

SIM *now*

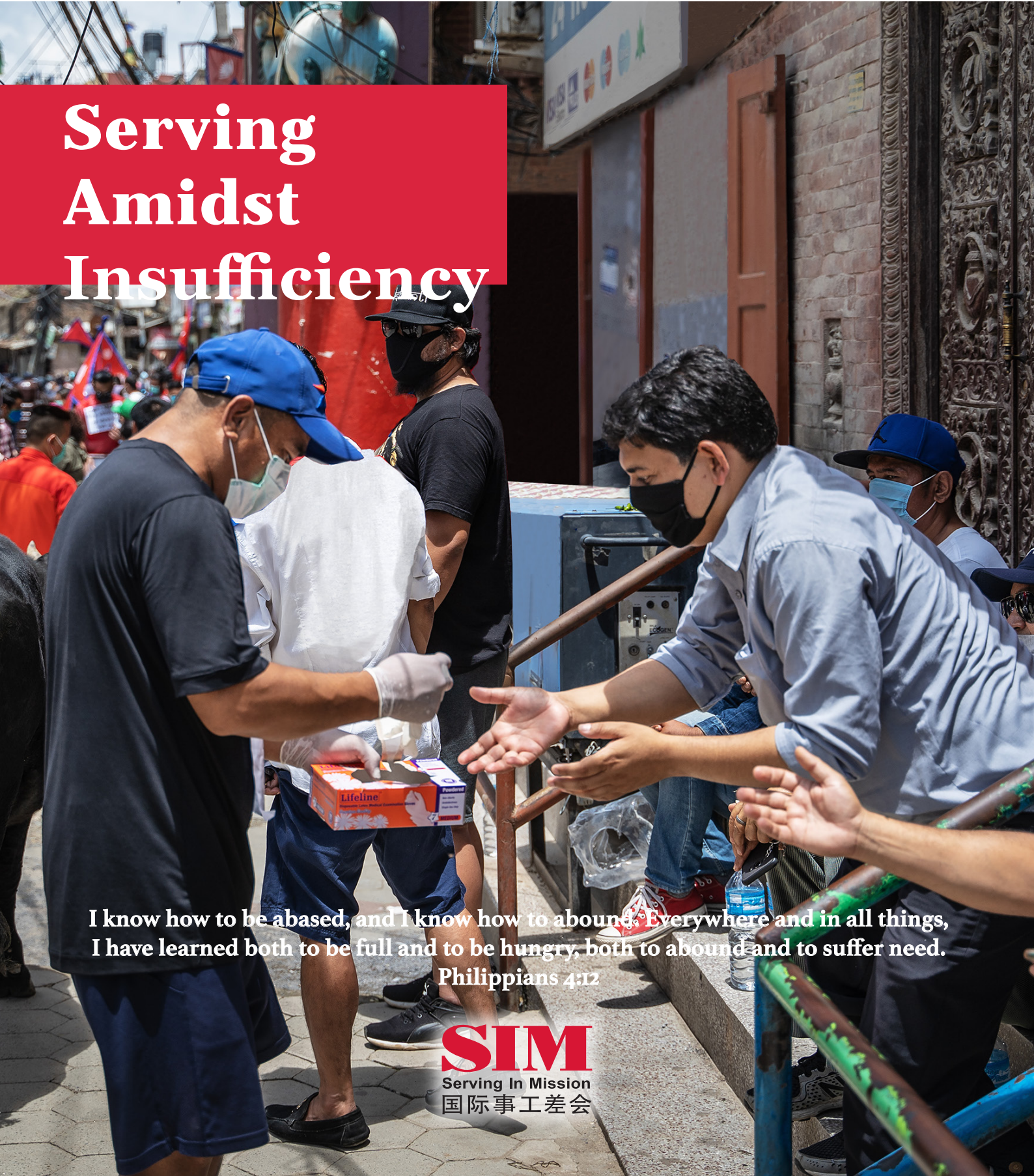
East Asia Edition

Serving Amidst Insufficiency

I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things, I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

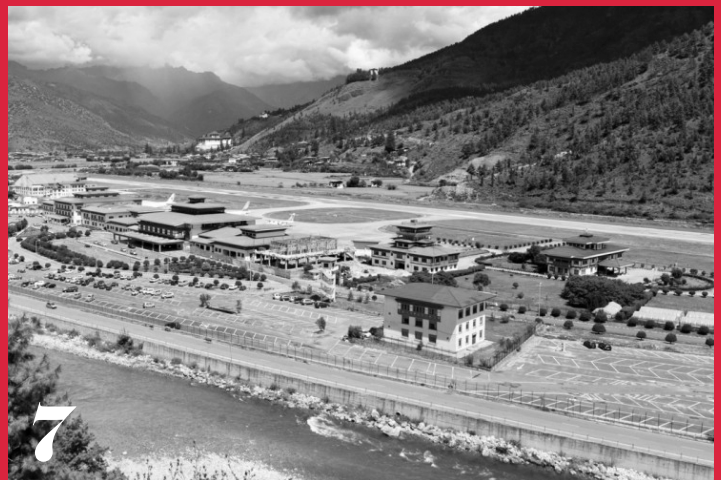
Philippians 4:12

SIM
Serving In Mission
国际事工差会



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Official publication of SIM (Serving In Mission), an interdenominational Evangelical Protestant mission. SIM includes Africa Evangelical Fellowship, Andes Evangelical Mission, International Christian Fellowship, Sudan Interior Mission and Middle East Christian Outreach.

The East Asia edition of SIM Now is printed by SIM East Asia, 116 Lavender Street, Pek Chuan Building, #04-09, Singapore 338730. ISSN 0711-6683-11981, MCI (P) 055/02/2021. Permission to reprint any material must be obtained from the SIM East Asia Editor at eastasia.info@sim.org. Editor: Watson Rajaratnam. Associate Editor : Michael Chay; Sub Editor : Rev Dr Lim Kheng Hai; Designer: Lim Zei Guen.

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Contentment and Generosity Amidst Inadequacy

Diane Marshall,

Global Director for Regional Development



“Called to be part of His mission in any situation”

Rarely is the whole world shaken by fear, loss and inadequacy. Global phenomenon like World War 1 & 2, terrorism, global financial crisis, and ecological breakdown have challenged humanity's confidence in solving the issues of the day while COVID posed as the ultimate test.

Clearly humanity lacks the unity, wisdom, and the resources to solve our most basic problems. Yet we in SIM firmly believe that we serve the God of mission, who has called every follower of Jesus to be a part of His mission in whatever situation, no matter how we are called.

To the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul was eager to reassure believers who were not from important

family lines, that God chose the lowly things of this world (1 Cor 1:26-30). We see this modelled by the Philippian church, the first congregation planted in Europe. Consisting of non-Jewish believers with women playing essential roles, it was noteworthy for their service amidst poverty (2 Cor 8:1-5).

In Philippi, Lydia, a businesswoman from today's Turkey, opened her heart and house for new believers to meet (Acts 16:13-15). The Philippian jailor and his household formed the nucleus of this church (Acts 16:23-34). Although not wealthy, this church became a model of generosity that enabled the gospel to spread. Paul himself embraced this model of contentment (Phil 3:7-11; 4:11-19).

What does serving amidst insufficiency and inadequacy look like today? For me, it is portrayed by believers in Andean villages extending generous hospitality to those who are hungry for biblical understanding. It is trusting God for our children's education when the options seem limited. It is depending on God to meet critical financial needs, personally and in ministry, and for colleagues. It is praying for God's wisdom amid the challenges of leading multicultural, multi-skilled teams through times of multi-layered needs.

Whatever part God calls us to play in His mission, our personal and collective inadequacies will loom large. Thank you for supporting our workers to and from SIM East Asia. I invite you to prayerfully read the stories of faith and courage by our ambassadors of the Gospel, serving in different parts of the world, during one of the bleakest moments of history. May the Apostle Paul and the humble Christians of Philippi be a model to us, serving with contentment and generosity, in times of both inadequacy and plenty, with the reassurance that “I can do all things through him who gives me strength” (Phil 4:13).

Bible Study: Serving Amidst Insufficiency (Philippians 4: 10 -13)

Reverend Prabhu Renganathan, Pastor, AMK Tamil Methodist Church



“Human wants are unlimited” is an old quote. But Apostle Paul was writing not about the wants but about the real needs. Insufficient resources before overwhelming needs do cause some concerns in a post-modern missionary. Serving God amidst various needs is a reality. Here are some precious lessons from Missionary Paul.

I. Paul, a Prisoner for the sake of the Gospel
“I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel” (Phil 1:7).

A. Changing circumstances brought challenges.

Paul was a tent maker and a self-supporting Missionary (Acts 20:34).

He was in the prison because of the Gospel and apparently, was in some need (Phil 1:7).

B. Mission had never been easy (Phil 4:12).
Note the words “in need”, “in plenty”, “fed” and “hungry”.

He was beaten, stoned, suffered shipwrecks, experienced hunger, was later imprisoned.

C. Facing any situation with contentment (Phil 4:12).

God’s Grace was sufficient and that was why even the prison cell became a preaching platform for him.

II. Philippian Church’s Partnership in the Gospel “your partnership in the gospel” (Phil 1:5).

A. Meaningful Partnership at times of crisis.
When the Philippian Church came to know about Paul’s need it responded

positively. They sent financial assistance through Epaphroditus who later became sick, may be because of the tedious and long journey (Phil 2:25-30).

B. True Partnership in mission goes beyond praying. The Philippian church’s partnership in the Gospel is revealed through their generosity and concern for Paul.

C. Grateful heart rejoices in God’s provision (Phil 4:10).

When Paul recognized that it was God’s provision, he received it with joy and gratitude. More than the money, Paul appreciated their love and concern for him.

III. Precious lessons on Faith in God’s service.
“I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am” (Phil 4:11).

A. True Contentment in Christ.

Amidst overwhelming needs Paul learnt to be contented and satisfied. To him it was not an academic classroom exercise but a learning experience from God.

B. True Contentment is not conditioned by circumstances.

It is not having all that we want. Whether “have” or “have not”, Apostle Paul accepted all situations as God’s appointments. This contentment makes us richer than the rich.

C. True Contentment is the result of being rooted in Christ.

It is an abiding experience in Christ amidst changing circumstances and enjoying God’s Sufficiency amidst needs.

Paul was optimistic even amidst internal pressures from false teachers and external attacks from Roman Persecutors. He said with all confidence “I can do all this through Him who gives me strength” (Phil 4:13). If our dependency is in Christ, we will also receive His constant strength which will enable us to fulfill His Mission.

Undeterred by Limitations

Ariel and Connie Ceballos, Philippines

When God provides through His people during this time of scarcity, we really marvel at the faith and sacrificial giving of His people towards His work which often result in thanksgiving.

Giving amidst Needs

We are challenged to give to others in need while trusting that God Himself will continue to provide for our own needs. Our family together with other believers gave food packs to a poor community during the lockdown. It opened creative opportunities for us to pray for the community and point them to our Provider, Protector, Healer, and Saviour.

Adapting amidst Challenges

One wise advice given by our former regional director, Dr. Stanley Ling, was that we need to adapt to new technology to continue with our ministries. We may not be as tech savvy as the millennials, but we could learn to adapt to new approaches to stay relevant. We heeded that advice and tried to initiate meetings through zoom or google meet and record our messages for virtual gatherings.

**“Amidst scarcities
God reveals
His sufficiency”**

However, our own computers were not functioning well after years of use, so we had to borrow our son's laptop for our own Zoom sessions, disrupting his online learning. Amazingly, through the sacrificial giving



of some friends, we were able to buy a computer.

Impacting amidst Restrictions

Despite restricted travels and interaction with people, we are amazed at how the Lord opens doors for mission mobilization and mentoring at a scope we never imagined before. Through virtual meetings, we can continue to speak in gatherings in mission field (where we once served) while we are in the Philippines. Recently we spoke during the Missions Week of a Bible School in Manila while we were at home in Central Philippines. We are mentoring a group of young professionals interested in missions and leading a Bible study for couples. We are also teaching in a Bible school and mentoring students. If these mobilization ministries are done face-to-face, we could incur substantial costs in travel alone. Despite scarcity and limited mobility, God has widened our influence and impact.

It is amidst scarcities that God reveals His sufficiency. We are grateful to God for His blessings and for His faithfulness to provide according to His will. Our contentment and joy are not dictated by changing circumstances (Philippians 4:12) but they rest on the fact that we are enfolded by His ever-sufficient grace.



Enriched Amidst Pandemic

Deborah, Creative Access Nation

“What a rich fellowship time we are having!” That was what I thought even during the pandemic! I am a single missionary currently serving in a Creative Access Nation. I thank God that I have been adopted here by a family, with an awesome dog. I look forward to post pandemic times to resume our tea together with local friends and their dog which has given me so much joy.

Times to reflect

The locals whom I serve are very warm-hearted people who love communal activities like seminars, conventions, parties, etc. Such times of engagement and interactions bring delight not only to them but to me too. When the pandemic became severe, almost all our programs and activities were cancelled. Those times of waiting provided me with more opportunities to be still before our Lord and to reflect on what I believe in, who I am, for whom I live, and why I am here.

New ministries

To be very honest, at first, I was happy when almost all the programs were cancelled, enabling me to rest. The irony was that, soon I sank into depression when activities resumed. That was when I sought the Lord and asked Him, “Lord what do you want me to do next”. Through His guidance, we started the “Covid-19 Relief Project”, and I also joined another SIM ministry called “For Freedom” which is an anti-human trafficking ministry.

Ongoing Opportunities

In His beautiful time, despite being in precarious situations, He gave me opportunities to conduct regular bible studies for the women evangelists in my office, women in a shelter home, and my adopted family members. The women in the shelter home are beginning to open their hearts to the Good News. The women evangelists' Bible studies have evolved into regular meetings. The family that adopted me is also blessed by His Word during our daily devotions. In my quietness, God unveiled to me that these people and the dog are precious and are His special gifts for me.

“His guidance helps to start Covid-19 Relief Project”

As I reflect on Philippians 1:3-6, I thank God upon every remembrance of those people and the dog who are precious, always in every prayer of mine making request for them with joy. Praise God that He who has begun a good work will continue it until the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank Him for He is faithful, keeping me safe and providing all my needs both physically and spiritually. Praise the Lord for some of those whom we are reaching out to in this creative access nation, have at least the means to receive messages through WhatsApp.

Continuing through Inconvenience

It is comforting to know that we may have some means to seek medical help if found covid positive. Sadly, the locals would not be able to receive the necessary medical assistance in case they contract COVID. Thus, we try our best to assist them in whichever way possible. Living in the rural villages, face-to-face ministry continues with precautions in place. It is true it's inconvenient, especially when the weather is hot. I am also thankful to God for the technology which has enabled me to do my local language lessons online too.

Communicating by Caring

I have been having weekly Bible studies with "Josh" and "Marie", together with another couple. Josh's family which came down with fever is now recovering. Josh is the only one in his family who can communicate with me in English; he is looking for a job and there is a

Continuing Amidst Inconveniences

Susanna, Creative Access Nation



Children's Fellowship

wish to shake my hand, but I have not been able to tell them in English that I cannot do so because of their grand-father's disapproval earlier. Recently, the children and their mother waved excitingly at me, even in their grandfather's presence. Then I sensed in my spirit the change in their behaviour as I have been interceding for their salvation during my daily prayer walk.

Pandemic or no pandemic, I am confident that our Lord will grant me more opportunities to get to know my neighbours in the days to come. No matter what inconveniences or struggles I encounter I am determined to continue to communicate His love and His gospel in my neighbourhood.

We praise God for the privilege of bringing this message of joy to those who are living and dying without Christ, here.

Serving amidst Constraints

Our main ministry is church planting among the ethnic groups (natives) which are least reached with the Gospel. The Lord has graciously enabled us to start four worship groups thus far. We are discipling new believers and training them for the work of evangelism. Praise God for His blessings upon our ministry. It is true

(To Be Continued)

Contentment in every Circumstance

Abraham and Sarah, Creative Access Nation

The country where God has positioned us is guarded by closed doors to the gospel. In fact, preaching the Good News here is not just a taboo but illegal. Missionaries do not have any legitimate access to this country. But more than any other time the country needs the Gospel now for it alone can bring hope to the hopeless and help to the helpless.

(Continued from previous page)

that the pandemic has affected our ministries in different ways. One of the main challenges is we are unable to come together for fellowship due to the lockdown. But that has not stopped us from worshipping Him. We do continue with our services through zoom though not everyone is able to join us as many do not have computers or good hand phones. Thus, we visit their homes during the weekdays to pray and encourage them to stand firm in their faith.

Sharing amidst Inadequacy

The pandemic has taught us to be more caring towards our new believers specially the widows and divorcees who struggle

financially. We thank God for enabling us to practice what James teaches in James 2: 15-17: ***“Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”*** We are trying to assist those in need by paying their house rent and by providing rice, oil, and other groceries. At the same time, we encourage them to always trust in God.

As we look back at the ways of our Lord, we can confidently say that He has helped us in every circumstance. The current pandemic has given us new opportunities to serve Him by sharing His message and His resources with others.



In remembrance of Rev Lily Ho (Mrs Hsueh Yu Kwong) ~ 1933-2021 ~

Mrs Hsueh (Rev Lily HO Swee Hoo) was born in Myanmar on August 10, 1933. She received Christ as her Saviour at a gospel rally when she was in senior high school. After graduating from university, she went to study Social Work at the University of Delhi, India and returned to Yangon to serve in the Methodist Church Service Centre and the Social Work Department of the Annual Conference. She studied at the seminary from 1965 to 67 and joined the Church to serve as a full-time pastoral worker for three years. Mrs Hsueh moved to Taiwan with her mother in early 1971 to be reunited with her family, during which time she met Rev Hsueh Yu Kwong. After their marriage, they joined Taiwan Campus Evangelical Fellowship and served for three years, after which they returned to Rev Hsueh's home country, Malaysia and settled there. When the Malaysia Bible Seminary was founded in 1978, the Hsuehs were two of the first four full-time teachers. They Joined SIM in 1981 and were sent to Nigeria, Africa, to serve. After returning to Malaysia in 1982, they went on to serve in SIM East Asia Office in Singapore and founded the Chinese magazine "Mission Vision" in 1984. When the Hsuehs retired and settled in Malaysia in 1997 they were members of Klang Chinese Methodist Church. Rev Hsueh rested in the arms of Jesus in 2004. While promoting missions, Mrs Hsueh supervised and published six books originally authored by Rev Hsueh. She frequently participated in the Taiwan Youth Mission Convention, enthusiastically cared for new missionaries, and often visited SIM East Asia office to encourage co-workers and pray for SIM. Mrs Hsueh's gentleness and loyalty as a faithful servant of God inspired her friends and co-workers both at home and abroad. She rested from her earthly service and returned to be with her Lord on 15 July 2021. To Mrs Hsueh, "To live was Christ, and to die was gain."

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