

## ICCM Bible Study

International Child Care Ministries

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’  
(Matthew 25:35-40 NIV)

Have you ever really needed something — not something like a new phone or tablet, but something that would sustain your life? Have you ever felt helpless because you weren't able to provide for the basic needs of you and your family? Have you ever felt the physical pain of not eating for days? Can you imagine being so desperate that you considered selling your child into slavery? Unfortunately, this is the reality for many of our brothers and sisters around the world.



Jesus calls us to support these brothers and sisters, those who are hungry and thirsty. We are directed to tend to the sick, visit the imprisoned, and clothe the naked. We are instructed to pursue social holiness by caring for “the least of these.”

Free Methodists have long embraced social holiness. Free Methodist founder B.T. Roberts — in the preface to Jane Dunning's 1881 book, “Brands from the Burning,” about the Providence Mission in New York City— wrote, “If we have the spirit of Christ we shall do according to our opportunities and circumstances the work that Christ did. His work among men was teaching the ignorant the way of salvation, preaching the gospel to the poor, and relieving the distressed. ... In the twenty-fifth

chapter of Matthew our Savior teaches that those who neglect opportunities for doing good to their fellow men will miss heaven in consequence." Our pursuit of social holiness will have eternal significance.

In seeking to live out our faith in a tangible way through serving others, we discover God more deeply. We realize His compassion, His righteousness, His goodness. We better understand His mission, of sending His followers to fully engage with the world.

But the suffering around our world can feel overwhelming. We hear of issues related to trafficking, imprisonment, extreme poverty, abandonment, corrupt governments and life-threatening illnesses. We know there are countless numbers of people caught in these circumstances beyond their control with no one to represent them or hear their cries.

International Child Care Ministries Director Linda Adams has seen hardship around the world personally: "When I go to Haiti and hear from our school directors that kids faint on Monday mornings because they haven't eaten since the meal we provided them on Friday, my heart breaks. I encounter the 48 percent of children in India who are stunted because they don't consume enough calories to sustain their growing bodies and brains. I learn from our leaders in Thailand that 85 percent of the parents in a certain region have sold a child into slavery. I hear that one of our schools in Kenya has 350 kids on the waiting list because there are no government schools in their slum. And I have come to love church leaders around the world who live on \$2 a day and sacrificially serve children who live on even less."



We know that it will take meaningful change to make a difference. For 50 years, International Child Care Ministries has been making a profound difference by making meaningful changes. In 1965, missionary Dr. Alton Gould started the first ICCM school on the rooftop of a Hong Kong housing project. He felt a burden to expand to other countries after visiting India and Africa. From his vision, ICCM has grown into a global ministry that partners with local Free Methodists in 30 countries through sponsorships, scholarships, and creative initiatives. The support of ICCM affects all aspects of the children's lives – spiritual, academic, physical, and social. ICCM responds to the call of Jesus to feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, and care for "the least of these."

Guiding principles support our vision and mission. We celebrate *community* and seek to express the unity of the body of Christ in its rich diversity. We celebrate *humility* and pursue respectful cross-cultural relationships. We celebrate the ministry of standing with and for children, blessing them and *giving voice* to their hurts and hopes. We seek to express the Gospel in word and deed, celebrating the power of *the transforming Gospel*.



Through ICCM, 17,474 children were sponsored in 2013. Through our food funds in Burundi, Haiti, and India, 2,861,625 meals were provided. Nearly \$115,000 was spent to protect vulnerable children through anti-trafficking initiatives; 2,000 water filters were provided for fresh, clean water. ICCM is caring for “the least of these” by changing the world one meal, one water filter, and one child at a time.

#### **How You Can Take Action:**

- Be aware of immigrants or refugees in your community, and remember that welcoming a stranger is a way of welcoming Jesus.
- Help the children of your church to gain a global perspective of the needs in our world through education and promotion of Free Methodist World Missions.
- Provide opportunities for your church, including adults and children, to serve others in your community through homeless shelters, nursing homes, food banks, and prisons.
- Sponsor a child for \$30 a month to help provide food, clothing and an education, or contact International Child Care Ministries to give toward a project that will benefit children around the world. Go to [www.childcareministries.org](http://www.childcareministries.org) or call 1-800-342-5531 ext. 502 for more information.

#### **Further Discussion:**

- Identify current needs locally and globally. How have you responded to Jesus’ call?
- Read Proverbs 31:8-9, Hebrews 13:2 and 1 John 3:17. How do these verses further emphasize our call to social holiness?

CONNECT WITH  
GOD'S HEART  
FOR THE WORLD

- How does responding to the needs of those around us affect our personal relationship with God? What characteristics of God are we reflecting?
- John Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, once asked, “Do you not know that God entrusted you with that money (all above what buys necessities for your families) to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to help the stranger, the widow, the fatherless; and, indeed, as far as it will go, to relieve the wants of all mankind?” How would you respond to this?