



感恩与代祷 Praise & Prayer

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Helping widows and orphans is an act of Worship

By Rev. James Lai

Since 1952, CNEC has established 170 Churches, 28 Church Schools, 19 Student Centers, 15 Orphanages and Children Homes, and 7 Theological Seminaries in the region of South East Asia within the span of 60 years. Nearly 5,000 poor children and orphans have benefited through the mentioned ministries. Our Ministry is an all-rounded approach that meets the full needs of a man holistically - through his body, his soul, and his spirit.

Hence, we focus on providing aid to the poor children in the mountainous areas who are the second generation of the local people. The following factors represent the importance of this Second Generation Ministry and the urgency that we face as an entity.

Firstly, our ministry does not believe that every person should receive the same level of education, but rather, everyone should have the equal opportunity for a well-rounded education. Some children may not be suitable to attend certain university courses or learn at the same pace as others, but every student deserves at least an opportunity for a place in university.

Secondly, when poor children receive the opportunity to educate themselves, they can be empowered to break the cycle of poverty that they were born into. We believe that academic education for the next generation is a way to overcome poverty.

Thirdly, a child who is receiving education can bring hope to his/her family, community, people group and even to his/her nation by equipping him/her through education. Therefore, what we are doing in fact is helping the children create a better future for themselves.

Fourthly, helping widows and orphans is one of the important teachings in the Bible. God is merciful and He has great love towards the widows and orphans. We can read it in **Deuteronomy 10:18**, it says **"He defends the cause of the fatherless**

and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing." On the other hand, those who do not reach out to help the less fortunate will be reprimanded by God. In **Proverbs 21:13**, **"Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor will also cry out and not be answered."** Moreover, God dislikes those who exploit the poor and their misfortune. In **Zechariah 7:10**, it says, **"Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other."**

James 1:27 says: **"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."** Rev Stephen Tong has illustrated the above bible verse as such: "When a person is willing to serve God with purity of his heart, he is ready to be humble and to sacrifice himself. This is a process of being godly. A self sacrificing person is a person who is willing to aid others - to help the ones, who are weaker, provide assistance to the poor, and to love the ones who are forsaken by the society. A truly godly person is one who looks after the orphans and widows in distress." (Taken from Rev Stephen Tong's sermon notes)

Therefore, helping widows and orphans, as well as the poor children, is an act of worship. A holy Christian should do things which are righteous! Let's follow the footsteps of our Lord Jesus, and be "salt" and "light" in our community. We ought to willingly extend our help to the misfortunate children in the mountainous areas, with a gracious heart of serving and actions filled with love.

At present, there are nearly 900 of such children in need of sponsorship to receive education. Please pray for them.

If you wish to help them by contributing towards the sponsorship program, do let us know!



The Holistic Gospel

By Rev. Paul Chang

I thank God that I grew up in a Christian family with much blessing and grace. The salvation of the Lord first came upon my grandmother, through Mrs. Grace Mary Rowley, a missionary from California, USA. She accepted Christ, and since then so did my parents, followed by my siblings and myself - I am the third generation of Christians in the family. I am truly grateful to God as my parents were people who feared God and loved God. They served God and the people around them wholeheartedly for the entirety of their lives and I was much influenced. I was taught to live a Christian life of faith and to walk closely with God daily.

When I was 13 years old, I left my hometown at Teng-xian, Shandong province of China because the war had erupted. At 17, I was forced to leave my parents and siblings. I became a refugee with a stateless status, independent of any form of identification when I left for Hong Kong. I carried nothing but my parents' blessings and advice. They prayed for me and my father said, **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."** (Proverbs 3:5-6) It has been 60 years from that time and when I recite this bible verse this day; assured that God has been true to me (now 80 years old) for His faithfulness!

When I first arrived at Hong Kong alone, I was extremely frightened and I missed my family immensely. My situation only got better after I met Rev Fred Seave, a British missionary, who took me to his residence and settled me there. Despite such a blessing, when I thought of my future, the uncertainty still made me uneasy. Until one day, Rev Seave told me that he had found me a sponsor to support my studies in Hong Kong. I was ecstatic to hear that I could still afford to study overseas. I was surprised to know that my sponsor was an American woman - her name was Mrs Gladys Jackson and she was one of the sponsors for both "Sponsor-a-Child" and "Sponsor-a-Student" programs at CNEC Hong Kong. I was even more surprised to learn that Mrs. Jackson had indeed sponsored my late father, Rev William Chang Hsueh Kung too in those earliest days. I was very thankful to the Lord! This happened many decades ago, but every time I think of it, it brings me tears of joy for Mrs Gladys Jackson's kindness towards my family.

Not only have I experienced much faithfulness of God during my youth, I also thank God for my father was a good example to me. The image of my father that is most ingrained in me was that engraved on his tombstone: **Faithful Servant of God.**

Although I did not meet my father again after I was seventeen, he has always been a great hero in my heart. My father's face carried the gentle loving kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ wherever he went. He had followed the example of our Lord Jesus who has compassion for the poor. He gave shelter to the needy people, fed them full and taught them the Word of God. He helped and served others when the opportunities arose. Once, I witnessed my father helping a poor widow buried her dead husband, after which he brought her and her four children to our house and looked after them for years. I remember what my father had said to me on that occasion, "Bao

Wha, God has placed them in our way. When we help them, it is as though we have met Jesus along the way and helped him. Serving others is really an act of worship." Yes, this was my father's belief. Obviously, there were many things that were beyond his ability. Nevertheless, when God placed them in his way, he never turned away from providing them with help and assistance. My father had great faith in the Lord throughout his life. Finally, he was martyred for the Lord. He had influenced me especially with his philosophy of helping others. I respect my father very much. My father had followed and lived up to the teaching of our Lord Jesus in the Bible: **Matthew 25:40, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."**

In 1974, I responded to God's calling - Singapore was the base where I started the Ministry in the region of South East Asia and it has already been forty years. I reminisce about my growing up in the Bible seminaries. Besides attending Bible classes, reading the Bible, singing hymns and praying, I followed my father's footsteps. I practiced what I saw him do. He brought me along when he visited the orphanages and leprosarium too. After I came to South East Asia, I put into practice what I had learnt from my father. I deliberately

went to visit the mountainous areas and looked and helped the poor needy people. I also shared the Gospel to them and brought them to know Christ! Praise the Lord! By His loving grace, my father had inspired me, and I had learnt from his life. This experience was deeply rooted in me and taught me more about the "Holistic Gospel".

Since 1952, CNEC has been working and developing on this Holistic approach to win, nurture, equip and empower the nationals and send them to reach out to their own people; build indigenous communities of faith in the remotest and least Christian areas; ultimately to have ownership to self-support, self-govern and self-propagate. To date, as I witness the fruits borne from this approach, my heart is full of joy and thanks to God! I pray that we are able to hand over this model, initiated by my father, to pass on the baton to the generations to come!

I stepped down in 2006. My successor and Executive Director, Rev James Lai, is committed to the Holistic approach and desires to expand it even further. Up till now, CNEC in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Mekong region (Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Yunnan) have established theological seminaries, churches, orphanages, schools, student centers, etc. I have also seen that most of our current leaders at the fields are the second generation if not the third, children who have been raised by the Holistic Ministry.

Last but not least, I urge all churches to join us in serving the Lord. Without your prayer, offering and participation, we are not able to reach our higher goals. May the Cross of the Lord Jesus be exalted in different places across the land and may the name of our God be made known and be glorified among all nations!



Rev William Chang Hsueh Kung

Path of Grace

Yan Lian

The Way of Faith

Pastor Luo Zhong Yong is a co-worker serving in the office of Grace Haven, Lashio, Myanmar, as well as a youth pastor at Holy Light Church. The young man benefited from CNEC's Sponsor-A-Child Program since childhood, then turned to Christ and followed by responding to God's calling. The cheerful expression on his face always reveals his immense confidence and gratitude to God.

When Zhong Yong was eight, he studied at an SAC school. Sadly, something terrible happened to his family during that time. His mother began acting abnormally - screaming incessantly and acting out in irrational ways, as though she was demon possessed. Even though his father was a shaman and was spending most of their money for cleansing ceremonies, his attempts at ridding his wife of the demon were all in vain. For two whole years, their household was in shambles and seemingly covered by a dark cloud.

Zhong Yong was envious every time he saw his Christian cousin's joyful face. God is amazing. Zhong Yong ran to the church to tell a pastor there that he was ready to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. When his father heard the news, he was furious. Not only did he force Zhong Yong to burn incense to beg for forgiveness from the deities, but he also beat his son up so badly that he broke three sticks and gave his son a concussion. Zhong Yong ventured to the mountains alone. That night, he prayed, "Dear God, if you really exist, please help my family to believe in you. Please also give me the chance to study theology to learn about you more." Zhong Yong clung to God's Word during that difficult period, especially the following Bible verse. God's promises gave him enough courage to bravely move on instead of giving up.

"Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown." (Revelation 2:10)

The Way Towards Dedication

When Zhong Yong turned thirteen, he asked his father, as well as his teacher for permission to study theology. However, because of his youth, he did not get any support. He had no choice but to pray profusely for the salvation of his family, especially for the recovery of his mother. God answered his prayer as his mother recovered later. Zhong Yong once again requested his father's permission to study theology. This time he was granted permission, though with one condition: he would have to stay home for an extra year to help with farming.

Zhong Yong was fifteen when he was bursting with confidence to pursue his theological studies. However, God had a different plan for him. Zhong Yong was brought to Grace Haven in Lashio and then to Mei Hang Student Center through the influence of Pastor Gu Jing Shi. During these three years, God equipped him in many ways. He learnt to be independent. In addition, by interacting with other students, he learned to love and serve others. God was moulding and training him well. Indeed, his life was undergoing a big change as God was sanctifying him!

"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want." (Philippians 4:12)



Children devotion at Grace Haven

The Journey to Preaching

In 2006, when Zhong Yong turned eighteen, he was finally accepted into Myanmar Union Christian College and received four years of education there. He was only twenty-two years old when he completed his studies.

During the internship in college, Zhong Yong and another teacher not only taught God's Word but also emphasized the importance of evangelism. Zhong Yong remembered very fondly the first Christmas Gospel Rally held in his childhood village (Gong Meng Village). It was considered a success since not only the head of the village was there, but even the mayor, the principal and many of the villagers were present. Praise the Lord that many of them accepted Jesus as their Savior!

After Zhong Yong graduated from college, he began to work in the office of Grace Haven through the recommendation of Deaconess Cha Jie Ling. Soon he will have served there a total of three years. Besides serving as a youth pastor at Holy Light Church, Zhong Yong also serves as a teacher in both the SAC school and Sunday School.

The Prospecting Way

Though pastoral service is, no doubt, challenging, it also reaps many blessings. As he continues, Zhong Yong feels that he is significantly blessed. He is learning to understand God's heart better and he prays for the sustainment of an unwavering heart for missions! In Lashio, Zhong Yong is joining many other local youths - thirty different church denominations with approximately three hundred young Chinese believers to come together for fellowship.

Last year, a gospel youth rally was organized by this combined fellowship and praise the Lord that many new believers were added to the churches. Please continue to pray for them that through them, God will bring more and more unbelievers to Himself and the unity and the loving kindness of these believers will be a good testimony to the unbelievers.

During this first visit to Singapore, Pastor Zhong Yong expressed his tremendous gratitude towards CNEC for the help he received from the SAC school, Holy Light Church, Grace Haven, Mei Hang Student Center, as well as Myanmar Union Christian College. In addition, he also thanked CNEC headquarters for teaching him several administrative skills. Before I ended the interview, he shared his deepest wish with me, which took root in his heart when he first accepted Christ: to become an evangelist. However, he clarified that, if this is not God's will for him, he will continue to pray that God will place in his heart a single minded devotion for missions.

"Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts." (Psalm 139:23)

A Life's Changing Offering

Reflection by a SAC Sponsor

Dr. Tay Chon Chong

Every time I collect a big, thick envelope from the postman, my heart is filled with thanksgiving. Inside the envelope are handwritten letters penned by the Sponsor-A-Child (SAC) children from foreign countries. Although I have not met these children yet, from their humble writing, I can feel that the children are now more joyful than before. Holding their letters in my hands, I read each and every one of them slowly and thoroughly and I know that the children are grateful to God and also to their sponsors. I praise the Lord as the SAC program has indeed changed their lives!

Whenever I read their letters, I reminisce about the kampong days forty years ago during my childhood. My parents were busy working then to feed a bundle of us kids at home. The eldest child, who was just at a tender age of five or six, was assigned to look after all the younger siblings. This was very different when compared to the situation now – children now are being taken care of by their parents; children in the older days had to look after their families. These children were in poor health and they lacked in knowledge as they had little opportunity to receive education. Some elder brothers and sisters were forced to even drop out of school early in order to save costs. Like my elder brother and sister, they gave up their education so that I could get an opportunity to study in university. I often ponder about the circumstances of these children: Are they fated to live in poverty? Do they have a chance to change their lives?

Soon after I started working in my first job, someone from CNEC shared with me about the SAC program. My first thought was that it was a golden opportunity, so I immediately participated in the ministry. Then, by offering a small portion of my salary every month, it could meet the many needs of the children. Subsequently, the lives of the children improved. I know that my offering which was still comfortably within my budget was valuable and meaningful.

To date, there are more than four thousand children who have benefited from the SAC Ministry. Over the past few years, the worldwide inflation impacted us and the sponsorship fees for the children were insufficient to cover their basic living expenses. CNEC then raised the amount of sponsorship per child. Likewise, the inflation also affected the sponsors' income worldwide, thus causing a handful of them to withdraw from the SAC programme. Consequently, the withdrawal resulted in nearly 900 children's loss of sponsorship. This is detrimental, as not only have the children lost the opportunities to receive education, they also lost the chance to learn about the gospel!

Recently, an elderly sister from my church shared with me about her sponsorship. She joined the SAC Ministry after her retirement – all by faith as she had no income at that time. This sister needed to go for an eye operation soon, and she told me honestly that she could not afford to sponsor her "children" any more, especially after the sponsorship fees were raised. Therefore, she reluctantly withdrew her sponsorship.

Nevertheless, I remained extremely thankful to God and as a Board Director of Malaysia CNEC; I thanked her for her past contributions to the SAC program.

When I look at the children around us, I think we are too good to them by giving them almost all they ask and want from us. We can contribute towards the needy children in the undeveloped countries, by willingly giving up just few good meals in restaurants, or even watching fewer movies. Just by doing these simple deeds, we will be able to help a child pay for all his expenses for a year! Our small contribution to the needy children cannot be compared to the value these gifts bring to the lives of these children.

Proverbs 19:17: "Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will reward them for what they have done."

The above bible verse is familiar to us. I pray that it can also become a motivation for us - a power of faith and love which drives us to lend a hand to those children in poverty. Please pray for the children too. May God make them wonderful soldiers for His kingdom!

It is an honour and privilege to be part of this project. Won't you be part of it too?

Notice

By God's grace, the Holistic Missions approach which we have been adopting all these years, which is meeting of the physical and spiritual needs in missions, has been proven effective in all the South East Asian countries. Through your faithful participation in prayer and contributions, many have come to the Lord, baptized and committed to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

We believe that this approach is also applicable to the other parts of the world and thus we should not just restrict our vision within the South East Asian region. We have sought the approval from the Registry of Societies to drop the words "South East Asia" from our registration name. We thank God that we have received the official approval recently.

From "Christian Nationals' Evangelism Commission (S.E.Asia)" to Christian Nationals' Evangelism Commission" and from South East Asia to world-wide, we sincerely invite you to join us to have a big vision to grow beyond the boundaries. If you wish to support our ministries, please make the cheque payable to **Christian Nationals' Evangelism Commission** or **CNEC**. Kindly omit the words 'SEA' or "South East Asia". Thank you!

MINISTRIES: INDIGENOUS CHURCH, BIBLE SCHOOL, TRIBAL WORKS, SPONSOR-A-CHILD MINISTRY, CREATIVE ACCESS MINISTRY, HOLISTIC MISSIONS

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