

INSPIRING CHANGE THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

Strategic Giving 2021

Every month, CBWOQ sends support for National Staff Lilian Yang and Pastor Xiaodan Gang—missionaries who come from the same group being ministered to.

CBM NATIONAL FIELD STAFF, LILIAN YANG serves in the Golden Triangle Region (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos)

Lilian is originally from Myanmar. Her role is to help equip pastors and laypeople through Christian theological training at Thailand Bethel Theological Institute (TBTI). Different areas of ministry are addressed, such as church planting, integral mission and support for churches and their leaders.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting classes has meant synchronizing online and in-person classes. Greater preparation and flexibility are required but have led to valuable teaching experiences. Lilian and her husband Joseph have been able to continue serving

at local churches on weekends. Lilian records devotional video resources, allowing her to maintain fellowship with local members.

On February 1, 2021, a military coup in Myanmar launched a political conflict that has impacted Lilian's ministry and students. A military-issued internet blackout left TBTI students in Myanmar without any access, but teachers still managed to send them handouts and class audio records to help them complete their courses for the 2020 school year.

The situation in Myanmar also impacts two other ministries that Lilian oversees. One ministry is in the mountainous Lahu villages of Northern Thailand, led by Pastor Duodo. In 2020 he made seven

trips to the villages, leading more than 80 villagers to Christ. Since February 2021, military checkpoints enroute to the villages have made travel challenging. However, with God's help, Pastor Duodo and his team still visited as many villagers had asked for them to come. As a result, they created a new church building plan, and 17 more villagers have accepted Christ!

The second ministry is the Zheng Zhu student centre in the border town of Tachileik between Thailand and Myanmar. Pandemic school closures meant the ministry had to adapt. The centre's director Pastor Zhao Shan Neng and his coworkers took on the responsibility of personally teaching the centre's 76 students so that they

► *Leading Bible study at Maesai Baptist Church*

All photos courtesy CBM

by Kristine Gonzalez, Canadian Baptist Ministries



Top left: Pastor Duodo preaching to new Lahu village believers, some of whom were baptized later on



Bottom left: Zheng Zhu Centre



Top right: Pastor Duodo at the new church building ceremony in the Lahu village



Bottom right: In-person and online classes at Thailand Bethel Theological Institute



could continue their education. With growing unrest in Myanmar, safety and limited resources were of concern. The team began growing vegetables—a creative way to reduce food costs and minimize their travel. Students learned new skills and improved their nutrition.

“We thank God, for He is working through our ministries despite the challenges,” says Lilian. “We also see that the needs of the people are met through our projects and can testify to God’s grace in their lives. We experienced that God is working among His people in a new way. He is leading us to walk through every circumstance.”

Please pray for God’s continued leading and guidance in the Golden Triangle Region through the pandemic. Pray for Lilian and Joseph, and the mission partners and their families; that they would

be able to support each other and work together to serve the Lord and the local people. Pray for the coming school year and its students; for Lilian’s physical and spiritual strength as she prepares to teach two courses this summer.

PASTOR XIAODAN GANG serves with CBM’s Chinese Ministries Team, ministering to Chinese students in the university town of Marburg, Germany. Germany offers free, quality education so

many Chinese students make it their temporary home, even though the transition can be isolating and alienating. Many students encounter the gospel there for the first time, joining a church, getting involved in ministry groups, and even serving the church and community. In partnership with a local organization called Forum of Mission to Chinese in Germany (FMCD), and together with local churches, Pastor Gang helps lead fellowship groups, Bible studies,

CONNECT TO MISSION

services and training programs for new leaders.

In this second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ministry continues online, making getting to know new students and building relationships more challenging. However, Pastor Gang shares: "It's very encouraging to see how the people in our church continue in their faithful relationship with the Lord. As far as it is possible, I meet people personally to build relationships and for discipling. This season is a good time for discipleship!"

A German reading group also started several months ago, which has been an excellent opportunity to reach students. Sharing God's hope, grace and love is needed now more than ever.

The challenge of a transient college ministry is that students come and go, but it also provides an opportunity to share the gospel with a larger demographic.

Pray that as students leave and



► Xiaodan Gang

pursue other opportunities, they will find people who support them and continue to disciple them in Christ.

God continues to work in and through the local church, no matter the circumstance. It is because

of your generous ongoing partnership to act as the hands, feet and hope of Jesus across the globe in all seasons, that we continue to witness God's faithfulness at work. ■

A HISTORY MOMENT

Holke and Her Boys

A story from our past to inspire our present

As Amelia "Holke" Holcum lies dying in a Sarnia hospital in 1948, she calls for a Baptist pastor. Rev. S. R. McClung of Central Baptist comes to her bedside. He finds a small, very old Black woman who is thought to be between 95 and 105. "You are going to bury me in about two weeks," she tells him. "My boys will be there. Be good to them." Pastor McClung is puzzled, as Amelia has no known living relatives. Less than two weeks later, he pronounces the benediction at her funeral. No one in the crowd of people of all ages, black and white, leaves. One man comes forward and says, "I was a drunk. Holke got hold of me and took me in. Now I am a sergeant in the police." Another steps forward: "In the Depression I was homeless and desperate. Holke took me in for three months until I got on my feet." In all, 24 men tell how they had found direction and courage in the little frame house Amelia had helped her husband build before his death many years ago.

The *Sarnia Canadian Observer* takes up the story of this "true Christian," one of 14 children born to a Baptist pastor in Buxton, near Chatham.

From the March 1949 Link & Visitor

As found on Page 177 in *Our Heritage Becomes Our Challenge: A Scrapbook History of the Baptist Women's Movement in Ontario and Quebec*, by Esther Barnes