

FAR & NEAR

FIRST QUARTER 2021

OUR VISION

Christ's transforming presence in healthcare and the nation through Christ-centered medical professionals.

Chairman's Letter

I SEE THE LORD

Prophet Isaiah says he saw the Lord and goes on to describe the splendour of that experience and its life changing effect on him (Isaiah 6:1-8). When did he see the Lord? Strangely he connects it to a negative event – when king Uzziah died.

King Uzziah overall was a good king, powerful, godly and “did what was right in the sight of the Lord” (2 Kings 15:3). But his life ended tragically when power went to his head, and his heart was lifted up to his destruction. This must have been a big blow and disappointment to all Israel, and especially to Isaiah. If Isaiah had been pinning his hopes for the spiritual survival of Israel on Uzziah, rather than on God, then it is easy to see how disappointed and disillusioned he would have become. Uzziah's death seems to have triggered in Isaiah a spiritual crisis that made him more ready to lift up his gaze from the security of earth to heaven. As Selwyn Hughes puts it, how often we look up only when something happens that knocks us flat on our backs!

When he looked up what did he see? “I saw the Lord”, says Isaiah. He saw Him seated on the throne, in all His splendor and glory. Though the earthly throne of Uzziah is now empty, the heavenly throne is not unoccupied. What a hope this must have given to Isaiah!

We too need a fresh vision of God when we are surrounded by so much of negativity and news of seeming hopelessness and evil. Wise king Solomon after all his achievements and research had this to declare – “Meaningless, meaningless! All are utterly meaningless... under the sun”. To find meaning, one has to look 'above' the sun, to God. Then we too will realise, like Isaiah, that God is still on the throne.

All around us almost everything we considered stable are all shaking. The kingdoms of power, finance, health, knowledge ... are all shaking. This is a time when God wants us to look up and see that He is on the throne. High and exalted; holy and lifted up. All our problems fade in the light of His sufficiency.

Isaiah had a fresh vision of himself too. As a prophet, he could have thought of himself as a holy man, especially when others too consider him as a prophet. All these changed when he had vision of God.



I usually wear a white shirt daily for hospital work. Thanks to the hard water in our place, the white colour has gradually changed to off-white or even grey. But I continue to think I am wearing a white shirt. In these covid times I had started wearing a white coat over the shirt (at least for a psychological feeling of protection). Only when I saw the fresh new white coat over the old white shirt did I realize how dirty my white shirt looks! Only when we have a vision of God do we realise how unholy and unworthy we are.

When we acknowledge our unworthiness, powerlessness and sinfulness we too will realize like Isaiah that God is not only awesome in His power, glory and holiness, he is awesome in His mercy and grace too. That is our assurance and hope, for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever (Heb 13:8). The full reality of forgiveness comes only through the Lord Jesus Christ whose blood atones for our sin and takes our guilt away.

There is one last significant point about Isaiah's vision. At the very end of it, God himself speaks, and asks, "Who will go for me?" and Isaiah responds readily, "Here am I, send me". Whenever God offers people his mercy and forgiveness, he also calls them to serve Him. He does that by asking for volunteers.

If you have seen something of God's holiness and glory, if you have been touched by His grace, will you say to Him today, "Here am I Lord, send me"? To whom much is given, much will be required (Luke 12:48).

The choice is yours.

Susheel K. Tharien

Highlights from the Staff

ISSAC CHANDY: ASSOCIATE STAFF – BENGALURU

Chandy writes, "It was a rare privilege to tune in and listen to some segments of the 150th Anniversary celebrations of CMC, Vellore on the 5th Dec, remembering the innumerable ways in which the life and service of Dr Ida Scudder has been a blessing and continues to impact people and nations for the Kingdom of God. We as the staff of EMFI were further blessed by the insightful Bible Studies led by Dr Kuruvila Varkey from Matt 22:1-14 (Parable of the Wedding Banquet) and Mark 4:35-41 (Calm in the storm) held on the 8th and 18th of December. Yet another new initiative announced for our members, especially students and interns, to learn about "Spiritual Disciplines" from Dr KV in Jan. 2021 was welcomed by 4 of our fellowship members. At the Bengaluru fellowship, we have taken up the 5th series (Signs of John) of Bible studies. It has been a blessing to be part of the daily Morning Prayer, which was started last year by the AP-TS Team and now opened up for others to intercede for the nation and its great needs especially for those who do not have access to good and affordable healthcare. We bid farewell to Bibin Benoy, thanking God for his youthful and enthusiastic contribution in building up fellowships in many colleges across Karnataka over the past 4 years. Though we are all going to miss him in EMFI, we pray that God will bless and use him wherever the Lord takes him next."

GEORGE SUCHIANG: FIELD PARTNER – NORTHEAST OF INDIA

George was unable to meet students and graduates physically, he could connect well with many of the fellowships through the virtual platform. He could participate in the online fellowships of Assam Medical College, Barpeta Medical College and NEIGRIHMS. He could also visit a few doctors in their clinics and hospitals and spend time praying with them.

PRATIK SINDHU: FIELD PARTNER – MADHYA PRADESH & CHHATISGARH

Pratik could visit the fellowship at Jabalpur on a regular basis even in the midst of the pandemic. He could also be part of many fellowships through their online meetings. He also ministered to some of the students over phone calls counseling and encouraging them to grow in the Lord. Every Sunday there is a long online fellowship that is conducted and many fellowships in the state attend this meeting.

Most of our staff have not been able to travel due to the COVID scenario in the country but have been in touch with the students and doctors through phone calls, WhatsApp messages and also through video conferencing and encouraging them to walk closer to the Lord even in the midst of the challenging times that we face.

Family News

NEW ARRIVALS

Drs Vineet & Rubina – CMC Vellore were blessed with twin boys Benjamin & Nathaniel on 5th December

Drs Freddy & Vaishnavi (AKS, Lamtaput, Odisha) were blessed with a baby girl on 4th February

Drs Sony & Shiney (CFH, Oddanchatram) were blessed with a baby boy Jayden on 25th February

WEDDING BELLS

Dr Hanson wed Dr Jebyline on 18th January

Dr Berin wed Dr Kavinila on 12th February

EMFI National Conference

5th to 7th February 2021 on a Virtual Platform

For the first time since its inception, the EMFI National Conference was conducted on an Online platform via Zoom. Though we had apprehensions about the reach and way people will receive this, the response was overwhelmingly positive. We had over 600 people register for the conference and an average of 250 to 300 people attending the plenary sessions.

The theme for the conference was, **“Aligning with God for the Poor”** taken from Luke 4: 18, 19.

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord.”

Rev. CB Samuel and Rev. Dr. Samuel Sidhartha expounded on the Theme from the word of God, and these sessions were interspersed with Breakout sessions on various topics that were dealt with by various resource people. We also had an early morning devotion time at 6.30am on all the days of the conference led by Dr Lankham.

There was a total of 32 topics covered in the breakout sessions under 8 major headings:

- Christian Life, witness & Ministry
- Choices
- Victorious Life
- Missions
- Ethics
- Parenting & Marriage
- Poverty & the Christian Response
- Dental Workshop

Since the breakout sessions were conducted over the virtual platform, the participants were able to have a good time of interaction with the resource person at the end of the session when they could have their questions and doubts clarified.

Many doctors and students helped in conducting, hosting and moderating the various sessions of the conference. We would like to thank everyone who offered their time and volunteered to take up responsibilities in conducting the conference. We couldn't have done it without your help and support.

We hope and pray that those who attended the conference are able to live out what they have learnt through the various sessions.

Some of the Videos of the sessions at the conference have been uploaded on our website and you can view them by clicking the link: <https://emfi.in/videos>



Opportunities

THE LEPROSY MISSION TRUST OF INDIA

Is looking for Specialists and Medical Doctors at various locations:

Specialist Doctors:

Dermatologist needed at:

Uttar Pradesh (Barabanki, Faizabad and Naini), Maharashtra (Kothara), Bihar (Muzaffarpur), West Bengal (Purulia)

Gynaecologist need at:

Uttar Pradesh (Faizabad), Chhattisgarh (Champa)

Ophthalmologist needed at:

Uttar Pradesh (Naini/ Allahabad), Bihar (Muzaffarpur), Chhattisgarh (Chandkhuri)

General Medicine needed at:

West Bengal (Purulia), Andhra Pradesh (Salur), Delhi (Shahdara), Tamilnadu (Vadathorasalur)

Orthopaedic Surgeon needed at:

Bihar (Muzaffarpur)

Medical Officers needed at:

Uttar Pradesh (Barabanki and Naini), Chhattisgarh (Champa and Chandkhuri), West Bengal (Kolkata and Purulia), Bihar (Muzaffarpur)

Please send in your updated resume to jobs@leprosymission.in mentioning your current and expected salary. In subject line please mention "Application for the post of Specialist Doctor / Medical Officer"

Junior Doctors Arise

A Time to 'go into the missions'

Dear ones who have finished internship,

We are going through the worst crisis that we have ever seen. The country is overwhelmed. Beds are full, drugs are in short supply and there is a sickening lack of oxygen.

The situation in North India, especially in rural hospitals is very bad. The staff are overworked. For fifty COVID beds, there is but one physician on duty round the clock all the days.

The nurses and doctors are exhausted but carrying on as there are no alternatives

Dear ones, with the NEET, postponed, can we please consider going to these missions in the North at least for the time period of this crisis.

Can we look at this time of postponement as an opportunity to help and take that tough but beautiful decision? It may be costly but of immense value to the suffering.

Of all the healthcare people in the country the batch of interns who have just finished, you know COVID care so much more than many others. You have been at that first interface with patients. The missions look to your valuable experience.

Please contact any of us in EMFI if you would like help in finding a place to go.

'If not now, when?'

Sam Sidharth for the EMFI team

Outreach Visit

In the first weekend of March, 5 students from Vellore Medical college along with Dr. Elliot's family and I, had the opportunity to visit the Samaritan Medical Aid and research trust located at Kamagiri, a remote village in Dharmapuri district. It is headed by Dr. Jeyachandran (a retired Pediatric surgeon). The trip was a blessing and made possible with some senior graduates undertaking to cover the entire travel cost. The visit was an eye opener to the students in many ways as expressed in their feedback. Future camps could be planned here as the place can accommodate up to 20 people. Drs. Pari and Shobana could take a day off to spend time with the students on the hills. Dr. Jeyachandran as usual was very down to earth on how to exercise our Christian faith in the student period and at the workplace. And he also stressed the importance of sharing one another's burdens. The place in itself is a demonstration of the love of Christ for His children.

Some Feedback from the students who attended:

"...I really enjoyed spending the two days with everyone, the experiences shared by Dr Jeyachandran, Dr Paari, the local people, the lives of the FMPB missionaries, the time of travel in the car, the morning trek and many more. I didn't expect the hospital to be able to accommodate us so well, and the food made me feel like I was at home. We got to hear Dr. Jeyachandran's experience and his life - one thing that stuck with me was how he didn't want to take any pride in anything that he had accomplished but attributed everything to God and His mercy. To seek first the kingdom of God. (and all these things will be added to you)."

"...It was much beyond anything I had thought it would be. Everything pointed me back to one Person: Jesus. The beautiful sunrises, star studded night sky, the wild and exotic plants all reminded me of God's amazing creativity. Seeing how each volunteer worked with so much diligence and joy was really beautiful and humbling to see. I also learnt so much from Jeyachandran Sir, who in each sharing and discussion, gently pointed me again and again to the Person of Christ. That God can use so many people from different faiths (who may be much more Christ-like than the 'christian' me) and backgrounds to inspire and draw us closer to Him."

Some of the Learnings from the trip:

To have a heart for the oppressed and the poor.

To be sincere in the things God has laid on my plate -with the work God has given to me.

To be faithful to God above everything else.

Herald Adelaide



Reflections from the General Secretary

THE RISEN LORD IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES

We celebrated the resurrection of our Lord a few weeks ago. As usual our hearts were filled with joy and hope at the glorious victory of our Lord over death and sin bringing us forgiveness and eternal life. Our hearts were strengthened to live this life on earth and face the difficulties that arise with renewed hope.

But when we stepped out of Church, we had to go back into the pandemic that rages around us with renewed vigor. Many of us are in the forefront of patient care and so many of us have tested positive. Some of us have lost very dear ones. We hear news about our brothers and sisters in missions struggling, tired and emotionally drained. We hear about the lack of oxygen, vaccines and Remdesivir and no beds. For many of these stories of suffering that are reported, there are unnumbered stories of untold misery and death.

Upon this pandemonium has landed the paradoxical practice of massive gatherings for the elections and religious festivals driven by authorities who themselves are under forces which control them. We cannot risk extended total lockdowns in view of the economy. Rules and laws bringing divisiveness and hatred have descended upon us. Minorities are feeling increasingly unsafe and the Church is being persecuted in many places. The poor and the needy are bracing for another season of misery.

How do we encounter the risen Lord among us in this situation? What encouragement shall we take from 'the cloud of witnesses' who have gone on before?

In a short time after the resurrection 'a great persecution arose against the Church...and they were all scattered' (Acts 8:1). Stephen was martyred followed by James and it would go on to families facing the lions and the stake in the Roman Arena. A great famine throughout the world was prophesied by the prophet Agabus and this also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar as in Acts 11:28.

The resurrection did not mean a disappearance of the suffering of people on a large scale. It did not mean an end to persecution of the Lord's people.

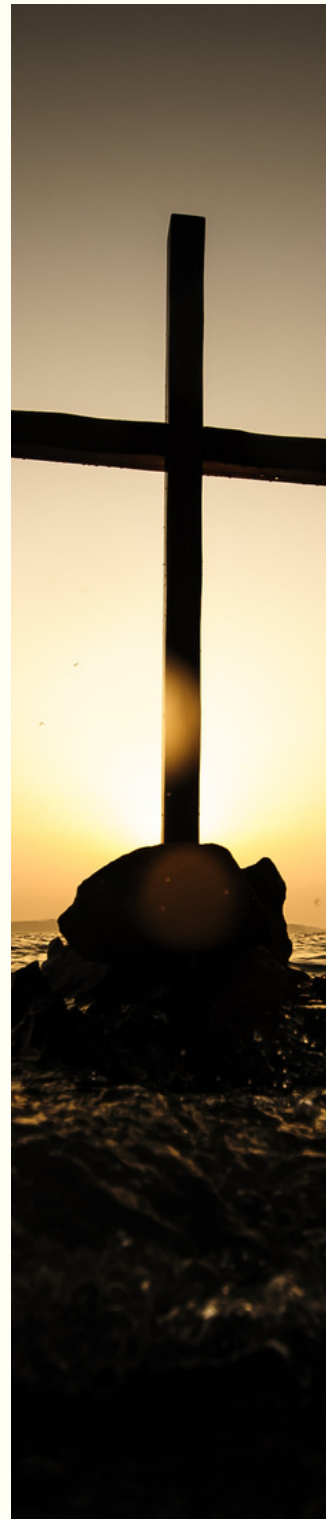
How did the disciples respond in this situation? What wisdom can we gain from our brothers and sisters of the early Church who appeared to be carrying on their lives amidst various crises, in the light of our Lord's resurrection?

Fellowship:

They came together in fellowship. They were advised to not forsake meeting together as some did. They continued to meet together openly at first and secretly during times of persecution. In spite of 'Zoom fatigue' let us continue the meaningful fellowship of the Church and our fellowship groups like the apostles who continued to do this amidst difficulties. Let us meet on the online meetings with a fresh perspective on these meetings, exhorting ourselves to a fuller participation with our hearts and minds. Let our jaded fellowship time glow with this gladness and let us find new meaning in the meeting together with the Risen Lord in our midst. Here we are asked to 'comfort each other and edify each other' (1Thess 5:11)

Going on with our work:

Just like us there may have been many questions raised to the disciples. But amidst these questions which they have answered in the epistles they went on with their work. They advised others not to be idle but 'to work with their hands'. Our Lord likes us to be good workers. Let us be found so when he comes suddenly. Whatever is given in our hands let us do with the best of our ability unto Him. Let us work the full hours allotted to us with diligence and sincerity of purpose. Let us not give in to paralyzing uncertainty which leads us to find comfort in the arms of sloth or the deceptive darkness of skepticism, nihilism or relativism.



The opportunity to share with the poor:

Some of us are blessed with a regular income, pandemic or not. Starting with John the Baptist we are asked to share radically from what we have. The early Church of the risen Lord exhorted its members not to forget the poor. The apostle Paul undertook upon himself to raise funds for the impoverished Church in Jerusalem. Let us then find in this pandemic the heart to reorder priorities and give to the poor, to the Churches and missions. Let us offer prayers, share words of comfort and send aid to our brothers and sisters in our medical missions. Let us share some part of our lives with them by undertaking to go there for a short time to help, as many are in dire need of doctors. If the Lord lays it upon our heart let us offer ourselves to be missionaries to bring access to healthcare where there is poverty and offer the good news of eternal health.

The opportunity to share the message of forgiveness and eternal life:

‘Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word’ (Acts 8:4). We too may experience a ‘scattering’ of our lives from its usual and comfortable routine. Amidst this, let us find like the apostles, an opportunity to share the glorious news of forgiveness and eternal life in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is said that many came to the Lord by the sharing of the gospel by believers, with people whom they met in day-to-day life. Let us recognize in this pandemic, the opportunity to speak with humility and joy, the gospel of grace.

And the risen Lord will meet with us:

The outpouring and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the promise of the risen Lord. He is the unending presence within us at all times. He is the Spirit of Christ. To Him we can withdraw frequently during the day and night to find comfort and strength. It was so with the apostles amidst famine and sword, and it can be so for us too.

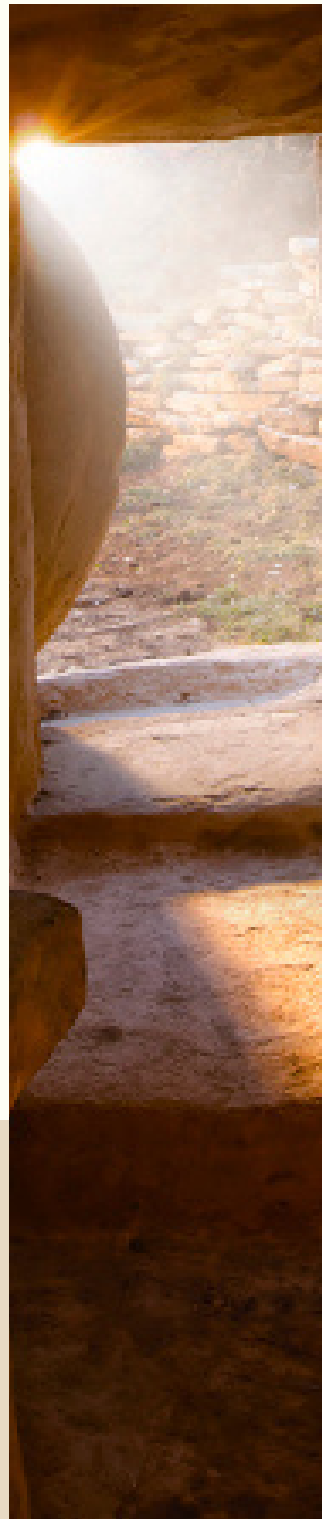
The Lord not only offered comfort but worked in them, through them and with them. Many were added to the Body of the believers. Signs and wonders were the norm and will be the norm if we will be open. Let us be open to His working among us. He will meet with us in wonderful ways as it is usual for Him to do. Only let us allow Him to do it His way, through His methods and in His time. Let us go forth with the truth that the Risen Lord is among us.

Our Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!

Samuel Sidhartha

Financial Update

MONTH	INCOME	EXPENSE
DECEMBER	1075192	849310
JANUARY	640360	727681
FEBRUARY	921401	759220
MARCH	694295	843074



Treasurer's Note

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Our Treasurer Dr Sukumar's family members have been affected with the COVID and are recovering. So I undertake to write on his behalf. He has been an encouragement to all of us.

By the mercies of our Lord, we were able to finish the financial year well. All salaries were paid and there were no major liabilities. Thank you very much for your sacrificial participation in the work of EMFI. We hope and pray that the Lord bless all of his with the presence and power of His Holy Spirit in this very trying time that we and the people of our country are going through.

We are blessed with a 'Finance Team' which meets periodically and reviews the finances and recommends measures to the executive committee. This has made decision-making participatory and enjoyable.

In the coming months with most students studying from home and with restrictions on the increase, it was felt that staff will work on online platforms to be in touch with students in Bible studies and personal encouragement. Though we all miss the wholesome benefits of meeting in person, the Zoom meeting has expanded the reach and the ease of meeting across distances.

We have planned to upgrade communication and effectiveness including computers for the office and a couple of laptop and fiber-based internet connections for some field staff members.

The Lord who has sustained us and kept us useful in the first wave of the pandemic will help all of our staff, graduates, and students through whatever is in store this year.

All glory be to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Samuel Sidhartha

Those wishing to contribute can send your cheques/DDs/MOs in favour of:

'Evangelical Medical Fellowship of India' to the address given below or make an electronic/Bank transfer to:

State Bank of India

Current A/c No: 35465591006

(Branch Code: 2288, IFSC: SBIN0002288)

HDFC Bank

Savings A/c No: 04921000009885

(Branch Code: 492, IFSC: HDFC0000492)

You can also make direct **online payment** by visiting our website www.emfi.in and clicking on the DONATE NOW button, or **click the link::**
<https://www.payumoney.com/webfronts/#/index/EMFIIndia>

*EMFI is charged a 2.5% service charge for every transaction

Please call/Text/Email us after you make the transaction.
09176215489/90, emfihq@gmail.com

Please note that we are not allowed to receive contributions from people who hold a foreign passport

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