A GIFT
THAT BLESSED
A NATION
THE STORY OF
GENERAL CARR
AND
CHARLIE SOONG
BY BISHOP COSTEN J. HARRELL
A GIFT THAT BLESSED A NATION

THE STORY OF GENERAL CARR AND CHARLIE SOONG

BY BISHOP COSTEN J. HARRELL

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT
Joint Division of Education and Cultivation
Board of Missions and Church Extension
(General Section)
THE METHODIST CHURCH
150 Fifth Avenue New York
A GIFT THAT BLESSED A NATION

This is the story of a "missionary special," a financial investment by a Christian layman in a scholarship for a Chinese student which paid incalculable dividends in character and service and influenced the modern history of the most populous nation in the world.

A generation ago General Julian S. Carr of Durham, North Carolina, was a widely known Methodist layman. He was a native of Chapel Hill, seat of the State University; served in the Confederate Army during the War between the States; returned home when the conflict was over and established a large industry in Durham. The General was a pioneer among the industrialists of the New South, a man of large means, a gentleman of the old school—courteous, generous, loyal.

During General Carr's active years there was hardly a public enterprise of moment in his native state that did not claim a share in his generosity. He gave the site on which the Women's College of Duke University now stands. He was an unfailing contributor to the building of schools and churches, to charity, and to all manner of undertakings for the common good.
But no gift that he made to any cause is comparable in its far-reaching results to the kindness he showed a stranded Chinese boy. By it he influenced the future of a nation, and became a Christian benefactor to the Far East. General Carr was the American friend and patron of Charlie Soong, father of the renowned Soong family of China, and thereon hangs one of the most romantic chapters in modern missions.

**HOW IT ALL BEGAN**

The story has been frequently told. Charlie Soong, a lad in his early teens, was employed on the ship “Colfax”; he fell under the influence and instruction of Captain Charles Jones, a devout Christian, and in the autumn of 1880 came into the port of Wilmington, North Carolina. Shortly afterward he was converted to Christianity, under the ministry of the Reverend T. Page Ricaud, then pastor of the Fifth Street Methodist Church at Wilmington. The boy’s Chinese name was Soong Yao-ju. He was baptized as Charles Jones Soong, in honor of the sea captain who had been instrumental in leading him to Christ.

Young Soong had an ambition to get an American education. Following his conversion, a new urge was born in his heart—he wished to return to his own people as a mis-

sionary of the Church. For a brief period Mr. Ricaud tutored him. Effort was made to enroll him in Trinity College (later to become Duke University) but Mr. Ricaud was confronted by an ancient difficulty—

“The eternal want of peace
That vexes public men.”

**FINDING A FRIEND**

Mr. Ricaud appealed to his friend, General Carr, in behalf of Charlie Soong. The General’s response has made the world his debtor. “Send him up,” he said, “and we’ll see that he gets an education.”

The writer was for a period during his college days General Carr’s secretary and was later his pastor. Often has he heard the General tell the story in substantially these words: “I heard of a Christian lad in Wilmington who had come there aboard a steamer. He was bright and ambitious. He wanted an education, but he was stranded and no way had been found to put him in school. I agreed to help him. He came to my house and lived there as a member of my family, and I helped him at Trinity and Vanderbilt until he had finished his education. This was Charlie Soong, who is as a son to me.”
Charles Jones Soong

A young Chinese preacher, converted in America and educated through the generosity of a Christian layman, became the founder of the most remarkable family of modern times and a potent factor in the history of China and the Christian movement in the Orient.

A Gift That Blessed a Nation

Mr. Ricaud took Charlie Soong to Durham. They were guests in the Carr home. There the General and Charlie met for the first time, and the former was immediately impressed by the boy’s intelligence and promise. In an old letter General Carr speaks of Mr. Ricaud as the “sainted” man who “came to my home to bring Charlie Soong, the Chinese lad that I adopted.”

Charlie Soong was doubtless the topic of conversation as the two men sat together that evening in the General’s den—the General usually entertained guests in his den—but neither of them dreamed that in helping a stranded boy they were setting in motion influences and movements that sixty years later would affect the whole world. God had used a sea captain, a minister, and a man of business to set the feet of Charlie Soong in the path of destiny.

A Home and an Education

From the first Soong was regarded as a member of the Carr household. “He was taken in not as a servant, but as a son,” says a member of the family. June 25, 1881, Soong wrote from the Carr home to his father in China: “I am a great hurry to be educated so I can go back to China and tell you about the kindness of the friends in Durham...
and the grace of God . . . Mr. and Mrs. Carr they are good Christian family and they have been kind to me before I know them.”

The new member of the Carr household soon won for himself a large place in the General’s affection. The lad called him “Father Carr.” Charlie Soong had fallen heir not only to financial aid in the pursuit of an education, but more—to a home and to the place of a son in a Christian family. There is no estimating how largely the influence of that Christian home molded the character of the man who through his family has made so large a contribution to the Orient and to the world.

It is worthy of note that when his eldest daughter, now Madame H. H. Kung, was born he called her by the Chinese equivalent of “Nancy,” which was the name of Mrs. Carr.

In the Carr home, and under the General’s guidance and sponsorship, Soong’s education was planned. In the spring of 1881 he entered Trinity College, where he remained for a little more than a year. In 1882 he entered Vanderbilt University, and was graduated with a certificate in theology three years later.

During all this period General Carr was his friend and sponsor. The Carr home continued to be Charlie’s home. When vacation time came he turned his face toward Durham. Near the end of his Vanderbilt days, Soong had a strong desire to study medicine as further preparation for his service in China, and General Carr expressed a willingness to finance him. The authorities decreed otherwise. Bishop McTyeire, the Vanderbilt Chancellor, wrote Dr. Young J. Allen in China making especial mention of Charlie’s “generous patron, Mr. Julian Carr.”

Other words in the same letter are prophetic above all that the Bishop dreamed: “We expect to send Soong out to you this fall. . . . The destinies of many are bound up in his case.”

Charlie Soong returned to China under appointment as a missionary in the autumn of 1885.

LENGTHENING INFLUENCE

The old relationship between the General and Charlie Soong continued. General Carr had assisted many boys and girls through college, but none of them held so large a place in his interests and affections as Soong. In conversation he often referred to “the Chinese boy who lived in my house as a member of my family.”

On his return to China, Soong became a pastor in the Methodist Mission. After a
few years he withdrew and established an independent business for printing Bibles. In addition to his printing business he was later made manager of a large flour mill in Shanghai. He prospered, and became a man of considerable means. His loyalty to the Church continued unabated. Charlie Soong was to the end of his days one of the great Methodist laymen of China. In business enterprise and in churchmanship he followed in the footsteps of his American friend and sponsor.

In 1916 General Carr went to China to visit his Chinese protege. Soong met the General at the pier in Shanghai and took him to the Soong home. The General’s devotion to Charlie Soong had brought him in his later years half way around the world. Old friends met again, but under different circumstances. The tables were turned. Charlie Jones Soong was now host to his American friend.

In surroundings that rivaled the Carr home in Durham, the General met the personages who were shaping the destinies of the Orient. Charlie Soong had married a Christian woman of strong character and personality. Their home was a Christian home. Their children were educated in Christian schools in China and then sent to America for higher training.

One of the daughters had married Dr. Sun Yat-sen, leader of the Revolution and first President of the Republic. The eldest daughter was married to Dr. H. H. Kung, a direct descendant of the great Confucius, who was to become Finance Minister and one of the most distinguished leaders of his people. Another daughter was destined to become the wife of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, military and political leader of all China. A son, T. V. Soong, was to develop into a great international financier and to occupy the post of Foreign Minister in the government headed by his brother-in-law, Generalissimo Chiang.

All China was astir and the Soong family had come to a place of national leadership and influence. The General was extensively entertained by the Soongs and their friends. The Chinese government presented to him three exquisite porcelain vases, especially designed and inscribed, tokens of appreciation for his service to China and his friendship for her people.

A Methodist layman who had made a modest investment in the education of a Chinese boy witnessed the fruit of his generosity and stood as a symbol of America’s good-will toward the people of the Chinese Republic. General Carr’s “missionary special” was paying dividends.
On May 3, 1918, Charlie Soong, still in the prime of life, died in Shanghai. General Carr followed him in 1924. When the Soongs were notified of the General’s death, Mme. Sun Yat-sen wrote in choicest English. One sentence stands out more expressive than any other. Its pathos and sweet eloquence are inescapable. Of General Carr the famous woman wrote: “He was our great, good friend.”

AN UNFINISHED STORY

The full story of a Methodist layman’s gift to China and the world is not finished. None can foretell its end. The Soong family is at the center of the forces that are now shaping the future of the Far East. Because Charlie Soong found a friend and sponsor in this great-souled layman, a new day dawns for China, and Christianity comes to a large and influential place in the unfolding life of the Orient. Out of the loins and soul of Charlie Soong the present leadership in the Far East has sprung. It is conceivable that but for Charlie Soong and his family China would not today be an ally in the cause of human liberty.

An investment of a few hundred dollars—and behold the result! God uses unexpected methods to work great wonders. The seeds were sown by a great-hearted layman, and the harvest is ten thousand fold. The story of General Carr and Charlie Soong is an example of the potency of the Christian missionary movement, and is proof that a man’s best and most enduring investment is in the spread of the Kingdom of God. By his gift to the great Cause a layman may change the course of a nation.

Today there are “missionary specials” around the world—in America and other lands—awaiting the generosity of Christian men and women. Boys and girls everywhere are yearning for a Christian training which they cannot receive unless scholarships are provided and schools are strengthened. A few should be brought to American schools, but most of them need scholarships in the Christian schools of their own countries. Such scholarships are needed for students here in America, too—especially for young preachers among the Indians, Mexicans, Orientals, Negroes, and others.

Who knows? Your gift might bless a nation, influence the world, and return human dividends as did the gift of General Julian S. Carr.

Write to Department of Financial Promotion, Joint Division of Education and Cultivation, Board of Missions and Church Extension, The Methodist Church, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N. Y.
World Outlook

THE HOME

JOURNAL OF WORLD

METHODISM

BRILLIANT WITH COLOR AND PICTURES — INSPIRING WITH STORIES FROM EVERY LAND

$1.25 per year. $1.50 for both WORLD OUTLOOK and THE METHODIST WOMAN.

Give your subscription to your pastor or agent in your church or send it direct to

WORLD OUTLOOK

150 Fifth Ave.          New York (11), N.Y.