



感恩与代祷 Praise & Prayer

福音自傳會

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The Ethos of CNEC that Begets our Mission Model

Rev Dr James Lai

Recently, a pastor asked me how long have I been serving in CNEC. I replied that I joined CNEC since 1977. He was amazed and counted the number of years I had served. Then he remarked that it was a long time! Perhaps some would ask why have I stayed faithfully in CNEC for such a long time. Frankly, I think this is not an issue of being loyal to an organization. Rather it is about identifying with the vision and ethos of CNEC which motivated me to shoulder the mission and responsibility of CNEC.

I remember when I graduated from the seminary thirty-eight years ago. I thought no one would employ an inexperienced young man like me. I grew up in a church founded by the China Inland Mission. I have no denominational background and I was not known to many. Although I earnestly desired to serve the Lord and wished that He would use me greatly, I felt that no one knew me and trusted me. It was at that precise moment that I received a phone call from Rev Daniel Tan, the former Director of CNEC Malaysia. He invited me to join CNEC to pioneer church planting work in Malaysia.

We have never met and I had no idea why they wanted me. That was my first encounter with CNEC. Later when I learned more about its mission - winning, building empowering the indigenous people to reach their own countrymen - I was really grateful. I was thankful because before anyone trusted a fresh seminary graduate like me, CNEC came into my life. They supported me, trusted me, and allowed me to serve alongside as partners to fulfill the Great Commission.

It has always been CNEC's ethos to empower the indigenous Christians to reach their own people. This ethos dates back to seventy years ago when Chinese missionaries were expelled from China. At that time, CNEC empowered the Chinese Christians to evangelize to their own countrymen. In later years, when CNEC expanded its ministry to other parts of the world, it adhered strongly to the same principle in its mission work. For instance, the Indians would evangelize to the Indians and the Africans would evangelize to the Africans. By doing so, it has removed cultural barriers, cumbersome visa applications, geographical barriers, as well as cross cultural and geographical adaptations encountered by foreign

missionaries. Moreover, this mission strategy has effectively minimized the amount of money spent sending missionaries on transnational and cross cultural missions.

Since the first year I joined CNEC, I have always held fast to this important mission principle, that is, empowering the local Christians to serve their own countrymen. I have upheld this vision and served the last thirty-eight years, sharing the ethos wherever I went. I thank the Lord that the gospel torch has not ceased to pass from one generation to another. According to the statistics on the ministry partner outcomes over the last twelve months: six churches were being built each day; one hundred and eighty people prayed to receive Christ each day; two hundred and forty-three thousand people heard the gospel each year; twenty thousand church leaders were being trained each year and they brought sixty-three thousand eight hundred and forty people to Christ. As can be seen, the ethos of CNEC begets our mission model. Empowering the indigenous Christians to evangelize to their own countrymen is the right and effective model.

Having gone through so many years serving in a mission organization, I have witnessed the numerous co-workers in many countries and ethnic groups who had been raised and used by the Lord. I would sincerely invite you to join us in empowering the indigenous Christians to fulfill the Great Commission!





Partnership

Pastor Tittiwa Yang

*"Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?"
(Amos 3:3) - NIV*

I had worked in CNEC in the past before I took a break. Five months ago I returned to serve with CNEC. Prior to my return I have asked myself a few questions. "Why do I come back?" "Am I too old to serve?" I am slow in learning and I am not fluent in English. My computer knowledge is in the dinosaurs age. After much prayer, I decided to come back. Although I am old and slow, poor in English language and computer knowledge, there are many "fellow workers" in CNEC who are willing to walk with me through this re-learning process. "Partnership" is the distinctiveness of CNEC. In missions, "partnership" is not a new word. One will not be lonely when there are "partners".

I am grateful to God for giving me a mission "partner" - Pastor Benjawan Karunsatit. We were once schoolmates serving in the same church. We had been "missionaries" serving in the same mission field. I remember there was a time when we were serving in Northern Thailand where we had to travel from Hwei Ma Village to Hwei Peng Village. The road was muddy and slippery when it rained. No one would drive along such a road on a rainy day. As we walked, we were hoping to meet other "fellow travellers". To no avail we were the only ones. We finally reached our destination after walking for seven to eight hours. This unforgettable experience has impressed upon me the importance of "partnership". Along the way, Benjawan and I partnered and journeyed together. We were there to help each other. It was a long and arduous journey but it did not seem long to us because we tread the path together. As "partners", we enjoyed the fruit of our labour together. **"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work." (Ecclesiastes 4:9)** I especially like the Chinese character "夥" (partnership) in traditional Chinese character. It is made up of two individual characters, "果" means "fruits" and "多" means "many". This character signifies



Pastor Yang & daughter serving the children in Thailand, 2014.

that partnership brings along "many fruits". Even when we failed, we bear the consequence together. Most important of all, we are able to enjoy the process of partnering.

In CNEC, our relationship with mission fields, churches and sponsors are built upon the idea of "partnership". Through partnership we engaged in evangelism, church planting and community service. "Partnership" reminds us that we are neither their bosses nor their superiors. This relationship calls for a display of the appropriate attitude and language when communicating with our co-workers. "Partnership" is mutual dependence, respect and trust.

Mark 2:1-12 records Jesus healing a paralytic. The healing came about because the four friends took the effort to bring the paralytic to Jesus. Arriving where Jesus was, they encountered another dilemma. They could not enter the house because of the crowd. Not giving up hope, they made an opening in the roof and lowered their friend right in front of Jesus. We do not know how these four men were related to the paralytic. However in this passage we see a beautiful picture of "partnership".

Do you value the "means" or the "end"? As a saying goes: you may travel fast on your own but you will travel further with a partner. In CNEC, some of our co-workers are very efficient and capable. However because of the spirit of "partnership", sometimes we intentionally slowed down to wait for those who may be slow to catch up. There is no "lone ranger" in "partnership".

Have you ever noticed that on a keyboard, the letter U is always next to the letter I? May the Lord bless our partnership in CNEC.

Conviction to Serve

Irene Yeak

I have always wondered what it would be like to serve full time in a mission organization. I ask if I am the right person for the job. After my first mission trip to Thailand, I made up my mind to join CNEC and since the day I joined, I have no regrets.

During one of my trips to the field, I witnessed a local pastor who fervently sought to learn God's Word despite the harsh living conditions. His hunger for God's Word did not waver in the face of poverty. I was greatly impressed by this pastor. It dawns on me the importance of supporting our frontline co-workers in their ministry.

There was also a life transforming testimony from the mission field which allows me to witness God's wonderful work in a young girl's life. This young girl was led to believe that Christians were evil and not to be trusted. When a local pastor tirelessly cared for her and shared the gospel with her, she became a Christian. She was totally transformed and she

went back to her village sharing the good news with her fellow villagers.

In another incident, some ethnic children who could not adapt to the organized learning schedule in a student center decided to skip class and ran away from the student center. When the local pastor and the ministry field leader found out, they informed the families immediately and patiently counseled the children. These children eventually returned to the student center. Our co-workers often encounter trying situations in the field but God is always their ever-present help.

If you ask how I would see my role in CNEC, I would say that I play the part of bridging the mission field with the sponsors. I share with our sponsors the needs in the field so that they in turn can pray, support and visit the fields. Working in CNEC has broadened my perspectives and opened up my world to missions.



Equipping the Nations

Rev Lau Pak Soon

Recently I had the privilege of training a small group of leaders in a sensitive restricted access country. They came from different denominations and regions. Most of them are from minority tribes in the country. But I was most impressed by their unity of purpose and the genuine warm fellowship among themselves. For them, the evangelist/preacher is not only a messenger of the Gospel but a channel conveying life. Therefore such a messenger must be a born again believer who has the life of Jesus in him, received the call of God, equipped and sent out by the Lord. Such a person would then be a vessel fit for God's use.

As I interact with them, I realized that many of them are shepherding many churches with membership in the hundreds and thousands. It was truly a humbling experience for me to meet these servants of God who labour under intense hardship and yet kept their joy for ministry. In resource-rich Singapore, we rarely demonstrate the thirst I saw in the eyes of these leaders for learning and equipping. It is my hope



Rev Lau is on the extreme right.

that the leaders of all our denominations, all our churches and fellowships, would be united under the Word of God and move out in one accord to bring the Gospel to all nations and reconcile many to God.

Dear reader, would you join us to pray for the equipping and empowering of servants such as these? Would you also consider how you could get involved with this equipping ministry? Please contact us!

What is so Special about CNEC?

Lim Cheng Cheng

I have never thought I would serve in a mission organization. During my years in the seminary, I love biblical studies and I did not mind spending my day and night figuring out the Hebrew or Greek texts. Mission was not a subject at the top of my priorities. When I was approached to join CNEC, I was not exactly sure if I would stay for long. However as I learn more about this organization I am serving with, it has won me over. I begin to appreciate the radical idea which sets CNEC apart from other mission organizations. And that radical idea is PARTNERSHIP.

CNEC has an exciting history which dates back to 1943. When the communist took over China in 1949, all missionaries were expelled from the country. CNEC did the unthinkable at that time: supporting the Chinese Christians to evangelize to their own countrymen. This gives rise to CNEC's earliest partnership model.

Dr. Sue Sainsbury, a board member of WorldShare UK¹ wrote a personal reflection on WorldShare's 'Covenant of Partnership'. She wrote that the foundation of partnership is

more theological than pragmatism. Partnership is especially compelling because²:

- it's ontological: 'being' (who we are) must come before 'function' (what we do).
- it's trinitarian: the eternal community of Three-in-one is our basis for ultimate reality.
- it's incarnational: Jesus' most extraordinary affirmation of humanity was that he became human.
- it's relational: the radical interdependence of 'the One, the Three, and the Many' is foundational.

In our partnering experience, we know that partnership is as much about relationship as it is about strategic outcomes. But partnership is also messy because we live in a fallen world. Our personalities and our culture clashes. Often, different expectations and misunderstanding lead to disappointment. This is when we need to practice forgiveness and speaking the truth in love. Working in CNEC has taken me on a journey toward a deeper understanding of what partnership means among God's people.

¹ CNEC is a member of Partnership Alliance, which consists of Partners International USA, Partners International Canada, WorldShare UK, WorldShare Australia and CNEC Singapore.

² This section is taken from the 'Theology of Partnership' on WorldShare UK web site (<http://www.worldshare.org.uk>)



Special Announcement

The torrential rain brought about by Cyclone Komen during the last two weeks of July has caused extensive damage to many parts of Myanmar. Although there were no heavy casualties, the areas affected were much more extensive compared to Cyclone Nagis in 2008. Many villages were swept away and large populations were displaced.



Myanmar Chinese Reuters reported that out of 14 provinces, 11 provinces experienced heavy flooding. More than one hundred and thirty thousand people were displaced and many remained homeless. The four worst hit areas are Chin State, Rakhine State, Sagaing State and Magway State. In accordance with Myanmar's Natural Disaster Management Article 11, the government has declared these four areas as natural disaster zones. They have focused their relief efforts in these four critical zones.



Our partners in Myanmar have entered Magway State and Rakhine State and delivered supplies to some of the hardest hit areas. They hope that this will not be a temporary relief for the displaced population but a long term ministry among the unreached. Please uphold them in your prayers!



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