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When I was with the children of pastors and missionaries, I recognized my own young shadow in them, just like the story of the ugly duckling who did not know who he was. The duckling put his best effort to intermingle with those who did not know or want to acknowledge him.

## **Little Ugly Duckling**

The Gospel Church of Faith, Hope and Love in Hong Kong was my spiritual home. At the present I am equipping myself in the United States. This is the 10th year. I have had opportunities to serve in different capacities and places. I have experienced the full grace of God and become God's blessing to others. Whenever I come back to my mother church, the Gospel Church of Faith, Hope and Love, I feel like I am entering a spiritual gasoline station. Here in the station, I can take a rest from my service, obtain enough strength from God, and get back to service.

In April 2003, when Hong Kong was at the peak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic, I went back there to attend the First Annual Youth Developmental Camp. At the camp, I had the opportunity to share with the young people regarding how missionaries came to Chine in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, and how those missionaries offered themselves to God in their youth and let Him use them as He saw fit. I also shared with them how God called me to serve Him.

On the flight to and from Hong Kong, everyone aboard the airplane had to wear a mask. In Hong Kong, no one shook hands, and all I could do was nod at them and pass my greetings to them with my eyes. When I went back to the United States and went to school, everybody at school was afraid of me, treating me like an alien from outer space. They feared that I was contagious. God, however, gave me this opportunity to challenge the young people to rethink their purpose in life, and to consider following the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. I felt my trip to Hong Kong was not wasted at all!

Surprisingly, not three months later, I had another chance to go to Hong Kong. This time I joined the Hong Kong Missionary Kids Caregivers Group to Bangkok, Thailand to run a camp for the missionary

kids from Hong Kong. When I was with the children of pastors and missionaries, I recognized my own young shadow in them, just like the story of the ugly duckling who did not know who he was. The duckling put his best effort to intermingle with those who did not know or want to acknowledge him. In the spiritual and worship times at the camp, I encouraged the young people to rethink our heavenly status, which Jesus Christ purchased for us with His precious blood. Since the parents of these youngsters were missionaries, many of had them had lived in various countries and cities. They learned various languages and attended various schools. Even though their status on earth might not be clear, I grasped the opportunity to explain to them that their heavenly status is very clear. Every morning, I led them to use various ways to see how God saw them from His perspective. In the afternoons, the youngsters would have the opportunity to recount their own experiences, come to terms with things, and find strength and support one another.

When I was young, I also experienced changing schools, moving from place to place, and saying goodbye to friends and relatives. These experiences of mine allowed me to understand the feelings of the children of missionaries. Because of this, I could point out the blessings that God has given to them through their trials. Therefore, whenever I have the opportunity to serve children of missionaries, I feel very happy and fulfilled. I also know that I am supported by many prayers of brothers and sisters. These past five years, God has put me in a good school in Los Angeles. I work with good Christian co-workers who encourage and grow with each other. God has also given me opportunities to equip myself further. The biggest joy is to give back to God what belongs to Him. God has also thrown open the floodgates of heaven and poured out so many blessings onto me, just like what Jesus Christ our Lord said, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

## **School in the Jungle**

After graduating from University and doing internships, I did not know where to find a job. During several interviews, I mentioned I would be going to Papua New Guinea as a student teacher, and several schools expressed interest. However, when I mentioned that I would not be home until the later part of September, they were all silent. I truly believed that God would provide. At the same time, I knew that God would move brothers and sisters to support me with prayers and finances. Therefore I could lay down all worries and step onto the road of short-term missionary work.

The university from which I graduated offers a class which people seldom know about. This class enables students to go abroad as a student teacher on the mission field, and at the same time it is recognized by the Department of Education of the country. Teaching the children of missionaries was the burden and dream God had placed in my heart since I was in high school. In the summer of 2001, I finally arrived in Papua New Guinea to start my first missionary assignment as a teacher. The local weather is good; springtime year-round, with a very long rainy season. Many local people are still living their lives as if they were in the Stone Age. I heard that there are over eight hundred and fifty-three local languages. Most of the languages spoken locally do not have written words. There are no Bibles for the local people to read. The Bible translation foundation had been working there for several years and brought many people to the Lord. They translated the New Testament into one hundred twenty-five tribal languages.

After I arrived in Australia, after two more days of journey on foot and by bus, I finally caught a small airplane. The small airplane passed through valleys, rivers, and forests, and finally it landed in front of the missionary center established by the Bible translation foundation. When I looked at it from the small airplane, it was like a small town. Even though it was shabby, God had provided for everything. It was a small town of two thousand people, one thousand local people, and the rest comprising of missionary teachers, local staff, and students. There were about six hundred missionary children (MKs) in this boarding school in the jungle. Their parents worked and lived in various parts of Papua New Guinea.

The first week at the mission center, I concentrated on preparing my lesson plans and studying the local languages and culture. I tried hard to fit into a new environment and a new way of living. I was

tired, both spiritually and physically, and I felt depressed. Small matters were bothering me daily; I felt uncomfortable and blamed them on God and myself. Suddenly I realized I had forgotten the abundant supply of God, and I forgot the calling of God. I also forgot the purpose for which I came here, to serve people. Friday came at last. At a meeting we shared and prayed for each other. Two of the professors washed our feet to remind us of the goal for which we were here. They exemplified humility and I was touched.

On the weekend before school started, I was taken through mountainous paths to visit a village. The chief and children of the village were eagerly waiting for us to come. They held our hands and guided us to tour their village. We slept in small grass sheds with insects and bugs. Jungle life was such unique experience! We used their language, which we had just learned, to communicate with the local people and to share the gospel with them. I was so overwhelmed by their enthusiastic responses; it preoccupied my mind for a long, long time.

Life in the village was a huge contrast to life in the missionary center. However, life in the missionary center was also shabby compared to the life in a big city. My mind struggled with questions: should missionaries live more comfortably? Do missionaries deserve good or perfect equipment? Should my attitude about missionary life be changed? Why did I donate my old computer to missionary organizations? Shouldn't we offer the best to our Lord Jesus Christ?

After several years of prayer and preparation, this was the time to test the call of God for my life. It was not an issue of pressure, or my ability being tested. Teaching was not my first choice as a profession. However, by His grace, I was able to do well. This was a miracle. This short-term mission of three months went by very quickly. From Monday to Friday, I taught Mathematics; on Saturdays I led the eighth grade student fellowship; and on Sundays I joined the worship service, which combined nineteen nationalities into one huge service. In the circle of missionaries, there were different necessities. Miraculously, God gave different callings and different talents to different people, who formed a harmonious United Nations Army used by Jesus Christ. We were different parts of a united body whose head was Jesus Christ. Praise God! He gave me opportunities to run with everybody towards the same goal. I truly enjoyed the assignments and the interactions.

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me." I knew brothers and sisters were praying for me. One time we met some robbers. There were six of them, with guns and knives, who tried to stop our small truck. God listened to our urgent prayers, and we did not lose anything. However, this event reminded me to pray for the lives and safety of missionaries. The next morning we read about the 9/11 incident in the United States. This incident led us to feel that: "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain."

Aaron Lee was born in Taiwan to a pastor's family, and followed his parents to Hong Kong at a young age. Aaron speaks Mandarin at home and Cantonese in school like a local. He studied Education at BIOLA and has been teaching high school in Los Angeles since 2001. Aaron has a burden to serve children of missionaries.