

Hedge of Thorns Prayer

Hosea 2:1-13

God called Hosea to marry Gomer who would be unfaithful to him. Hosea, (whose name means “salvation”) was from the northern kingdom of Israel and preached to the north, his homeland. His wife mirrored the people of God, Israel. Gomer’s unfaithfulness is an allegory of Israel’s spiritual infidelity.

When Gomer (Israel) forsook her husband and prostituted herself, she was the pursuer. Similarly, many in church are no “accidental victims” of sin.

There are many believers who are living lives of compromise and are disobeying the Lord or who have turned their back on God and embraced many “false lovers.”

Like members of the five churches (in the book of Revelation), we have chosen to leave the groom’s side and strayed into idolatrous and loose living.

For this reason, the prophetic proclamation of God (recorded in Hosea 2:6) rings true today – “I will hedge up your way with thorns, And wall her in, So that she cannot find her paths.” NKJV

The Scriptures record for us three types of hedges.

Firstly, the Hedge of Restoration (Ezekiel 22:30 KJV)

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.”

The hedge here is the city wall that protects the city from imminent invasion, allowed by God because of the backslidden ways of Judah.

With God’s impending wrath about to be poured out, there was no one who would intercede on behalf of the city and seek God’s mercy.

Today, we need intercessors to stand in the gap in the hedge to plead for God’s mercy on behalf of the people and the nation.

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Secondly, there is the Hedge of Protection (Job 1:10)

“10 Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.”

We also see that Job habitually prayed a hedge of protection around his family (Job 1:4-5). Consequently, the devil could not touch him nor his household.

This hedge of protection is a supernatural shield, a barrier - it is invisible, placed around someone you have prayed for, for God's protection to be upon them.

As we witness an increasing number of leaders falling, I wonder if it is because the Church has failed to pray for a hedge around them.

Lastly, the hedge of correction or Hedge of Thorns (Hosea 2:6-7).

When Gomer (Israel) began pursuing her “lovers”, God intervened in a most unusual way. He built a hedge of thorns around his unfaithful wife (Hosea 2:5-7).

A hedge of thorns is something that stands in the way of a child of God who is heading further and deeper into sin.

It can be a disappointment, or failure that God places in the path of a Christian who is heading in a wrong direction, an affliction, obstacle - pointing the person back to God.

Once Gomer (Israel) is blocked from her lovers, she then says, “I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better for me than now” (Hosea 2:7).

The present day Church needs this hedge as too many do not realise we have fallen short, nor do they realise what they have lost - and have no desire to return.

When we have a wayward member, spouse, child or grandchild who has tasted the good life in Christ and then chooses to pursue the ways of the world, then we can pray for God to do to them what He did to Gomer.

The thorns aren't only on the inside of the hedge! God desires to protect us not only from our own selves, but from the evil and temptations that seek to get at us from without.

Let's not forget our youth need to be hedged in so that they will make God's will a priority. Many are hooked onto pornography. Young Adults are preoccupied with career first, materialism and worldliness.

The seniors, too, even in church, are less passionate about church, enjoying the comfort of life with more zeal than for the affairs of God. Too few have any sense of destiny.

There is evil all around us. Sadly, it is easier for the devil to have a foothold in our lives, when our hearts are lifted up and we have forgotten the LORD our God (Deut 8:14).

God's hedge of thorns is there to define and direct our path, to give us guidance. To bring us back.

Thankfully, Gomer and many like her, including the prodigal son, *came to their senses*, because of the prayers of His saints. We cannot afford not to pray for the Malaysian Church to return. The final shaking is looming on the horizon. May we take advantage of this season of grace, and return to God's paths.

Eu Hong Seng
NECF, Chairman

40-Day Fast and Prayer Launch

THIS year's NECF 40-Day fast and prayer was launched at multiple locations in Malaysia, representing congregations of multiple languages, people groups, sizes and denominations. The theme, Kingdom That Cannot be Shaken was a timely message for the Malaysian Church to prepare herself to be strengthened in the fundamentals of faith amid the global risks and instability today. At the onset of the launch in Petaling Jaya, Bishop Ong Sek Leang encouraged the church to be prophetic in this season, to have a humble posture in prayer, be persistent in intercession and to prepare for revival.

A notable feature of this year was the virtual morning prayer altars held in collaboration with the Malaysian United Firewall. Indeed, as the Church humbles herself and seeks the destiny of the nation, God intervenes and promises supernatural help in the midst of the shaking. The continued prayers of God's people will bring forth lasting transformation and deep change at the heart of our nation.

CITY / TOWN	HOST CHURCH	LANGUAGE GROUP	DATE	NO OF ATTENDANCE
Kluang	Agape Presbyterian	BM	19 Jul	65
Seremban	SIB SRM	BM	27 Jul	36
Kuala Lumpur	SIB City Life	BM	3 Aug	130+
Kota Bahru	Christian Praise Centre	Eng & Chi	2 Aug	90+ (11 churches)
K. Terengganu	Lifeline AOG	Eng & Chi	3 Aug	40+ (5 churches)
Kuantan	Grace Christmatic	Eng & Chi	4 Aug	50+
Muadzam Shah	Methodist Centre	OA	23 Jul	60 (6 Denoms)
Tapah	Praise Church	OA	30 Jul	180+
Kangar	Kangar Baptist Church	Eng & Chi	26 Jul	52
Batu Pahat	FGA	Eng & Chi	6 Aug	96 (12 churches)
Kulim	Bethsaida Hope Church	Tamil	1 Aug	130
Rawang	FGA	Tamil	25 Jul	60
Penang	Praise Baptist Church	Tamil	25 Jul	65
Bukit Mertajam	Gereja Rivers of Waters	Tamil	27 Jul	40
PJ	GA611	Eng & Chi	4 Aug	400+-



PJ



Batu Pahat



K. Terengganu



Kangar



Muadzam Shah



Kluang



Kota Bahru



Kuantan



Kulim



Penang



Kuala Lumpur



Seremban



Rawang



Tapah

The following are reports (in Bahasa Malaysia) from two Orang Asli groups who had participated in the launch.

Pelancaran Doa dan Puasa NECF Orang Asli Zon (Pahang) Timur

National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) Zon Timur telah mengadakan Program Pelancaran Doa dan Puasa untuk komuniti Orang Asli pada 23 dan 24 Jun 2024 dari jam 7.00 hingga 9.00 malam di Muadzam Shah, Pahang. Program ini bertujuan untuk memperkukuhkan kehidupan rohani dan kesatuan dalam kalangan komuniti Orang Asli di kawasan tersebut, berlandaskan tema “Kerajaan Yang Tidak Dapat Digoncangkan.”

Acara dimulakan dengan kata-kata aluan dan ucapan selamat datang serta doa pembukaan oleh Pastor Yosua sebagai tuan rumah. Ini diikuti dengan sesi pujian dan penyembahan oleh Pastor Gerald dan pasukan persembahannya. Firman disampaikan oleh Rev. Sanusi Bah Sahak mengenai “Kerajaan Yang Tidak Dapat Digoncangkan” dan diikuti dengan pengisytiharan serta pelancaran Doa & Puasa Orang Asli oleh Saudari Ngeh Hoong Eng dari NECF. Program Pelancaran Doa dan Puasa ini dihadiri oleh 60 orang peserta dari 7 denominasi gereja.



Pelancaran Doa & Puasa 23 Jun 2024 bermula pukul 7.00pm - 9.00pm

Pada keesokan harinya, 14 pastor telah menghadiri Persekutuan Pastor-Pastor Pelayanan Orang Asli. Acara bermula pada pukul 9.00 pagi di tempat yang sama dengan sesi perkongsian pengalaman dan cabaran pelayanan. Ini diikuti dengan sesi doa dan makan tengah hari.

Program ini merupakan acara yang julung kali diadakan dalam sejarah NECF Zon Timur untuk komuniti Orang Asli. Ia menandakan permulaan gerakan yang amat positif dalam membangunkan Kerajaan Tuhan bersama-sama, tanpa mengira denominasi gereja. Sambutan yang memberangsangkan dari pelbagai denominasi menunjukkan kesediaan untuk membina kesatuan dalam kepelbagaian.



Persekutuan Para Pastor pada 24 Jun 2024 bermula pukul 9.00am

NECF sangat gembira dengan permulaan perkembangan ini, khususnya dalam kalangan komuniti Orang Asli yang sudah mula bergerak ke arah kesatuan dan pemeraksanaan rohani. Program ini dilihat sebagai titik permulaan untuk siri program yang lebih banyak pada masa hadapan, bertujuan untuk terus menyokong dan memperkukuhkan iman komuniti Orang Asli di kawasan tersebut.

Kejayaan program ini memberi harapan baru untuk kerjasama antara denominasi dan pembangunan pelayanan Orang Asli yang lebih mantap, selaras dengan visi “Kerajaan Yang Tidak Dapat Digoncangkan.”

Pelancaran Doa Puasa 40 Hari Orang Asli Zon Perak

Pada malam 30 Julai 2024, Gereja Praise Tapah telah menjadi tuan rumah bagi pelancaran Doa Puasa 40 Hari Orang Asli Zon Perak dengan tema tahunan “Kerajaan yang Tidak Dapat Digoncangkan”. Acara ini bertujuan untuk memperkenalkan dan menggalakkan gereja-gereja Orang Asli bersatu dalam doa dan puasa demi negara, komuniti, dan masa depan pelayanan suku ini, sambil memperkukuhkan iman, kesatuan, dan dedikasi dalam tempoh puasa dan doa .

Acara dimulakan dengan perarakan bendera-bendera dari setiap negeri, dibawa dengan penuh semangat oleh wakil-wakil gereja setempat, seterusnya mencipta suasana meriah dan penuh makna. Perarakan ini diikuti oleh pujian dan penyembahan yang bertenaga dari Gereja Shalom Gopeng yang dipimpin oleh Pr Rino, menambahkan suasana sukacita dan bersemangat. Rev Andry dari Gereja Lutheran Tapah memeriahkan acara sebagai pengerusi, memastikan setiap detik acara berjalan dengan lancar. Kemudian, Pr Arwien menyampaikan khutbah bertema “Kerajaan yang Tidak Dapat Digoncangkan”, menekankan bahawa Kerajaan ini adalah milik kita, bersifat stabil dan kuat, serta setiap individu merupakan ejen penting dalam menyampaikan mesej Kerajaan ini kepada dunia.

pendidikan, gereja-gereja, dan pelayanan Orang Asli di hadirat Tuhan. Acara diakhiri dengan pujian yang bertenaga, diikuti oleh doa kesyukuran oleh Pr Pian (Epac Kampar) dan doa penutupan oleh Pr Mansor (SIB Tg Malim), meninggalkan kesan mendalam kepada semua peserta.



Kehadiran acara ini mencapai 183 peserta, termasuk pastor, pemimpin, dan jemaah dari pelbagai denominasi seperti Methodist, Lutheran, Anglican, SIB, dan gereja bebas. Penglibatan peserta dalam sesi doa dan ibadah sangat aktif dan penuh semangat. Sambutan terhadap pelancaran Doa Puasa 40 Hari ini sangat positif, dengan peserta menunjukkan komitmen tinggi untuk terlibat dalam tempoh puasa yang akan datang.

Sebagai lanjutan, satu pertemuan pastor-pastor telah diadakan pada 31 Julai 2024, disertai oleh 12 orang pastor dan pemimpin dari pelbagai denominasi. Pertemuan ini membuka lembaran baru dalam kerjasama antara gereja-gereja pada masa akan datang. Acara turut disertai oleh Saudari Hoong Eng, wakil dari NECF, yang memperkenalkan agenda NECF dan menyatakan kerinduannya untuk melihat pelayanan Orang Asli berkembang pesat dalam kesatuan antara gereja-gereja. Beliau menyatakan bahawa untuk mencapai matlamat ini, beliau telah menunggu hampir 30 tahun. Para pastor menyambut baik agenda tersebut dan berhasrat untuk melanjutkan kerjasama demi kerajaan Tuhan, dengan komitmen untuk memajukan pelayanan-pelayanan pemerksaan masyarakat Orang Asli di masa hadapan.

Secara keseluruhan, pelancaran ini berjaya memperkukuhkan kesatuan dan dedikasi dalam kalangan gereja-gereja orang asli. Acara ini menandakan langkah penting dalam memajukan kerjasama dan sokongan terhadap masyarakat Orang Asli, serta melanjutkan usaha-usaha pemerksaan di masa hadapan.



Acara diteruskan dengan sesi doa khusus yang dipimpin oleh Pr Asmah (SIB Slim River), Pr Jamin (SIB Bidor), dan Pr Rubil (Praise Tapah), yang mengangkat isu-isu penting seperti kebajikan, tanah adat, penindasan,

Silver Jubilee!

Next year marks the 25th year our 40 Days' Fast and Prayer initiative. Indeed, God's faithfulness has been evident since the turn of this millennium, when the first nationwide fast and prayer was called to unite Malaysians from all walks of life to one common purpose of seeking the Lord. For the Silver Jubilee, we warmly extend our invitation to your church to participate in this momentous occasion. More details will be announced soon.

2024 Sabah Flood Response Brief Report

On June 30, Sabah experienced flash floods that caused widespread inundation, affecting areas including Inanam, Menggatal, Telipok, and Tuaran. The most impacted area was Penampang District, where flooding was extensive, with water reaching above-waist levels. Many homes and vehicles were severely affected, resulting in substantial damage.

On July 1, the disaster response plan was activated by 7979 Holistic Care Relief Network, with efforts focusing on setting up the Command and Coordination team, preparing cleaning equipment, recruiting volunteers, collecting disaster information, and determining the base of operations.

By July 2, the flood waters had receded, and power and water supplies were being gradually restored in various affected areas. Requests for assistance began to come in, and volunteers were deployed to the disaster zones.

Short-Term Disaster Response Actions:

Over the next nine days, volunteers worked tirelessly and strategically to clean up and assist in reinstating power to the affected town and villages, often rendering much-needed relief services in houses, churches, schools and businesses. A total of 30 houses, 10 apartment corridors, two learning centres and one church were cleaned up; with electricity checking conducted on 12 households.

Children's Fun Day "Rainbow After the Rain -

In addition, an emotional support initiative for children was organised to cushion the impact of the flood. Targeted at children aged five to 12, these fun and entertaining activities were held at different locations and attracted 98 children.

PROGRAM PELANGI SELEPAS HUJAN

03/08/2024 (Sabtu)
7.45am Pendaftaran - 12.00pm Pulang

KUMP. PRA-SEKOLAH: TADIKA KEMAS KG. INOBONG
KUMP. SEKOLAH RENDAH: GEREJA MARANATHA

ACARA-ACARA:
SUKANEKA, BERCEKITA, MENYANYI, MAKANAN SEDAP,
HADIAH PERCUMA DLL....

JOM MENYERTAI SEKARANG!

KUMP. PRA-SEKOLAH: Ms. Christiannie 013-6060256
KUMP. SEK. RENDAH: Mr. Chin 011-3313 8909 / Ms. Ng 016-831 5672

Penganjur: HIS 7979, Maranatha, Agape Counselling Centre Malaysia (KOTA KINABALU BRANCH)

Summary:

We are grateful for the participation of nearly 100 volunteers from various professions, denominations, and non-Christians who joined in this disaster response effort. This collective effort brought some measure of warmth and assistance to the affected communities. Special thanks to the local churches and organizations that actively supported this effort, including the Methodist Church, Basel Church, Grace Chapel, Maranatha Church, Dream Center, Tadika Kemas, and Agape Counselling Centre Malaysia (Kota Kinabalu Branch).

Though the floods came and went quickly, they left an indelible impact on the affected residents. The severity of the floods exceeded expectations, leaving many unprepared and at a loss. This disaster served as a stark reminder to local churches and organisations of the importance of emergency preparedness. Although this response effort has concluded, it highlights the need for ongoing preparation and training to better equip ourselves, our families, and our communities for improved disaster prevention and response in the future.

7979 is a relief network of churches established by Holistic Integrated Services (HISTEAM) to provide relief, care and community services during crises.

Cleaning Operation



Rainbow After Rain





NECF Tamil Commission Women's Conference

THE Tamil Commission organised a women's conference in the Southern Region on May 18, 2024. The conference's theme was "You are valuable", and was held at the Salem Tabernacle Centre, Skudai, Johor Bahru (JB). Tamil Commission members Rev Daniel Loh, Rev M Rajan and Rev Subashini Achari worked together with various churches in JB to organise this conference, which was attended by about 200 women. The Commission also received overwhelming support from the JB Pastors' Fellowship. Pastor Nima Wilson from HISnearness Penang spoke at two sessions, while Rev Subashini took up the devotion.

With the many deceptions and lies around women these days, this conference encouraged women to acknowledge their worth in Christ and embrace their identity as the image bearer of God. The messages were aimed at empowering the women as God's masterpieces, anointed to do great things for His kingdom and communities beyond. The participants were asked to develop their gifts and talents, and also stepping into leadership roles within their churches. They were encouraged to serve and make a positive impact in their communities by reflecting the compassion and love of Christ.

The Conference was also designed to address the unique challenges and needs facing the women of today's era. These are the pursuit of personal growth, spiritual enrichment, professional development and emotional well-being. By providing resources, guidance and a sense of community, these challenges are mitigated, thus providing an environment for Indian women to thrive.

True to its objective, the four-hour conference was an investment in women; not just for them but for their families, community and the next generation. Organised with the purpose of providing a space for women of faith to come together for spiritual growth, encouragement, and community, this event offered a supportive environment for women to connect with one another, share experiences, and find inspiration to navigate the challenges they may face in various aspects of their lives.

It was a great and much-needed conference for the Indian women in this era. Many good testimonies were shared on the blessings of the event.

By **Rev Subashini Achari**



List Of New Members

ORDINARY MEMBER

1	Sungai Nibong Gospel Hall	Penang
2	Gereja Raban Iban Baptist	Johor Bahru
3	Grace Assembly Tamil	Perak
4	The Connection Church	Selangor
5	Elimalech Potter's House	Negeri Sembilan
6	El-Shaddai Ministries	Johor
7	Loveworld Ministries Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur
8	The Journey	Selangor
9	Gereja Keluarga Tabgha	Penang
10	Generations Church	Selangor
11	Klang Jaya Gospel Chapel	Selangor
12	Hope Senawang	Negeri Sembilan
13	Persatuan Sukarelawan Subang, Sunway Dan Berseluruhan (SU-SU-BE)	Selangor

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

1	Pr Paul Cheong Kok Wen (Grace Comm Ctr (USJ))	Selangor
2	Pr Sangli Dass (Pertubuhan Anugerah Kasih)	Selangor



NECF Penang Visit

ABOUT 60 pastors, leaders and missionaries were present at the Penang Ministers' Fellowship meeting held at Georgetown Baptist Church on Friday, July 19. The attendees included those from mainland West Malaysia, such as NECF Chairman, Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng, the Secretary-General Pr Sam Ang and the Executive Secretary of NECF and Christian Federation of Malaysia, Rev Andy Chi. The event started with breakfast and a time of fellowship, followed by a short worship session.

Rev Dr Eu gave a devotion on how churches needed to prepare themselves for the coming season by being grounded, prepared and ready. He gave a series of very practical pointers that churches could and should engage in. It was an exhortation to the pastors and church leaders to start thinking of the way forward in building strong churches together.

Pr Sam Ang and Rev Andy Chi then shared some of the latest developments at the national level that would impact churches and the Christian community. There was a time of questions and answers where very constructive ideas and information were exchanged. One idea was for NECF to have a dialogue to explain some national issues when they had been finalised and settled with the Federal Government.

The event ended at around 12.30pm with a prayer for the NECF team, and for the pastors and churches in Penang.



Rev Dr Eu Hong Seng



Pr Sam Ang

Prayer Shield for Pastors and Full-time Workers

The call of a pastor is sacred because it is a unique call from God to shepherd the flock of God. However, this call comes with great challenges.

A pastor does not have a clock-in-clock-out job that allows him or her to have sweet hours after a day's work. A survey in 2022 (by Pastoral Care Inc. of American pastors) revealed that 72% of the pastors work 55-75 hours per week (an average of 8-11 hours daily), with 84% of them feeling that they are on call 24/7. Majority (71%) of churches do not have a sabbatical plan for their pastors. Fifty-two percent of them felt overworked and couldn't meet the church's expectations.

There is also a high expectation on pastors' families, i.e., their spouses and their children. Sixty-five percent of pastors see their homes as "glass houses" with their family living under the scrutinisation of their members. Eighty percent of pastors believe that their work in the ministry has negatively affected their families, with many of their own children harbouring resentment. Some pastors' children had left the church where their parents were serving in. Recently a local interview with some Malaysian pastors' kids revealed that the latter felt that church members always place a higher expectation on them in terms of their spirituality and commitment in ministry.

Pastors (57%) are underpaid and struggle to make their ends meet while being deprived of proper rest and sleep. This is largely due to the heavy demands of church and ministry that require great commitment in relationship building and personal development of the flock. Some of these statistics could be higher in Malaysia, given that we tend to be a more communal society compared to the individualism in the American society!

But praise God, statistics also show that 90% of pastors continue to affirm their calling in God's plan! Due to their calling, they remain where they are, despite not feeling particularly welcomed or comfortable!

As the Body of Christ, we have a responsibility to look out for one another. The Bible tells us to bear one another's burdens so as to fulfil Christ's law (Galatians 6:2). As God people, we are to appreciate one another's role and function, and the role of a pastor is definitely one that is honourable, as exhorted by Paul to the Ephesian church, writing, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching." (1 Timothy 5:17)

With this in mind, we would like to encourage churches to remember to honour their pastors and full-time workers for the good work and sacrifice they have made. Every year we have set apart the month of October to appreciate and pray daily for pastors and church workers. This year, we will focus on five areas of the life of a pastor and we hope churches would mobilise their members to stand in the gap to intercede for the welfare and breakthrough of their pastors and church workers.

Week 1: Pastor & Health
Week 2: Pastor & Family
Week 3: Pastor & Spiritual Walk
Week 4: Pastor & Finance
Week 5: Pastor & Leadership

Besides praying for pastors and full-time workers, let's think of ways of how we can bless them practically, for example, by allowing them to have a break from their daily tasks and having a good rest with their family with a traveling package; spending them a meal and having a close fellowship over the lunch or dinner tables; buying gifts and giving thank you notes to show them care and concern; caring for their children so that they can spend private time together with their spouses etc. We pray that God will give you creative ways to bless your pastors and full-time workers!

Prayer Shield

for Pastors & Full-time Workers

A series of topics will be released during Oct 2024

Week 1

Pastor & Health

Week 2

Pastor & Family

Week 3

Pastor & Spiritual Walk

Week 4

Pastor & Finance

Week 5

Pastor & Leadership

**A Prayer A Day for your Pastors
and full-time workers.**