



## WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

We thank the Lord that the second issue of the Expansion Newsletter is published and ready to greet everyone! We are grateful to the staff members who contributed articles and to the many brothers and sisters who helped with the translation, editing, and production of the newsletter.

The aim of the Expansion Newsletter is to communicate the latest expansion news as well as to provide answers and additional information to questions raised during previous expansion town meetings. The main focus for the current issue is again on the mission and vision of BCEC. Elder Brian Hui shared with us about the growth of BCEC from a personal perspective. We also had Pastor Steven Chin discuss why we want to expand in Chinatown. It turns out that the planning for church expansion was set back in 1993, when the proposed long-term plan was presented and accepted in the annual congregation meeting. The 1993 long-term plan, as recorded with the meeting minutes is republished in this issue.

With regard to future newsletter topics, we will present in the 3rd issue discussions on financial projections, costs, and fund-raising. In the 4th issue, we will discuss the design and utilization of the new facility. Topics for later issues are to be determined.

In this current issue, we have introduced the teams and leaders of the BCEC Expansion Committee. You are very welcome to contact them and discuss related matters. We have also published a list of prayer requests. We hope every brother and sister will remember the need of the church and spend time praying for the expansion project.

*BCEC Expansion Committee, Communication Team*



## ANOTHER JOURNEY OF FAITH BY ELDER BRIAN HUI



In the first issue of the BCEC Expansion Communication Newsletter, Senior Pastor Steven Chin highlighted the needs of Church Expansion with an emphasis on the church's vision of growth. In this issue, I would like to share my personal perspective on Church Expansion, specifically focusing on our needs for space.

Thirty years ago when I came to Boston for work, I spent my first few years living in rental properties. It wasn't until I started a family that I purchased a house and settled down. I am thankful to God for providing my family with a stable living situation so that my wife and I could focus on working while my children could grow up in a secure environment. Soon after I moved, I started attending the Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. For these past 30 years, this church and I have been growing together.

Back then, BCEC consisted of about 200 people without a permanent church site. Our Sunday worship service was held at a homeless shelter, which was not an ideal environment for worship. The most pressing need of our church at the time was a place for peaceful worship, Sunday School classes and fellowship meetings.

It took 18 years for BCEC to finally have its own place of worship. Since then, the church grew from one congregation of just over 200 people into six congregations of over 1000 people worshipping in three different languages. Following

the construction of our main church building, we have experienced over twenty years of consistent church growth.

While such growth is amazing, we must not be satisfied. One thousand people comprise only a small corner in the harvest field of the lost. In the community where we are situated, there are so many people who have yet to hear the Good News.

Our main church building was designed to hold about 250 people, but we outgrew this facility very quickly. Even after several phases of renovation and construction, the Chinatown Campus is still lacking space. The purchases of the 237 Annex Building and the Newton Campus have only partially resolved this problem, as our church still has to rent space for two worship services, over 20 Sunday School classes, and a number of fellowship meetings.

Renting space is only a temporary solution for our church. In addition to being expensive, it comes with a series of restrictions and promises no long-term security. All leases are temporary. While the school auditoriums, cafeteria and classrooms that we rent may be suitable for Sunday School classes at best, they do not provide an ideal place for worship.

Ten years ago, our church leaders proposed a land swap that would address our needs for more space; however, this plan did not come to fruition for various reasons. Since then, our leaders have not given up on the idea of physical expansion and have looked into a number of buildings and open spaces in Chinatown. These searches have not resulted in a suitable new site for our church.

**“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.” Psalm 127:1**

Early last year, we were surprised to hear that the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) had rekindled talks with BCEC regarding the old land swap idea. The new parcel of land under discussion is adjacent to our current site. Its location and rectangular shape make it an ideal location for church construction. Considering the absence of other viable options for building in Chinatown, the government’s usual preference for residential housing, and the potential competition with other community organizations for land, I believe that God has opened a door for us.

The BCEC leaders have been continually praying about this matter to seek God’s will and guidance for our church. From rekindling the land swap conversation, receiving the endorsement of over ten neighboring agencies, and obtaining tentative designation, I have seen how God has been at work, leading us each step of the way.

BCEC’s location in Chinatown is strategic because of its accessibility by public transportation to many people including college students and new immigrants. There are also schools, hospitals, restaurants, stores, and residential buildings nearby. Chinatown is a place that many people pass through

whether they live there or not. Besides being very visitor friendly, it is also a place of great spiritual need. It is a strategic location for our church to share the Good News of Christ with those around us. As a versatile church with the ability to cater to all age groups of varying languages and levels of assimilation, we are like one big family living in harmony across generations.

Our church’s need for additional space makes it necessary to consider acquiring a new building. I want to emphasize that we must not stop at simply maintaining our current ministries without planning for the future growth of our church by figuring out how we can fulfill the Great Commission given to us by God.

Expansion is a huge undertaking that requires the kind of manpower and financial resources that many people would deem impossible without the help of God.

I firmly believe that when BCEC approached church construction for the first time in the 1970s, it had to face greater challenges than we face this time around. We can learn so much from the original couple hundred members of our church who embarked on a journey of faith and relied on God every step of the way. They set us a precedent for unity, and patience in times of adversity, disagreement grounded in love and respect, dependence on God with time and money, and discernment of God’s voice amidst conflicting human chatter.

I urge you to participate in the expansion of our church and be a part what God is doing in Chinatown. Let us embark on yet another journey of faith and witness another miracle in the history of our church. ✚

## **BOSTON CHINESE EVANGELICAL CHURCH**

*REACHING THE CHINESE TO REACH THE WORLD*

### **PURPOSE**

BCEC is a Bible-believing, non-denominational, local body of believers whose purpose is to glorify God through worshipping God, edifying believers, and sharing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior by word and by deed to the Greater Boston Chinese community and the world, as guided by the Bible and the Holy Spirit.

### **VISION**

Because God has blessed us, we strive to be a blessing to the Chinese/Asian community and to our neighbors, by sharing the love of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are compelled by a passion for God and a compassion for people, all for the glory of God.

### **LONG TERM GOAL**

By God’s grace, we desire BCEC to grow and to actively cooperate with area churches and organizations to increase the percentage of Christians among the Chinese in the Boston area from 5% to 50% within 25 years.

## INTRODUCING THE BCEC EXPANSION COMMITTEE

**CHAIRPERSONS** PASTOR STEVE CHIN, ELDER BRIAN HUI

**VICE CHAIRPERSON** ANTHONY LAI

**SECRETARY** LINDSEY WONG

**BUILDING DESIGN TEAM** HENRIETTA MEI

**FUND RAISING TEAM** ANTHONY LAI (ACTING)

**COMMUNICATION TEAM** JASON CHEUNG, LEE HO

**FINANCE TEAM** ELDER JACK LEE (ACTING)

**PRAYER TEAM** HORACE LING

**LEGAL TEAM** GERARD FONG

**COMMITTEE CONSULTANTS** PASTOR DANIEL CHAN, ELDER CHUK-LAM YUEN

## EXPANSION@BCEC.NET

EXPANSION.CHAIRMAN@

EXPANSION.VICE-CHAIRMAN@

EXPANSION.SECRETARY@

EXPANSION.ARCHITECH@

EXPANSION.FUND-RAISING@

EXPANSION.COMMUNICATION@

EXPANSION.FINANCE@

EXPANSION.PRAYER@

EXPANSION.LEGAL@

EXPANSION.BOE-ADVISOR@

\*ALL EMAILS: @BCEC.NET

## VISION CAST

BY PASTOR STEVEN CHIN

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**I**t is advantageous for the church to physically expand in the strategic location of Chinatown in order to increase the percentage of Christians among the Chinese in the Boston area from 5% to 50%. Chinatown is the most accessible location for most Chinese in the area and is the cultural center of the community. Expanding physically in Chinatown would mean increasing our spiritual resources and our community-directed ministries toward a needy population. Chinatown is where our church has seen the most fruit in its ministries.

Our present facilities are inadequate for our present size and future size. A larger facility will allow more efficient use of our human resources as well as more effective planting of “daughter” churches in the long term future. Renting space has many restrictions, lacks long term stability, and will cost more in the long run.

Given our Purpose, Vision, and Long Term Goal as a church as presented in the previous issue, we want to focus this issue on the proposal to expand physically in Chinatown.

### *1. How does physically expanding in Chinatown fit the vision? Why not expand into the suburbs where most of the Chinese live?*

If reaching the Chinese in the Boston area is our primary goal, the location of the church building is of strategic importance. There are a number of factors that favor expanding in Chinatown.

#### **A. Chinatown, as the population and cultural center of the Chinese community, provides the best opportunities for outreach.**

Most Chinese in Massachusetts live in the city of Boston or near the city of Boston. In fact, 50,000 Chinese, or over half the Chinese population in the state, live in six cities and towns: Boston, Quincy, Cambridge, Malden, Newton, and Brookline. The city of Boston has the largest population of Chinese in the state at over 20,000. Over 5000 Chinese live in Chinatown. The number of residents in Chinatown is growing because of new housing developments that have been completed recently as well as others being planned. The Chinatown residents are also becoming more diverse ethnically and economically. Furthermore, the other five cities are all adjacent or very close to the city of Boston.

A church building located in Chinatown would be very accessible to most Chinese in the Boston area either by walking, public transportation, or by car. Those living in Chinatown or near Chinatown can walk to church. This is especially important for low income and elderly residents of Chinatown. Most of the college students in the area, as

well as those without cars, can come to Chinatown by way of public transportation. The Orange Line, Silver Line, Red Line, and Green Line all feed into the downtown area and Chinatown. In addition, Chinatown, being at the crossroads of two interstate highways, is very accessible by car. Even those who live in Rhode Island and New Hampshire can drive to Chinatown in a reasonably short period of time.

Though most Chinese in the Boston area live outside of Chinatown, Chinatown is still seen by most as the cultural center of the Chinese community. Most Chinese in the Boston area know where Chinatown is and have visited there because it has the largest concentration of Chinese stores and services in the Boston area. Though there are growing numbers of Chinese businesses in the suburbs, many still like to come to Chinatown to utilize the restaurants, grocery stores, bakeries, hair salons, health care, or other services. This is not surprising since nearly 70% of Chinese in Massachusetts are foreign born and have a strong affinity to the Chinese culture. That is also why most Chinese social service and cultural organizations are based in Chinatown. Many have recently shown their long term commitment to the community by building new facilities in Chinatown. Even American born Chinese are attracted to Chinatown because of the food and the culture. Our church's recent history has shown that even with a larger facility in Newton and easier parking, people in our church have overwhelmingly preferred to worship in Chinatown.

If the church's long term goal is to reach

# The greatest blessing we can give to the residents of Chinatown and to those who come to Chinatown is to verbally share the life changing message of the Gospel. But we can also be a blessing by sharing the love of Christ by deed.

more Chinese Americans for Christ, then expanding in Chinatown can take advantage of the fact that Chinatown is the population and cultural center of the Chinese community.

## **B. Chinatown has a need for more spiritual resources.**

Chinatown is the population and cultural center of the Chinese community. The businesses and services in Chinatown serve not only those who live in Chinatown but also those who come to Chinatown. Yet there are only two evangelical Chinese churches located in Chinatown. This is different from the situation in New York's Chinatown, for example, where there are many Chinese churches. In fact, the entire city of Boston, which has the largest Chinese population of any city in Massachusetts with over 20,000 Chinese, has only four evangelical Chinese churches.

Most of the Chinese churches in the Boston area are in the suburbs. Quincy, with over 10,000 Chinese residents, has four Chinese churches. Expanding in Boston Chinatown would provide more resources to reach the Chinese in the Boston area in the strategic location of Chinatown. Also as the Chinatown population is growing more ethnically diverse, the English speaking congregation of the church will also have more opportunities to reach other Asians and non-Asians.

## **C. Expanding our ministries in Chinatown can bring more blessings to the community.**

The greatest blessing we can give to the residents of Chinatown and to those who come to Chinatown is to verbally share the life changing message of the Gospel. But we can also be a blessing by sharing the love of Christ by deed. By sharing God's love in action, we can point them to God's love and to the Gospel. It is not enough for the church building to be in a location accessible to most Chinese. We cannot expect people to just walk into our church to hear the Gospel. To be fishers of men and women, we must attract them to hear the Gospel. Sharing God's

love by deed will establish relationships and provide opportunities to share God's love verbally. We have seen this happen already in our outreach ministries, such as our Community English Classes and Project Destiny.

Therefore, physically expanding in Chinatown and making it a center to meet community needs is an integral part of our plans. Within the community there are many needs among the children, the youth, the families, and the elderly. A new facility can be designed to share God's love and to attract non-Christians to our church through various means such as recreational programs for youth and restaurant workers during the week, child care services, ESL and citizenship classes, senior citizen gatherings, youth tutoring, music lessons, counseling, or computer classes.

Expanding in Chinatown will also add to the life and vitality of Chinatown. Many of the 14 Chinatown organizations that supported our proposal for the land swap cited BCEC as a valuable member of the community. We can continue to support the local economy in Chinatown through the patronage of our members. Already we attract over 1000 people each week to Chinatown. Also, our presence and involvement in the community will help direct people with their time and talents to volunteer or work in Chinatown, especially in human services and education.

Expanding in Chinatown can also be a blessing to the whole region because of the strategic nature of the central city and urban ministry. Tim Keller, a well known pastor in New York City, wrote the following: "You can't reach the urban centers from the suburbs, but you can most definitely reach the suburbs from the city... Ministries that begin and thrive in the city will eventually spread all through the suburbs, following their converts out to their new neighborhoods."

## **D. Expanding in Chinatown will put more resources where we have seen the most growth.**

We have seen God bless our ministries

in Chinatown in the past 47 years. Based in Chinatown we have grown from 18 people to over 1000 people, growing to be the largest Chinese church in New England. While God has blessed both our Chinatown and Newton campuses, we have seen most of our baptismal growth come from Chinatown. Whether it is ministering to senior citizens, reaching out to immigrants through ESL, attracting students from area colleges, operating a day camp, or teaching children brought by immigrant parents to our Sunday Schools, BCEC's ministries have shown the most fruit in Chinatown. Ministry in the suburbs is something we are still learning how to do. Now that there is finally an opportunity to expand in Chinatown it makes sense to put more resources into the location where we have seen more fruit.

## **2. Given that Chinatown is a good location to minister, why do we need a new and larger building?**

### **A. The present buildings that BCEC owns in Chinatown are inadequate for our present size.**

Our present main building at 249 Harrison Ave. was completed in 1979 for a church no larger than 250 people. The purchase and renovation of 237 Harrison Ave. in 1993 provided additional offices and meeting rooms. Now we have 1000 adults and children in Chinatown. The adults meet in four worship services, two of which meet in rented facilities. The Cantonese I Am service has been overcrowded for several years. Eighty people have had to worship via closed circuit TV in the basement with no room for new people. We have had to rent or borrow space for over two decades.

### **B. We need to plan to accommodate our future members.**

Not only are the existing facilities inadequate, but we must plan to accommodate new members into the church as we strive toward our long term goal. Just a doubling of the number of people coming to BCEC

would mean adding another 1000 people to our facilities in Chinatown. Where would those people worship? How can we accommodate these people in our Sunday Schools and fellowships? We must seek to expand physically while the opportunity is available and not wait until there is a crisis.

**C. A larger facility in Chinatown will allow our human resources to be utilized more efficiently.**

A larger facility will allow for economies of scale, especially in terms of pastoral staff and key personnel. Instead of spreading our

leadership across different locations at different times, we can concentrate our human resources for maximum impact. For instance, a sanctuary that can accommodate 700 people, instead of the present 350 in the 11am Cantonese service, would double the capacity of that service without adding much more preparation for the preacher, the choir, worship leaders, or the musicians. On the other hand, having two worship services of 350 would require two sets of gifted leaders or the overuse of the same set of leaders.

**D. A larger facility in Chinatown will**

**allow the church to send out larger “daughter churches.”**

A larger facility in Chinatown will also allow the church to send out more people to start “daughter churches” (either independent church plants or congregations that are still part of BCEC). In the long term, even a larger facility in Chinatown will not be adequate for our long term future growth. It will be difficult to grow any more physically in Chinatown because of the lack of space and high building costs. Therefore, sending out people to start new churches or congregations in the suburbs must be part of the long

## THE 1993 BCEC LONG TERM PLAN

After months of praying, planning, discussing, and meeting, the Pastoral Staff and Board of Deacons has agreed on a long term plan that they believe God is leading the church toward. We had all agreed that we wanted the church to continue growing. However, we had different ideas about what form that growth would take in the next three to five years. As we prayed and shared our ideas, God united the leaders toward a common plan. We introduce the plan today for your prayerful consideration. The plan is general in nature at this stage. As the members of the church agree with the general direction of the church, more detailed plans will be formulated and presented. Since no plan can be implemented without the support of the members, we will be asking the members to confirm this plan at the Annual Congregational Meeting on October 31.

### STRENGTHENING OUR FAMILY TOWARD AD 2000

Our theme for our 237 Harrison Ave. project was “As Our Family Grows”. It helped focus on our space needs as our church family grows. Our long term plan wants to expand on that idea. We need to strengthen our church in a number of areas as we approach a new century.

#### I. IN MATURITY

We will begin by strengthening our church family in term of maturity. Only a strong and mature church can grow. We will focus on motivating, discipling, and training our members. Existing programs will be reexamined for effectiveness. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening our people ministry and leadership development. Even though our church is large we want a church where individual needs are being met. Because of cultural differences this may mean different plans for building up the various congregations in BCEC. We want a church mobilized to evangelize.

#### II. IN NUMBER

We want to expand our outreach to the Chinatown community. Most of the Chinese population live in Chinatown or see Chinatown as its cultural center. We are the only large evangelical Chinese church in Chinatown and Boston. Rather than extend our ministries to the suburbs at this time, we want to concentrate our resources where the people are and where they go to. We want to strengthen and expand our outreach particularly to the residents of Chinatown. Ideas include citizenship classes, a reading room, and a staff member assigned specifically to Chinatown.

As we expand our outreach, we need to reorganize to accommodate the growth in numbers for the short term. The 11 AM service is already full, and the 9:15 AM service approaching capacity. Ideas include adding services, closed circuit TV, satellite services (another worship at the same time but in another location nearby), rental of more space, and shifting all the worship times to maximize Sunday morning.

#### III. IN FACILITIES

As we increase in numbers, reorganizing will only accommodate the growth in the short term. In the long term we must add to our facilities if we are committed to a Chinatown-based ministry. We may renovate and add to our facilities to double our capacity for worship. We also need additional space for Sunday School and fellowship groups. New space can be designed for multiple use and community outreach such as recreational space and day care. The cost may be large but with increased maturity and numbers the church can do it with God's help.

#### IV. IN SENDING

Eventually as the church continues to grow and has a strong Chinatown-based ministry, we will send out daughter churches. The location will depend on the population patterns at that time. By strengthening the mother church in Chinatown before sending out new churches, the daughter churches will have sufficient members to grow and the mother church will not be hurt from the loss of resources.

term plan to achieve our vision.

Our elders believe sending out only a small group of believers to start a new church is not an effective strategy. They have observed that Chinese churches under 100 people seem to stay small for a long time. These small churches spend most of their energies just trying to survive. Our elders believe sending out 300-400 people to start a new church is a better strategy. Such a church right from the beginning would be able to offer ministries to meet the diverse needs within the Chinese family. However, sending out so many people from a “mother church” of 1000 people may hurt the mother church. With a larger facility in Chinatown, if the mother church has 2000 people, then it can more easily send out 300-400 people. This could happen multiple times in order to achieve our long term goal.

Therefore, a larger facility in Chinatown would help present needs, future needs, and long term needs.

### **3. Why can't we just continue to rent space as we have been doing?**

#### **A. Renting space has its limitations.**

Our strategy for decades has been to rent or borrow facilities to make up for our inadequate facilities. Though we are grateful for the rented facilities, they have their limitations as related to effective worship, teaching, fellowship, and outreach. For instance, newcomers

can be confused by the borrowed facilities where signage is limited. Parents must shuttle their children across busy streets in bad weather to drop off and pick up their children from Sunday Schools. Music and sound equipment must be set up and put away, taking time and energy. Bible story pictures and Bible verses cannot be hung on the walls of public school classrooms. Fellowship groups on Friday night cannot meet past a certain time as allowed by our rental agreement.

#### **B. Renting space lacks stability and will cost more in the long run.**

As we grow larger as a church, being able to count on facilities becomes more and more important. When the church was smaller, it was easier to rent or borrow space for 2-3 classes or a worship service of 75 people. Now with a lot more people including children and the elderly, the options are much more limited. A problem with our rental agreement could not only prevent us from making progress toward achieving our vision but it could even cause us to shrink.

We currently rent two facilities: the Quincy Upper School (behind 249 Harrison Ave.) and the Quincy Elementary School (across Washington St.). We use 4 large classrooms and the cafeteria at the Quincy Upper School. When the Quincy Upper School moves completely to their new site perhaps in the summer of 2009, these temporary

classrooms will be removed. This means our rental use of that building – on Fridays (Fellowships), Saturdays (ESL), and Sundays (Sunday Schools) will definitely end. Ministries may have to be curtailed if alternate space is not found.

Our rental of the Quincy Elementary School is by yearly agreement.

We rent the auditorium, the gym, the cafeteria and 18 classrooms. We pay over \$1000 per week for about 6 hours of use. The permission to rent and the rental fees are subject to change. The loss of use of that facility would mean we would have to find worship space to seat at least 300 people and at least 20 classes. Our rental requirements would be more in the future. Finding such spaces to rent are not easy in the Chinatown area, especially at an affordable price.

Owning our own space in Chinatown (249 Harrison Ave. and 237 Harrison Ave.) has given us a measure of stability even though the cost of those buildings seemed high at the time. Over the years, with the cost of real estate steadily going up, the price paid can be seen as relative bargains today.

The situation is analogous to why families try to buy homes. Single people usually rent. But families, especially those with children, usually try to buy a home not only because of the long term financial advantage but also because of the stability it affords in raising a family. These same advantages hold true for the church as we plan to grow. ✚

## **PRAYER REQUESTS**

1. Pray for the work with our consultant and staff to finalize the stewardship campaign schedule. Pray for wisdom and His timing.
2. Pray for the preparation of master project plan and budget for the expansion project.
3. Pray for the preparation of the next issue of the Expansion Newsletter.
4. As each department begins to look for helpers, pray for God's provisions. Especially the Finance Committee which is still waiting for a leader.
5. Pray for church unity and that the church sees God's plan regarding the vision.
6. Pray that the congregations have passion about the vision.
7. Pray that the church with all its diversity will discern God's will together regarding what He wants the church to do in the future.
8. Pray that as we plan our new church building, our heart will be open to the community and welcome people from the community to share our new facility.
9. Pray that we will have a greater opportunity to share God's love with people in the community through this expansion project.