berita NECF



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

## The Unanswered Question

"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11: 3 NKJV)

ark clouds continue to loom over Malaysia even as we enter into the new year of 2016.

That the nation is undergoing challenging times is a gross understatement. The weakening ringgit, rising unemployment and retrenchment, drastic drop in oil prices, unstable world economies, escalating threats of terrorism, unabated corruption, as well as moral decline - all attest to the crumbling of foundations.

Added to the mix, we have "what pagans choose to do -- living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry" (1 Peter 4:3 NIV).

Psalm 11:3 is an individual's lament, written at a time when David was hunted by Saul "as a partridge in the mountains" (1 Samuel 26:20). The central issue then, as is now, is the persecution of the righteous by the wicked in a time when the foundations of the nation seem to be falling apart.

There is really no simple answer to the lament -- "the foundations are being destroyed; what can the righteous do?"

When the moral standards of society are persistently compromised; when the economy nosedives; when the *rakyat* suffers under the burden of inflating costs; when racial harmony is at its lowest, it is tempting to conclude that God has abandoned His people.

There will be times when it *seems* that He is not looking. But He is most definitely not asleep. The Bible says, "He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:4). There will be times when it *feels* like God does not care — especially when all things seem hopeless and when it does not look like He is answering our prayers. So, what then do we do? Therein, begins the test – "His eyelids test the sons of men" (v4b).

The Hebrew word for "test" here means "to try metals by fire". God's eyes indeed

#### Psalm 121

- <sup>1</sup>I lift up my eyes to the mountains where does my help come from?
- <sup>2</sup> My help comes from the Lord,
- the Maker of heaven and earth. <sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot slip—
- he who watches over you will not slumber; <sup>4</sup> indeed, he who watches over Israel
- will neither slumber nor sleep.
- <sup>5</sup> The Lord watches over you the Lord is your shade at your right hand;
- <sup>6</sup> the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.
- <sup>7</sup> The Lord will keep you from all harm he will watch over your life;
- <sup>8</sup> the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

"behold" us (v4a) to try us, to test us, and to see how we would respond. How do we respond when the wicked bend their bow? Can we confidently

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#### The Secret is in the Attitude, Not the Action

declare like David "In the LORD I put my trust" (v1a)?

There seems to be no direct instruction as to what the righteous can do. As the wicked continue to shoot secretly at those who are upright in heart, the secret to overcoming trying circumstances, perhaps, may not be found in the *action* but, rather, in the *attitude* of the righteous – where, besides trusting God, he remains confident that the Lord is still in His holy temple (v4a), and that the Lord's throne is in heaven (v4b).

Cornered into vulnerability, David did not resort to his own devices and plans to contend with wickedness and unrighteousness.

Like David, we need to trust (v7) -

For the Lord is righteous,

He loves righteousness;

His countenance beholds the upright.

What can the righteous do (v3b)? It is not always in the doing. The Church must rest in Him and *believe*, and remain confident to be found standing even when all else in the world collapses in the days ahead.

# NECF 2016 Calendar

11-12 Feb 23-24 Feb 25 Feb 27 Feb 26-28 Feb	Bahasa Comm: REEP Prayer Comm: Pastors Meeting with Dr John Mulind Prayer Comm: Prayer Seminar with Dr John Mulind Tamil Comm: Prayer Seminar with Dr John Mulinde YouthNet: Nazarite Phase 1
5 Mar 25 Mar	Legal Comm: Christian Lawyers Conference Good Friday
7 May 30-31 May	15th Biennial General Meeting YouthNet: Contending for the Faith Training
8-10 June	YouthNet: Nazarite Phase 1
26 July	Synergy 2016
7-31 Aug 31 Aug	40-Day Fast & Pray Merdeka Day (Wednesday)
1-15 Sept 8-10 Sept 12-14 Sept 14 Sept 15 Sept 16 Sept 19-21 Sept	Tamil Comm: Pastors' Wives Gathering National Prayer Rally Malaysia Day (Friday)
28-30 Nov	Bahasa Comm: Pastors Retreat
25 Dec	СFM Ні Теа

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# Lighting Up the East Coast

By Rev Andy Chi

he East Coast is represented by the states of Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang. It covers an area of more than 66,000 sq km with a population of about 3.9 million, 14.5% of the total population of Malaysia. The East Coast is the poorest region and its economy is largely based on agriculture and tourism.

The majority people group in the East Coast are Malays. They make up 95% of Kelantan, 96% in Terengganu and 78% in Pahang. Kelantan and Terengganu, in particular, enforce many aspects of Islamic law in public. Beaches and supermarket queues are gender-segregated, and the availability of alcohol is limited. Unlike the rest of Malaysia, the weekend in Terengganu and Kelantan runs from Friday to Saturday, with shops and banks closed on Friday but everything opens normally on Sunday.

The first Christian arrival to the East Coast was the Catholics. They came around the 16th century. Then, in the early 20th century, Christianity began to spread throughout the East Coast led by the Presbyterians and Methodists. Since then, many other Christian groups have gone to the East Coast to start churches there. Evangelism was mostly done among the Chinese, the indigenous groups and Indian communities. Most of the churches here are small in number. Based on the 2010 national census, the Christian population in Kelantan was 4,375 (0.28%), Terengganu 2,269 (0.22%) and Pahang 26,846 (1.86%). The East Coast has the least Christian presence compared to the West Coast and East Malaysia.

Until recently, the East Coast has been left very much on their own and unattended to. Other urgent focus, such as the needs of the East Malaysians, occupied the Malaysian Church. Then, came the historic flood that hit the East Coast on the eve of Christmas 2014. Because of the magnitude of the flood, many voluntary groups from all over the country were mobilized to the East Coast. This included the NECF, various Christian groups and relief agencies.

The flood placed the East Coast back into focus. As we went about extending help, the challenges and needs of the East Coast churches and people returned to our attention again. It is the most neglected region in need of the light of God.

As a positive step forward in this direction, the NECF leadership has proposed for an East Coast Commission to be formed. A meeting was held early this year with several East Coast pastors and leaders in Kuala Terengganu. It was unanimously agreed that the East Coast Commission be formed with all present volunteering to be its members.

God's desire to touch and bless the East Coast still remains the same. He desires to pour out His love and grace to all who are living here. We thank God for the



faithful that have laboured tirelessly all these years to keep the fire alight. It is time for us to come alongside and together light up the East Coast once again.

#### What can we do to help light up the East Coast?

*Firstly, by relocating there.* Jesus says we are the light of the world. God's light dwells in us and He wants us to shine it in the darkness. Where the Christian presence exists, there will be light. Where the Christian presence is absent, darkness resides. What the East Coast needs is for more of the Christian presence. One possible way is for Christians to consider relocating to the East Coast and sharing their light there.

Secondly, by sending labourers to the field there. Jesus said that the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few. This is very true to the East Coast. One of the reasons for the lack of progress in the East Coast is due to the shortage of workers. If more workers are sent to the East Coast, it will enable the work to move forward and His light to reach more.

Thirdly, by saturating the East Coast with prayer. One of the requests put forward by the East Coast churches is for prayer teams to be sent to pray for the land and with the churches. They believe as more prayer is saturated over the land, the hearts of the people will soften and more doors will be open.

*Finally, by pledging our finances.* Most of the churches there are small in number. Many are running on a lean budget. Without sufficient finances, they are unable to support workers, invite speakers or run projects. Additional regular aid from outside can greatly help the local church to advance the work to impact the land.



Rev Andy Chi is the Assistant Secretary-General of the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) and chairman of the East Coast Commission.)

## Seek the Lord and Live: Building Our Personal Prayer Altar

By Tan Poh Kian

A reflection on the teachings at the Pastors and Prayer Leaders Training held in Peacehaven, Genting recently.

Seek the Lord and live" (Amos 5:6) was the heart cry of the prophet Amos in the times when the nation of Israel seemed to be prosperous and was more powerful than her neighbouring nations. Yet Amos, in his spirit, agonized over the nation of Israel and lamented over the sins of the people of God as they had overlooked the ministry of the Word. They had deviated from God's truth, abandoning themselves to all kinds of ungodly indulgences like idolatry and adultery, and defiled themselves by pursuing after pagan worship and oppressing the poor.

The same heart cry which was heard vividly by all Israelites then echoes loudly in our days as we see our nation caught up in her deep troubles. As God's royal priesthood in this nation, we have a sacred role of realigning our agendas and our hearts to God's, and rising up in this season to be the "gatekeepers" of our nation. We are exhorted to humble ourselves in praying and seeking His face and turning from our wicked ways, so that God hears from heaven, and forgives our sins and heals our land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

A seven-week intensive training in Peacehaven, Genting, attended by many pastors and prayer leaders of respective churches in Malaysia, yielded many benefits. The time has now come for the Malaysian churches to take the responsibility of nurturing and growing this prayer movement.

In order for us to have a clearer perspective and understanding of what the 24/7 prayer altar is all about, individually and corporately as a family, a church, and a nation, we have to look intently into the following five elements that can be found in Leviticus 6:10-13. This will help us start building our own personal prayer altars to raise 24/7 prayer altars all over Malaysia.

"The priest shall then put on his linen clothes, with linen undergarments next to his body, and shall remove the ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has consumed on the altar and place them beside the altar. Then he is to take off these clothes and put on others, and carry the ashes outside the camp to a place that is ceremonially clean. The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out." -- Leviticus 6:10-13 (NIV)

#### THE ALTAR

An altar - literally means a place of slaughter -- is a place

where the Old Testament priests made animal sacrifices or sin offerings to the Lord on behalf of the people of God. Before the altar of God, aspects of both life and death are involved -- where sins are atoned for and lives are preserved because of the shedding of animal blood. When one comes before the altar of God, it is indeed a process of dying to self and living for God.

There are many incidents and occasions in the Bible where the building of altars are mentioned. Noah built an altar to the Lord as a remembrance of God's salvation in the midst of the great flood (Genesis 8:20). Abraham built an altar to the Lord under the great tree of Moreh at Shechem, after the Lord appeared to him and made a promise to give the land of Canaan to his offspring (Genesis 12:7).

Thus, an altar is a place of remembrance of God's wonderful deeds and faithful promises. It is a place where His people enjoy their fellowship and communion with their Maker in heaven. When Jacob was at Bethel en route to Paddan Aram, he encountered God there, where his grandfather, Abraham, had built an altar for the Lord. Jacob had a dream of an open heaven above him, with angels ascending and descending on a stairway connecting the earth to heaven. He reckoned this place as the gate of heaven and the house of God (Genesis 28:10-19). An altar reminds us of who God is, and it is revealed through both His awesome character and His mighty deeds.

An Old Testament altar was an altar built on land physically. A New Testament altar is an altar built within every believer's heart. Since our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, our heart is the altar of God, where our praises, worship, adoration and devotion arise. Hence, consecrate our hearts this day, and make it a holy dwelling place for our Lord Jesus Christ. Constantly come before the Lord with a contrite heart, lifting up our voices to Him for the redemption and salvation of our family, our community and our nation. Live our lives as if we are mobile altars of God, to shine forth His radiance and glory wherever we go.

#### THE PRIEST

When the Lord first called Israel into a nation, He called them to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:6). What then is the role of a priest? A priest is responsible to service the altars. He gives legal right to whom he serves, so that the land will come under the dominion of whom he bows down to and worships. If a land is full of evil altars, then darkness takes control over the land. But if the land is saturated with godly altars, light and righteousness shall prevail. When we as priests of the Almighty God do carry out our priesthood roles faithfully, the land shall permeate with the presence and glory of God. Priests have been prominent figures since ancient society. People look up to them and fear them because they are extraordinary men and women who communicate with the spiritual realms. Indeed, most kings in ancient days (and even politicians today) sought the counsel of priests before they went to war against their enemies, or before they

ventured for a conquest. Even minor decisions like the time for seeding, was brought before the consideration of priests. If kings were to be heads over their land, priests could have been their necks exerting great and powerful influence over their policy and strategy making.

Peter, the apostle, does remind us that we are the royal priesthood, servants who belong exclusively to Christ Jesus, our sovereign King, and we are called to serve His will and His agendas by declaring His praises (1 Peter 2:9). A priest's prior responsibility is to stand before the Lord as His servant, before he assumes his role of servant of men. We are people of power and authority entrusted with heavenly missions and visions. The modern priesthood goes beyond merely making morning and evening sacrifices; it is an offering of ourselves with full, undivided devotion before His altar. The restoration of the priesthood would bring forth anointing and the presence of God among His people, and even among nations.

terribly before Him (Leviticus 10:1-2). We have to allow the Spirit of God to direct the course of His movement, and to trail His footsteps obediently. Go along with God and observe His move, so that not only are our sacrifices accepted as burnt offerings, but they ascend as an aroma, and then His presence shall descend mightily in our midst.



#### THE ASHES

#### THE SACRIFICE

Priests are instructed by God to offer morning and evening sacrifices before the Lord. Generations to come are to offer this burnt offering regularly as a pleasing aroma to God. For the Lord meets us and speaks to us as we faithfully fulfil our priestly duties (Exodus 29:38-46).

God demands sacrifice and coming to the altar of God costs us something. Divine exchange occurs the moment priests come and serve at their altars with sacrifices offered to God. It could be our sacrifices of praise, worship, prayers, petition, intercessions, hymns, or the reading of Scriptures. Above all else, we are the living sacrifice that God is interested in (Romans 12:1). We should avail ourselves to be offered to God, so that our holy living may invoke the favour of God to see breakthroughs in our personal life as well as our corporate life as in our family, churches and nation.

#### FIRE

Fire is symbolic of the work of the Holy Spirit. The first time Aaron, the high priest of God, performed his priesthood duty, he was obliged first to offer a sin offering and a burnt offering for himself. The fire that came down from the Lord consumed the sacrifices offered on the altar (Leviticus 9). A same phenomenon with heavenly fire was witnessed when King Solomon dedicated the temple he constructed for the Lord, by offering sacrifices on the bronze altar.

The work and the move of the Holy Spirit is sovereign and exclusively divine. Man is unable to manipulate or duplicate the work of God, like how Nadab and Abihu did, which provoked the anger of God, and they failed and fell Priests were instructed by God to remove the ashes of burning sacrifices from the altar, because ashes tend to weaken the fire and eventually quench the burning flame. A constant clearing of ashes at the altar kept the fire therein burning brightly and unceasingly.

What ashes do represent are sins hidden in our lives. Things that defile our lives and render us ineffective in our prayers and intercession may seem insignificant like ashes, but they hinder us from drawing near to God, and separate us from God's presence and anointing. Sins from our corrupted nature, such as sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, etc., (Galatians 5:19-21) hinder us from inheriting the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. We will not be able to see breakthroughs in our prayers even if we wrestle day and night before our altars if ashes were to remain there undealt with.

Remove sins from our midst as we come before the altar of God in our priesthood call. Offer ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God. Reconcile with God and with one another, as individuals, families, communities (or churches), and the nation as a whole, and we shall witness the rekindled fire of God burning ever brightly throughout our nation!



Tan Poh Kian is the Assistant Executive Secretary of the Chinese Commission, NECF.

# A Call to Exalt His Name

#### **By Pastor Steven Choon**

he call to pray and build prayer altars is the message by Dr John Mulinde, founder of World Trumpet Ministries (WTM), whose ministry is involved in the transformation of nations. He was the main speaker at the three sessions of the *Revival Fire Conference* which was held in Kota Kinabalu last November. The conference saw many participants travelling from as far as Tawau, Sandakan, Lahad Datu and many other nearby towns to attend the sessions. More than 1,000 spiritually hungry Christians came for the night sessions with great expectations. "If Christians do not exalt God's name, others will ...." said Dr John in his messages. It was a challenge for Christians to take our positions to bring about transformation and to overpower demonic forces. He said His Name must be declared to the community, the workplace, the economy and every arena of life. "Let His name be glorified," he said, in order to bring about His righteousness.

Throughout the conference, participants found time to intercede. There was an electrifying atmosphere when the people began to pray. The unity of hearts and minds of people from different language groups and different denominations brought about a oneness in prayer we had longed for.

Unless prayer is powerful, people will not pay attention to it and magnify Him. Unless prayer is powerful, it will not have impact on the people. The participants went away with the desire "to build a power prayer altar" in our lives.



Pastor Steven Choon is a committee member of the Commission of Sabah Affairs & Chairman of the Sabah Pastors Fellowship.

## BM & OA Pastors Get Recharged!

**By Alfred Tais** 

he Bahasa Malaysia and Orang Asli Pastors' Retreat is an annual event organized by the NECF Bahasa Malaysia and Orang Asli Commission. Last year, it was held at the Grand Hotel Kampar from Nov 3-6. A total of 66 pastors from 33 churches attended the event. It was held to meet the need of pastors to be refreshed and recharged to continue in

their ministries. The retreat was indeed timely in order to encourage the BM & OA pastors to unite together through fellowshipping, sharing and praying for one another.

Topics that are relevant and needful for pastors to serve more effectively, such as effective communication with the Father's heart in mind and good health, were covered by speakers who are well versed and experienced in them. Pastor Sam Surendran spoke on *Techniques on Effective Communication and a Father's Heart* while Canon Dr Teoh S K from St. Peter's Church, Ipoh, who is a trained medical doctor, covered the topic *How to take care of our* 



BM and OA pastors pose for a group photo at the Malaysia and Orang Asli Pastors' Retreat.

*health.* Pastor Alfred Tais, the executive secretary of the NECF BM and OA Commission, shared on *The challenges faced by the Church Today and The Implication of Sharia Compliance.* Most of the pastors who attended the retreat gave positive feedback on the content and delivery of the topics and in the way the event was run.



Alfred Tais is the NECF Bahasa Malaysia and Orang Asli Commission executive secretary.

# **Charging to A Life of Destiny**

#### **By Pastor Lee Yew Meng**

n 26th November, 2015, a devoted and passionate group of youths, young adults and the young at heart gathered in the upper sanctuary of People's Park Baptist Church, Petaling Jaya. The event for the night was *Charging to Destiny 2*, organised by the YouthNet of NECF. The speaker was no stranger to us, Dr. John Mulinde. Dr John has been influential in stirring up a spiritual awakening in Malaysia and across the nations. The people gathered were full of anticipation as Pastor Alvin Tan of High Praise Ministries led the congregation in an exuberant time of praise and worship.

On that night, Dr John spoke straight to the hearts of those present, especially the young generation. Dr John showed us the grim realities we are facing by citing an example of the breakdown of the family unit in Europe whereby God is no longer the centre of the family, what more the nation. He explained to us how crucial it is to take hold of the young generation. The fact is that, based on sheer demographics alone, whoever has the young minds under their influence, effectually has the world under their control. The sad reality is the church at large has not been on the cutting edge in this aspect, Dr John noted.

Yet, it was not to be a night of despair but one of hope. Dr John went on to show us that if the people of God find and pursue their destiny, God's purposes will be accomplished – no matter how terrible the circumstances. In Dr John's own words, "destiny" is the "purpose of which God created me and the course of life He ordained to me, even unto eternity". Only a church that is alive to its destiny can influence the youth and shake the nations.

Dr John revealed to us the need to set oneself apart in order to achieve one's destiny. He opened the Scriptures to us with clarity and conviction by pointing us to the life of Daniel. Even at a young age, Daniel "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" (Dan. 1:8). Daniel set himself apart and was used mightily by God to positively and significantly influence one of the most pagan cultures of that day.

The challenge to set oneself apart like Daniel still stands today. Not in a way that is reclusive, but in a way that looks beyond the walls of the church and taps into the emerging youth culture. Something so seemingly paradoxical can only be achieved when God's children are walking in their destiny. Dr John emphasised with full conviction that "the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits". (Dan 11:32)

The night ended with a time of passionate prayer for the next generation, for families and for the days to come. One night is never enough to tackle such a deep topic like "Destiny", but even if we didn't get all the answers, at least we went back asking some of the right questions -- questions that will eventually lead us into our God-glorifying destinies.



Pastor Lee Yew Meng is the pastor of People's Park Baptist Church in Petaling Jaya.

## REEP Conducts Its First Volunteer Training Session By Jack Cheah

he Rural Educational Empowerment Programme (REEP) was announced at the launch of the NECF's Annual 40-Day Fast and Prayer at the Petaling Jaya Evangelical Free Church on July 30 last year.

REEP is a new initiative under NECF to address the deteriorating standards of proficiency in English, mathematics and science especially among school-going children from the Orang Asli and East Malaysian native and Indian communities in the country. It is an after-school tuition which is structured and remedial in nature to equip participating children with the basic 3R's (reading, writing and arithmetic) so that they can complete their school education without dropping out from school.

REEP's distinguishing feature is its approach where the tutor seeks to be a friend rather than the formal tutor who could be intimidating. The view is to make learning fun and a joyful experience. The learning programme is in modules where understanding of the subject is of utmost importance rather than rote learning. The goal of each module, whether English or mathematics, is to improve the child's current intellectual level so as to be on par with his/her biological age. Assistance is given to helping the children complete their school homework assignments. In addition, motivation in learning and character development are promoted and passed on to the children.

Critical in the implementation of REEP is the training of volunteer tutors in order to prepare them to conduct the classes in the areas that have or will be identified. Volunteers could be any person from churches, institutions or organisations who has at least completed Primary School education up to the Standard 6 level and has a strong passion and burden to see the next generation being given basic education, particularly the 3 Rs.

NECF took the initiative to organise the first volunteer training session at Life Church, Kampar on October 31, last year. A total of 16 volunteers with the majority of them from Life Church attended and participated in the training session. The trainers comprised Bro Cheli Nadarajah and Sis Ruth Cheah of NECF's Education Commission with the assistance of Sis Kong Lai Mei. NECF vice-chairman, Pastor Dr Khoo Kay Hup, gave the opening address and introduction to REEP. Besides emphasising the importance of and the need for REEP, the trainers spoke on how to conduct the homework assignment, English and mathematics modules. The session rounded off with a workshop on conducting the English and mathematics modules.

The NECF hopes to organise more of such sessions in the future.



