



iCentralCorner

Volume 10

**Discipleship For Eternity
The Reason For Mission**



Words from Editors

This July is CBC mission month during which Sydney is under lockdown due to the pandemic and our church has to be closed temporarily. Thank God we have Sunday services online through which we had several interviews with our supported missionaries. Their stories have been presented in detail in this issue. Furthermore included is the Street Mercy ministry which is run by some brothers and sisters in CBC quietly. Lastly we have a special article on Dr Daniel Wong who has served CBC for most of his life.

Although these articles have different aspects, they all have one common goal. The people in the stories are all disciples of Jesus who are willing to offer themselves to God in fulfilling God's mission.

Let us give you all a challenge. The word "mission" should be familiar to all Christians, but do you know the real meaning of it? Through the messages from Rev Ken and Rev David, may we be open to new insights and seek to hear His call.

Table of Contents

- 2 Words from Editors
- 3 To be a Missional Church
Rev. Ken Clendinning
- 5 Seeing Mission through
God's Eyes
Rev. David Zheng
Translated by Amy Tam
- 6 Missionaries in Malawi
- 8 Linder, The Thai Missionaries
- 12 Brother N: CBC Breed
- 15 Murray and Elizabeth Benns
in Mongolia
- 22 CBC Street Mercy Ministry
Shirley Cheng
- 24 My Brother, My Friend,
My Partner in Christ
Eddie Pang

iCentralCorner Vol. 10, 2021

Publisher: Literature/Website Committee

Central Baptist Church

619 George Street

Sydney NSW 2000 Australia

Advisors: Rev. Ken Clendinning, Rev. David Zheng

Editorial Group: Vivian Ku, George Wu, Crystal Huo, Fiona Yue, Amy Tam
C.Y. Kong

Proofread: Fiona Yue, Andy Lam

Contact: icentralcorner@gmail.com

Copyright 2021 Central Baptist Church



To Be a Missional Church

Rev. Ken Clendinning

Over the past couple of decades, the term “missional” has become a popular buzz word amongst some Christian circles. It is being applied today in such a wide variety of ways that it often results in confusion. Some view missional as the latest church growth strategy, or a better way of doing church evangelism. Others see missional as a means to mobilize church members to do missions more effectively. While still others believe missional is simply the latest Christian fad that will soon pass when the next trendy topic comes along.

I believe there are at least three major truths that help to undergird this missional conversation. Without such a foundation we run the risk of simply attaching the word “missional” onto everything the church is already doing, and therefore ignoring the necessary shift in our thinking.

1. Being a missional church is about the missionary nature of God and His Church. We recognize both God and the church are intrinsically and principally “missionary” in nature. God is a missionary God who sends a missionary church. Scripture is full of sending language that speaks to the missionary nature of a Triune God. God the Father sends the Son, and God the Father and the Son sends the Spirit, and God the Father and the Son and the Spirit sends the church. In the Gospel of John alone, nearly forty times we read about Jesus being sent – either from John himself or from

Jesus' own lips. In the final climatic sending passage in John's Gospel, Jesus sees himself not only as one sent but also as one who is sending: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21).

The church must not be seen simply as an entity that sends missionaries; as admirable as sending and supporting missionary activity might be. Instead, we must recognize that the purpose of the church is derived from the very nature of a sending, missionary God, which in turn compels it to be sent as a missionary people, both individually and collectively.

2. Being a missional church is about incarnational ministry.

While there is nothing wrong with attracting people to participate in various meetings of the church, the missional church is more concerned about sending the people in the church out amongst the people of the world, rather than getting the people of the world in amongst the people of the church. Missional churches see their primary function as one of actively moving into a community to embody the word, deed, and life of Jesus into every part of our lives.

3. Being a missional church is about actively participating in the *missio Dei*, or mission of God. Many times we wrongly assume that the primary activity of God is in the church, rather than recognizing that God's

primary activity is in the world, and the church is God's instrument sent into the world to participate in His redemptive mission. This key distinction clarifies the difference between a church with a missions program and a missional church. A church with a missions program usually sees missions as one activity alongside many other equally important programs of the church. A missional church, on the other hand, focuses all of its activities around its participation in God's agenda for the world. God's mission must form and inform everything we do. All activities of the church must be catalysed by and organized around the *missio Dei*.

During our Month of Mission we have been encouraged to consider how we might become a more missional church. We have also heard reports on how some of the missionaries we have sent to other places live out being missional. I trust their stories will help us to better understand how we might be missionaries in our own context, both as a church here at CBC and as individuals in each of our own contexts.



Seeing Mission through God's Eyes

Rev. David Zheng

Translated by Amy Tam

July is Mission Month at Central, so let us learn to understand God's will for us and the world.

Since the fall of man, God has determined to redeem mankind, to deliver them from sin and return to God. It is also His desire that through His people, all nations can turn to God.

God started off by electing Abraham and establishing through him the nation of Israel. God hoped that the Israelites could become a nation belonging to Him, and through this nation, all nations in the world could come to know God.

Our Lord Jesus fulfilled God's salvation plan and took His promises to Abraham to all mankind. And God's universal intentions have never changed, that is, through the disciples who are already redeemed by Christ, the gospel will reach the whole human race.

In this process the Church has two vital roles to play:

- 1. To nurture believers to become disciples of Christ.**
- 2. To train disciples to lead people who don't know God, including all ethnic groups, to turn to God.**

I believe our church has done a fairly good job of the first task. Through Sunday worship, bible study, fellowship and various ministries, as well as pastoral care, the church has helped brothers and sisters to mature spiritually through the understanding of God's word.

However, how can we better accomplish the second task?

We should first of all become our Lord's witnesses, to influence those around us with our lives so that they can see the beauty of Christ in us and therefore willing to follow Him.

Then we also need to learn to witness among people from different cultures. God has intentions for us to live in this cosmopolitan city of Sydney, that we can witness to people from different cultures around us - your colleagues, classmates, neighbours, friends etc., and to influence them with the beauty of Christ in our lives.

Mission is not just a ministry, but God's universal plan of salvation. Every disciple of Jesus Christ has a part to play in this plan - that is to model the life of Christ to inspire those we can reach out to.

Are you willing to lead a Christ-like life to influence people around you?

Missionaries in Malawi

Peter Ong and his wife Joanne, both our church members, went to Malawi in southern Africa for cross-cultural mission in 2012. Now as a family of five, they have stayed there with their kids for the past nine years.



Peter is now the director of SIM Malawi and Joanne leads a sewing ministry called Tiyamike. This July being CBC Mission month, they have talked to us via video about their mission and the work they have done in Africa.

Carrying out the great mission

In carrying out Jesus' Great Commission, they are living within and working with the local tribes and communities where Jesus is least known.

The Youth

75% of the population in Malawi is under the age of 30, so there is a great need to make disciples among these young people especially those outside the church. There are social communities where many of the youth do not know Jesus or have a personal relationship with Him. These youth groups are a main focus for Peter and Joanne in making disciples.

The Yao

The Yao is a tribal group living along the lake shore of Malawi. They are predominantly a Muslim group who need a gospel witness in the community. Currently they have missionaries from Ethiopia among them sharing the gospel and planting churches there.

The Chinese and Indian communities

Many Chinese come to Malawi for business and they have never been to any church or heard anything about the gospel. They are recruiting for missionaries who will work among them and similarly for the Indian communities there.

Tiyamike sewing ministry

This sewing ministry is to help those vulnerable and illiterate women who do not possess any skill to earn living income. It started in 2014 when Peter and Joanne were asked by one of the church leaders to start a sewing class together with a bible study.

They started the first class in the garage and now it is almost the tenth class. Each class lasts for nine months and sewing is taught weekly on three mornings. There will be bible study and staff devotion before each lesson. The students enrolled are widows, beggars and mothers who are unable to provide for themselves. They will find a sponsor to support each student for the course who will then receive a sewing machine at the graduation.

Vision to support the blind

Currently, they plan to have a new course for blind women including beggars they have met on the street. By understanding their background and individual stories, they will try to teach and equip them with new skills. Pray that God will lead them to start this new course successfully, especially during the current pandemic.

How they start their cross-cultural mission journey

It was in high school when Peter came across cross-cultural mission to Malawi, but the idea or passion began in CBC. Peter came to CBC during his high school years. At the time, the youth leaders were mission minded, all eager about spreading the gospel. Their passion made him consider whether this would be something he would do for the rest of his life. At the end of high school, he made a dangerous prayer to God that he would go wherever and do whatever God called. This was the start of his journey to cross-cultural ministry, which ended up in Malawi after his marriage to Joanne and finishing Bible College.

God's calling to Joanne came when she was in university. At that time, she had been dating with Peter with marriage in mind. But she did not want to be just a wife of a missionary just tagging along the side. She prayed and asked God if He had a personal calling for her. One night when she went to a Christian gathering with Christine Lau and Priscilla Wong, the speaker gave a call asking people to commit themselves to God and let God use them whenever and wherever God called. At that moment, she had committed herself to God. Later at home she could not believe she had made that promise, but at the same time there was a real excitement and she has had that feeling ever since.

How CBC can help them carry out the great mission overseas

The Tiyamike sewing ministry needs financial support. Brothers and

sisters in CBC can help sponsor each woman in the class by fund raising.



Peter, as SIM director in Malawi, hopes to have short term or long term recruits join the team. CBC can share in the work of the ministries by sending co-workers to Malawi. They can help in the local Chinese community, take a supportive role in church planting or roles in other key ministries reaching out to the unreached.

Prayer points

1. Covid cases are rising in Malawi and pray that God will protect them from a potential third wave.
2. Pray for Peter that he has the wisdom to navigate through the challenging issues and responsibilities in entering his sixth month as SIM Director in Malawi.
3. Pray for the team in this transition period, that God will lead and let them know the way to reach those communities in Malawi who have never heard about Jesus.
4. Pray for the three children of Peter and Joanne: Teaghan, Micaiah and Lucas that God will look after them in their learning and living in Malawi.
5. Pray for the provision of teachers for the Tiyamike sewing ministry in preparation for the new class in September.



Johan & Debbie Linder have been a part of the CBC family ever since they went to Thailand in 1993. The Linders often visited CBC whenever they came home for visit from Thailand. CBC has been a faithful supporter of the Linders' ministry over many years and the Linders are thankful for that.

You might know that Thailand is a Buddhist country where more than 90% of people are Buddhist. Another 5% of the people are Muslim. That leaves the Christian population of about 2% i.e only 1 in 50 people is Christian (either Protestant or Catholic).

Introducing himself, Johan says, "We went to Thailand originally to tell people about the good news - that God loves them and God sent his son to die for them. When people responded to the message and God's love, we would group them together in a small group and that would eventually grow into a church of people worshiping God together.

"When we returned to Sydney about 15 years ago, I found out there were many Thai people in the city. I got

permission to work among them and reach out to them, to tell them about Jesus as well. And that's what I have been doing for the last 15 years since we came home.

"CBC has been really good and let us use the Jarvis Centre for that time. Now it is great to see the group growing and thriving as they have been meeting together on Sundays."

Johan and Debbie have spent many years serving the Thai people.

Johan shares how the journey started.

"I am happy to talk about that because God came into my life in a very real way when I was a teenager. I came from a very troubled family - we were a migrant family (originally from Sweden) - my parents divorced. Life was very hard for our family. When I became a Christian, I was 15 years old and my life was turned around. Because I experienced God's love for myself, I wanted to share that with others who didn't know him.

"In Australia, there are many opportunities to know about God and to know about Jesus. I was

challenged at a conference to think about crossing over into another culture and learn a new language in order to tell people in other countries about God.

“And we were drawn to OMF because they seemed like a really good agency to go with and through OMF we were led to serve in Thailand which has many people that don’t know Jesus as I’ve already explained.”

Johan’s experiences in the past have shaped his ministry to the Thai people and to reach some of the most unreached people. **Here are his stories about how today’s churches are living out the great commission.**

“In my job, I get to visit many different churches and have contacted a lot of different churches as well. It’s great to be able to have an overview of what is happening.”



“Reaching out across cultures is not easy and I think you probably already know that because you have lots of different cultures in your church. You have the Cantonese culture, Mandarin-speaking culture, the ABC culture, Brazilians, Thai’s.. it’s a very multi-cultural church.

“And as I have gone around to many different churches I found that some of them have given up on sending workers to other countries because it’s really hard to learn a new culture and a new language. And it’s expensive to send people overseas.

It often takes a long time to see any fruit. It takes real faith to be sending someone overseas long term.

“Many churches just look at their local area and think there are so many people here who don’t know Jesus. So they say, ‘*why should we send our best people who know how to do ministry and spend a lot of money and send them to other countries? It seems like a big waste.*”

“But what we need to keep in mind is there are still countries who don’t know about God’s love at all and have no opportunity to hear about it. Scripture reminds us that we are to keep the whole world in mind, we are to be witnesses to all nations and this is a really important point.

“I can think of one church that has adopted Christian workers in Thailand for instance and this came about because they have a pastor and his wife who have worked as missionaries and got the church on board with the vision of supporting overseas workers. And they financially supported a few families working in Thailand and also in Japan and they also support a lady who serves here in Australia with OMF. But they do a lot more than that.

“They also organise regular teams to visit those missionaries that they support when they can. Before Covid, they were sending a team every year to join in the missionaries adventure camp for high school students. They would go rock climbing with the students, they would go kayaking, swimming, bushwalking with all the Buddhist

and the Muslim students and share the love of Jesus with them.

“This was hard for those who went because many of them came from an Asian church and they had never slept outside in a tent before; and they had never been rock climbing or kayaking or done any of those things. But they were willing to give a try and they worked hard at it.

“So they supported the missionaries with much more than just money and prayers. And many people in the church because of that knew them personally and the people they were trying to reach out to. There was a real partnership and trust between the church here in Sydney and the missionaries that they were supporting overseas in Thailand.

“OMF as a mission agency was able to partner with that - to help, prepare and train the teams as they leave to support the missionaries so that they are being helpful in a good way and they are able to answer all the questions before they go. So when they go they are prepared and have the opportunity to talk about Jesus with the students they meet in a way that is culturally appropriate.

“That is just one example of a church that has been really active not just sending people overseas but also working in their local area to reach people where they are at.”

Johan then answers the question about **how CBC can be involved in the great commission and about its role as a local church.**

“CBC is so well placed to reach out and mission to other cultures because you have so much

resources, skills and abilities that many other churches don't have.



“First of all, you understand Asian cultures. You understand that many Asian cultures are very different. Many Aussie people think Asian cultures are all the same. Just like Chinese people might think that all Western cultures are the same too. But we know every country and nation operates very differently. Just having that awareness of how different people are is a really big head start.

“I think that some of the things that CBC needs to remember is that to have a global vision. We think of all the people in the world and how many of those people are actually living right here in Sydney. I can think of the Census that has been done in the inner city area - there are Koreans, Brazilians, Thais, Indonesians.. there are so many different cultures.

“Some of these cultures are more Christian than others. Some of them are ready to reach out to other cultures. Some of them don't know anything about Jesus. For example, most of the Thai you see around you in Thaitown, they know nothing at all about Jesus.

“When you are reaching out to them that you are really starting from nothing at all. They have no knowledge of what the Christian

God is like. If we have a global vision, we can think about how God can use us to be reaching out to people of other cultures who don't know Jesus.

“Regardless of how much knowledge you have, I think it's really important to remember that we have to be learners of new cultures. You really need to be a learner to understand how another culture thinks. Sometimes we think ‘we know it all’ or ‘we know how to do this.. how to do that’. I lived in Thailand for 14 years and it took about 3-4 years just to learn the language. And it took even longer to understand Thai culture and what is really important to Thai people and how I can learn to get along with them.

“If we are going to communicate God's love to people from other cultures, we need to really be a learner to do that effectively because it doesn't come naturally. When we move into a new cultural situation, whatever culture that is, we have to really be humble and we have to be prepared to learn what it means to be communicating effectively with that culture. That role is really important - to be a learner.”

Finally Johan shares the **prayer needs of himself and Debbie, and the Thai community.**

“I have been so encouraged to see the Thai group grow to where it is now. I am so encouraged that CBC has adopted the Thai group and Nun and Num are leading the group so well. It has been a tremendous encouragement to me.

“First of all, I really would like you to pray for the relationship between the

Thai group and the rest of the church, because there are different cultures in the church, it is very easy for miscommunication to happen. You know I have had that happen to me many times. It's easy sometimes for people to not feel welcomed even though we do want to welcome them, but sometimes that trust can break down so easily when there is misunderstanding. Communication is really important so that trust and understanding can grow. So just pray that it will continue to grow.

“We would also appreciate prayer for Debbie and myself as we finish up as the National Director of OMF in Australia. We are finishing up at the end of August and we will move to New Zealand in the new year to start as the National Director there. It is a leap year of change for our family. We're going through lots of changes. Our youngest daughter Julie will be getting married in January. I also found out just recently that I am going to be a grandfather because our oldest son is having a baby in December. So we'll be leaving straight after that - leaving as grandparents going off and doing a new job!

“We'd really like prayer as we manage all those transitions and move to a new country. We'd really appreciate that. Thank you very much.”



Brother N : CBC Breed

Home grown and in full bloom!

Brother N grew up and spent his first 27 years at Central because his parents Spencer and Sylvia are members of the Cantonese congregation. In the eyes of many brothers and sisters, N is our kid, our family. He has now been married for 13 years, with two daughters – A who's eight and E is six this year. He and his wife S are missionaries with the Australian Wycliffe Bible Translators. Before Covid they lived in Sarawak in East Malaysia, on the island of Borneo. But his ministry project is mainly focused on Indonesia, so he used to travel to Indonesia every quarter. They intentionally chose to serve in Indonesia and Malaysia because they are Muslim countries. Indonesia is the biggest Muslim country in the world with about 227 million followers of Islam – about 87% of the population. Malaysia is also a Muslim majority country – about 62% of its population, where culturally and politically Islam is very strong.

God's Calling

N and S received separate calling from God to be missionaries before they got married. N talked to his teacher as early as in Year 5 about becoming a missionary, but it wasn't until he was in university that he received the strong calling from God to serve Him in vocational ministry. It was through church, his pastor and also the Christian group at

university that N shaped his understanding of what it meant to serve God vocationally, and learned about the different possibilities and the steps required. S was in a Christian group at university where she received God's calling to become a missionary.

But God's calling to both N and S when they were at university wasn't that specific. It was about 6 years later after they began working and got married when God started to put Muslim ministry on their hearts. When N was half way through a 3 year degree at bible college they still didn't know where God was leading them. They earnestly prayed and asked: "Our Lord, please show us what You want us to do? How do you want us to serve you?" The very next Sunday, as usual N was sitting in the sanctuary at CBC waiting for the 11am service to start. Then a Muslim man came in and sat next to him and started a conversation. Before this N never had a proper conversation with a Muslim and he thought it was really strange that of all the churches in Sydney this Muslim man would come to CBC in the CBD. And there were more than 150 people in the service, he would choose to sit next to N. N believed this was no



coincidence, especially when they had been praying to seek God's will. So he thought that through this man God is telling them to explore the Muslim ministry, to understand more about Muslim and Islam, and making Muslim friends.

That very same week the bible college was signing up people for college mission for the following year and one of the locations was to go to a Muslim country. Based on security reasons the college was not able to advertise which Muslim country. But N and S felt that if God wanted them to learn more about Muslim and Islam they should really sign up. And so they went with the college trip to Bangladesh, a country where over 90% of its population are Muslims. They stayed in the capital city of Dhaka for two weeks and that trip really opened up their eyes to the needs of the unreached Muslim people groups. Dhaka has a population of almost 10 million but primarily unreached. During the trip they lived in a suburb with nearly one million people, but there were only two missionaries. With the ratio of two missionaries to a million Muslims they were astounded at the great need. After that mission



trip they had more clarity on the calling to serve in a Muslim country.

Subsequently they joined a training program that focused on preparing people to serve in Muslim countries. Partnered with their mentor, N and S reached out to Muslim people in Greenacre and Lakemba for three years. They learned a lot about Islam and how to talk to Muslims about Jesus through this program and through their relationship with their mentor.

But throughout those 3 years of ministry and training in Greenacre and Lakemba, N always had a question of how they could get a visa to go to a Muslim country where missionaries could not openly expose their identity. They started talking to different missionary agencies and then the opportunity to contact Wycliffe Bible Translators with whom they shared how God had guided them all along. Because N's major was Linguistics at university, and with the help of Wycliffe, they were able to secure a ministry and role in Malaysia.

“Intentional” Muslim Ministry

Before Covid they lived in East Malaysia for almost two years and saw first-hand the needs of the people there. Sarawak, the state where they lived, is culturally a bit more diverse than other parts of Malaysia, and more opportunities to reach the Malay and Muslim groups. N felt that the local churches need more

encouragement to reach out to their Muslim neighbours. And outside the city of Sarawak in really remote rural areas outreach is even harder as Christians are not allowed to enter Muslim villages but only Christian villages.

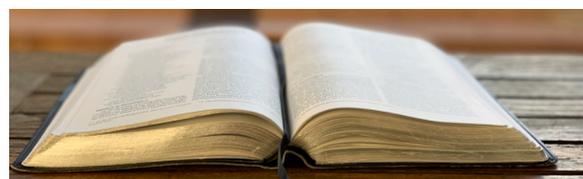
Whenever talking to people about Muslim ministry, whether in Australia or Indonesia or Malaysia, N believes it is most important to “intentionally” connect more with their people groups, talk to them and develop friendship. We Christians need to step out of our comfort zone and maybe visit a mosque, because Muslims rarely visit a Christian church. On the other hand, we need to respect that, for traditional Muslims, male and female boundaries are very important. Within their social structure they also see older people more important in a teacher role, so it will be an advantage to have workers of different ages within a team. It is more effective in outreach to have someone older to come in a teacher role to respond to questions of Muslim friends.

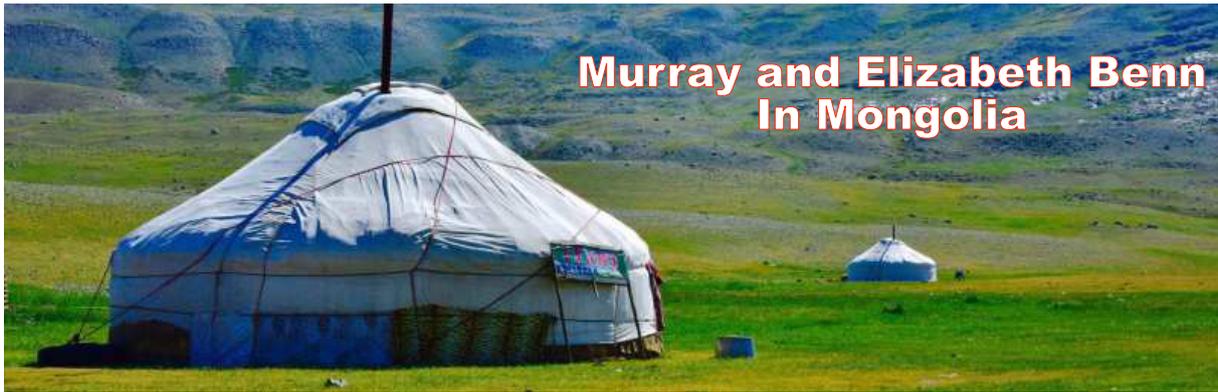
N believes another way that our local church can participate in Muslim ministry is to better prepare ourselves. A lot of the Muslims that live in Sydney are very keen to argue against Christianity. They actually get training in talking to Christians and how to convert them to Islam. As Christians we need to be prepared and learn how to answer them. It is not just about

learning about Islam and their belief, we actually need to find out what is their most common argument against Christianity and prepare a reasonable response. The local church can run training programs and invite experienced speakers to help us to be more prepared for Muslim ministry.

Pray for them

- Pray that God will guide them in their Muslim ministries, and give them wisdom in words to more effectively spread the gospel. We also pray for the Muslim people groups that they can overcome community pressure, differences in culture and worldview, so that they can find Jesus.
- Pray that God will keep N and his family safe and healthy and that the Covid crisis in Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia can improve so that they can return to Malaysia as soon as possible to continue their ministry.
- Pray for God’s wisdom, that in the meantime while N and S are working on remote assignment in Sydney for Indonesia and Malaysia and missing living in that community, they can maintain good contact with local churches to continue to work, analyse and respond to opportunities and challenges.





Murray and Elizabeth have served with Pioneers for 11 years in rural Mongolia. They first went to Mongolia with their 4 children, and one by one, as they turned 18, they left to return to Australia for university and to live independently. Their eldest is 23 and the youngest is nearly 16, much older than they were when they first came to visit CBC. Now only Ella, their youngest, is living with them and she is the only one returning to Mongolia when the Benns go back.

The Benns live in a small, rural town of around 20,000 people called Tsetserleg, in the central province of Mongolia called Arkhangai. It is about 500km west of the capital city, Ulaanbaatar; it takes about a 7 to 8 hours drive by car. They describe the place as lovely - the summers are beautiful but very short, and the winters are long and get a little cool, down to -35C overnight.

It is in this place that the Benns own a business - a guesthouse, cafe, bakery and tourism business which caters to both locals and tourists. The typical tourists are adventure travellers who come to ride mountain bikes, motorcycles, do horse treks and experience the nomadic culture. In a normal year

the business employs around 25 to 30 staff. Murray says, "Covid has knocked us around as you can imagine given we are in tourism." This business gives the Benns a fantastic connection with the community, and provides lots of opportunities for discipleship, which is what they believe God has called them to do amongst the small Christian community in the town.

Responding to the Great Commission Call

As to how this journey in the mission field started, Elizabeth tells their story, "Even before we got married we thought the Lord might be calling us to go overseas and serve, but instead, surprisingly, we felt that He called us to stay in Camden, Sydney, and serve as lay people in our local church." This is what Murray and Elizabeth did for many years - they got involved in running play groups, youth group leading, bible studies, young adults ministry, pre-marriage preparation - everything! Every few years they would pray and ask God if this was where they were supposed to be and as they felt this was where they were supposed to be, they kept going.

Eventually God did call them to go, starting with Murray, then Elizabeth,

then their 2 older children, who at the time were about 6 and 8. Normally after dinner, the Benns would read the Bible and pray as a family. One night their eldest son Jack, who was about 8, asked, "Why do we always pray for missionaries? Why don't we ever go?" And the daughter Rosie said, "Yeah, and I want to learn a new language." They could see that God was preparing even their children's hearts for overseas mission.

Why Mongolia?

At that time, Murray and Elizabeth didn't know where and so they just prayed. Not long after, a couple who was preparing to go long term in Mongolia to serve came to their church. After seeing a slide show, the Benns knew that was where they were supposed to go. Then they started seeing "Mongolia" everywhere, and doors started opening up making it possible for them to move their family to rural Mongolia.

During that time in preparation, the Benns learnt that the Christian church in Mongolia was very new, and everyone was a new Christian. There weren't any older, more mature Christians or mentors who could help them understand the Bible and figure out what a Mongolian Christian is supposed to look like.

They felt specifically called to be in a discipling role in Mongolia. As they look back now at the years of experience in discipling in their home church in Camden, they can now understand why God had

stalled them - He was training them in their home church to go.

The Unique Mongolian Culture

Mongolia is a traditionally nomadic herding culture but over the past generations there has been an increasing number of people relocating to the towns and cities and it is becoming a lot more urbanised.



Mongolia's population is about 3 million and half the population lives in Ulaanbaatar. About a third of the population remains as nomad people. This migration to the city has had some significant social issues. Traditionally, the men were herdsman and were not educated because they were looking after animals. Relocating to the city has left them quite displaced with nothing to do in town. Typically the women are finding work but a lot of men can't (and don't), and they end up turning to alcohol. And alcohol has actually become a huge social problem in Mongolia.

The other significant impact is that the country has come out from under Russian Socialism about 30 years ago. The country is still finding its feet since then. There is a lot of distrust of each other. In fact they

are more likely to trust a foreigner than another Mongol, even within the church, which is very difficult.

The whole country runs on bribery and corruption, from day-to-day interactions right up to, and especially in, the top levels of government. There is gradually a polarization of the very rich and very poor, with very little middle class.

Murray and Elizabeth recount how fast Mongolia has developed, “The country is developing incredibly fast, becoming more westernised and modern. Even in the time we have been there, we have seen huge development. The missionary couple who lived in the town before us bought a car only 5 years before we arrived, and that car was the 7th car in our town. Now there is traffic jam even in a small town. There are traffic lights and roundabouts and it is very hard to find parking anywhere. When the traffic lights were first put in, some people didn’t know what colour to go on and what colour to stop on. We saw herders who’d come into town on their horses just sitting at the traffic lights perplexed. And NO ONE knew how to drive around a roundabout.

“When we first arrived we celebrated Christmas and we couldn’t buy a Christmas tree and decorations to be able to celebrate in an Australian manner. Now there are Christmas trees in every shop leading up to New Year which is



when they celebrate with what we call a Christmas Tree. So the country is changing rapidly.”

Living Amongst the People in Mongolia

The Bennis describe Mongolia as a country of extremes, not just in the weather. Elizabeth says, “The people can be really warm and hospitable, yet can also appear hard and even rude at times. Living amongst them can be quite difficult. It is very different from the Australian culture.

“Mongolians’ apparent self-centredness and pride can be wearing to live with day-in, day-out, when you haven’t been brought up with that. Even in the church, humility and graciousness are rare characteristics, because they are looked down upon and seen as weak and undesirable. People don’t want them. They are not good things to be if you are a Mongolian.”

Elizabeth finds life in Mongolia very spontaneous. A long-term plan in Mongolia might be what you are going to do next week so the Bennis have to adapt and hold loosely to their plans. She recalls a story about being invited to a picnic by the people in their church, “We get a phone call that day inviting us to a picnic by the river. Even if we had all these plans we were going to do we had to drop them to go. We have to live in a lot more spontaneous way.”

There are also many other unique aspects of the Mongolian culture, as Elizabeth continues, “It is also an event-driven culture, not a time-driven one. People don’t really multi-task. You don’t see people walking down the street eating, for example,

because that would be 2 separate activities. So it means efficiency is not highly valued. Time is NOT money! This is another adjustment we have had to make. We have had to learn to be more patient and just go with whatever is happening at the time.

“We have had to learn to speak much more bluntly when we want something to happen, than we would in Australia. This has been very difficult for Murray and I, but our kids seem to have learnt how to be comfortable speaking like this. Equally, we have learnt not to take offence when people speak bluntly to us, eg. “You’ve got fat!” (while patting our tummy). This lack of shyness makes them great evangelists. They just tell it like it is. This is something we can definitely learn from them.”

The Benns find the Mongolians very resourceful, out of necessity, and they have a very positive “can do” attitude to most things. This is very difficult to the Western culture, “So, while we can look at a broken car and think that’s the end of it, they will look at it as a challenge, and will often find a creative solution. That attitude is a great thing for us to learn. Mongolians don’t see lack of resources as a problem. They are far more willing to trust in God and just go than an average Westerner would be. I think we all need to be more like that.”

How The Benns Family Make an Impact on the Mongolians - Three Ways

1. Business principles

One thing the Benns have come to realise is that the Mongolians that

they engage with (both in the business and church) have never really seen handling of money, and business modelled without using bribery and



corruption. They operate their tourism business on godly principles - honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, servant leadership - and they have shown that it can work successfully and be profitable, even while paying all wages due, and taxes! Actually, paying their taxes in full and on time is such a stand-out thing in Mongolia, that Murray has been on national TV a couple of times to accept awards for having paid the taxes on time, which is an excellent thing to model.

2. Conflict resolution

Most Mongolians the Benns associate with have no idea how to resolve conflict. Historically they are nomadic people. They just picked up their yurt and moved away without any resolution with each other. But now, living in towns, they can’t do that as easily. The Benns have been called in many times to help resolve a number of different disputes between colleagues, boss and employee, pastor and church members, even husband and wife. Murray says, “To be able to sit down with them and to work through issues of forgiveness and reconciliation, and teaching them what the Bible says about humility, about grace and about loving each

other, has been really powerful and a fantastic discipleship opportunity.”

3. Parenting and the Christian family

A few years after the Bennis first arrived in Mongolia, a couple of ladies they were employing said to Elizabeth, “We were so happy when you arrived in our town with your 4 little kids. We have so many questions to ask about how God tells us to raise a family. Our parents weren’t Christians, and we’ve never seen it done before.”



(The previous missionaries had no children). Elizabeth’s friends were blown away when they saw her kids obey straight away without a tantrum, and asked how this was done. Modelling Christian parenting has opened up many opportunities to be able to speak into the lives of people there, and to be able to look at what the Bible says about parenting children and be godly husbands and wives.

How can CBC Respond and Be Obedient to the Great Commission

“The Great Commission was given to all followers of Christ,” Murray shares, “so we are ALL called to be missionaries, to share the Gospel and make disciples of all nations, wherever we are. Some of us will be

called to do that in other countries and cultures, but some of us are called to stay and share the Gospel where we are, and to make it possible for others to go. It’s really an attitude, a Gospel focus. It’s making the most of every opportunity, being deliberate and intentional in our day-to-day interactions and relationships. It’s being prayerful for opportunities to come up and for the courage to use those opportunities for the Gospel. It’s being willing to walk alongside younger Christians and nurture them in the faith. All of this is fulfilling the Great Commission.

“All Christians are part of the Body of Christ. We are one body but have different functions. Not all of us can go to different countries and cultures to be missionaries, but the local church can support those who do - by praying, supporting financially, encouraging, even visiting those who go. It’s a huge role, and most missionaries on the field will tell you they couldn’t be there without the support of their local church. That’s how it should be and that’s what you (CBC) are doing.

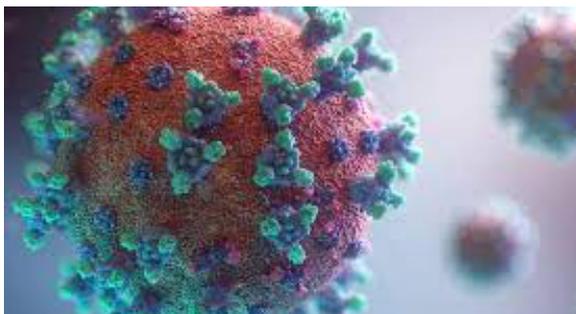
“We don’t see that we are in Mongolia alone; we are simply representatives of the churches back in Australia that support us. We are the hands and feet of those local churches that reach out to the Mongolians. So owning this mission to Mongolia is important to CBC, and doing what you would normally be doing to care for your own members and to care for your missionaries is the role of the sending church.”

On the work of Pioneers, Murray continues, “Pioneers actually has a very strong focus, one of their core values in fact, on supporting and enabling the sending churches. They do not see that it is Pioneers who sends missionaries out – Pioneers is committed to supporting local churches to be the ones who are sending. We are being sent by you, fulfilling what Paul talked about in Romans 10:15 when he says, “And how can anyone preach if they are not sent?”

How CBC can pray for the Mongolians and the Bennis Family

Murray and Elizabeth are very thankful that CBC is able to pray alongside them. They are incredibly encouraged every time they know that their supporting church, their supporting people are praying alongside them.

1. For the Covid situation in Mongolia - it is out of control and the statistics at the moment make Mongolia much worse than places like India and Indonesia per head of population. But the Mongolians are not big enough population to make news. The whole place runs on an informal economy, being that people are working today (taxi drivers, wood cutters etc) to be paid this afternoon so they can eat tonight.



Putting a country like that in lockdown, it is impossible for the people not to be working. They have been in lockdown for a long time. Even though the numbers are very bad they have opened up to allow people to be working and travelling again. Please pray for what the outcome of that is going to be in a state of Covid.

2. For their church in Mongolia - the church has been able to meet face to face only 6 weeks in the last 18 months, and the countryside people are not an online culture, so very few church people have had much feeding or community with other Christians during this time. Please pray for the state of the church once they are allowed to be meeting together.



3. For their business - Fairfield is hurting, given the huge downturn in business due to tourism being stopped entirely. Give thanks that it has pushed the staff to show initiative and creativity and there has been some positives. Please pray for provision for the business so it can continue. If there is no business the Bennis have no visa to be in the country so they are dependant on business to be there.

4. For wisdom and clarity - as the Bennis work out when it is the right time to return to Mongolia. At this stage they will re-assess

early next year, and see how everything looks.

5. ***Give thanks for the miracle of the Bennis*** being able to get back to Australia late last year in time for Jack's wedding, and that now they'll be able to be here for the wedding of Rosanna, their 2nd-born, who is getting married this year.
6. ***New roles with Pioneers*** - please pray for the Bennis' new roles with Pioneers which they begin from now. They will be working in member care roles, specifically with children, and in mobilisation roles, specifically with families (with children) who are preparing to head overseas. Please pray they are going to be valuable in that role for people.

Again, Murray and Elizabeth would like to thank CBC and would love that we pray for them.



CBC Street Mercy Ministry

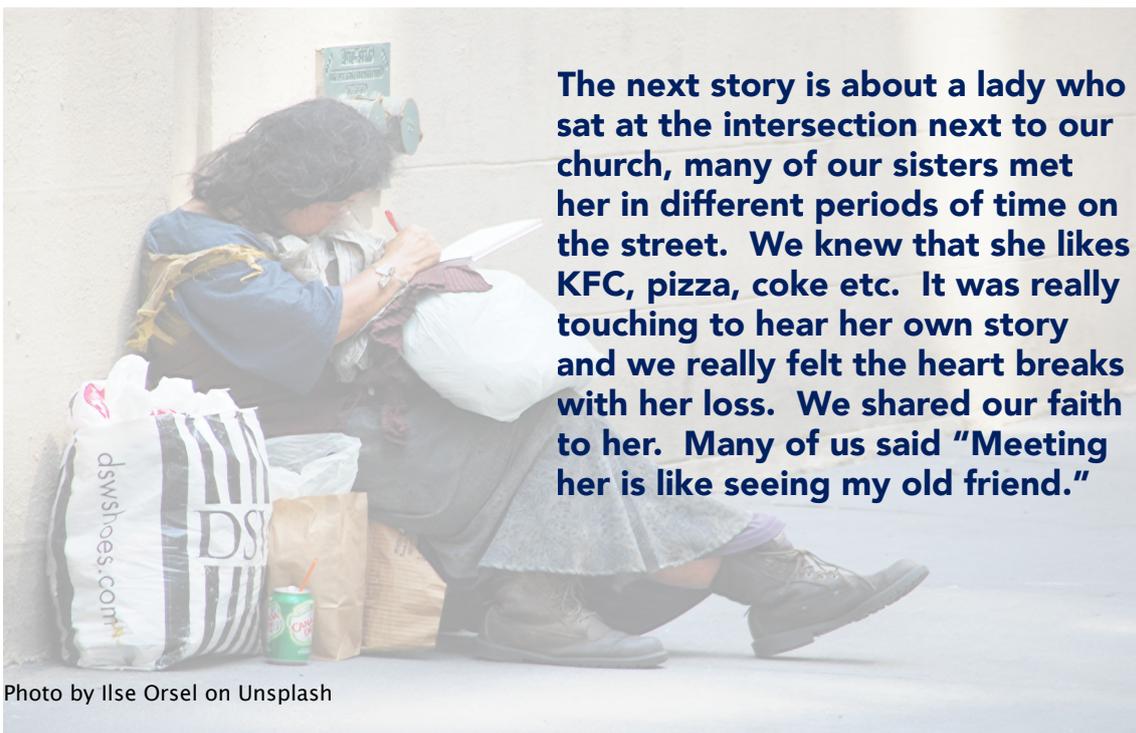
Shirley Cheng

Many of you may ask, do we have a church street mercy ministry??? Yes, we do, we are a group of brothers and sisters that do not meet up regularly, do not have agenda, but we just have a private facebook and whatsapp group to pray for the others doing their work and of course our street friends. Today I am sharing some stories and my heart journey.

The first story is from the Christmas day, we met a Christian lady and a man on the street, who both can not speak. When we worshipped God together with singing 'joy to the world', the lady moved her body joyfully and kept nodding her head in response to the lyrics. She opened her arms and looked upon the sky. This is a life changing worship experience for me. And we discovered that they originally do not know each other, but by mercy, the lady took the man home and offered him shelter, to keep him away from the unsafe environment of the streets. This is MERCY in my eyes. At last, we held each others' shoulder and prayed for the faith in God. THIS IS CHURCH.



Photo by Ben White on Unsplash



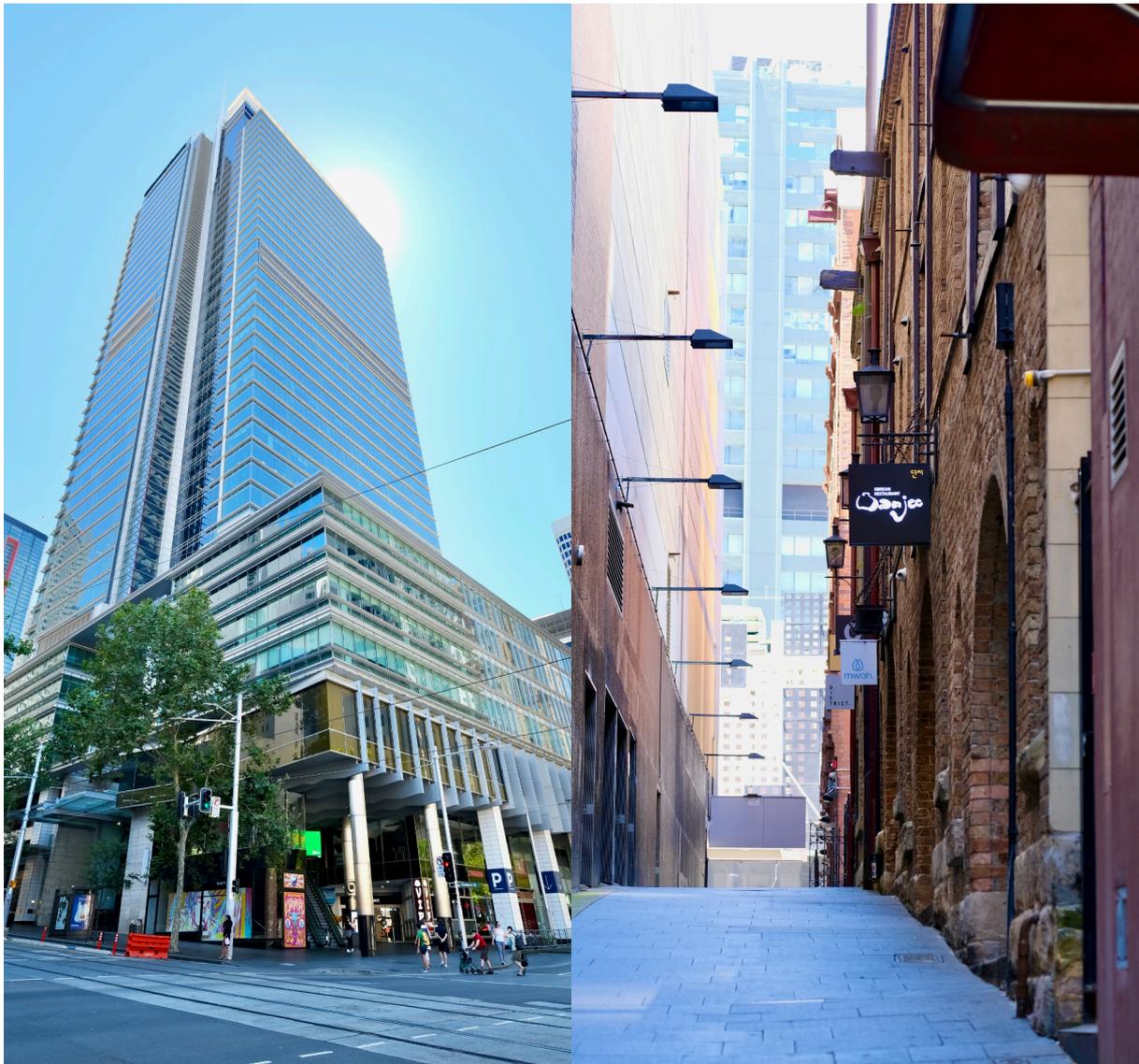
The next story is about a lady who sat at the intersection next to our church, many of our sisters met her in different periods of time on the street. We knew that she likes KFC, pizza, coke etc. It was really touching to hear her own story and we really felt the heart breaks with her loss. We shared our faith to her. Many of us said "Meeting her is like seeing my old friend."

Photo by Ilse Orsel on Unsplash

The last story I am going to share is my struggle during this journey. We sometimes meet some street friends asking for money to help with their accommodation. I personally always struggle to give or not, as I was thinking about if he is going to use my money to get cigarettes, drugs, alcohol etc. But there was a time, my brother encouraged me that you never know if one is really in need or not, God did not teach us to judge whenever we help others. Rather He asked us to "Get an honest job so that you can help others who can't work" from Ephesians 4:28. Pray for

the pure heart that we could continue walk with the people we met.

In this ministry, we seldom meet the same street friends again. We do not know how they went with their life and faith, but we believe God asks us to just go and be His witness. We are not calling everyone to join our team, but I am writing to invite you to support and walk with our street friends. We are definitely grateful to hear your experience and encourage each other under the light of Jesus.



My Brother, My Friend, My Partner in Christ

Eddie Pang

Where do we start with someone who has been here long before most of us in Central! I am talking about **Dr Daniel Kinwei Wong and Mrs Jean Wong**. They joined the Asian Department of CBC in the 60's together with some of the well-known Central identities such as Rev Edward Yu, Dr Kitty Yu, Rev Joseph and Nancy Fung, Dr Paul Fung, Coleman Chan.

In 1969, Jean and Daniel were engaged in April (Rev Harry Rowe) and then married at the end of December the same year by Rev Ben Ewing. Daniel was baptised in 1962 in Kowloon City Baptist Church in Hong Kong while Jean was baptised in North Sydney Church of Christ in August 1961.

Arrived at Sydney in January 1965 from HK, Daniel did not come with any specific academic ambition or plan. He was just happy to be able to study in Australia, hopefully good enough to go to a university. To cut a long story short, Our Heavenly Father enabled Daniel to study in Medicine and then specialised in Anesthesiology. That is far beyond his expectation or imagination, as he said. Jean, from Ingham Queensland, was an accountant and was looking after Daniel's books from a successful practice. Daniel could see God's guidance in all his choices during the earlier years in university and in hospital. All these were God's grace which certainly enriched his faith in the following years in CBC.

Daniel had a lustrous ministry in Central. He served as a deacon for years, many terms of Diaconate chair, member of the Church Council and

chaired committees such as Structural review, Constitution and Bylaws review committee just to mention a few. One can still find evidence of Daniel's contribution in the existing Church

constitution and Bylaws. He is not one to mince words and believes in 'agree to disagree' principle although he will not give in without a good debate. He is forthright, outspoken, logical, systematic, caring, always Bible based and prepares his Bible study material well if he is to lead the lesson.

In addition to looking after the finance of Daniel's practice, **Jean taught the Junior Sunday School for primary school age children for over 20 years.** Out of her students, many dedicated their lives as missionaries or in full time ministry. Included in the group taught by Jean are Priscilla Wong, Nathaniel Wong, Esmond Wong, Lilian Pang, Peter Ong and Joanne Kwok. There were many others who took part in short term missions in Australia and overseas. Jean also taught English as a Second Language on Thursdays helping a lot of Chinese migrants to settle in Sydney.

Always ready to help, Daniel is a handyman. Should see his tool shed! He would do whatever he is able to do, e.g. Deaconess Hy Lam knew he could



change washer in the tap and she asked him. He did go out early the next Sunday morning and fixed that tap in the ladies toilet. As Daniel would say, "whatever needs to be done – just do it". On the other hand, because of his profession, Daniel knows he could never be the church secretary as the role requires someone to be available in the church office occasionally to perform some of the duty of CHURCH SECRETARY between 9am and 4pm during the week, like Norman or Della who served the church so very well before.

Daniel enjoyed his time at the Mandarin worship service and bible study. Despite encouragement from the pastors he did not want to get too involved in the ministries since he was thinking of retirement. Daniel feels pastors should go through the Biblical doctrines on the pulpit periodically through the years to ensure believers are solidly grounded in it. These days, he is worshipping in Castle Hill Baptist which is closer to their home and very strong in biblical teaching.

Daniel speaks good English while his Cantonese and Mandarin are more than average and that's why he was in the interpreting team for many years. Daniel knows his music and enjoys singing. He used to be a member of the choir and sang in the bass section. Loves his classical music and is very particular with his music system. He loves his

coffee (his own blend mind you) and a glass of fine wine too. Daniel enjoys fishing, tennis, but, no golf for this doctor though. Daniel enjoys good food especially Italian cuisine and dabbles in cooking although most of us will remember Jean's braised pork knuckle!

Now in retirement Daniel and Jean are enjoying the grand children from his two sons and daughters-in-law who were all well brought up in CBC years ago. His PRAYER for Central is for us to keep on with our missional hearts and remain the lampstand in the City of Sydney where God has strategically placed us!



As an appreciation for the over 50 years of faithful ministries by Jean and Daniel, Central had prepared a souvenir plaque to be presented to them in a farewell luncheon before their retirement and worship in a local church. Since the pandemic has made the party unattainable, therefore on behalf of the Church, Pastor Anthony and Deacon Eddie had to present the gift to them during a home visit.



มูลนิธิเพื่อเด็กพิการ
ศูนย์ส่งเสริมและพัฒนา
ศักยภาพของเด็กพิการ
ศูนย์ส่งเสริมและพัฒนา
ศักยภาพของเด็กพิการ
ศูนย์ส่งเสริมและพัฒนา
ศักยภาพของเด็กพิการ

THE CITY OF MELBOURNE
IN MEMORY OF
MR SHEPHERD JAMES
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF MELBOURNE
1857-1893

KING SIZE BED