

WHITEFIELDS

Gospel Operation International English Magazine • Vol. 1 No. 3 • Fall 2020 • John 4:35



HUMBLE STAR

Brilliance is sometimes found in the steadfast and faithful.

By Solomon Hwee Kiong Oh

RELIEF FUND UPDATE

Donors, missionaries and partners come together to help a world in crisis.

ADVENT UNDER FIRE

Armenian Christians celebrate the Christmas season in the shadow of a war.

EVERYDAY MISSIONS

Reflections on the everyday faithfulness of a missionary's life.

By Ryan Beneke

UNITED WE CONFESS

A president calls his nation to confess their sins before Almighty God.

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LIBAN

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“Seek the prosperity of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord in its behalf; for in its prosperity will be your prosperity . . . For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the Lord, “Plans for prosperity and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will let Myself be found by you.” (Jeremiah 29:7, 11-14)

The year 2020 has reminded us more than ever that we are bound together into a common weal:

a global pandemic, global economic trends, and global geopolitics. May Christians around the world find themselves facing the both the tumult and the displacement felt by Jeremiah’s audience. May we also come around the mission set forth by Jeremiah: to bless our world and pray for it, even as we are reminded that we do not belong to it, but to a higher Kingdom. May we be faithful in prayer, faithful in mission and faithful in proclaiming the gospel to a world sorely in need of finding and being found by the Creator who loves them.

Chris Chu
November 2020



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He serves together with his wife Chindra on the field in Cambodia.*

A Humble

STAR

*For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the
outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.*

(1 Samuel 16:7)





DARA'S

entry into Living Water Church reminds us that neither the church, nor its platform, nor its pulpit are in need of stars



Let me introduce to you a brother from Living Water Church. His name is Dara. Dara is Cambodian. In the Khmer language, Dara means star (a famous or popular person), but this Dara is no star in the popular sense. He is not spectacularly handsome in the way that movie stars or fashion models are known for. A traffic accident broke three of his front teeth, leaving a wide gap which makes his tongue visible when he grins. This star has no

fans, no social media followers, and only a few friends. Dara has deformities in his hands and legs, but he can walk by his own power. Dara's fingers are stiff, making it difficult for him to perform simple tasks that the rest of us often take for granted.

Dara was in secondary school, but he still has difficulties reading his own mother language. The congregation exercises a great deal of patience when it is Dara's turn

to read the Bible in worship service. When one hears Dara read in his own language, it can make one wonder how Dara ever graduated from primary and secondary school.

Dara is unable control his tonal pitch or volume when he sings, which can make for some interesting moments when Living Water Church gathers for musical worship. Dara may not be the best musician at Living Water Church, but ironically, all the



other “stars” of Living Water Church have left one by one, leaving behind this “Dara-Star” to serve quietly and faithfully at church. His service in the church is not glamorous or celebrated under the spotlight. Dara does mundane tasks like stacking chairs after service, packing up the projector, arranging the Bibles, or switching off the audio equipment. Dara rarely comes to mind when one tries to look for candidates for jobs that require “star power.”

Dara is the oldest child in his family. His father rides a

motorbike to earn a living. To supplement the family income, Dara’s mother works in a factory. Amazingly, this family of six (sometimes with relatives visiting them) can cram into an approximately 16m² (172 ft²) room every night. This space serves as their dining room, bedroom, living room, etc. Only the toilet/shower room is separated by a brick wall.

When Dara was young, he came to join the Sunday School of Living Water Church. Dara told me that initially, he hesitated because he had no money.

Jesus performed a great miracle using the child's tiny offering.



Somehow, he thought that he had to pay something to participate in Sunday School. Dara does not have friends of his age, but he enjoys coming to church to befriend the older dormitory students, the staff of the church and the missionaries. The church accepted him, never despised him, and he found his second home in Living Water Church.

When Living Water Church started a project to purchase property, we implemented faith pledges. Surprisingly, Dara (he was then a secondary school student) pledged one US dollar a month. To him, it wasn’t a paper-exercise; he faithfully gave one US dollar every month until we concluded the pledge giving exercise. One US dollar might not mean very much to you, but for Dara it was a significant

amount. *(Editor's note: for an idea of what \$1 USD can buy in 2011, here is a helpful video: <https://youtu.be/mkATj4G2F6I>)*

Dara reminded us of the child who offered his five barley loaves and two fish to Jesus. Jesus performed a great miracle using the child's tiny offering. Even though it is a well-known miracle recorded in the gospel, no one has ever taken note of the child's name. In the current church culture, many are busy looking for stars to promote their ministries. Star-preachers, star-evangelists, star-singers, star-drummers, star-bands.... Dara's entry into Living Water Church reminds us that neither the church, nor its platform, nor its pulpit are in need of stars. It may not even be important to have stars.

Cambodia



Prayer Guide

Area: **181,035 sq km**

Population: **16,662,000**

Unreached People Groups: **19 out of 44**

Percentage of population in UPG: **95.9%**

Primary Religion: Buddhism

Percent Christian Adherent: **3.4%**

Percent Evangelical: **2.0%**

Evangelical Annual Growth Rate: **8.8%**

GOI Prayer Requests from the Field

1 Pray for Unity among Christian leaders and churches in Cambodia. Recently there have been many debates and tensions among them in social media, causing Christians and churches to take sides. Such debates are affecting the public witness of Christians, Christian workers and the church.

2 Pray for Gospel Operation International ministries in Cambodia. Cambodia is host to the largest GOI team. Pray for God's continual blessing on our strategy, "Unity in Diversity." GOI seeks to deploy workers according to their gifts, callings and experiences. Pray that God will raise up a new leader to lead the work of GOI in Cambodia.

Statistical Sources

Joshua Project - <https://joshuaproject.net/countries/CB>
Operation World - <https://www.operationworld.org/country/camb/owtext.html>



FORWARD IN LOVE

The year 2020 has brought its share of global challenges. In late April 2020, the board of Gospel Operation International (GOI) decided to create a Relief Fund for the purpose of helping resource GOI missionaries and mission partners. GOI and its donors wanted to come alongside the families and communities we serve in helping them meet their felt basic needs. Beset by a global pandemic, many people found themselves unable to work or to feed their families, so our missionaries and partners worked to help needy families bridge the gap.

Lebanon

Life was already hard for many residents in Lebanon at the beginning of the year. Fiscal mismanagement, high inflation and enormous public debt was already placing enormous strain on all segments of society, leading to a series of mass demonstrations that rocked the nation. Nearly 20% of Lebanese residents were refugees, mostly

fleeing from conflict in Syria, who worked low-paying agricultural jobs for a few dollars a day. The novel coronavirus pandemic led to higher prices, the loss of jobs for many, and the reduction of wages for almost everyone else. Then in August, an enormous explosion crippled Lebanon's largest port, rendered three of Beirut's hospitals inoperable and damaged three more, displaced hundreds of thousands of people, and catalyzed a political crisis.

As of September, GOI was able to raise \$20,000 USD and direct it towards trusted ministry partners from other organizations. One partner has a vision to build up thriving communities around missional churches called "Lighthouses". After the Beirut explosion, this partner organization dedicated itself to providing food aid for affected neighborhoods, and accelerating development of Lighthouses in Beirut. Ten thousand dollars USD of GOI support was used by this partner to fund the purchase of food, basic medicines, and offer financial support to needy people.



"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! For I have overcome the world."

(John 16:33b NIV)

Another GOI partner serves some of the largest tent communities of Syrian refugees within Lebanon. This partner has built and administers schools that serve children who would otherwise fall behind or drop out of the Lebanese public school system. They also operate a community center that offers vocational ministry training and youth programs. Ten thousand dollars USD of GOI support was used by this partner to pay for food aid boxes to some of the neediest families in the camps, containing items like cooking oil, flour, sugar, pasta and sauce.

Uganda

Gospel Operation Africa (GOA), GOI's affiliate in Uganda, serves many students from Kisenyi, one of the neediest neighborhoods in the Ugandan capital of Kampala. As 2020 progressed, many families found themselves in need of charcoal. Charcoal is an ubiquitous need in Kisenyi, used both to cook meals and to heat homes. With the assistance of donations from the GOI Relief Fund, GOA was able to provide

charcoal for all the families of students who attended GOA ministry center programs. In addition, each student received a basic assistance package containing sugar, salt, cooking oil, three bars of soap, posho maize flour, and a small allowance to help them through the month.

Going Forward

The end of 2020 draws near, but no end is in sight for the crises faced by all peoples around the world. Yet we are not disheartened or discouraged. As Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! For I have overcome the world." (John 16:33b NIV) The missionaries and partners of GOI continue to press forward in love, sharing the gospel and helping to meet needs in communities around the world. Our church and individual donors go with us in prayer and by giving, and to these we extend a heartfelt expression of thanks and gratitude. We who serve on the frontline could not do so without the support of all who go with us.



Photo by Thiago Rochaon Unsplash

If you would like to join us in our global work through financial giving, there are several ways to do so. Ways to give can be accessed by going to <https://goimission.org/give/> on your desktop or mobile device. In addition, your nation of residence may have a local GOI area office. These can be found by navigating to <https://goimission.org/regional/> on your desktop or mobile device. If you have any questions, please write to info@goimission.org.

.Holiday Recipe.

Armenian Ghapama

Ingredients

- 1 sugar pumpkin, about 3 lbs.
- 1 cups rice
- 4 Tbsp. melted butter
- 1/4 cup each of chopped dried plums, apricots, cherries
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 3/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- Dash of salt
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts
- 1/4 cup hot water

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees
2. Wash and dry exterior of pumpkin. Cut off the top in a circular shape as it will be used as a lid.
3. Scrape out the stringy fibers and seeds.
4. Boil rice with 3 cups of water, cook it half way so the rest of the baking occurs inside the pumpkin.
5. In a bowl, mix together rice, chopped dried fruits, butter, salt, cinnamon, honey, and nuts.
6. Loosely stuff filling into pumpkin; pour the 1/4 cup hot water over the top of the filling.
7. Place the pumpkin on a baking sheet for support. Put the top of the pumpkin back on and bake at 400°F for about 2 hours or until soft.



Armenian Christmas

The Armenian Church celebrates Christmas on January 6th. On this day it also celebrates the Epiphany

Some Armenians fast in the week before Christmas. The Christmas Eve meal is called *Khetum*. *Ghapama* is a stuffed, baked pumpkin traditionally served with a few other dishes between the New Year and Armenian Christmas. In Armenian, the word *ghapama* means "cooked in a covered pot." Pumpkin is rich in soluble fiber, therefore ghapama makes a great dish that is gentle on the digestive tract to ease the stomach off the week-long fast.

ADVENT UNDER FIRE

Two thousand years ago, the night rested uneasily upon the beleaguered land of Judea. For decades, the wanton brutality of Roman invasion, Herodian taxation, false messiahs and political zealots wreaked havoc upon an exhausted populace. Yet it was at this moment of history that an angelic choir chose to manifest itself to a small band of shepherds, proclaiming the birth of Jesus Christ in song:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace among people with whom He is pleased!”
(Luke 2:14)

On September 27, 2020, large scale fighting erupted between the nations of Armenia and Azerbaijan, leading to a gruesome war, severe civilian displacement on both sides, and a series of broken cease-fires. The war has seen the widespread use of drones in warfare, the involvement of mercenary groups from around the world, and reports of atrocities.

The violence stands in stark and sober contrast to the Armenian tradition of Hisnag, the Armenian word for Advent. Hisnag is a

50-day period, about two weeks longer than Advent in the Western Church, in which the Armenian church prepares to celebrate the birth and appearing of Jesus Christ on earth. During Hisnag, Christians seek to rededicate themselves to Christ through actions, thoughts and prayers. The first, second and final weeks of Hisnag are marked by fasting or abstinence from certain foods, such as meat and dairy. Wednesdays and Fridays on non-fasting weeks are also fast days during the Hisnag season. On the other hand, November 21st and December

*Let us pray for a lasting end to hostilities,
and for the gospel of God's peace to be
proclaimed to all people.*



Shepherds escort their sheep on a mountain road in the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. Christians in the region grapple with the violence of the bloody conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, even as they look to celebrate the birth of the Savior who gave His life for all peoples. *Photo by Lora Ohanessian for Unsplash*

9th are marked by feasting, commemorating two Orthodox traditions surrounding Mary, the mother of Jesus.

On Orthodox Christmas Eve, January 5th, and Christmas Day, January 6th, Armenians celebrate with a large feast. Traditional dishes include *bood*, the cooked thigh of a cow; *nevik*, green chard and chickpeas; *anooshaboor*, traditional Armenian Christmas pudding; *ghamapa* and a whole host of soups, sweets, dried fruits, nuts and porridges.

This Advent season, Christians around the world will remember how the Prince of Peace has come, has risen, and will surely come again. As we remember the long centuries of waiting for the first appearance of Jesus, and anticipate His promised Second Coming, may we remember Christians around the world whose communities are embroiled in violent conflict. Let us pray for a lasting end to hostilities, and for the gospel of God's peace to be proclaimed to all peoples, and let us seek to live at peace with those around us.



Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before.

(1 Thessalonians 4:11, NLT)

Quiet Productivity

A "normal" missionary life

Guest contributor Ryan Beneke and his wife Jungshin are university campus missionaries with Cru who serve in Japan. They are based in the city of Kobe and recently welcomed the addition of their third child into their growing family.

People tend to envision missionaries' daily lives as a stream of spiritual highlights: ministering to the needy, preaching the gospel, and getting a front row seat to God's miraculous work of personal transformation. However, the reality of missionary life is that it often looks a lot like the "quiet life" Paul describes in 1 Thessalonians 4:11.

Recently my daughter began attending a local Japanese kindergarten. Because my wife is pregnant and I am working out of the home due to Covid-19, it has been my responsibility to take my daughter to and from school every day. Sometimes she wants to stay after class to play with her friends; sometimes I have to stay after class to attend PTA meetings. The result is that, between travel time and the other interruptions to my schedule, I usually find myself with a couple less hours to work each day than I did before.

How do I respond to my reduced capacity? If my identity as a man and a missionary is tied to what I can produce, then I will probably view this season of life as an irritating distraction. If, however, I recognize that God has called me to follow Christ in whatever circumstances he ordains for me, then I can be content to mind my own business, work with my hands, and live my life quietly to his glory here in this foreign land.

By God's grace, being a full-time missionary provides many opportunities to witness the life-transforming power of the gospel. But more often than not, missionary life also looks as ordinary as taking your daughter to school or attending a PTA meeting.

United We Confess



On March 2, 1863, at the height of the United States Civil War, US Senator James Harlan introduced a resolution in the Senate that appointed a National Fast Day. It would be adopted, signed by President Abraham Lincoln, and observed a month later. The words of the proclamation are as relevant today as they have ever been.

Photo by Lin Kay on Unsplash

It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

March 30, 1863

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Whereas the Senate of the United States, devoutly recognizing the supreme authority and just government of Almighty God in all the affairs of men and of nations, has by a resolution requested the President to designate and set apart a day for national prayer and humiliation; and

Whereas it is the duty of nations as well as of men to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon, and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord;

And insomuch as we know that by His divine law nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins, to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people? We have been the recipients of the choicest

bounties of Heaven; we have been persevered these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

It behooves us, then, to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

Now, therefore, in compliance with the request, and fully concurring in the views of the Senate, I do by this my proclamation designate and set apart Thursday, the 30th day of April, 1863, as a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer. And I do hereby request all the people to abstain on that day from their ordination secular pursuits, and to unite at their several places of

public worship and their respective homes in keeping the day holy to the Lord and devoted to the humble discharge of the religious duties proper to that solemn occasion.

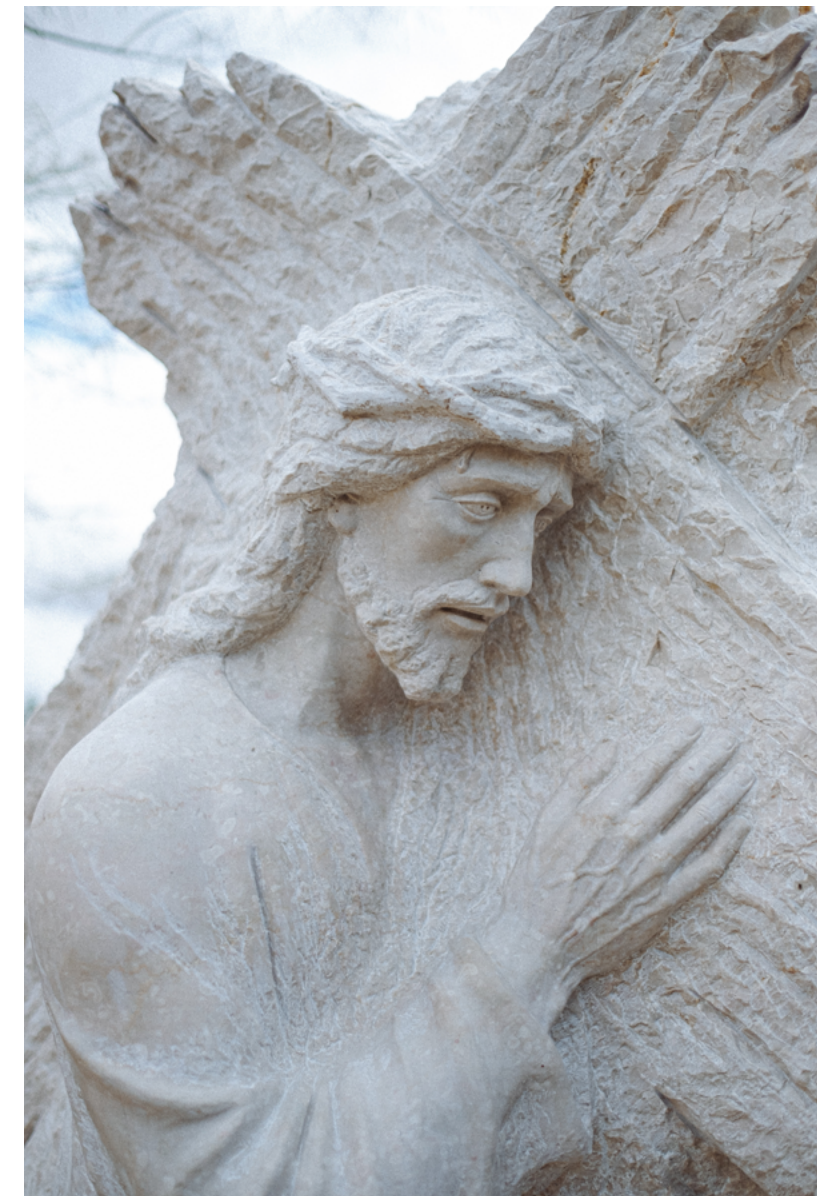
All this being done in sincerity and truth, let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the divine teachings that the united cry of the nation will be heard on high and answered with blessings no less than the pardon of our national sins and the restoration of our now divided and suffering country to its former happy condition of unity and peace. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this 30th day of March, A.D. 1863, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-seventh.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

By the President:

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.



(Abraham Lincoln, Proclamation 97 – Appointing a Day of National Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/203143>)



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