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鍾少溪宣教士代禱信 Prayer Letter from the Desk of Barnabas



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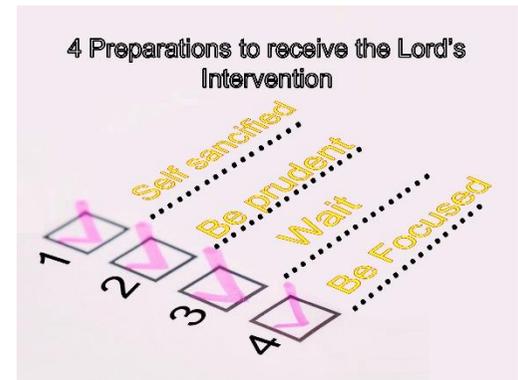
Dear prayer partners,

During the pandemic, many people expect God's intervention, God's arrival and God's presence! People are only concerned about ending the pandemic with God's intervention. How many of them would be prepared before God's intervention, God's arrival and God's presence? It is an opportunity we encounter God when we participate in the live/recorded Sunday Service which is broadcast every Sunday. Are we also prepared to face God? Exodus 19:10-15 reminds us of how Israelis prepared before they faced God:

¹⁰ And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes,¹¹ And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.¹² And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be

surely put to death:¹³ There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.¹⁴ And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.¹⁵ And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives.

We can learn from these verses that we should sanctify ourselves, be prudent, be focused and wait before we encounter God and receive God's intervention during the pandemic. Let us prepare ourselves before we encounter God during every Sunday Service, receive God's presence, understand His words and experience His power.



The coronavirus in South Africa

Since the first case of coronavirus was confirmed on 5/3 in Kwazulu Natal Province in South Africa (where Durban is located) and a 21-day lockdown of the whole country announced on 26/3,

COVID-19 STATISTICS IN SA

				
257 541	7220	2746	138	437
TESTS CONDUCTED	POSITIVE CASES IDENTIFIED	RECOVERIES	DEATHS	NEW CASES

MONDAY
04
MAY
2020



Durban

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which was extended for 14 days afterwards, only essential businesses have kept operating. People can only stay at home except for shopping for groceries and seeing the doctor. During the lockdown, many people could not afford food as they had lost their jobs. Much grievances were thus aroused. Although the Government and non-for-profit organizations continually raised funds to supply food and pandemic prevention packages to the people, there was still room for improvement. Since the lockdown has been effective in slowing down the spread of virus, it has to be continued. As the economy has plummeted, people livelihood was adversely affected. In addition, as winter started, people are in need of resources. As such, the Government has lowered the level of lockdown from level 5 to level 4 since 1/5. Apart from essential

businesses, many businesses with lower risk of spreading the virus were allowed to provide limited services. Nevertheless, with the increase in the number of coronavirus tests, the number of confirmed cases is also on the rise. As of 4/5, there were 7,220 confirmed cases and 138 deaths, and the death rate being 1.91%. Although the number of confirmed cases in our province ranked the third in the country, there were only 1,106 confirmed cases and 35 deaths. However, the death rate reaches 3.16%, which is 1.65 times of the country's death rate and the highest rate in the country. In Kwazulu Natal, two private hospitals and one public hospital were closed due to confirmed cases. Recently, there was severe explosion of cases in the public hospital. A total of 9 mothers, 2 infants, 4 doctors and 1 nurse were confirmed of being infected. A hospital with 219 patients was instantly closed and turned to a quarantine facility. (note: there is no standard calculation of death rate yet)

It is not appropriate to lower the level of lockdown to level 4 in Kwazulu Natal. However, the Government had to do the same because of economic pressure. Moreover, as the restrictions are too stringent under level 4, the Government has to face many lawsuits, namely from the British American Tobacco plc company. The Government had initially allowed the sale of tobacco during the level 4 lockdown, but it changed the decision later and forbid the sale. The Government's measure had aroused grievances from many people. In addition, Tebeila Research Institute also sued the Elementary Education Department, trying to stop the Department from allowing students to be back to school phase by phase starting from May. The Institute thought that the Government should not let students to be back to school while keeping their parents at home for fear of the spread of disease.

In addition, many celebrities wrote a petition to the President Cyril Ramaphosa.... May God grant the President Cyril Ramaphosa wisdom to handle the many-facet problems of South Africa.



Afterwards, some people spread videos about Africans being tortured in China on Twitter and had aroused discontent against Chinese. They even initiated attacks on Chinese on 30/4, which aroused panic among Chinese. Thanks be to God! As the President mobilized more than 70,000 military force to keep law and order, assist in rescue and medical services, the anti-Chinese sentiments were kept under control and no major incidents occurred. In early May, during the level 4 lockdown, the people all wore masks in public spaces and they were no longer hostile toward Chinese. The factories, restaurants and stores run by Chinese resumed service. The employers not only made arrangements for resuming work, they also prepared pandemic prevention gear for their employees. They also had to arrange for disinfection of the factories, restaurants and stores, which involved a great amount of tedious work. For the sake of resuming work to make money, employees had to face such pressure.

The situation of Chinese in South Africa

As most Chinese in South Africa engage in trade between China and South Africa, they kept themselves posted of the severity of pandemic in China. Before South Africa was affected, the Chinese had already bought enough face masks and wear masks whenever they go outside.

In early February, Peter, the new member of the guitar class, said that once he wore a face mask to a clinic to see the doctor, everyone there was scared to death. At that time, the local people still rejected wearing masks and many of them were skeptical about Chinese for fear that they may be virus-carriers. Fortunately, the first confirmed case on 5/3 was not Chinese, and the Chinese were relieved.

The situation of the church

The church planned to produce a large quantity of pamphlets of 2020 year plan to be distributed together with the Chinese Today monthly with an aim of preparing people to join different activities of the church, including the guitar class, the Youth Band, the table-tennis event and the Gospel Camp. However, the plan has to be changed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The congregation of the church were already concerned about the pandemic before the virus spread to South Africa. Who returned from China? Did they perform self-quarantine? Is there any confirmed case in South Africa? Is there any suspicious case

in Kwazulu Natal? They also expressed views about gatherings of the church, requesting that the church should provide masks and disinfectant, etc. Since a suspicious case occurred in the Kwazulu Natal on 7/2, the church has been suspended until 1/3.

However, the congregation were frightened as one of the sisters did not carry out self-quarantine after she had come from abroad. In addition, the first confirmed case occurred in Kwazulu Natal on 5/3. Hence, the Sunday Service has been recorded and broadcast online since then.



Since the real Sunday Service was suspended, Barnabas turned the little room into a studio. The hymn dedication and sermon were recorded, and edited on computer and then broadcast. (you are welcomed to view

the recorded Sunday Service at : FaceBook: "Peace Chinese Christian Church", or click the following link

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1_OQ_gEm6fW_WB3GnHgliC1BB614n0d1O)

Since Peggy came back from Hong Kong on 6/2, she carried out self-quarantined for 14 days. Barnabas served Peggy with three meals so that she could self-quarantine in a room. Since 8/3, Peggy has been the only pianist and she has to practise for two hours every day. She was nervous when recording the hymn dedication and she had to record for many times. Thanks be to

God! Deacon Jia-wei volunteered to record hymn dedication on Youtube. Then Deacon Kenny also followed suit on 3/5. In this regard, Peggy's pressure was relieved.

Nevertheless, diligent Peggy still performed "cupping" therapy on our neighbour Mr and Mrs Casper and also taught them to do so. The equipping for "cupping" therapy was transferred back and forth. Later, the massage bed was also lent to them.

Moreover, Peggy also performed therapy on Mr and Mrs Shang to treat their frozen shoulder and lumbago until they resumed work this week.

In addition, the domestic helper could not go out to work and the gardening service did not provide service due to the lockdown, we had to do the work ourselves. And it is also a chance for us to exercise to stay healthy. Barnabas was responsible to clean the hall and the garden, and Peggy did the rest. The experience let us understand that how much we need the them!

Short-term mission in South Africa

The short-term mission trip to South Africa originally scheduled on 1/4-17/4 has been postponed to 18/12/2020-2/1/2021, and the Gospel Camp (originally scheduled on 3/4-5/4) was also rescheduled for 25-27/12. Thanks be to God! The Church of Christ in China Morrison Church was enthusiastic about the Gospel, and three more members joined the trip. A 12-people short-term mission team will be led by Rev. Kwan, and altogether they will lead the Gospel Camp and the Christmas Gathering. However, we once had difficulty in finding the venue for the events due to

Christmas holidays. But thanks be to God! He had prepared a venue named Glenhaven, where no short-term mission teams had visited before. Please pray for the preparations of the short-term mission trip, and that God may use the team and the Gospel Camp to preach the Gospel to more people!

As the short-term mission trip has been rescheduled, the Bible Study Camp originally planned during Christmas has also been cancelled. We now plan to organize the next short-term mission trip during 26/3-10/4 next year. The participants will lead the Gospel Camp and Easter activities. Please reserve the time if you are interested to join the trip.

Peggy's sharing

“1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them. 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.5 While the bridegroom tarried,...8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.... 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” (Matthew 25:1-13)

The pandemic is very severe all over the world and the life of

mankind has undergone great changes. In particular, religious activities have changed a lot. Worshipping God and caring for the congregation has posed a great challenge to church leaders (including missionaries).

When I returned to Durban in early February, I went through a 14-day quarantine. The congregation was afraid of meeting me and some of them had not been meeting me since I returned. They were not only afraid of meeting me, but they were also afraid to get in touch with Barnabas. After three weeks of broadcasting recorded Sunday Service online, we resumed real Sunday Service on 1/3. The first case was confirmed immediately afterwards, hence the real Sunday Service was cancelled again. Since then, the parable of the ten virgins has been a constant reminder to me. Though I could not visit brothers and sisters (except for an emergency visit in mid-March), I tried to express my care for them over the phone. In fact, brothers and sisters have more time showing their care for one another on the WeChat, which has promoted closer relationships among the congregation.

Originally, I was arranged to be the pianist for two to three times a month. However, as every recorded Sunday Service required a pianist since March, I had to practise more diligently. The pastoral work during the lockdown is very abstract and unreal. It is very easy to be a clumsy virgin who is always in a state of "unpreparedness". Hence, we have to stay very vigilant.

When will the bridegroom appear? Will the lamp oil be enough? Am I really prepared to fight?

Prayer requests

1. As of 4/5, South Africa has accumulated 7,220 confirmed cases and 138 deaths! As the nation-wide 35-day lockdown was effective, the level of alert has been downgraded from level 5 to level 4 since early May, thus helping to revive the economy. Pray that God may guide people of South Africa to keep vigilant against the virus while resuming economic activities.
2. We still have to videotape and broadcast the Sunday Service online. Please pray for the patience and faith of the congregation. Barnabas introduced a song once a week for members of the Youth Band and the guitar class to practise playing the guitar and encouraged them to play through hymn dedication during the Sunday Service. However, Barnabas still could not help the members through interaction. Please pray that God may help them to keep up with practising.
3. Thanks be to God! Barnabas becomes familiarized with the skills of videotaping and broadcasting the Sunday Service online. Although there was no real Sunday Service, the delivery of sermons continued every week, with the recent sermons covering the Ten Commandments of the Exodus. It is getting more difficult to deliver future sermons. Please pray that God may grant me wisdom.
4. During the nation-wide lockdown, we drove sister Bonnie to make food purchases (as she had no car) once a week. Bonnie's old mother died in Taiwan on 25/4 and she could not go there to say goodbye to her mother. Bonnie is very sad. Please pray that God may comfort her and help her go back to Taiwan as soon as possible.
5. Apart from treating Barnabas, Peggy also treated new neighbour Mr and Mrs Casper, Mr and Mrs Shang. Please pray for the recovery of the sick, and God may bless Peggy's work.
6. Please pray that God may grant President Cyril Ramaphosa to face and solve the multi-facet problems of South Africa.



Peggy & Barnabas

Thank you for Praying!

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