



A GATHERING PLACE  
FOR SHORT-TERM MISSION ARTICLES,  
RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

## **God's Work Goes on During Pandemic**

*By Isabel Lee, Minister of Global Outreach and Women's Ministries, Chinese Bible Church of Maryland (CBCM), U.S. and International Board of Directors of SEND International, SOE Board of Directors*

Cancelled. Closed. Locked Down. Restricted. Unprecedented. These are words we have heard or used often since March due to COVID-19. Does it cross your mind His work might also be locked down because no missions teams can be sent out? Or do you think there is something GREAT, EXCITING, or EXTRAORDINARY He is doing beyond our imagination? Since we no longer can handle life and ministry like business as usual, I believe God wants to stretch our creativity, to collaborate with others, to think outside of the box and to mobilize the church to be involved in missions ministry in this unique time!

Soon after Maryland Governor announced new protocols and restrictions in response to the worsening coronavirus pandemic in mid-March, I contacted local ministries that work with refugees to see if our church can be of any help. Three weeks later, I found out there would be meal distribution to refugees twice a week. I immediately signed up a block of five people, later on nine people out of a total of ten needed, encouraged my Adult Sunday School class, then announced to the church to participate. It is an exciting joint effort from our different congregations, ages, and languages working together. From mid-April to the end of June, we mobilized 48 people from our church over 19 days to distribute 9,350 meals provided by International Refugee Committee to refugees.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I constantly think of and pray for our supported missionaries. Therefore, in April I contacted them and set up Zoom calls to check in with them. I called it "CBCM Global Family Connections." On the two calls, we gathered:

- 23 households (32 global workers)
- 20 missions agencies/organizations represented
- 27 ministries represented
- 19 countries/U.S. States represented

What a blessing and delight to hear them share about: (1) How COVID-19 affects them, their families, and ministries; (2) open doors in spite of limited face-to-face contacts; (3) their financial needs due to the pandemic; and (4) their prayer requests.

In mid-May as I was praying, I felt there is more the Lord wants our church to do (this time with folks overseas). After contacting a few groups/missionaries, a missions organization responded. This group is the biggest sending network from East Asia and has workers scattered in 20+ countries. These young global workers have the heart but are not as well prepared. Normally we send teams out to do evangelism-related ministries, but God laid on my heart this summer to help and equip workers who are already on the fields in challenging/restricted countries so they can be more effective in doing the work out there.

Due to COVID-19, all of our 7 missions trips in 2020 were cancelled; YET, God opens doors for CBCM to engage in VIRTUAL Missions Ministries. Ten days after two informational and interest meetings, CBCM launched a ministry to serve Galilee's global workers and their families in 9 Middle East and South East Asia countries and 6 time zones. We teach English, Bible verses, lead songs and discussions about life, help adults share their testimonies, have daily conversations, and prepare a Bible study and message in English. With 24 volunteers including 6 teens, we teach 22 children and 15 adults in 20 families around the world!

Now we are into our third month of ministry in September. We have had 32 CBCM'ers participate including the senior pastor, 2 elders, 2 elder wives, 1 minister, 8 teens, 2 college students and folks from the English and Mandarin congregations. Most teachers for adults stay on. CBCM pays for the monthly Zoom Pro subscription for those who teach. We teach twice a week for one hour each time. Participants must commit to teach for an entire month. The youngest teacher is a rising 6th grader who team-taught with her mom for two months.

We are doing more than just teaching English. We are pouring into these global workers' lives and even teaching Bible to their children. We are becoming friends, informal counselors, and mentors.

We also started a connection between our teens and teens in Indonesia through our supported missionaries to teach them English through Bible stories. According to our missionaries +/- 80% of the Indonesian church youth eventually left their faith and married Muslims. This opportunity helps the Indonesian youth to know the Bible better as well as practice their English.

So far, during this pandemic God allows us to be "in" 10 countries and 7 time zones every week! God is amazing, and I am thrilled beyond words that with God's help we are able to mobilize our church to bless and to impact many lives.

I hope the experience of our church inspires you for how you and your church can continue sharing the gospel around the world even when travel isn't possible.

**Bio:**

Isabel graduated from Washington Bible College and Columbia International University in Bible and missions.

She served with SEND International for 22 1/2 years involved in church planting: evangelism, disciple-making, mentoring, seminary teaching, leadership training in Taiwan & in China. She also served in various leadership roles throughout the years, ministered in Ukraine, Ulan Ude, Korea, Egypt, India, Uganda, Thailand in evangelism and leadership training. She has served among the Afghans and Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Macedonia, Clarkston, GA, Riverdale, Maryland. In recent years, she has been to United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Turkey, Qatar to learn about God's work among the Muslims.

Currently Isabel is the Minister of Global Outreach & Women's Ministries at Chinese Bible Church of Maryland. She plans, coordinates missions Sundays, mentoring and plan missions trips training. She is a regular Perspectives' instructor, and serves on the U.S. and International Boards of SEND International and the Board of Standards of Excellence on Short-term Missions.