

# a look at poverty

by Alfred Lu

A look at poverty can take two extremes. There is the viewpoint that we should give more as Christians as we are living decadent lives and are uncaring to the poor. The other viewpoint is by giving too much to the poor, we are enabling and trapping them to live a life of poverty.

The answers to poverty are not that simplistic.

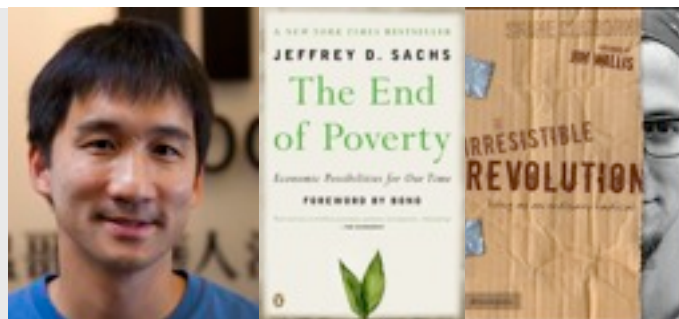
*The End of Poverty* by former Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs looks at the reasons for poverty and possible solutions. Sachs shares his personal experiences and his travels to various poverty stricken countries, as well as his work in trying to alleviate economic issues. He notes that about 200 years ago, all the countries in the world had roughly the same level of income, poverty, and life expectancy. No particular country was rich, there was no huge gap in income levels and everyone struggled to lead healthy lives. Today, the story is much different with some clearly wealthy countries while others are mired consistently in low income (living on less than a dollar per day per capita).

What happened? Why the difference? Technology, beginning with the industrial

revolution, has played a large part. But technology is portable, so why does poverty persist? Sachs outlines different reasons like geography and climate, and also deals with myths like

government corruption. At times a technical read and at times inspirational, Sachs challenges western nations to increase their foreign aid. He gives persuasive reasons to do so, and builds a convincing argument such action is not only beneficial for all, but possible as well. Although I do not know Jeffrey Sachs' religious beliefs, his presentation is both thought-provoking and appealing. It is worthwhile read indeed.

Shane Claiborne's *The Irresistible Revolution* has a completely different approach and feel to poverty. Taking Jesus' admonition to "sell everything" and looking at how the early Christians shared and lived in Acts 2, Claiborne lives in a communal house in inner-city Philadelphia. Claiborne points out how ridiculously wealthy we are, and how dependent we are on a system that perpetuates the growing divide between rich and poor. He



and rich do not know each other. The rich give some token amount to help deal with guilt, and the poor take the charity but remain poor. He gives persuasive biblical arguments that by developing personal relationships with the poor, we will have greater compassion, we will give more to them free from guilt, and we will start to wonder why the poor are poor. In doing so, we will begin to see some fundamental problems with our society and a system that preys on the most vulnerable.

Whether or not you end up agreeing with the authors in the end, hopefully reading these books will give you a sense of what a Christian's response to poverty should and could be. At the very least, you'll walk away with the belief the worst response is no response at all.

## pearl&william continued

### Pearl Lui

Pearl is married to William, who, to Pearl, is the gentlest man she's ever known (And she's only known one, she clarifies). She has two teenage children, who certainly would not appreciate Pearl expressing her affection to them or praising them publicly in any way. But, Pearl says, all moms adore their kids, so she wants people to know that her kids are far better than she had ever expected. Wesley is becoming a strong responsible young man and Meghan is very driven with high aspirations. She loves her family because they have open communication and there's always a lovely conversation around the dinner table because they have a rule at home is the TV stays off during mealtimes. They talk about most things, except the things she doesn't know about in the first place, and she respects that. Pearl says, "Like my son puts it: Did you tell your own mom everything? No, you don't, so there you go." As a parents herself, Pearl admires her own parents' dedication to her and her siblings during their childhood but also their continued zest for life now and a healthy attitude towards living as fulfilled people.

### William Lui

Favourite song: A light-hearted song by Francesca Battistelli, called, "This is the Stuff." I find it rather funny, and "Mary's Song" by a band called "Petra."

Favourite movie: "Spy Game", starring Robert Redford and Brad Pitt.

Things William wants you to know about his family:

Pearl: his smart, pretty, kind-hearted other half who can drive a stick shift. According to William, they met each other by paying attention to the Sunday sermon. And, no, there was no encrypted message in the sermon. It's a long story that maybe he'll tell you if you ask him.

Wesley: his witty, creative, responsible, favourite son, whose shoe size is a colossal 13.

Meghan: his smart, focused, cheerful favourite daughter, who is really taller than you think.

A long, long time ago, in a galaxy far far away, a young engineer decided to accept a new job offer after much praying. The result was devastating; his boss had no moral standards and the young mandreaded going to work. One day, on the drive to work, he complained to God bitterly. As soon as he opened the door to his office, his phone rang. A head hunter, that he has never met, called to find out if he wants a new job. To make the long story



short, he was hired for a much better job. The moral of the story: God listens to our prayers; He is sovereign and He decides how things gets done. In this case, he decided to let make William go through the first job before he could get the second one. Since then, William has decided not to complain so much to God. William always wanted to become an engineer. He enjoys learning how things work and applying that knowledge to create something useful. He wants to help young people appreciate God's wonderful creation and encourage them to apply their imagination to whatever they do. He also wanted to become a pilot and experience the "wind beneath his wings". If he could time travel, that would another added degree of freedom!

# sandy&ian continued

## Sandy Chian

### Describe your parents.

My parents are very hardworking. They immigrated to Canada in hopes that they can provide a better future for their children. They had only the clothes on their back and whatever was in 2 suitcases. They speak virtually no English but started from scratch working very hard at humble jobs and are good stewards of their money. Even during times of financial difficulty they never give up hope that the future would one day be better.

### A crisis moment in life.

In 2008 my grandma had a stroke and her health was deteriorating in the hospital. She was very withdrawn and discouraged that she had lost so much mobility. She was not able to speak or move half of her body. She was not able to swallow or digest her food properly and eventually her organs started to fail. It was very hard for her because she has always been a very brave and independent woman and loved to eat and be with other people. She is the loudest and liveliest member of our family. It was also very difficult for me and my family to see her suffer. Throughout this time, God continually showed us His loving kindness. He sent many many friends to visit my grandmother in hospital, some who have never even met her before. Her room was always filled with flowers and cards. They were truly angels. I was also blessed with the assurance that I will see her in heaven again, which was so important to me. My grandmother was the strictest Buddhist I knew but approximately one year before her stroke, God kept pushing me to share the gospel with her even though I felt so afraid of rejection and judgment. Praise God that she accepted Jesus into her heart! Praise Him for His providence and miracles and amazing love.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Romans 8:38-39

### Tell us about Ian.

Ian is a leader/problem-solver. He has a very strong faith that God knows our needs and will take care of us during difficult times no matter the circumstances, therefore he rarely worries and is a calm person.

Ian has G6PD deficiency. There are a number of medications and foods he needs to avoid, otherwise he may develop hemolytic anemia.

### How did you meet?

The first time I was introduced to Ian was through Hannah at UBC in 2004. However I didn't actually talk to him until Crystal invited him to Caleb Fellowship in 2005.



## Ian Chian

### A crisis moment in life.

I used to worry a lot back in high school. Mostly about being successful, and having a good job and getting into university. I originally was planning to be a computer science major but grade 12 sciences really kicked my butt. Something that was quite easy for me before, suddenly wasn't. I remember worrying about not having the grades to get into UBC and disappointing my parents. While all this was happening I had applied for summer jobs, and didn't have any work experience. I interviewed for two jobs, one I was hoping to get and another that I wasn't completely sure about. I waited to hear back from the job I wanted, but instead got an offer for the later. I accepted it, worrying that I might not get any job if I waited too long. But in the end, everything just kind of worked out - and it was for the better. (I even got offered the job I originally wanted, and had to turn it down). After that something clicked in my head that God is good and I didn't need to stress out over things. I haven't had that same level of stress since.

### Describe your parents.

My parents created a home that was both loving and safe. No matter how heated things would get when people argued, the next morning we always had a clean slate. They supported everything me and my siblings did - they went to all our concerts etc. Many times they would be the only adults in a group of young people during a youth rally when we would be involved in the leading.

### Describe Sandy.

Caring. Sandy has this ability that I see in so few people that I really admire. She genuinely cares for people with all her heart. It's not tainted by expectations or who you are. It's just real, and almost like how I child loves, before life skews your your perspective of the world. I love Sandy. She is my biggest cheerleader—she has more faith in me than I do sometimes. Just knowing she is in my corner goes a long way.

Sandy can read at an alarming speed when she's reading novels, but if reading dialogue in a video game she suddenly forgets how to read fast and it takes FOREVER when we are playing a game together.

### How did you meet?

We met through friends at VCBC. We actually crossed paths at UBC back in first year, but never really spoke. So I'll answer in a different way: I first noticed Sandy after we had met at Caleb fellowship (After being invited by Crystal through our CCO small group). We were chatting online, and she asked me to list 3 things that I liked about myself.

No one had ever asked me something like that. It made me think: hmmm. this girl is different.

*Read the profiles of William and Pearl Lui on reverse.*

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