



In this issue...

Focussing on FES Essentials - Discipleship as Mission

cover: Central SELAH (more on page 4 & 6)



¹⁸He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.
¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
²⁸Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present
everyone mature in Christ. (Colossians 1:18-20, 28)



Jesus Christ is the preeminent one, the alpha and omega. In our current pandemic-dominated life, we must once again remind each other the true ruler of our world.

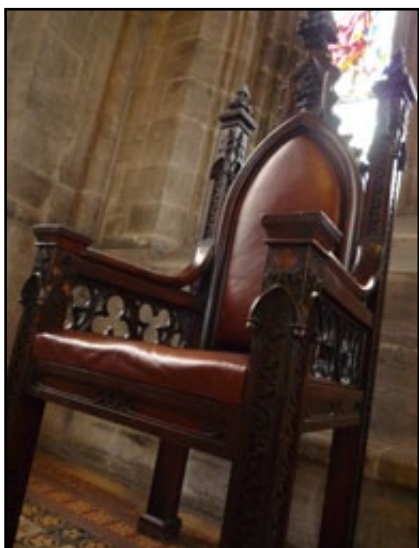
The Starting Point of Discipleship is Christ

In the ultimate reversal, sin along with death and evil were turned on its back. It came through the ultimate sacrifice of God himself in Christ. Our Lord, suffered for us and with us. God has deliberately rejected the way the world considers power and chose to work through solidarity with human weakness and suffering¹. God is reconciling the world to himself in a way that is as unexpected as his victory on the cross. It was a victory, not a defeat. (Col 2:12-14). This admittedly, is not something we can readily understand in a power-obsessed world, even if it is power to do good.

Christ is Redeeming Our Lives

In reconciling and redeeming the whole of creation, Christ is also redeeming each individual life. All followers of Jesus must surely bear semblance to the Saviour. Discipleship is in essence the maturing process in Christ (Col 1:28), growing to be Christ-like in our thoughts, words and deeds. As a tree is known by its fruit, so the disciples of Jesus will be known by the Fruit of the Spirit. In contrast to a world that emphasizes appearances, this is a call to examine the inner person. **Is the person on display the same as the person inside?**

It has been said that right believing produces right living. Yet we see that all kinds of sinful conduct and abuses of authority within the church community. All this is happening despite no lack of teaching, so **what seems to be missing?**



¹Vinoth Ramachandra, *Sarah's Laughter: Doubt, Tears, and Christian Hope*. (Langham Publishing, 2020) 44.

DISCIPLESHIP AS Mission

Christ Calls Us to Follow Him

Jesus calls us to follow him on the way of the cross. No one walks away from the cross alive. That is true even for our Lord. He calls his disciples to follow in his way but this call runs counter to every instinct that we have. To live in Christ, we must first die to self. To deny self is the readiness to embrace suffering and give up the right to rule over our own life. Paradoxically, in giving up of ourselves and becoming wholly his, we find ourselves more than ever.

Our early forefathers have shown us examples of such living. In response to the plagues of AD165 and AD250 across the Roman Empire, the church took extraordinary risks in taking care of the ill and burying the dead. They did not abandon those who were infected. Instead, they reached out and shared the little resources they had.

The church suffered accordingly and many died as a result of their kindness. Still the church was not only preserved, it grew and has continually demonstrated the same in the aftermath of every major disaster.

Discipleship is lived out not through attending sophisticated programmes but by acts of kindness and mercy shown to fellow human sufferers.

“The choices of the early disciples drew the world’s attention even if they did not intend to.



Implication for Discipleship Today

As disciples today, are we willing to participate in the sufferings of the world - to sit alongside our fellow human beings who are suffering, just as God himself did?

We need to enter the world of sufferings with compassion and to lament and plead before God. Perhaps then, we echo the words of Paul that in sufferings, the redemptive word of God may be fully known. (Col 1:24-27).

This is discipleship as mission.



**Yong
Yuong Eng**
Assistant
General
Secretary

Focussing On CENTRAL

SELAH & Discipleship

'What is Selah?' Selah is a Hebrew term used in the Psalms and in Habakkuk 3, possibly as a musical notation of "pause" or an instruction in the reading of the text to:



STOP



PAUSE



LISTEN or THINK ABOUT



Sadly, many of us today either have no time or the patience to sit in silence and solitude to meditate and listen even though it is an essential part in our growth as disciples of Christ.

This is what we have been encouraging students to do through Selah – to pause and think about what God has been doing and saying as they look back at their lives and that they may continue to find courage and hope as they walk in this journey of life. This is very much needed in our fast-paced world as we often do not have the time to stop and reflect on our experiences in light of Scripture.



Ruth Vinoth
Central Staff

How does this connect to discipleship?

Discipleship is about following our Lord Jesus Christ in both word and deed. It is about listening to what He is saying or revealing to us through His Word. This is where Selah comes in: It is where students intentionally set aside time to listen, that they might have a fresh encounter with their Lord as they reflect on their lives through the lens of Scripture and continue towards maturity as disciples. In this whole process, staff workers are privileged to journey alongside as we listen to them as they share the fruit of their reflection, pray with them and continuously point them to God.

With Covid cases drastically increasing this year, it was **challenging to plan** for our "Selah

at the Park" event. We are thankful that we managed to have our first session at the Bukit Jalil Recreational Park, but our second batch of students did not have the privilege of going to a park as the number of Covid cases had escalated. Instead of cancelling the entire programme, staff in the Selah team decided to modify the programme and conduct Selah online, over a period of 3 weeks, with smaller groups of students. We thank God that despite the challenges, it went well and many students appreciated having the time and space to pause and reflect.



At the end of the day, I am reminded that though the approach of Selah had to be modified, our God is still the same God and when we give space for Him to speak to us, He will indeed come and minister to His people no matter where we are, whether in a beautiful park or in our bedrooms.

Focussing On SARAWAK

Pemuridan dalam Pandemik



Dalam era digital, pemuridan merupakan satu cabaran untuk menjangkau generasi pelajar kini. Semasa pandemik, segalanya telah beralih kepada persekutuan di atas talian. Nampaknya norma baru ini merupakan satu cabaran yang besar dalam melakukan pemuridan. **Persekutuan di atas talian yang ramai** membuatkan apa sahaja acara ataupun aktiviti yang kita lakukan untuk kumpulan besar ini **sangat sukar untuk benar-benar fokus kepada pemuridan.**

Ini disebabkan oleh batasan waktu, liputan internet dan kesukaran membina hubungan yang erat dengan pelajar dalam kumpulan yang besar.

Dalam masa yang sama, cabaran yang kita hadapi dalam membentuk hubungan melalui alam digital ini memerlukan pengorbanan yang besar, baik dari segi masa mahupun tenaga, untuk kita benar-benar melakukan pemuridan secara satu dengan satu dalam alam maya.

Sungguhpun begitu, pemuridan satu dengan satu mungkin cara yang baik jika berbanding dengan dalam kumpulan yang besar pada era digital ini.

Mungkinkah ini salah satu hikmah di sebalik pandemik ini?

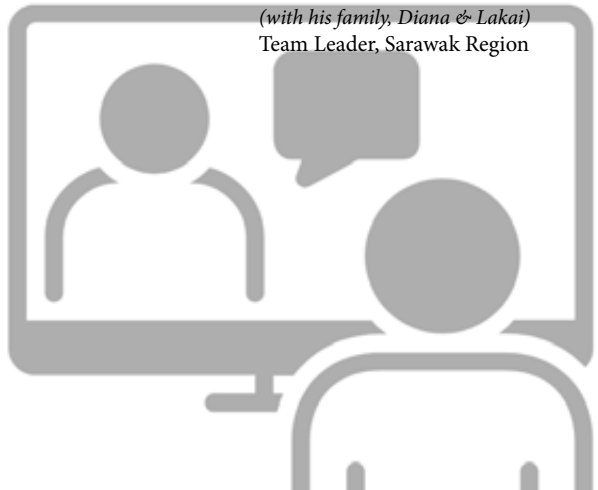
Bila berbicara tentang pemuridan, ertinya secara Alkitabiah dimulai oleh Tuhan Yesus Kristus sendiri yang mengundang manusia untuk mengikut Dia (Mat 4:19), dan dilanjutkan dengan perintah agar kita juga mengikut teladanNya, iaitu membuat murid (Mat. 28:19-20). Ini merupakan perintah ataupun amanat agung sebagai pengikut Kristus.

Pemuridan seharusnya kita lakukan hingga ke hari ini walaupun dalam situasi yang kita hadapi iaitu pandemik!



Peter Paris

(with his family, Diana & Lakai)
Team Leader, Sarawak Region



LET'S CELEBRATE!



SELAH @the park 17 April 2021 @online May 29, June 5 & 12

This retreat was much needed, even as one year on, we are still having on and off lockdowns. But the team had to grapple with decisions to cater to the changing situation from a physical one day retreat to going online. We are glad that the students who attended online sessions were surprised by their discoveries and reminders about God.

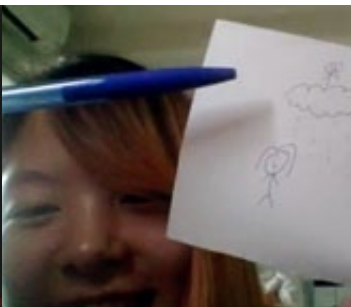
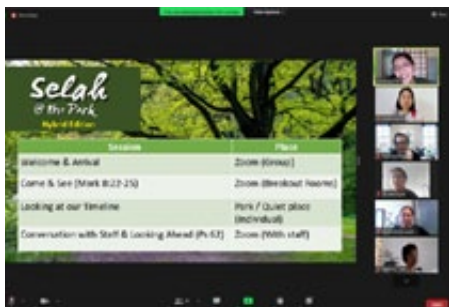


“

To trust and totally surrender.
Angeline (Sunway University)

Selah helped me to appreciate God's creation as I studied the Word, being in nature with God.
Joses (USCI graduate)

”



I didn't expect that such a short time of reflection & sharing could help me realise how good God is in my life.

Elsa (IACT College)

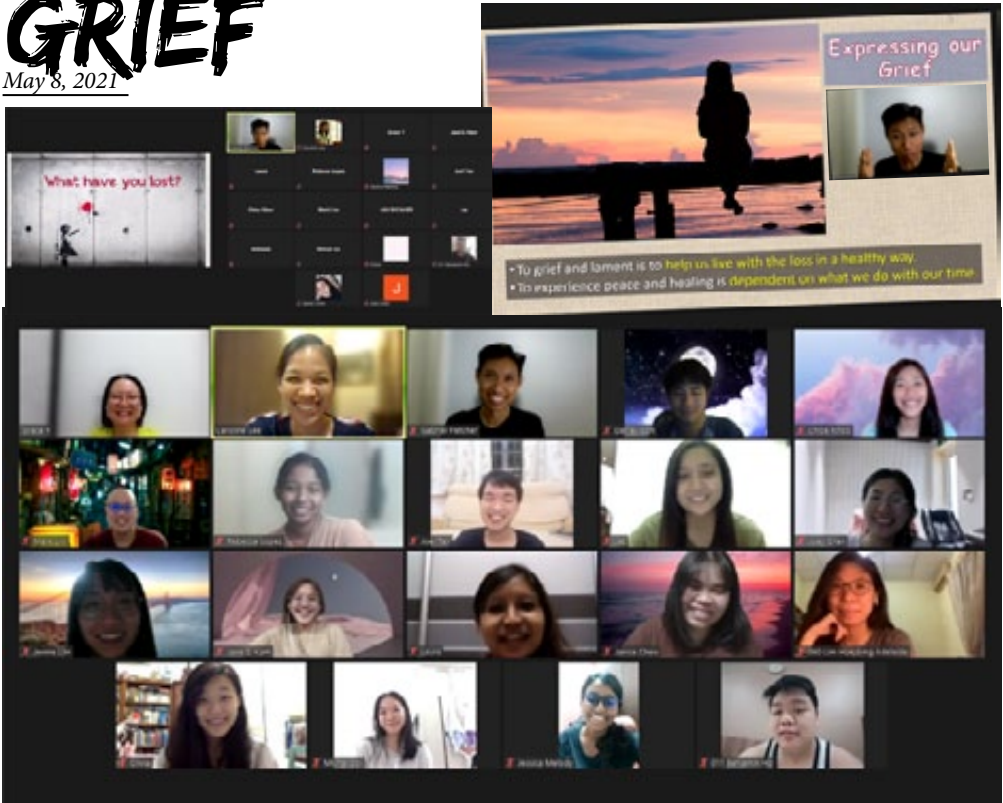
LET'S CELEBRATE!



MEETING GOD ⁱⁿ our GRIEF

May 8, 2021

Learning from **Prophet Jeremiah** how we can walk with God through our pain, brokenness and sorrow. Students from Penang, Kedah & Perlis logged in for this virtually.



The **CGK journal** is here to be your tool and guide.

DISCIPLESHP

If you are looking for a material to do with a friend or a small group of friends, do consider getting a copy of our CGK journal. It will be an insightful & reflective journey for you.

For more info check out:
<https://fes.org.my/resource/cgkjournals/>

Up Next

National

Tahan Lasak
Leadership
30 Oct & 13 Nov

Central

CGK (NT)
2, 9, 16 & 23 Oct

Selah
4 Dec

Focussing On **NORTH**

Discipleship Programmes during this pandemic?

I have always been impressed on how Jesus does discipleship. Unlike our usual teaching seminars or programmes on discipleship, Jesus did not organize such programmes.



**Gabriel
Fletcher**

with wife,
Karen | Northern staff

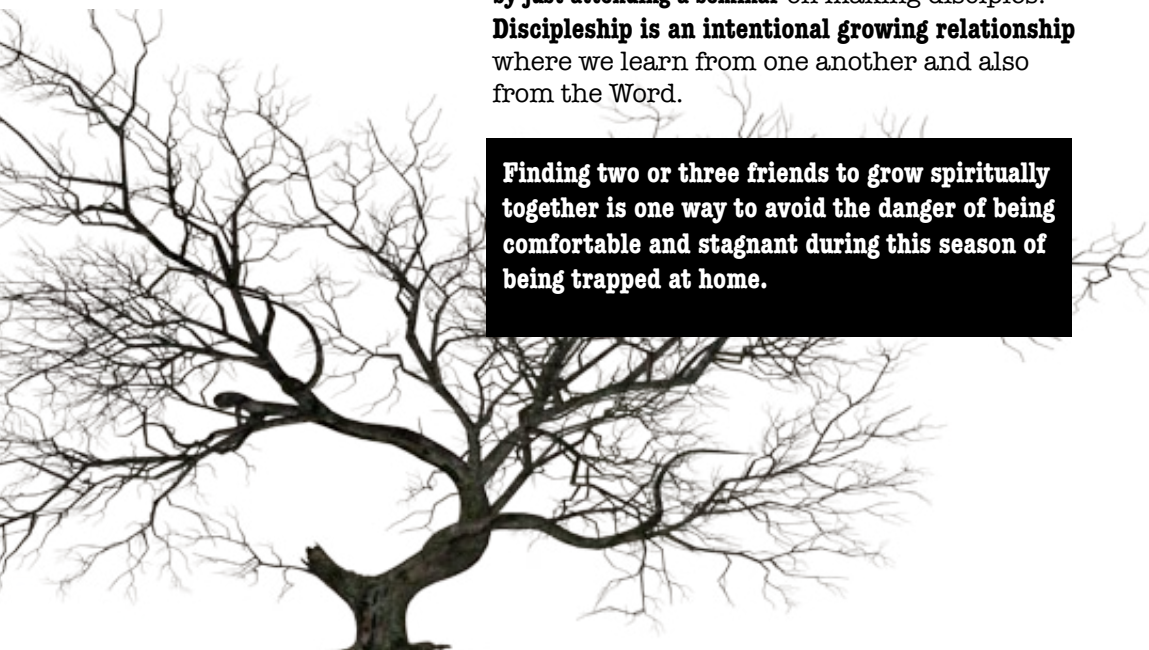
In the gospel accounts, **Jesus built intentional relationships with his disciples** and subsequently, his disciples went on to make other disciples and their numbers grew. **This is a slow and tedious process which goes against our culture of instant answers and change.** Nevertheless, we need to remember that discipleship is a lifelong process.

The pandemic restrictions may have limited our movements but it does not limit our growth as disciples of Christ. I am thankful that my church started a discipleship group (4 people in a group) early this year, where we can come together virtually or physically to share our struggles, learn from the Word, and pray for another.

I felt this season of pandemic has exposed the danger of how comfortable and stagnant I can be in my spiritual growth. Honestly, I enjoy the time alone doing my devotions but I also found myself lacking a certain genuine growth that only comes when I can honestly share my joy and struggles with a group of friends whom I can journey with.

Therefore, **discipleship cannot happen alone nor by just attending a seminar** on making disciples. **Discipleship is an intentional growing relationship** where we learn from one another and also from the Word.

Finding two or three friends to grow spiritually together is one way to avoid the danger of being comfortable and stagnant during this season of being trapped at home.



Focussing On SOUTH

DON'T let
your **BREAK**
from **SEMESTER**,

be a **BREAK** from
GROWING IN CHRIST.

In 2020, I began organising something I call holiday programmes.

Nothing cutting-edge or ground-breaking about it. Our camps (e.g. Camp Cameron) basically work on the same principle – a sustained discipleship programme during the “down” times of a uni. student’s life. So why holiday programmes?

One of the unexpected good that came out of the pandemic era was the unprecedented wide-spread use of online platforms for virtually everything including discipleship. Realising this, I decided in mid-2020 to take advantage of this trend by organising online programmes for CFs during their semester breaks. In pre-Covid times,

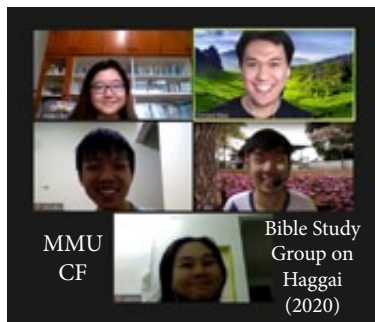
physical holiday programmes would have been unrealistic unless one is willing to stay back in campus during the long holidays (not many as you can imagine). **But since “online”**

is now the norm, holiday programmes do not sound so inconvenient. They do not cost much money (practically free for students actually) and no travelling is involved.

Among the programmes I have tried so far are Bible studies, a watch party, and a short course. I usually run them weekly for 2 to 4 weeks. Here is my experience...

- The truth is not many are willing to let go of their precious free time for a Bible study. But those who come, they do so willingly. So it is much easier to go deeper into Scriptures without encountering much resistance.

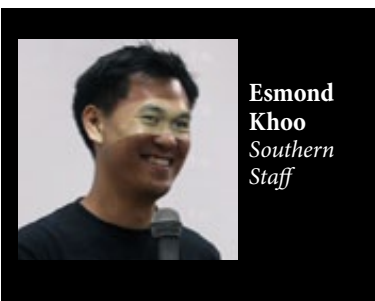
- I have also been able to get to know students quicker. This helped tremendously because there is no way I can build friendships with students virtually the way I could have physically.



CF activities during semester do not typically provide the space to sit and talk to individuals before and after meetings. After-CF mamak sessions have gone the way of the dinosaurs. So the holiday programmes are an added help towards fulfilling this function especially with students who themselves desire to grow in Christ.

Holidays programmes have played a crucial role during the pandemic for both the students and I. If the “everything online” trend continues well into the future in our post-Covid-19 world, this may be something I will keep doing to disciple students.

My hope? That they do not let their break from semester be a break from growing in Christ.





**Alakasia
Petrus** | Sabah Regional
Staff

1st June 2021

Sabah team is formed with Alakasia, a Sabahan, joining the team after completing her training in Central Region. She shares about some of the challenges faced by the students there.



Cabaran anak-anak muda Sabah

• Tidak Bersedia

Pengaruh golongan majoriti mahupun persekutaran sehingga beralih iman kerana cinta, duit, atau kenaikan pangkat.

• Konflik Tradisi

Kepelbagaian suku membawa kepada konflik sendiri apabila budaya bertembung dengan kepercayaan peribadi. Contohnya minum arak.

• Sekadar Aktiviti

Kehadiran di gereja merupakan aktiviti yang kurang membawa faedah berbanding bekerja. Contoh ini diteruskan oleh anak muda yang melihat ayah sebegini.

• Anak muda yang aktif dalam pelayanan gereja tetapi malu untuk berkongsi Firman Tuhan kepada keluarga mereka.

• Zon Selesa

Tidak perlu untuk membangun hubungan peribadi dengan Tuhan kerana merasakan diri sebagai golongan majoriti dan tidak menghadapi cabaran untuk mempertahankan iman. Keadaan zon selesa membuatkan ada yang tidak ingin mengambil tahu atau terlibat dalam isu semasa.

Pemuridan secara konsisten memerlukan keinginan & medium.

Saya mengalami cabaran iman apabila mendapat tentangan keluarga menghadiri denominasi gereja yang berlainan. Namun, setelah terpisah dari keluarga kerana melanjutkan pelajaran, saya banyak belajar ketika menghadiri ibadah yang diadakan di gereja berlainan mahupun ketika menghadiri persekutuan Kristian universiti. ***Saya melihat persekutuan Kristian di tempat saya belajar sebagai medium pertumbuhan rohani kerana dapat membincangkan pandangan-pandangan berlainan tentang pemahaman pembacaan Firman Tuhan.***

Saya sedar yang pengalaman ini membantu saya ingin **mencari sahabat baru di tempat kerja mahupun gereja untuk saling bertukar pendapat tentang prinsip dan hal yang menjadi prioriti semasa selain berbincang mengenai pemahaman Firman Tuhan.**

Ketika kembali ke kampung, saya mula mencari peluang untuk berkongsi tentang hal yang saya belajar. Biar pun pendapat tidak seiring, namun saya belajar untuk membuka fikiran dan melihat semua yang terjadi sebagai proses pembentukan kerana nilai yang saya pegang dan belajar ketika di universiti.

Pemuridan yang sengaja berlaku apabila ada keinginan untuk terus bertumbuh dan ada medium untuk dimuridkan. Saya percaya kelompok sel yang sihat menjadi komuniti yang menyokong pertumbuhan. Secara peribadi, saya mengalami pertumbuhan dalam iman apabila ada beberapa kawan bersama-sama berkongsi Firman Tuhan yang mereka baca.

TIMOR LESTE

Kernels of Wheat (K.O.W.)

Holding on to HOPE

Discipleship in Timor Leste can be misunderstood by people even though we try to explain that ultimately, we want them to know Jesus. In Timor, many young people who we encountered have a lot of brokenness within, mostly related to family.

Here are the challenges towards discipleship that we face...

1. Perception of the act of reading the Bible

Reading the Bible itself is perceived as one wanting to become a Protestant. It is common to hear “Only Protestants do this and their teaching is wrong”. Some families tell students that they can become crazy if they continue to read the Bible.

2. Perception within the family members

Some families find it hard to accept those who have decided to go to a Protestant church because they are expected to stick with the family’s religion.

Another reason behind this is once the student understands the WORD, they will not want to follow the culture’s tradition that goes against the Bible. This is seen as something bad by the family. Phrases like “If you enter another religion, you will no longer belong to the family” and “You will lose your Timorese identity if you follow Christ” are uttered to the students.

3. Perception regarding romantic relationships

Many students have fallen in this area and it is hard for them to forgive themselves. As such they don’t want to receive forgiveness, instead they condemn themselves and stay that way.

The above are usually the major challenges we face in discipleship. These are areas in which we seek to encourage our students to stand firm in their faith once they know and follow Christ.



*K.O.W. Team
in their Bible Study groups
(July 2021)*

at the **Moment**

3 ^{virtual} **WAYS TO PARTNER WITH US**

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