

“What Is The Measure Of A Man?”

**Chin Keong Tan--Acceptance Speech
Center for Health and Hope Hero of the Year
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2021 Hero of the Year**

What is the measure of a man? Not in awards, I hope, but in terms of sacrifices of time, heart and humility. Well, my mama taught me never to do anything with ulterior motives, but to be gracious in all things, so I accept this award with much gratitude.

I grew up in a country of 5 million people, on an island less than twice the size of the city of Denver. Yet I was encouraged from young to act locally but think globally, to be a citizen of the world. I fed on a staple of Bruce Lee and Rocky Balboa movies and learned to cheer for the underdog, the outcasts of society. So, even though I was very much a part of the establishment, I identified with the marginalized and sought to straddle both worlds.

I may not have fulfilled my early dreams of becoming a missionary, but thank God, through the Center, Brad and I have had opportunities to work among precious ones such as those with HIV, the LGBTQ, Dalits, Kimeru, tribal Batwa, and people of all color. I've found my mission field after all - a people most worthy of all our resources.

Right after the landmark jury decision was announced earlier this week, MN AG Ellison commended the witnesses of the murder of George Floyd on that fateful day, how by stopping and raising their voices, they challenged authority because they saw Floyd's humanity. By holding their ground and holding up their phones, they performed simple, yet profound acts of courage.

In the same way, we are witnesses to the vulnerability of our friends across the nations, who through no fault of their own suffer hunger and disease, marginalization and persecution. And why? Because they were born to the lowest caste of society? Or their parents had HIV, and they have HIV themselves? Our sisters and brothers who are *BORN* lesbian gay transgendered and bisexual... All of us trapped in a society who judges us - every day of our lives - as less than human.

We are all witnesses. By doing what we do, in whatever capacity, we are performing simple, yet profound acts of courage.

I am no hero. This award should be shared among all of us, dear volunteers of the Center, partners who continue to support our work through your prayers and the fruits of your labor. To Bonnie and Don, every one of you directors of this wonderful organization - YOU are the TRUE HEROES who inspire me to serve.

I have one last thing to share with you: a song in celebration of Earth Day this week. May we all heed the cry from Mother Earth.