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## Editor's note

This year marks the 30th anniversary of CEDAR. This year is not only a year of celebration, but also a year that teaches us to move forward courageously by standing firmly on the foundation built by our predecessors.

In this issue of 'Focus', we will share exciting testimonies from our 30th anniversary event and the direction our ministry is headed towards. We encourage you to continue to walk alongside us on this journey. We also interviewed a staff member who has served at CEDAR for many years where she shared stories about being part of the organisation. ('Learn a Little More'). Additionally, we lead everyone in reading the Bible through the eyes of marginalised communities, which allow us to change the way we interpreted scripture ('Back to the Bible'). Lastly, we invite everyone to participate in our 'Beyond Feeding the Poor' initiative to witness and cheer on the transformation of lives.

## Focus

### Continually Inspired, Unchanging Mission

*Written by Edward Lai (Senior Communications Officer)*

A Haitian woman sits on the floor beside several circular mud cakes. She rubs pieces of dust off the mud cakes, and slowly puts the cakes into her mouth, chewing slowly. To her, and to many other Haitians living in poverty, these cakes – made by mixing mud with water and salt, kneading the mixture into the shape of a cake, and setting the cakes under the sun to dry – were their daily meals; their life-saving meals.

Our founders, Mr and Mrs Oliver Mark, were deeply touched by the sight of women eating mud cakes. They were in the UK at the time; after returning to Hong Kong, they were inspired to think about how churches and believers in Hong Kong could help respond to the needs of the poor.

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## Touched Hearts

CEDAR was established in Hong Kong in July 1991. Ever since, CEDAR has been a helping hand for Hong Kong's church community, cooperating with churches and Christian organisations around the world to develop communities and alleviate poverty.

Time has flown; CEDAR is now 30 years old. Over the years, CEDAR's co-workers have stood firm on the foundations laid by our predecessors and adhered to the organisation's core principles and mission when serving the poor. We have ensured that the poor not only have adequate clothes and food, but also that they can live out their lives according to God's will, and experience the dignity and value associated with being God's children.

Hence, the theme for CEDAR's 30th anniversary is 'Beyond Feeding the Poor'. This theme is not only a slogan, but also represents the beliefs and values of CEDAR and our overseas partners have while carrying out our work with the poor. As Mr & Mrs Oliver Mark said while celebrating our 30th anniversary,

'We follow the principle of "From Church · Through Church" to reach our goals. Our work is not simply to alleviate poverty, it is also for others to hear of the gospel, or even to obtain eternal life. Therefore, the theme "Beyond Feeding the Poor" is most suitable.'



Pastor Eugene Leung from EFCC Jachin Church shared his experience working with CEDAR during the 30th Anniversary Thanksgiving Sharing Session.

On 9 July, CEDAR held the 30th Anniversary Thanksgiving Sharing Session on 'Beyond Feeding the Poor' at EFCC Tung Fook Church (CWB). Pastor Eugene Leung of EFCC Jachin Church shared his experience working with CEDAR to promote the global perspective of the youth. He believes that working with CEDAR has allowed young believers to take part in caring for the poor and to fight against the injustices of the world.

'When CEDAR comes to our church, it seems as though they are here to collect donations. But I say that this is not the case. In 2 Corinthians 8:4, the Macedonian Church repeatedly asked Paul to accept their gifts for the poor in Jerusalem and to have the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. Instead, we should be thanking CEDAR for giving us the opportunity to participate in poverty alleviation work overseas and to share in this service.'

## The Power of Commitment

Another one of CEDAR's church partners who shared during the 30th anniversary event was the MongKok Baptist Church. During the event, the church shared how, through CEDAR, they were introduced to CEDAR's workers in Yunnan, China. These workers serve people living in the mountains, and help with drug rehabilitation through sharing the gospel. Since 2015, the church has visited Yunnan three times a year to establish relationships with beneficiaries and provide them with suitable assistance, including subsidising meals for children in mountainous areas, organising activities for those going through rehabilitation, such as Bible study, role-playing, movie screenings and ball games; these helped the people grow and transform both physically, psychologically and spiritually.

Mr Wong Wai Man, Chairman of the church's Mission Committee, said, 'We may be limited in what we can do, but through regular visits, we are able to witness the transformation in people's lives. We have seen how drug addicts have changed after receiving the gospel and going through rehabilitation. One former addict even decided to enter a Christian seminary. His life has encouraged and inspired us greatly.'



MongKok Baptist Church shares their experience of participating in CEDAR's ministry

CEDAR is grateful that our project has become the church's 'mission field'. By working together with churches, we have tried to help the marginalised communities in society. We are also happy to see that although CEDAR is a small organisation, it has become a platform that allows local churches to serve the needs of the poor overseas and fulfil their mission.

Chief Executive Chan Pui Si used planting as a metaphor at the meeting. She said CEDAR is just like a farmer that helps to take care of the Lord's farmstead. During this process, CEDAR has seen many difficult issues that need to be watered and cared. However, through the Lord's grace and the fellowship of believers, the Lord has allowed us to work and spread blessings to communities in need.

## An Unchanging Mission Throughout the Years

In the future, CEDAR will aim to respond to the needs of local and global communities on three different levels.





CEDAR's 30th Anniversary Thanksgiving Sharing Session

### 1. Local Integration Mission Promotion:

To understand how CEDAR's experience in alleviating poverty overseas can contribute to projects in Hong Kong by conducting research, and to continue to work with the church community in order to carry out the integral mission that aligns with local characteristics. CEDAR will also connect with Christian communities that serve ethnic minorities, organise training sessions and seek cooperation.

### 2. The New Norm of Poverty Alleviation:

During the pandemic, we continue to flexibly deploy resources and revise our project contents to better respond to local needs. This included increasing anti-pandemic components and stabilising the emotions and spirituality of our partners to support their work on the front lines. Apart from this, we focus on the serious online sexual exploitation of children by targeting and preventing online sexual trafficking in developing regions.



Sharing by Dr Chan Nim Chung, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Dr Chan Pui Si of CEDAR

### 3. Peace and Reconciliation:

Amid tense international relations, regional conflicts continue to surge globally. In addition to promoting peace and conducting restoration work in the Middle East, Asia (including Myanmar and Hong Kong) and Africa, we have also cooperated with various organisations, sharing experience in peacebuilding, which enable us to establish new methods of poverty alleviation and development.

In the face of growing and new needs, CEDAR will, as always, work with churches and believers to serve together. We will also expand our human resources and office space. Our office will be relocated to 2,700 square feet unit in an industrial building in Hing Yip Street, Kwun Tong.



What our future office space currently looks like

The larger office space will allow for multi-purpose use; it will provide educational activities and project resources for church communities, support the local integral mission ministry and help remote supervision of projects.

We are looking forward to welcoming our new milestones and promise to unwaveringly uphold our integral mission.

Click here to view CEDAR's 30th anniversary event (Chinese only).

[link.cedarfund.org/30replay](http://link.cedarfund.org/30replay)

## Back to the Bible

### Reading the Bible from the Margins

Written by Winnie Fung (Board Member of CEDAR Fund, Academic Head of Lumina College)



'Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy... Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work...' (Deuteronomy 5:12-14)

When you read this passage, what jumps out?

Many of us may answer: the seventh day is meant for rest.

However, for the impoverished, it may be the opposite. Justo L. González, in his book *Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes*, shares about a pastor who, when preaching this passage, asked his poor and urban congregation: How many of you were able to work six days last week? A couple hands went up. Four days? A few more. Two days? A lot more. How many of you wanted to work six days but couldn't find work? Almost all hands shot up.

For this group of brothers and sisters, it is verse 13, not 14, that captures their attention: 'Six days you shall labor...' For them, it is not just a command but also a promise from God. 'Six days you shall labor' is no less part of the order that God desires for humankind than resting on the seventh day.

Have we been interpreting this passage wrongly by focusing on rest? Not at all. Rest is much needed in our busy society. But this example illustrates how each of us comes to Scripture with blind spots. While the Bible is written for both the poor and nonpoor, in reality, a lot of biblical interpretation are done by the nonpoor.

We focus on the command to rest, often to the exclusion of the command to work, because we read the Bible from the perspective of one who does not need to worry about work. If instead we read 'from the margins,' from the perspective of the poor, we get a fuller picture of God's intention for the work-rest rhythm for humankind. We will be rightly indignant not only at practices that treat human beings as non-stop machines, but also at economic and societal structures that perpetuate unemployment and underemployment for certain groups in society.

Hence the question is not simply, 'What does the Bible say about the poor?' but 'What does the Bible say when read from the perspective of the poor?' Once we ask this question, we will encounter a much richer, deeper, and broader picture of who God is and what His love, mercy, and justice mean.

Reading Scripture from the margins allows us a richer and

more multifaceted encounter of God's love, mercy, and justice. Without the perspectives of the poor, we miss precious things from the Bible. It is not learning about the poor or learning about how to help them. The poor themselves have much to offer us. May we receive.

## Blessing by Offering

### 'Beyond Feeding the Poor' Campaign

Written by Edward Lai (Senior Communications Officer)

'I hope that my little donation will help you and can make a change to your life!'

'I pray that you will be joyful, that the Lord will help you and that you will have a prosperous life!'

These are the words of primary school students in Hong Kong when they wrote words of blessing to our beneficiaries overseas. Though most of them have never seen the beneficiaries of CEDAR's projects. They have realised, through our activities, that there are people living in poverty: these people only want a simple, happy life; they do not want extravagance.

There is a popular saying in Zimbabwe, 'Hungry men are angry men.' When one of our co-workers visited local families in a poor village in Zimbabwe, a middle-aged man named Paul said to us, 'I am my children's father. When I am unable to feed them, I feel extremely stressed.' On top of practical difficulties, the father's stress stems from self-blame and his inherent guilt of not being a competent father.

In reality, the problem is not that Paul is lazy or unwilling to earn a living for his family. It is because as a farmer, his land has been greatly impacted by global warming. Seeing his family go hungry, Paul feels annoyed and unsettled, causing more quarrels at home.

Bringing warmth and positive change to the poor has been a mission of CEDAR's since its establishment. This mission stems from empathising with the poor and understanding what the Gospel means to them. The Lord wants people to have sufficient food and clothing, but He also wants His children to live with dignity, because these people are His beloved children.

We thank the Lord that through our partners' training, farmers like Paul have learnt new ways to farm while conserving the environment and have successfully improved their livelihoods. Their joy is apparent on all of their faces. When our colleagues see their happiness, they inevitably think: isn't this exactly what transforming a life looks like?

As we celebrate CEDAR's 30th birthday, we hope to pass on the blessings you have given to us. Therefore, we have organised our 'Beyond Feeding the Poor' Campaign to encourage everyone to donate HK\$30 or more and write a blessing to our friends in need in the birthday card. We will pass these cards on to those in poverty to encourage and support them. Please don't underestimate your impact!

Details: [link.cedarfund.org/30card-241e](http://link.cedarfund.org/30card-241e)



## Learn a Little More

### CEDAR's people. CEDAR's touch.

Written by Edward Lai (Senior Communications Officer)

Editor's note: In this issue of 'Learn a Little More', we'll introduce you to our 'coffer keeper', Bonnie. Through sharing her experiences and thoughts while serving with CEDAR, you will understand more about what kind of Christian community CEDAR is, and witness God's unending grace.

'Time flies when you're having fun. In a blink of an eye, I have served CEDAR for 23 years,' said Bonnie Ho during her sharing in a prayer meeting with co-workers.

Over the past 23 years, Bonnie has witnessed several milestones of CEDAR. From the 1990s, when founder Mr Oliver Mark ran CEDAR as a family-based service organisation, to the 2000s, when former director Dr Faith Ho established CEDAR's institutional framework, to when former Chief Executive Dr Chan Nim Chung emphasised local education and project supervision, to the present, in which Dr Chan Pui Si has been leading teams to deal with the impact of COVID-19 in poor countries, Bonnie has been there through it all.



Bonnie with her husband who has supported her throughout the years.

What Bonnie is most proud of and happy about is how CEDAR continues to unwaveringly cling to its original mission, 'From Church, Through Church, Alleviate Poverty', despite all the changes and innovations throughout the years.

When asked about her most memorable experiences in CEDAR, Bonnie said that she remembered and treasured all the people that she had met while serving others. Apart from colleagues and board members, she also treasured long-term donors and volunteers, especially those with whom she has spent countless days together to serve the poor.

Bonnie said, 'When CEDAR wanted to mail a large number of our publication, *SHARE* newsletters, and other communications materials, we depended on volunteers, they would come up to the office and help with the envelopes and stamps. Once, some volunteers brought homecooked meals to the office to share with the colleagues; it really felt like a church fellowship.'

As the 'coffer keeper' of CEDAR, Bonnie's greatest sense of

joy does not come from receiving large monetary contributions (even though she is really grateful for these gifts); it comes from the sincerity of CEDAR's supporters. 'I think that CEDAR's supporters have a lot of lasting affection for CEDAR, and they also really trust us. Over the years, there have been some donors who have stopped donating due to financial difficulties, but some people will come back after weathering these difficulties.' When some donors who have emigrated come back to Hong Kong, they always make time to visit Bonnie and other staff members. Sometimes, when I see Bonnie's joy while interacting with donors, it looks like a reunion between old friends.

'I think the most special thing about CEDAR is that the Lord is our first priority. Our decisions as an organisation depend on whether it is the Lord's will for us to do so.' This may be the reason why our supporters continue to bless us throughout the years.

In a world that is constantly changing, CEDAR's projects have let Bonnie see that the Lord is still in many different places and is transforming the lives of beneficiaries. His work exceeds Bonnie's expectations. I hope that when you read CEDAR's stories, you will also be able to see God's work. If you have any thoughts or suggestions you want to share with CEDAR, you are most welcome to contact us via email.

## 2020/2021 Operating Statements In the period of Jul 20 - Jun 21

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Income            | HK\$24,179,678 |
| Donations         | 17,831,801     |
| Grants            | 234,015        |
| Appeal for Relief | 4,950,155      |
| Other Income      | 1,163,707      |

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| Expenditure                               | HK\$22,132,907     |
| Development Projects                      | - Asia 8,725,436   |
|   | - China 2,835,047  |
|   | - Africa 1,403,174 |
| Disaster Relief & Rehabilitation Projects | 4,093,641          |
| Partnership Development                   | 3,164,673          |
| Administration                            | 1,690,555          |
| Depreciation                              | 220,381            |

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Surplus/(Deficit) | HK\$ 2,046,771 |
|-------------------|----------------|

This financial report has not been audited. The 'Other Income' in this report includes an HK\$672,100 wage subsidies provided by the HKSAR Government under the "Employment Support Scheme". Due to the global spread of COVID-19 and the tense situation in Myanmar, our overseas project implementation has been affected to a certain extent. Taken account of these factors, we temporarily withheld project remittance of over HK\$1,220,000. The annual budget for 07/2021 to 06/2022 is HK\$23,429,000. Please support CEDAR and our partner's work with your prayers and donations.

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