

Retaining the Next Generation of Christians The Protestant Church in Sabah (PCS) Support for Pre-Schools

The Protestant Church in Sabah (PCS) is a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF – a global communion of Lutheran churches). It is also a member of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Malaysia and Singapore (FELCMS) together with the Lutheran Church in Singapore



(LCS), Lutheran Church in Malaysia (LCM), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia (ELCM) and Basel Christian Church of Malaysia (BCCM).

The church was started by German missionaries in Kudat (near the tip of Borneo). It was established in 1966 and registered with the Sabah government in 1967. PCS has a current membership of 32,000 baptized members in 322 congregations, making it the second largest of the four Lutheran churches in the country. PCS' membership is primarily made up of the indigenous people of the different tribes from the rural interior of Sabah, such as the Rungus, Tobonuvo, Kimaragang, Garo and others.



Majority of its members are illiterate and unskilled so unable to seek good employment in towns and cities. Families live in simple lodging and depend on the jungle for food or from simple cultivation for their own consumption and subsistence.

The church sees the need of education and had started pre-schools to help the children of its members to learn at an early age. However, with limited resources, most of these pre-schools were forced to shut down.

There are many challenges facing PCS's members because with the lack of Christian pre-schools within their reach, many of PCS's members had no choice but to send their children to non-Christian schools. However, they were dismayed when their children came back influenced by the school's religious teachings and practices. They had appealed to the church to restart the pre-schools and are prepared to send their children in order to prevent the church from losing its next generation of Christians to another faith.

PCS is making efforts to restart as many preschools as possible with the most basic of facilities that are within their means – using the church premise, having only one teacher and assistant to cater for the many children from its members and community.

The situations and needs were shared during the mission consultation of FELCMS. Though all churches in Sabah with rural ministry are also facing the same challenges, PCS, with mainly indigenous members, is in much dire need than the others. The maintenance of a pre-school is about S\$2,800 per annum.

In view of the above, LCS had made an appeal to its congregations to support 10 pre-schools in PCS for a period of three years from 2018-2020 -- S\$2,800 x 10 x 3 years. Some congregations had made pledges, but the full support has yet to come in.

We pray that God would touch the hearts of the pastors, mission committees and members of every LCS' congregations and pre-schools to give generously toward this important mission that is in critical need.

