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The Diaspora Chinese Gospel: Pursuit of Success on Philippians 3:7-14

By Rev. Wenhui Gong
Columbia International University

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The goal of Paul's pursuit was a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, not worldly success. The way of his pursuit was to achieve righteousness through faith in Christ. The difference in emphasis between sin in a guilt-based culture and righteousness in an honor/shame culture is an important distinction. Paul continued his pursuit by pressing on to reach others with the message of relationship and righteousness with Christ. He focused on "one thing," the prize, his missions to reach others with the Gospel message.

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The Gospel message must be contextualized for the recipients but the core must never change. Contextualization is the dynamic process to deliver the Gospel message in a concrete cultural situation. Contextualization is always relevant when missions and culture exist. Otherwise, the message will miss its intended target, and missions movement will never happen.

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I. Introduction

It was on November 26, 2005, Thanksgiving holiday 15 years ago, that Dr. Wong (pseudonym), a professor at a university in Indiana and also a member of our Chinese church in Chicago, hosted a Thanksgiving celebration party at his house. Most of the people he invited were his Chinese neighbors, such as students, scholars, new immigrants, and professionals originally from China. Due to Dr. Wong's great honor as a tenured professor at an honored American institute, he has a *face* (Chinese 面子 *miàn zi*) with social power and capital, and all the people he invited had shown up at the party. I felt honored at the invitation to share the Gospel message with my testimony.

Among all the people, one in particular, Antony Yan (pseudonym), caught my attention. There were two things special about him. First of all, he was a successful professional with a Ph.D. degree in food science. He shared his special pumpkin pancakes at the potluck, a recipe to which he claimed he had applied his professional knowledge. Secondly, he was in the Seeker's Bible study group for eight years, yet had not accepted Jesus. It is not easy for Chinese scholars to believe in God. In general, if one spent two to three years in a seeker's group, either he would have accepted Jesus or have left. But Antony stayed with the group all these years, and he still had not believed. His self-introduction as a "senior seeker" made all the guests laugh a lot.

On that night, I tried hard to share what many consider two powerful tools of evangelism, "Four Spiritual Laws" and "The Romans Road," with all the unbelievers there, which were about half of all the guests, hoping to convince them to accept Jesus, particularly Antony who was sitting right across from me. During the sharing, he kept nodding as if he agreed with me wholeheartedly. I did not know if he just wanted to show respect to me and honor me as a speaker, or if the message truly spoke to his heart. As a Chinese, I knew at least he showed his politeness to me! Having finished my sharing, I had a private conversation with him in order not to shame him publicly. I asked him seriously: "Antony, think about all the sins you have committed in the past. Repent before Jesus, who died on the cross for all of your sins and took on all your punishments. Would you please open your heart, come to the Lord, accept His salvation, and become a Christian?"

But at that moment, Antony used various excuses to avoid a commitment. Maybe it was his pride or his concerns about the future, or maybe he still needed more time to think it through, I do not know. In the end, he said, "It's quite late now, can we talk tomorrow?" I know that, for shame-oriented Chinese, time is dynamic and relative depending on the context, not mathematical or measured in figures but instead in relationship-centered events (Steffen, 2016b). Looking at my watch to show my respect to him, I found it was past midnight already. I said: "Let's talk tomorrow then." That excuse ended up becoming a major regret in my life! For a very long time, I had no peace in my heart, and I lived in sorrow and disappointment over what happened that night!

The following day, Antony went to the local community library to borrow some books. After parking his car, he had a heart attack right after he stepped out of the vehicle. He fell on the parking lot in the snow. Due to the heavy snow and cold weather, two hours passed before he was found. Taken to the emergency room, he

Author: Co-founder and Africa Field Director of Chinese Diaspora Mission; Adjunct Professor of Intercultural Studies, Columbia Biblical Seminary, Columbia International University.
e-mail: wenhui.gong@ciu.edu

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never regained consciousness. Dr. Wong cried out to him many times by his hospital bed: "Antony, you must believe in Jesus." But he did not receive any response! Many people prayed to the Lord earnestly in the church and at home. Regardless of whether they knew him or not, whether they met him before or not, they all prayed that the Lord might heal him and save his soul. But Antony passed away five days later, and he was only in his forties. The question of his salvation became an ache in my heart.

Antony's relatives attending the funeral service were his mother, his only daughter, and his former wife, whom Antony had divorced to honor his mother's decision due to a disagreement between his mother and her daughter-in-law some years before. They were in great sorrow, mourning his premature passing. Dr. Wong shared his sorrowful message, touching all who were present:

> Antony, where are you? If I knew there would be no tomorrow on that night, I would have tried all I could to convince you to believe in Jesus. I would be willing even to let you stab me if that was what it would take. But, my need for saving face overpowered me, and I gave up this opportunity. Antony, where are you? For the past week, I kept asking the same question again and again. It's like I heard a voice, from far away, from ancient times, that's the same voice that God called to Adam: "Where are you?"

The same question, "Where are you?" was lingering in my heart too. I felt profoundly sorry and heartbroken about this for a very long time. Did I share the true Gospel? Was my method correct? What exactly is the Gospel? Which parts of Scripture should I include in my Gospel? How should we present the Gospel, especially to those Chinese who are living in a foreign country? How does our metanarrative of Scripture define the Gospel? Can we compromise the Gospel while settling for Truth? What is evangelism from a power perspective? How do our fear/power cultures define sin, the cross, and salvation? I hoped to find answers to the above questions from the Apostle Paul and his message in Philippians 3:7-14 of the Bible. As a result, I have worked out a Diaspora Chinese Gospel message in the context of the Chinese pursuit of success.

a) Background of Philippians

The Philippian church was the first church started by the Apostle Paul in Europe, around 50 AD. This church had a close friendship with Paul. Paul wrote the letters to the Philippians near the end of his life while in a Roman prison (Heil, 2010).

The book of Philippians is called "a letter of joy;" Paul mentions joy many times as an overarching theme. Why is there so much joy for a man who is facing death? Is it just self-comfort by denying the realities, the "Ah Q Spirit" referred to by the famous Chinese atheist writer Lu Xun? No, it is authentic joy from the bottom of Paul's heart! What is the reason for his happiness and blessing?

It is because of the Gospel! The Greek word **εὐ αγγέλιον**(*euaggelion*), or *Gospel*, appears 77 times in the New Testament. Paul uses it most, 61 times (79.2%) in his letters, especially in Philippians, where the word *Gospel* appears nine times (1:5, 1:7, 1:12, 1:16, 1:27 [2X], 2:22, 4:3, 4:15), the same number of occurrences as in the book of Romans, and the highest frequency per number of words in all the books of the Bible. The friendship between Paul and the Philippian church, which is the fruit of his mission and later becomes his most faithful partner in mission work, is rooted in their close partnership in the Gospel. In the very beginning of Philippians, the Gospel of Christ is mentioned repeatedly (1:5, 7, 12, 15-18, 27); everything they did was for the sake of the Gospel of Christ. Their pursuit of success is the Gospel.

b) Outline of the Message.

In the above Scripture passage, Philippians 3:7-14, the similar words, "gain," "having," "attaining," "obtained," "take/took hold of," and "pressing on toward" appear eight times. These keywords are from three Greek verbs **κερδαίνω (kerdainō), καταντάω (katantaō),** and **λαμβάνω (lambanō),** meaning the pursuit of success, which the Chinese value most. From the passage, we can see Paul's pursuit of success.

The goal of pursuit—To know Christ for relationship (vv. 7-8)

The way of pursuit—To have faith for righteousness (vv. 9-11)

The practice of pursuit—To win a prize for mission (vv. 12-14)

II. The Goal of Pursuit: To Know Christ for Relationship (Philippians 3:7-8)

When we talk about a pursuit, first of all, we want to know what the goal is. Here we will see what Paul's pursuit was. I will share my own pursuit so that we can know more about the value of Chinese culture and how to present a contextualized Gospel to a diaspora Chinese.

a) Paul's Goal

We know that, from a human perspective, Paul once was a highly respected man of lofty status and great honor. In Philippians 3:4-6, he mentioned his two sources of honor-ascribed and achieved-in three aspects:

Regarding education. He was a student of Gamaliel, the famous rabbi, receiving the most rigorous instruction of the Jewish laws and becoming the most law-abiding Pharisee among the Jews. This accomplishment is his achieved honor.

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Regarding social status. He was born a Roman citizen, a rank and standing desired by many. He possessed citizenship by birth, not gained through anything he himself did, not naturalized citizenship as may be achieved through channels of immigration by Diaspora Chinese, by such means as an investment, expertise, or academic degrees and career, and through the path of permanent residency. This social position is his ascribed honor.

In the Roman Empire, over 90% of the people were noncitizens. The privilege of his ascribed honor as a Roman citizen was special. It was more than a voting right. It implied patronage, which was a common social framework in the ancient Mediterranean basin associated with great honor and respect, as Neyrey and Stewart (2008) indicate, "Patrons were people with power who could provide goods and services not available to their clients. In return, clients provided loyalty and honor to the patrons" (p. 47; cf. Mischke, 2015, p. 188).

Regarding morality. He had both ascribed and achieved honor as a Pharisee. He followed the moral laws, and his character was flawless (Phil. 3:6).

In short, he would not be ashamed to boast his honor in every aspect. However, even though such an excellent person, he did not know the Lord for quite a long time. Before he heard the Gospel, he was enthusiastic about the Jewish laws, "as an attempt to protect the honor of God and Jewish religious standards" (Mischke, 2015, p. 317). Paul obtained authority from the High Priest to arrest Christians and, while on his way to Damascus, the Lord appeared to him, telling him he was shameful in his relations with the Lord, for he was persecuting the disciples of the Lord Jesus. Thanks be to the Lord's mercy! Blinded and shamed, needing to be "led by the hand" as a child (Acts 22:11), God spoke to Paul through Ananias, a most honorable man. Paul regained the honor of eyesight and could freely walk again. He came to the Lord and believed in Jesus! He had an entirely different relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

How does Paul see his relations with the Lord after his conversion? Paul says in Philippians 3:7-8:

> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ. (English Standard Version, ESV)

What he shares is his "dramatic honor status reversal" (Mischke, 2015, p. 316). Three things gain our attention:

A knowing relationship: What does knowing mean here in the Bible? You know of Donald Trump, the President of the United States, and Xi Jinping, the Chairman of China, but they do not know you. Possessing knowledge is not the knowing mentioned in the Bible here. Knowing in the Bible is not just to understand by reason and knowledge; it is like the understanding between a husband and wife or between parents and their children. In Genesis 4:1, our Chinese translation uses 同房 [tóng fáng](Adam made love to his wife Eve). The English Standard Version Bible says "know." ("Now Adam knew Eve, his wife.") We can see that knowing is to experience the relationship personally. To know Jesus is not a religion; it is a relationship. To believe in Christ does not mean to become a member of a certain religion; it means to establish a relationship with the Lord who brings His people into His family with the great honor of having God as their Father.

A personal relationship: Please note the word "my" in verse 8: "The surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8, ESV). It is my Lord! Paul does not say the objective of his knowing is "Christ Jesus" or "the Lord. " He adds a definitive word, my, to express his own personal relationship with the Lord. The Lord Jesus was crucified for me, Paul. My life belongs to Him. He died for me, and I live for Him. Paul has an authentic and living relationship with the Lord! It is an absolutely loyal and obedient relationship between the patron and the client.

Change of values: When Paul believed in the Lord and established his relationship with Jesus, his value system was completely changed, with the sharp contrast of "garbage" versus "surpassing worth," a dramatic honor-status reversal. He says: "I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ" (Phil. 3:8, NIV). What does "everything" mean? It means the world and the things of the world, including his excellence in education, morality, and social status.

Comparing the world and the things of the world with knowing Christ, Paul found that the things of the world are like garbage with no value and honor at all. On the contrary, the most precious and honorable thing is to know Christ, to have a personal relationship with Christ, and to become a member of God's household. Therefore, he was willing to lose all things for the Lord-to abandon everything in the world. Paul, saved by God and sincerely appreciating the grace of receiving a changed relationship with the Lord, heard the command of his master:

> I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me. (Acts 26:17b-18, New International Version, NIV)

Unquestionably, Paul obeyed his patron and made every effort to convince unbelievers to fulfill the

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calling that God had chosen him for, a mission of highest honor (Mischke, 2015, p. 318).

Paul's life journey is from honor to shame, then to highest honor, and then eternal honor with a glorious God. His life journey reminds me of my life experience: from shame to honor, back to a sense of shame, then to highest honor as Paul experienced.

b) Personal Experience of Knowing

I was born in a poor and remote village in Hunan, China. Deep in my memory, I recall the shame of coldness, hunger, poverty, and death that I suffered as a child. My family made our clothes of cheap cotton fabric, and they barely covered our bodies. Sweet potatoes were our chief source of food, but we could never find enough to fill our stomachs. Many families in the village could not even afford salt. I remember the time we gathered mud to make our salt. We mixed it with water, filtered it with our mosquito nets, then boiled it until the water evaporated, all to collect some salty red powder. We discovered the best mud near the wall of our toilets. It had a more salty favor!

My father worked so hard he became ill at 37 years old. He remained bedridden and died two years later because we could not provide him with proper medical treatment. My father left me a special gift of shame on my eighth birthday: He died on that day, leaving behind my mother and his five little children in a miserable mud house. There is one unforgettable moment from my childhood. We were crying, screaming, pounding our chests next to my father's dead body. I made up my mind: "One day, I will leave this place and make good money to change the shame of this family." I carried this dream with me when I went to high school in the county city. There I saw cars and trains and began a new life. However, the reality was that my experience of shame did not change. I dropped out of high school and became a migrant worker, doing inferior jobs like pulling a cargo cart, mining rocks, and constructing buildings. In the winter, over a dozen migrant workers gathered to settle in a simply built shelter with a cold wind blowing around us. In the summer, we slept on the ground at our construction site, accompanied by the buzzing sound of summer bugs!

Moreover, one more death added to my shame. An accident happened to a good friend who had shared the sleeping mat with me. He was crushed by a moving train near our construction site. A living man suddenly was smashed into pieces. His face was beyond recognition when another worker and I pulled him out from under the train. His jaw broken and his face mangled, he whispered for a few seconds, but no word came out. He died a few minutes later.

Migrant workers had no status. There was no insurance, no compensation, not even a coffin! We collected money from the other migrant workers to buy him a coffin to hold his mangled body and drove it to his home. We learned that he had a seventy-year-old father, a three-year-old child, and his wife was about to give birth to another child. His whole family depended on his money to survive. Who would have expected such an outcome of shame--A badly crushed body that once belonged to a healthy young man with honor? "Will I become the shameful victim of the next accident? What is my destiny?" I asked myself.

I determined to turn shame into honor. At that time, people believed education was the best solution for poor people to change their lives. We Chinese believe a famous maxim: "万般皆下品，唯有读书高 [*wàn bān jiē xià pǐn, wéi yǒu dú shū gāo*]" (To be a scholar is to be the top of society. All other trades are low). So I spent one year preparing for the college entrance exam with financial support from my uncle, who was also a poor farmer; Finally, I made it to a famous university in China! I became a legal resident in a big city; I received a government food provision 国家粮 *guó jiā liáng* (literally to eat federal food) for city-dwelling people. My days as a farmer and migrant worker were over!

I majored in Radio Science and minored in Chemical Engineering and Computer Science. I became the Top Student at my university. My goal rose higher, and I wanted to become a famous scientist! Very few new college graduates could go on to graduate school, yet I was honored to be excused from the admission exam and admitted to graduate school directly from college. I was on my way to achieving my dream. However, an unfortunate event occurred in China in 1989 that crushed my dream. No new college graduate was allowed to enter graduate school in the next year. I had to change plans and find work as a sales engineer. I worked very hard, believing the saying "吃得苦中苦，方为人上人 [chī de kǔ zhōng kǔ fāng wéi rén shàng rén]" (Only those who endure the most become the highest). Finally, I achieved another success. When China passed its first business law in 1994, I became a business owner, among the first group of private entrepreneurs in China, beginning a successful and honorable career. My life began to turn around with my Chinese "五子登科 [wǔ zǐ dēng kē]" (qī zǐ: wife, hái zǐ: children, chē zǐ: car, fáng zǐ: house, and piào zǐ: money), plus my additional education before I obtained my Ph.D. in the United States: I was honored with the opportunity to pursue my EMBA from CEIBS– an elite institution.

> The CEIBS MBA Programme has ranked in the top 25 of the Financial Times' annual global business school ranking for 16 consecutive years (2005-2020). The Global EMBA Programme was #5 worldwide and was the highest ranked stand-alone in Asia in 2019. (https://www.ceibs.edu/rankings-accreditation, Top-tier global rankings).

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Back in early 1999, a CEIBS graduate earned an average salary of over 200K USD per year and some had received work visas from some European countries. However, I did not want to stop there. I wanted to become a successful entrepreneur, the Chinese Bill Gates!

I was proud of every step of my success; and I felt honor status reversal. However, there were times when I felt confused. I had far more than the bowl of rice I had dreamed of at a young age in the village, dining on different delicacies at fancy restaurants around the world. But I did not always enjoy them because I did not feel I was receiving as much honor as I deserved. When I was angry with the restaurant staff, those gourmet foods did not taste any better than the sweet potatoes from my village! I often exhausted myself dealing with strategies in the business world. My brain got worn out, and I did not sleep well. I remembered the days when I was a migrant worker and I was able to sleep by the roadside with mosquitoes buzzing around. A sleepless me asked over and over: "Why is there no peace in my life?" No one shared the Gospel with me. No one ever pointed out to me the real meaning of success. Thoughts about making money filled my head, and the honor of career successes deceived me.

It was September 1999 when I started my business in the States, pursuing a Fortune 500 company and working to become a Chinese Bill Gates. I came to know a business partner who was very friendly to others. One day when I visited him, he invited me to attend his church's evangelistic conference. I felt very strange at that moment. I said I had never seen any gods through my tough life. Every step of success that I took in my life was a direct result of my own hard work. Anyway, he gave me 面子 [miàn zi] (face), I should return him 面子 [miàn zi] or receive his face. I know that "giving and receiving face is the way to enter, sustain, and strengthen relationships" (Mischke, 2015, p. 174; see also Wu, 2012, p. 176). So I went to the conference with him; although I thought it ridiculous, I kept my thoughts to myself.

That was the first time I heard the Gospel. I learned that there is a God who created me in His image and He cares about me! He is the God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He is a holy, righteous, loving, and glorious God. I cried out with tears when I learned of the blood on the cross of His one and only Son Jesus Christ that washed away all my shame, and that I can raise from the shame of death to life with honor! Jesus is my brother. He is my friend. The Creator and Owner of the Universe is my Father! How great an honor I am ascribed!

After I met Jesus, I had a completely different view of the value of success. I have a completely different perspective on the shame and honor of my culture. As Paul said in Philippians 3:8, "I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things" (NIV). Real success is achieved by being taken hold of by the Lord Jesus. It is worth more than one million dollars, even one billion. It is worth paying my life to pursue it; however, it can only be received by grace!

How can we receive this precious gift with great honor? How can we have this honor relationship with Him? In Philippians 3:9-11, Paul pointed out the way of this pursuit.

III. The Way of Pursuit: To Have Faith for Righteousness (Philippians 3:9-11)

> And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ-yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. (Phil. 3:9-11, NIV)

Paul points out the way of his pursuit is to have faith in Christ righteousness by faith. Faith brings human beings into a right relationship with our Creator, our glorious God. That means salvation. We are not saved by our deeds or by observing the law. We are saved simply by faith. It is not a one-time action but a process and a relationship with the Lord!

a) Understanding Righteousness

Here I want to talk more about *righteousness*, which is translated into English from the Greek word **δικαιοσύνη (*dikaiosunē*).δικαιοσύνη (*dikaiosunē*)** is the noun form from its adjective root **δίκαιος** (*dikaios*), which means right and equitable. Its verb form **δικαιόω (*dikaioō*)** occurs 40 times in the New Testament. Paul uses it most, 27 times. Interestingly, all 27 occurrences of **δικαιόω (*dikaioō*)** in Paul's books are translated as "justified" in the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. When I search other places in the Bible, the KJV Bible translates 39 of the 40 occurrences of **δικαιόω (*dikaioō*)** as "justified." Only Revelation 22:11 is translated as "let him be right." Nowhere is it translated as "get it right" or "make it right." That is why Western theology summarizes the Gospel as "justification by faith," as Mischke (2015) stated, "Typical Western constructions of the gospel are oriented on law, guilt, justification, and judgment" (p. 89).

I suddenly understand why it is difficult to convince the Diaspora Chinese, such as Antony, a non-Western person, to have a right relationship with God by using "Four Spiritual Laws" and "The Romans Road." If we did not limit our theology within the Western guilt culture, we would have translated **δικαιόω (*dikaioō*)** as

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"make right" or "have a right relationship with God," which is more accurate and faithful to the original Scripture, and it is more applicable for the majority of people in the world with shame cultures. Here in Philippians 3:9-11, Paul wants to tell us the way of pursuit is *righteousness by faith*. "The faith of the Gentiles, like the faith of Abraham, was the sole basis of their being counted righteous before God" (Mischke, 2015, p. 201).

Paul emphasizes the content of faith: "that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:10-11, ESV). True righteousness is an honor consistent with divine righteousness. Anyone who puts their faith in this Gospel will be set right, that is, "be placed in the right relation to the most significant arena in which honor is dispensed: divine judgment" (Mischke, 2015, p. 298). God has done it through Christ, the righteous one, who died for the unrighteous, redeeming their shame. As Jewett says: "Thus the triumph of divine righteousness through the gospel of Christ crucified and resurrected is achieved by transforming the system in which shame and honor are dispensed" (R. Jewett, in *Romans: A Commentary*, 2007, cited in Mischke, 2015, p. 298).

Sin vs. righteousness: To more thoroughly understand righteousness, we may reflect it from another angle towards sin, which is the opposite of righteousness. Sin is a violation of specific rules (1 Cor. 6:9-10), anything that pollutes the purity of God; and a violation of God's holiness publicly or privately. However, sin in the Bible does not just refer to breaking the laws (although it is a sin) as in Western guilt culture: Sin is also contamination, shaming the patron's name, or stealing the Patron God Father's honor. Sin is anything that does not reflect the character and worth of God (Wu, 2015).

There are two aspects of sin: sinful nature and sinful deeds. Similar to ascribed honor, sin is ascribed shame: Human beings have a sinful nature from birth. Similar to achieved honor, sin is also achieved shame: Sinful deeds are the outward manifestation of the inward sinful nature.

Consequently, sin brings about the punishment of guilt, abandonment of shame, the curse of fear, and contamination of pollution, and it carries a sense of being out of a relationship in a profound way, where the belonging to a community of God's family does not exist (Stockitt, 2012).

Where did sin originate? The loss of a relationship with God is the root of all sins! When God created man in His image, He settled them in His garden. They delightedly dwelled together with unashamed righteousness in the face of God. When our ancestors Adam and Eve were deceived by Satan and then shamed God, the relationship between God and men was thus changed. "The man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:8, ESV). The word *presence* comes from the Hebrew word **מינִפָּ (pâ nîym),** which means "face." When they heard God's voice, "Where are you?" they sensed their shame. "Their instinct was to turn immediately away from God's face" (Mischke, 2015, p. 170; see also Stockitt, 2012). Thus as descendants of Adam and Eve we ever since become sinners. As Romans 5:12 says, "Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned" (NIV). Therefore, the Bible says: "There is no one righteous, not even one" (Rom. 3:10, NIV). "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23, NIV). We are all condemned with shame, separated from God, and under the wrath of God!

Because we are sinners and shameful, we will assuredly shame God if no righteousness of God changes our relationship with Him. If we replace God with the world and pursue the success of the world, we cannot have peace. "The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply" (Ps. 16:4, ESV).

Salvation: As Wu (2012) says, "A person's social status is put at risk by accruing a social or monetary debt. Financial debt poses the threat of enslavement, forfeiting honor, and status. Thus, sin is called a 'debt' that needs to be forgiven" (p. 182). We need to have salvation.

From Philippians 3:9-11, we can see that faith in the multifaceted Gospel of Jesus Christ bring righteousness, which is salvation. We can have forgiveness not only from the guilt of our sinful behavior but also from the shame of our sinful being. Jesus defeated sin because He died on the cross, bearing the punishment of our guilt and suffering our shame. As He resurrected from death, He triumphed over sin and shame with great honor. God reveals His glory, honor, and grace to persons from among all peoples, so they experience salvation from sin and gain abundant blessing. When we believe in Jesus, having faith in Him, we have guilt forgiven, shame covered, and honor elevated in knowing the only true and living God. We are willing to follow Him day by day, and we can truly live in victory with honor! ("The Father's Love," 2006, p. 18). Paul emphasizes in Philippians 3:9-11 that we need to abide in Christ by faith moment by moment. By the grace of the Lord, we can have a victorious and joyful life!

Since sin is both vertical and horizontal because sin is personal and corporate (Hiebert, 2008), salvation has both vertical and horizontal dimensions (Tennent, 2010). Salvation is a right relationship with God vertically and a right relationship horizontally with God's people in His family by sharing in honor, majesty, and glory, the virtues that characterize God. Through Christ, God

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redeems our *face*, restoring us to the original honorableness and dignity, full acceptance into God's honored family (Flanders, 2011). "It is in the experience of salvation that God gives us a new name, affirms our dignity, and re-honors us" (Flanders, 2011, p. 245).

The Chinese character for *I*, **(我 *wǒ*)** is an ideogram that vividly illustrates a person holding a weapon to strive for personal success, no right relations with people and God, representing unrighteousness. It is a sin. However, when I submit myself to the Lamb, it becomes *righteousness* (義 yi). As mentioned before, the righteousness of God is salvation for His people. It brings them into harmony with others and into a living relationship with Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. It is eternal life.

Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24, NIV). The NIV Bible uses three tenses of verbs to clearly express the results of salvation by faith (also righteousness by faith): "has eternal life" in the present tense, "will not be judged" in the future tense, and "has crossed over from death to life" in the present perfect tense, expressing that what happened in the past brings effects to the present. We can see that righteousness with eternal life brings us blessings from the past into the present as well as the future. Salvation with righteousness is a life of peace, joy, and abundance, a relationship forever connected to God!

Many Diaspora Chinese Christians love to sing a hymn titled "这一生最美的祝福 [zhè yī sheng zuì měi de zhù fú] (*The Gift of Knowing You*)" (https://www.sop.org/music/in04/): The chorus goes

Nothing compares to knowing you
You are the treasure of my life
Trusting in Jesus Christ my Lord
My richest blessing in the world
In the valleys or on high
You are with me all the time
Thank you Lord,
For the gift of knowing you.
(https://images.slideplayer.com/2/715151/slides/slide_5.jpg)

I think these words come from the bottom of the hearts of many who know Jesus and have experienced His blessings by faith. The origin of all blessings is God's love in the Lord Jesus Christ. The only thing we need to do is to have faith in Him!

b) Personal Experience of Righteousness

Here I want to share how I experienced the righteousness of God by faith and enjoyed the abundance of His blessings in family, business, and church when we have God's righteousness and do things right by faith.

Family: On the day when I heard the Gospel for the first time, I accepted Jesus to be my Lord and Savior. My outward appearance did not change, but inside I had a new life in Jesus. I knew that I was no longer a slave of sin. I am a child of God.

I returned home to Shanghai with great joy and honor. With great excitement, I told my wife: "I am a new creation. Jesus is the Lord of my life. My old self is dead. Christ's life is in me." To my surprise, my wife Jane did not pay any attention to my sharing. She replied with a stern Chinese proverb to shame another: "狗改不了吃屎 **(gǒu gǎi bù liǎo chī shǐ)**"–(A dog can never change his old habit – eating poo).

I was profoundly ashamed and irritated. Immediately after praying to God the Father, I realized why she said this to me: Before I became a Christian, our relationship was falling apart. I was discouraged, but I understood her bitter feeling. However, when I prayed to my Lord privately, I had no fear because I was very sure that God had forgiven me. My God answered my prayer and was working for us. Jane also became a seeker of God's Word when she experienced my change, and by the second year, my wife and our eight-year-old daughter were baptized and joined God's family. We had God's love in us, and we began to love one another. Our marriage renewed. We love each other in the family with the lordship of Jesus. Soon God gave us another big surprise. My wife became pregnant, and God delivered a beautiful child to our family. We named her Yin, which means Gospel because the Gospel gives us a new life; the Gospel gives us a new marriage; and the Gospel brings a right relationship with each other and with Him! It is God's righteousness!

Yin is nine years younger than her older sister. Raising one child was a heavy burden for us before we had a right relationship with Christ; now, raising children is our joy. God gave us two more children a few years later. I pray that our four children follow Jesus without dishonoring their parents (Yep et al., 1998). The eldest, Jin, has graduated from a Bible college, starting God's ministry at another university; Yin is now twenty, studying at a Bible college, and working part-time to support herself. She expressed a desire to be a missionary in Africa when she was saved at the age of five. Our sons Gershon and Caleb want to be evangelists in the workplace. We are experiencing the practice and blessing of the Gospel!

Business: God guided us not only into the right relationship with family but also in the right way in my business marketplace. I reflected before my Lord, "Why did you create a business?" and "What is your purpose?" As Baer (2012) says, God established my business for a purpose. I see my business as a legitimate calling and as an act of worship (Steffen & Barnett, 2006, p. 25). My business should be a kingdom business, with traits of a holy calling, an explicit purpose, a strong relationship

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network, and motivation for excellent operation (Baer, 2012). I started to pursue success characterized by the traits of the kingdom business.

Near the end of 1999, I suddenly saw that the way that we were running our trading business could lead to a problem of tax evasion. Back then, the Chinese government collected import duty and VAT on imported merchandise. Our industrial automation products usually paid 10-15% duty and 17% VAT. But at the same time, companies in special economic zones such as Shenzhen offered lower import rates through tax evasion. So companies used this particular zone channel to report tax. I did not feel comfortable with this practice and immediately stopped using this business channel. That year I paid over two million RMB (around 300K USD) extra of tax and causing my business to become much less competitive due to higher costs. I was confused about why this happened to me when I did business in a godly way, especially when a customer canceled his business order to me and laughed: "Christian faith is not applicable in China." I earnestly prayed to God and suddenly saw that we could lower our profit to match the price requested by the customer. Thank God I was willing to do that to win a customer without breaking the law. I won the order and the long-term customer, finally.

I lost many customers and employees when I eliminated tax evasion practices and unnecessary business entertainment. But the Word of God gave me wisdom and strength. I believe God controls all things. There was a pleasant surprise. By the end of the year, my sales engineers became more mature and productive. We gained many customers and agents who did not care about excessive business entertainment, and we enjoyed a most profitable year! Not only that, I did not feel burdened any longer, and the presence of God filled me with peace and joy.

Eighteen months later, the government launched an investigation of tax evasion. Praise the Lord, they found no wrongdoing in our records. But many companies were asked to pay fines; Some were closed. Some business owners and managers fled abroad. A Chinese journal published this story, and many Christian business men were greatly encouraged to have faith in the Lord, and our Lord Jesus Christ has been proclaimed. Our business echoes Neyrey's (1998) words: "Their good works should be seen, because they are a claim for the honor of the Patron-God of both Jesus and his disciples. Thus God will be honored when the disciples are honored" (p. 222).

Church: Afterward, God took us further as we made "a concerted effort within a company setting to witness for Christ, both overtly and through holistic lifestyle evangelism" (Steffen & Barnett, 2006, p. 25). We used our business profit to sponsor school tuition for 50 poor students. We opened our office as a house church for evangelism and worship. Praise the Lord. Many newcomers accepted the Lord. In the first year, we baptized about 100 people. We were blessed to see the joy that comes when lives change through the Lord Jesus. Up to today, this house church is still a witness God's grace in China. Many people have come to Christ through this business as mission.

IV. The Practice of Pursuit- To Win a Prize for Mission (Philippians 3:12-14)

> Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:12-14, NIV)

Paul clearly expressed here that he was never content simply to have known Christ and fulfilled righteousness by faith. Even though he could be proud of himself for leading people into a right relationship with God, he said that he had not already arrived at his goal. He had not reached his final destination. He wanted to "press on."

a) One Thing

Paul kept striving to respond to "that for which Jesus Christ took hold of me" (Phil. 3:12, NIV). How did Paul respond? He said to do one thing. Here Paul stressed that there was "but one thing I do" (Phil. 3:13, NIV). Paul had only one clear goal. He focused single-mindedly without losing sight of his goal. He did not waste his energy on lesser matters; compared to the "all things" (Phil. 3:8, NIV) he referred to previously, what is his "one thing"?

Indeed, the Bible emphasizes this "one thing" in several places.

In Mark 10:17-21, a young man ran up to Jesus and fell on his knees before Jesus to ask Him what good things he must do to inherit eternal life. This man knew God's commandments and had kept them since he was a boy. Jesus told him "one thing" he lacked was to sell everything he had, give to the poor, and follow Him. Here the "one thing" is to despise all but honor Jesus.

In Luke 10:38-42, Jesus was teaching His disciples at the house of Martha and Mary. While Martha was busy with preparations, Mary sat at the Lord's feet quietly, listening to what He said. Martha was upset and asked Jesus to tell her sister Mary to help. Jesus said to Martha, "You are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed-or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (10:41-42, NIV). Here the "one thing" is to study

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God's Word and keep an intimate relationship with the Lord.

Chapter 9 of John's Gospel records Jesus healed a man who was born blind. The Pharisees wanted to accuse Jesus of healing him on the Sabbath. The man whose eyesight was recovered testifies before the Pharisees: "One thing I do know. I was blind, but now I see!" (John 9:25, NIV) Here the "one thing" is to witness Jesus with one's life and words.

Psalm 27:4 says:

> One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. (NIV)

"One thing" here is to live in a beautiful relationship with God moment by moment!

There are many other examples from the Bible that echo the "one thing" mentioned by Paul in Philippians 3:13. The "one thing" can be summarized as missions. Paul runs fast for missions. He wants to win a prize from His Lord. Missions refers to "all that God wishes to accomplish in the world so that He is glorified and God's kingdom expands universally and comprehensively" (Steffen, 2016a, 1 CPM&S Intro). Tennent (2010) refers to missions as,

> the specific and varied ways in which the church crosses cultural boundaries to reflect the life of the triune God in the world and, through that identity, participates in His mission, celebrating through word and deed the inbreaking of the New Creation. (p. 59)

For us, diaspora Chinese, it is through the face of others that we first come to know the divine Face (Flanders, 2011, p. 197). We have an intimate relationship and righteousness with Him. We have gained a new and real face (Flanders, 2011, p. 198). So we Diaspora Chinese Christians have no honor deficit. We are children of God, siblings of the King. We are not ashamed. On the contrary, we are full, and we are free, on missions with God to bless all the peoples of the earth through the diaspora (Mischke, 2015, p. 524).

Ministries may not be missions (Tennent, 2010). In church history, many of God's faithful servants knew that God asked them to do "one thing" of missions. D. L. Moody is an example (D. L. Moody's Story, n.d). Before the Chicago fire in 1871, Mr. Moody was a transplant, diaspora as it were, to Chicago from the countryside. He had been busy with various ministries. In that disastrous fire, he sorrowfully saw many die without hearing the Gospel. After that disaster, he clearly knew that the Lord Jesus had commanded him to do "one thing" — to preach the Gospel, although others derided him because he spoke a rural dialect in the big city of Chicago. He was not ashamed of preaching the Gospel earnestly so that more and more people could know Christ, and God used him exceedingly. Tens of thousands of people came into a right relationship with God and God's people through him. Mr. Moody established the Moody Bible Institute in 1889, a very successful training center for missionaries throughout the world. I am blessed to have become a missionary for Chinese Diaspora Mission when I received training at Moody in 2008.

Why do people focus on "one thing"? Because they have seen the beauty and glorious honor of God when they know Christ and have righteousness by faith. A story from the Chinese countryside may illustrate it.

As a child, I lived in the countryside. A neighboring farmer found a baby eagle. It had only some downy feathers, which were not suitable for the eaglet to fly. The farmer raised the eagle along with a bunch of newly-hatched chicks. After some time, the eaglet's wings became stronger, enough to enable it to fly. However, the eaglet was used to the chick's lifestyle and it stayed on the ground with the chicks. It had no idea how or desire to use its wings! The chicks and the eagle often searched for worms to eat under the large tree in their small courtyard. Occasionally a worm would fall from the tree above, and they would all rush in to fight for the worm. Day after day, they just fought for those worms. Sometime, a few birds would chirp on the branches above, as if they were trying to tell the eaglet he could find other worms to eat up in the tree. But the eaglet just ignored them. It never looked up to enjoy plenty of healthy worms on the tree. The eaglet only knew how to pick up the sick worms that fell off the tree. Finally, one day the farmer took the eaglet to a cliff. He dropped the eaglet off the cliff. Suddenly the eaglet spread its wings and flew high up in the sky! It no longer just searched for worms on the tree; now it saw a better and different world! Will this eaglet come back to fight for sick worms with the chicks? No, it will never come back to do that. It has an entirely different perspective. Paul, after he met Jesus and knew Him, was just like you and me, as the eaglet. We have experienced the richness that comes from above, which our God has prepared for us! I would never be satisfied now with what the world can provide temporarily, but rather focus on the "one thing" of missions from above.

How to make "one thing" of missions available? In Philippians 3:12-14, Paul's pursuit of "one thing" of the missions includes two aspects:

Forgetting what is behind (Phil. 3:13): "Forgetting what is behind" does not imply losing the memory of the past. That is impossible. To Paul, "forgetting what is behind" means he would not be frustrated by the past failures, nor would he be prideful or content with his privilege, achievement, success, or even his spiritual victories.

Recently a Chinese friend shared this poem with me, "The Blessing of Being Forgetful." It illustrates well the true meaning of forgetfulness.

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When I was young, I wished
I could remember everything.
If so, I would be a genius.
As time passes by and my hair is gray, I
know to be happy is to be forgetful.
Forget the gossips, unless you want to live
in their shadow.
Forget sadness, unless you want to live
with a twisted heart.
Forget your past glory; you have humility.
Forget your failures; you have courage.
Forget your wounds; you have forgiveness.
Forget your shame; you have honor.
Forget others' wrongdoings; you have
thankfulness.
Forget others' unkindness; you have
kindness.
Forget others' insults; you have love.

- "Forgetting" is harder than "remembering."
- "Remembering" is smart, but "forgetting" is wiser!

(Personal communication, translated into English by the author of this paper)

Pressing on toward the goal (Phil. 3:14): Paul compared the "one thing" of missions to a race in the sports field. "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14, NIV).

There are several crucial success factors in any race. First of all, you must have an objective. As mentioned earlier, the goal is to know Jesus and to do so for others so that target people can have righteousness by faith. You want to win the prize of the race in the mission field: the crown of life with eternal value. It is not an earthly prize, like wealth, which does not have heavenly value. There will be persecution, but you will be blessed.

Chinese like to post the character 福 (fú) for *blessing* on their doors, and the culture of blessings is an integral part of Chinese culture. With the developments of thousands of years of civilization, it has infused into every part of Chinese life, reflecting the perspectives and values of the Chinese people. Chinese people have a common desire to receive blessings! Why do we leave our hometown to travel thousands of miles to a foreign place? It is for the future happiness of our family, children, and ourselves! But the beatitudes of Jesus teach us, and here in Philippians Paul teaches us, there is a higher pursuit! The greatest blessing of the beatitudes is what I call the *blessing of the persecuted*, which is the persecution that comes with preaching the Gospel.

> Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matt. 5:11-12, NIV)

Persecution in this world is temporary. It is an honor to be persecuted for the Lord, and the prize in heaven is eternal. It is worth it to win the prize for the Lord.

For the race, besides the goal which we want to know clearly in advance, we want to have a quick start and keep running without stopping. A Chinese fable of a race between the tortoise and the hare may help explain. The story concerns a hare who ridicules a slow-moving tortoise. Tired of the hare's boastful behavior, the tortoise challenges him to a race. The hare soon leaves the tortoise behind and, confident of winning, takes a nap midway through the race. When the hare awakes, however, he finds that his competitor, crawling slowly but steadily, has arrived before him.

b) Reflection on Diaspora Mission

Diaspora is a trending concept of globalization (Tennent, 2010). Today, the Chinese church comprises over 90 million believers (Tennent, 2010, p. 36), and it is the fastest-growing church on the planet with an average growth rate of 16,500 per day (Tennent, 2010, p. 36; Barrett et al., 2001, p. 191). The Chinese are the largest diaspora population in the world today, with 46 million people scattered around the globe. These Chinese have an abundance of resources, including personnel, finances, and, most importantly, access to many cultures to which Westerners have limited access. These resources can be very useful in reaching the world through Chinese Diaspora Mission. However, Chinese Diaspora Mission is a new ministry without abundant knowledge or mission experience, a slow tortoise in the race of missions, as it were. Studies on diaspora missiology are critically needed for this mission trend.

There is a need to quickly establish user-friendly platforms whereby Chinese missionaries can feel accepted, included, and utilized. We need to develop missional approaches of "missions to the diaspora," "missions through the diaspora," "missions by and beyond the diaspora," and "missions with the diaspora" (Wan & Pocock, 2015, p. 216), rather than count on the traditional "West-Reaches-the-Rest" paradigm that "Missionary training and support structures assume a Western initiative in the development of strategy and assume a movement from the West out to the peripheries of missional engagement" (Tennent, 2010, p. 37). It made sense in the twentieth century since the vast majority of the world's 16,000 missionaries were from the West in 1900. However, "the dawn of the twenty-first century witnessed a world with over 420,000 missionaries, of which only 12 to 15 percent were from the West" (Tennent, 2010, p. 37; see also Guthrie, 2000).

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This fact alone stimulates strategic changes by the Chinese Diaspora Mission to raise Chinese missionaries to do missions "from everywhere to everywhere" (Chen, 2016, p. 7). I believe that in the future the Chinese diaspora will become a powerful mission force. We need to pay more attention to the studies and strategies of the Chinese Diaspora Mission.

Formerly missionaries were mostly theological ministers, and the mission fields only required certain specialists, such as medical doctors and education trainers. Most diaspora Chinese are working in the business area. In the future, a large number of lay Christian professionals with a missional perspective will serve in their workplaces, which will become the largest mission field (Liu, 2012), and Tennent (2010) foresees that most missionaries will be highly educated and have a social background in future. The value Chinese culture places on education and social relationship will contribute to methods used by the Chinese Diaspora Mission.

c) Personal Experience of Missions

In 2004, God opened the door for me at Moody Theological Seminary so that I could equip myself for future missionary work. I began working with a team of American co-workers to reach Diaspora Chinese students and scholars in Chicago. One of the places I served for the Chinese Diaspora Mission was the campus of the University of Chicago. The students there have a strong sense of superiority; their workload is intense, and the neighborhood is not safe. Due to these and other reasons, the campus was once called "spiritual hard soil." Praise the Lord! He promises in the Great Commission, as long as we carry out the Great Commission, He is with us. God used us to share the Gospel with thousands of Diaspora Chinese students in Chicago, including the "spiritual hard soil."

We also meet a lot of business visitors and Chinese government officials. Once a senior government official was invited to our meeting. He was unwilling to tell me his name at first, but God worked in his heart. In the middle of my sharing the Diaspora Chinese Gospel message and my testimony of family relationships, I felt moved by the Holy Spirit to ask, "Who wants to become a member of the family with the Lord of Jesus?" This official stood up immediately and accepted the Lord! A few months later, he was baptized. Before returning to China, he gave the following testimony: "I did not know the Lord, and even persecuted the faith. Today I have been won by the Lord. Being a member of God's family is a real honor. I want to proclaim the Lord and am willing to endure persecution for His sake."

However, most diaspora Chinses have difficulty accepting the Gospel. They believe it is a Western religion. They do not want to become Western; some even do not want any contact with the church at all.

In July 2014, I moved my family to Kenya, Africa, for the missions of helping Chinese churches to mobilize, equip, and send out missionaries to make disciples among diaspora Chinese and beyond. Two million Diaspora Chinese are already in Africa, and more and more are coming. Few of them know the Gospel and come to worship God in His family. I am praying to God: "Father, how to get the Chinese missionary movement to happen? First of all, what is definitely the Diaspora Chinese Gospel?" I agree with Dr. Steffen (2011), "If you mess up the message, you mess up the movement" (p. 132).

V. The Ending Story

The scene of Antony's funeral service at the beginning of this paper always comes to my mind. Some years after Antony's death, I was praying and asking God how to spread the Gospel to the diaspora and how to raise up missionaries from the diaspora. I attended a Christian conference in December 2009 where Dr. Cao (pseudonym), a medical doctor in Taiwan, gave his testimony. He shared that, while he and his brother are both missionaries, his brother is a professional minister but he is a volunteer. It is interesting that Dr. Cao has brought more people to the Lord than has his brother. He said many people have come to see him as a doctor rather than a missionary, which provides him an opportunity to talk to them and to establish a good relationship. "Every time I picked up the scalpel, before I started I would ask the patient whether they want to believe in Jesus or not. Almost everyone said, 'Yes'." He also said, "Once they establish a relationship with the Lord, I am soon be able to help with the follow-up, as with his return visit." God has used his business to build relationships and increase his patients' faith in Christ.

To my surprise, Dr. Cao specifically mentioned Antony Yan at his sharing. When he went to Chicago to visit his relatives, he heard that Antony suddenly had a heart attack and was in the emergency room. As a member of the church and being a doctor, he went to visit Antony in the hospital, although no church members or relatives accompanied him. Dr. Cao was holding Antony's hand, called his name. Then he used a completely different way than I had to share the Gospel with him, from the perspective of a parents' family relationship, neighbor's friendship, and Chinese cultural values, especially his success in education, shame and honor, and so on. Antony still seemed to be unconscious, but he was aware of his friend's presence and words because Dr. Cao felt the reaction of his fingers. Finally, Dr. Cao called to him, "Antony, Jesus has taken every shame, mine and yours. Join His family? He is waiting for you and welcomes you. Jesus loves you. I love you." Tears ran from Antony's eyes, and his hands moved gently to accept the Gospel. He did

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not respond afterward. But the nurses on site were surprised to see his reaction to the Gospel. Dr. Cao did not get a chance to tell the church about this before he went back to his work in Taiwan, but he shared this good news at the conference after my 4 years' prayer.

Great surprise and comfort came to my heart at Dr. Cao's story. It suddenly reminded me of Mischke's (2015) ideas about the Global Gospel that also apply to the Diaspora Chinese Gospel. "It is much more than a list of theological propositions about sin and guilt, forgiveness and heaven; it is also a narrative of the conflict of rival kingdoms saturated with the dynamics of honor and shame" (p. 440). We cannot ignore culture when spreading the Gospel. That is why we have Hiebert's (2012) four steps of critical contextualization for missions: Exegete the host culture; exegete Scripture; community evaluates beliefs and customs; and community develops new contextualized practices. Mischke (2015) emphasizes an additional foundational step before Hiebert's four steps: Exegete Bible cultures (p. 491), because the Bible has its own background of culture, including shame and honor. We cannot miss it. "If you mess up the message, you mess up the movement" (Steffen, 2011, p. 132).

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