practice their religions openly. Pray also for sensitivity and respect for each another during this time.

c. More Christians in Teaching Profession

- i. Pray for more Christians to take up the vocation to be teachers given the dropping statistics of Christians working in education. Pray that more young people will hear the call to work in this critical sector.
- ii. That more high performing students, especially Christians, would consider becoming teachers in order to influence young minds.

d. A Sound and Visionary Education Policy

- i. Given the drop in education standards and quality, pray for those involved in policy decision in the Ministry of

Education that God will give them wisdom and integrity in implementing sound programs, select quality teachers, handle sensitive issues, and will be good stewards.

e. Christian Students To Be Allowed To Wear Their Crosses In Schools

- i. Pray for the rights of all Christian students, especially those from Sabah and Sarawak but living in Peninsular Malaysia, to be respected and upheld. In this case, let's pray that students be allowed to wear their cross without pressure from teachers and school administrators.

f. Marginalized Communities In Our Midst

- i. Pray that the government will not forget the marginalised communities in our midst. These include:
 - 1. The Orang Asli communities, a majority of whom don't get even a Form 5 education
 - 2. Non-Citizens, such as migrants and refugees, who are not able to have access to affordable education
 - 3. Male students who are likely to drop out of school, where the gender ratio at the higher education institutions are increasingly skewed against male students
 - 4. The urban poor
 - 5. East Malaysians especially in the rural areas

g. Christian Parents To Take Leadership and Active Roles in PTA

That more Christian parents will take an active role in their PTAs/PIBGs to influence their schools, and take leadership to ensure that students in schools are being brought up with the right values