



感恩与代祷 Praise & Prayer

福音自傳會

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Waking up the Sleeping Giant of Missions

Rev James Lai

In 2005, during the Lausanne Conference, the worldwide Church was reminded to utilize its most neglected resource for missions: its professionals and businessmen. Many professionals and businessmen in churches today think that their statuses and professions do not have anything in common in relations to missions. Most likely, the majority of them think that the work of mission belongs solely to missionaries and, therefore, missionaries are the only human resource for missions. However, if churches today wish to do greater missions works and have a bigger impact, there is a need to explore those neglected resources. We have to awaken the professionals or businessmen in churches – the “sleeping giants” of missions, as you might call them.

Why does the phrase “the sleeping giant of missions” refer to Christian professionals and businessmen? Why do they play such an important role in missions work? We are going to approach this topic from the following three perspectives.

1. The Perspective of the Bible

There are many examples in the Bible that emphasize the importance of professionals or businessmen as resources that God used for missions work. In the Old Testament, people such as Joseph, Esther and Daniel were neither priests nor religious leaders; however, they set good examples for missions at their respective work places. The apostle Paul, the first missionary sent by God, is one example from the New Testament. During his time, the transportation, banking and communications were substandard and inconvenient. Thus, Paul had to serve as a tent-making missions worker. It was his strong entrepreneurial spirit and missionary heart that made him such an effective evangelist. Wherever he went, he worked hard to earn his own living. He shared the gospel and, at the same time, established his own business. Influential leaders and believers whom Paul contacted in early churches, like Aquila and his wife Priscilla (Acts 18:2-3), Apollos (Acts 18:23-24), Lydia (Acts 16:14), and Philemon were business people, as well. They were the important resources for missions work in the early churches.

2. The Perspective of the History of Missions

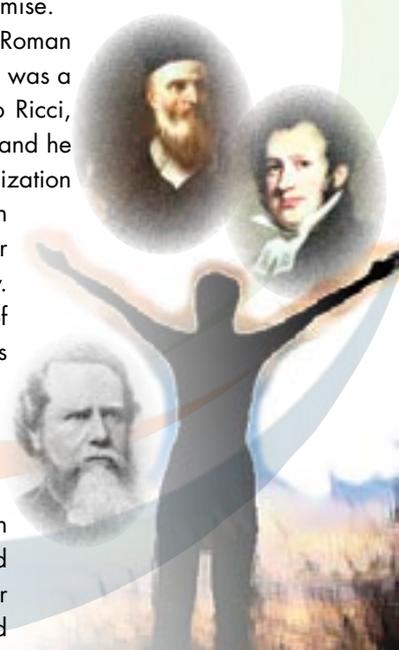
Christianity first entered China during the Tang Dynasty.

Christian businessmen from Persia traveled to China via the route of the Silk Road. When these Persian Christian businessmen shared their faith amongst the locals, it garnered much of the locals' attention and interest. Not long after that, the Persian Christians brought their own missionaries into China to help to explain their beliefs to the locals there. Alopen was one of the first Nestorian missionaries sent to China. Although the old Silk Road was rough and difficult, the combination of the businessmen's great courage and the missionaries' passion brought the gospel to China in the eighth century! Businessmen were the spearhead for missions into China, opening up the door for the Nestorian missionaries.

Marco Polo's family was a business group that went into China in the 13th century via land and sea. These Western businessmen entered the palace of the Yuan Dynasty, meeting Genghis Khan and Kublai Khan. Each emperor gradually became interested in Christianity through the influence of this family. As a result, the Polo family promised that after returning to their country, they would bring a hundred missionaries to China next time they came. Unfortunately, they failed to gather enough missionaries to fulfill the promise.

During the 17th century, Roman Catholic priests visited China. There was a Jesuit priest by the name of Matteo Ricci, who was also a renowned scholar, and he introduced western science and civilization into China. As a professional with high status, he was allowed to enter the palace of the Ming Dynasty. Through this creative method of access, the door for the gospel was opened.

In the 19th century, when the British Colonial Army had forced its way into the ports along the coastline of China, a Christian missionary Robert Morrison had to work as a business translator in Macau in order to be allowed



access to the area so that he could share the gospel there. At that time, it was incredibly difficult for western missionaries to share the gospel in China because the Chinese were very resentful of all western influences and they loathed the fact that the British army controlled many areas of their land. This meant that western missionaries in China were perceived as simply being servants of the West and so they were kicked out of the country. Robert Morrison faced the problem of getting permission to stay inside China until he began to work as a translator for the East India Company, which finally permitted him to live in Macau territory, which is part of China. This situation also affected James Hudson Taylor when he came to China. As a missionary, he knew that he would not be allowed to travel within China and so he brought missionaries who were scholars, teachers and scientists into China. This opened the door for the gospel to spread to all parts of China. This is a very clear example of how the gospel was spread using commercial and professional people's statuses and resources. From then until now, many missionaries have needed to be equipped as businessmen before entering the mission fields. When seen from a historical perspective of the expansion of Christianity, believing businessmen have played a particularly crucial role, especially in the initial stages of development. Their courage and fearless determination have helped open up more ground and opportunities for missions work.

3. The Perspective of the Trend and Strategy of Missions

Although there have been many missionaries sent out, there is still a long way to go before the gospel is spread all over the world. As Jesus says in **Matthew 9:37-38** while he was still on earth, **"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."** Today, two-thirds of the world are still

classified as the non-believers. How do we fulfill what Jesus taught us to pray for so that we can accomplish His Great Commission? Yet where can we find more workers for the mission fields?

Based on the current trend of missions, the holistic approach is the most effective way to communicate the gospel to the community. It is an approach that follows the example of the Lord in reaching out to the community. In **John 1:14**, it says, **"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."** The holistic approach is the integration of the works of grace and of truth. The holistic approach is a complex one in which the gospel is not merely preached but the holistic needs of people are also reached, just as Jesus did while He was on earth. In today's mission fields, the work of grace includes holistic projects such as Business as Missions, micro-enterprise projects, education, sponsorship and community development. These endeavors all show that not all missions work is done by traditional missionaries with a few years of theological training. Christians of all trades and professions ought to be motivated to be involved in missions. In fact, only when our churches are able to persuade everyone to participate will we be able to accomplish the Great Commission and fulfill the Lord's teaching by sending out more workers into the fields.

Based on the three perspectives stated above, we notice that the businessmen and professionals in churches are precious resources for missions. If churches do not motivate and equip these people for missions, the work of missions will suffer a big loss.

Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, let us wake up the "sleeping giants" of missions' resources – the businessmen and professionals in our churches!

Waking Up the Sleeping Giant of Missions

(The Challenges of Micro-Enterprises & Business As Missions)



Date: 10th May 2014 (Saturday)

Time: 0830 - 1530

Programme:

Theme Messages, Workshops, Lunch & Refreshment

Theme Speakers:

Rev. Dr. Enoch Wan / Rev. Dr. James Lai

Workshops' Speakers: Elder Tan Tian Hup

Dr. Lee Sing Kong

Mr. Chan Ban Leong

Venue:

Grace (S.C.C) Church

14 Queen Street, Singapore 188536

RECRUITMENT NOTICE

APRIL 2014

JOB VACANCIES at CNEC

FINANCIAL OFFICER with the following Qualifications & Job Description:

- Accounting experience preferred
- Accounting software skill and knowledge [MYOB, etc]
- Able to handle daily income and expenses book-keeping
- Appropriate qualification
- Effective in written and spoken English and Chinese
- Salary range from \$1,800 - \$2,000 (negotiable based on qualification and experience)

MINISTRY ADVANCEMENT PROJECT COORDINATOR with the following Qualifications & Job Description:

- 'N' Level or above
- Effective in written and spoken English and Chinese
- Salary Range from \$1,800 - \$2,000 (negotiable based on qualification and experience)
- Project proposal writing and presentation in powerpoint
- Computer skills with Microsoft Office knowledge

Contact Miss Irene Yeak at Tel: 62800312 for an appointment

GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Mrs Paul Chang (Mdm Liu Nien-Chang) was called home to be with the Lord on the 15th February, 2014. The memorial services were on the 16th, 17th and 18th February. Rev Paul Chang wants to thank CNEC and brothers and sisters from all churches that gave him and his family support through their love, kindness and offerings during this difficult period. In memory of his wife, Rev Chang would like to set up a memorial fund to help the poor children in Laos and Vietnam by providing them with an opportunity for education. This was also the wish of Mrs Chang.

NOTICE

Thank God that ROS (Registra of Societies) has approved us to drop the word "South East Asia" from our registration name. Thus, please make cheque payable to 'CNEC' for your next contribution. Kindly omit the word SEA.



Theme Speakers



Rev Dr. Enoch Wan

Rev Dr. Enoch Wan was born in China and educated in the USA. He is currently Professor & Chairman in the Division of Intercultural Studies, and Director of Doctor of Missiology Program at Western Seminary, Portland, Oregon, USA. He travels and lectures extensively in North America & abroad. Rev Dr. Wan previously served as Missions Department Chairman at the Hong Kong Alliance Bible Seminary, Founding Director of Inter-cultural Studies Program at Canadian Theological Seminary, and Founding Director of the Ph.D. Intercultural Studies Program at Reformed Theological Seminary. He had also planted and pastored churches in Hong Kong, New York, Vancouver, and Toronto; and engaged in missionary services in the Philippines, Venezuela and Australia. He is the Editor of the electronic journal: www.GlobalMissiology.net

Rev Dr James Lai is the Director of Christian Nationals' Evangelism Commission. Prior to his current position, Rev Lai was the Director of CNEC Malaysia. He received his Master of Divinity from Singapore Bible College and his Doctor of Missiology at Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon, USA. Rev Dr Lai had co-founded Partners Training Centre (PTC) in Johor Bahru many years ago. He has not less than fifteen years of pastoral experiences and has another not less than fifteen years of experiences in missionary fields. He has traveled all over the world to speak in revival meetings, evangelistic meetings, church leaders training, mission conventions, seminars, workshops and church camps etc.



Rev Dr. James Lai

Time	Program
0830am-0900am	Registration
0900am-0915am	Welcome & Announcement
0915am-1030am	Theme Message (1)
1030am-1100am	Refreshment
1100am-1145am	Workshops: (1)/(2)/(3)
1200pm-1330pm	Lunch Time
1330pm-1415pm	Workshops: (4)/(5)/(6)
1415pm-1430pm	Refreshment
1430pm-1530pm	Theme Message (2) & Closing Prayer

Workshop 1 & 4 :

Elder Tan Tian Hup is a Christian businessman and has many years of experience in landscaping work. He has used his expertise, skills and knowledge to help and guide CNEC Cambodia to start a small Pepper Plantation in Kompong Cham that has yielded fruitful harvests, created job opportunities, and also to reach out to the unreached Kuy people to Christ. He is a Board Member of CNEC and CI.

Workshops' Speakers

Workshop 2 & 5 :

Dr Lee Sing Kong is the Director of NIE. He has been using his horticulture knowledge & skills to help different communities in Southeast Asia to improve their agricultural development. He also lends his expertise to the Micro-enterprise Department of CNEC that provides resources to start projects like tea plantation, pig rearing farming projects, etc. in order to help the local ministries towards self-sufficiency. He sits on the Board of CNEC since 1996 and is also a Board Member of CI.

Workshop 3 & 6 :

Mr Chan Ban Leong retired from civil service and has been actively involved in Missions. He is the Board Chairman of CNEC International Limited (CI), a business arm of CNEC, registered in April 2011, to develop business and investment opportunities so as to generate revenue for CNEC ministries in the near future. He is one of the longest serving directors on the Board of CNEC since 1976.

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

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All funds received are to support CNEC ministries; the operation cost is not more than 20% to sustain the office for ministries' purposes.