



From Our Senior Pastor:

Sabbaticals: Not Just For Pastors



by PASTOR STEVEN CHIN

As I write this article, I have recently come back from the first half of my sabbatical. During the 2011-2012 ministry year, a number of pastoral staff will be taking their sabbatical. (The timing just worked out that way). I think this is a great benefit provided by our church where pastors are each given a six-month sabbatical after six years of ministry in our church. Serving as a pastor is very demanding and stressful. Many work 50-70 hours each week. Pastoring is demanding physically, mentally, and spiritually, and it is hard on the pastor's family as well.

I know for myself I was very tired and weary just before taking my sabbatical. I was running out of gas and running on fumes. Even half of my sabbatical allowed me to get rest and be renewed. It gave me time to think and to explore new ideas by attending conferences, reading books, and visiting other churches.

Our pastoral staff is one of the most valuable resources God has given our church. We need to treasure them, and make sure we do not burn them out. A sabbatical can increase the productivity and loyalty of our pastoral staff. Unlike many other churches, we have had a very stable group of pastors, many of whom have served our church



BCEC alumni reunion with Pastor Steve, Pastor Daniel, and Pastor Fung in Hong Kong, September 2011

for decades. In fact, of our five pastors, the pastor with the shortest (yes, shortest) tenure at our church is Pastor Enoch with 10 years of service. This is a blessing from the Lord, and has allowed our church to grow steadily over the years without the interruption of finding and adjusting to a new pastor. Without a sabbatical, I think I would have resigned from working for the church years ago.

What is good for our pastoral staff is also good for all our members who are serving. Some of our members need to take some time off to rest and

be renewed. I know some may be surprised I am encouraging people to take some time off from ministry. I know that there always seems to be a shortage of workers in the church's ministries. We appreciate that some have served decades non-stop because they are committed to meeting the needs. However, we should be careful we do not burn these people out. We do not want them to drop out or become bitter. Instead of continuing to serve because of obligation, some need to take time to be fed and remotivated spiritually.

God created us with a need to rest. Instead of people working everyday with no end, He commanded His people to observe a Sabbath after six days and not to do any work (Exodus 16:23). In fact, the Hebrew for Sabbath means "rest." Later, a sabbath year was instituted to give the people and



Pastors at the Chinese Congress on World Evangelization

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the land rest (Leviticus 25:3-4).

Some of us may feel guilty for taking off from ministry. However, Jesus, even though He was divine, took time to rest (Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:31; Luke 5:15-16). He did not constantly minister to people even though the demands of ministry were great. Jesus took time to be alone and to rest, to pray, and to think.

Some ministries have mandatory sabbaticals

built in. If your ministry does not and you have been serving continuously for many years, perhaps you can discuss it with your ministry leader and plan out a time where someone else can take over your duties, so you can rest and be renewed. Although you may think you are indispensable to that ministry, a sabbatical may give an opportunity for someone else to grow into that ministry. In fact, many members often do not volunteer be-

cause they think they are not needed.

A ministry sabbatical will give you time to rest. It will help you gain perspective. You can focus on receiving, instead of giving to others. You could even try out new ministries. Hopefully, after your rest, you will feel energized to serve the Lord even more. Remember, ministry is not a sprint, but a marathon. Let us pace ourselves for a lifetime of ministry.



Left: Children's Program during the Missions Conference; Right: Rev. Henry Lu speaks to the Chinese congregation during the Missions Conference

Missions Conference, Chinese Track:

The 34th Annual Missions Conference



by CHRISTINE WONG,
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

For BCEC's Missions Conference 2011, God sent us one of BCEC's overseas missionaries as the Chinese speaker. Rev. Henry Lu, who had been serving as the general director of Chinese Overseas Christian Missions (COCM) in Europe, came to our church this past November for three consecutive days of sharing about the Chinese ministries in Europe. He titled his messages for each of the three days with three why's: Why Europe? Why us? And why now? After explaining the urgent needs of workers in the harvest field in Europe, he challenged the congregation to respond to the needs of the gospel in Europe as Jesus did in the land of Israel: "And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages... When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest'" (Matthew

9:35-38 – ESV).

More and more Chinese students are going to Europe for their graduate studies. Most of these students are in their twenties. After they finish their studies, they are expected to return to China with promising careers waiting for them. They will become influential in their home communities. If they receive Christ during their study in Europe, they will bring to their home country not just their expertise, but also the gospel of Christ when they return home. With about 100,000 students and their potential influence in China, the Chinese student community in Europe is a harvest field that calls for more laborers.

Chinese immigrants, especially the second generation immigrants, are also in great need of the gospel. Of the eight hundred million people in Europe, two million are Chinese. The younger of them are not just faced with the difficulties of adjusting to a new cultural environment, they are also growing up in a spiritual environment where about 75% of the continent's population claim themselves to be Christians but only 1.5% of them are practicing their faith. They need guidance as they are looking to build up their own identity, and true guidance can only be found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is Rev. Lu's answer to the question, "Why Europe?": They need God; they need to be built up; they need to be shown the right way! We

are supposed to respond to these needs as Paul said in Romans 9:2-3 – ESV, "... I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

Why is it we who should respond to the needs of the Chinese in Europe? Rev. Lu used the story of the rich ruler in Luke 18:18-30 to remind us that the question, "Why us?" arises when we are unwilling to give up our earthly possessions to respond to God's call. To follow God, we need to give up our wealth, status, and the sense of security that comes with them. True security lies in our faith in the everlasting God. God's call is a gracious call. We may find ourselves in need of a lot of things when we choose to respond to His call, but He will certainly provide his laborers with abundance beyond imagination. This call is also a call for response now, for this is a call that has been given through Jesus two thousand years ago: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20 – ESV). While we sit in the comfort of our own homes, may the Lord help us to see how we are to serve our kinsmen overseas now.

Missions Conference, English Track: Rejoice, Repent, and Rededicate in Missions



by CHRISTINA DIZON,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

The theme for this year's Missions Conference was "Rejoice, Repent, Rededicate in Missions," and it took place at the Chinatown Campus on November 18-20, 2011. The main speaker for the English congregation was Tom Lin, who called BCEC his home church in the 1990's when he was a student at Harvard University. He later planted and became campus minister of their InterVarsity Chapter, which is still active today. Currently, he is the Vice President of Missions for InterVarsity and the Director of the Urbana Student Missions Conference.

On Friday, Tom Lin began the conference with a reading of Mark 10:17-31, the story of The Rich Young Man. We learned that Jesus doesn't give us easy callings, and Tom outlined four categories of cost, some of which Jesus may ask us to leave behind when we follow him: career and academics, money and possessions, relationships and family, and pride. Tom related these costs with his personal testimony of how he decided to go into full-time ministry, despite the crushing disappointment of his immigrant parents.

He admitted, "It was hard following Jesus into mission." Then why, in Mark 10 – ESV, does Jesus command us to leave? In verses 29-30, Jesus says, "there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life." Scripture tells us that God is faithful. Following Him will be hard "with persecutions," but it will also be rewarding with a "hundredfold" blessings.

On Saturday, Tom gave us an overview of the changing face of Christianity on a global scale, termed the "New Normal." Several facts exemplifying the "New Normal" include the following: more missionaries are being sent from Asia, Africa, and Latin America (all located in the Global South) instead of America and Europe; Islam is growing rapidly; the largest evangelical student movement is in Nigeria; there is rising persecution of Christians in the United States, mostly present in college campuses; the fastest growing evangelical population is in Iran; and sadly, research shows that 80% of those who grew up in the church end



Tom Lin shares his testimony with the English Congregation

up leaving the faith by their late 20's.

In light of these facts, Tom posed some questions to ponder: How do we work alongside the Global South? How do we love our Muslim neighbors with mutual respect and still share our faith? In regards to the decline of the Christian West, how do we share the gospel with an unchurched generation? We must consider these questions thoughtfully to provide more effective ways of communicating and relating the gospel to others, and also realize we can learn new and different ways of evangelizing from variant cultures.

On the final day during Sunday service, Tom used the Parable of the Dishonest Manager (Luke 16:1-9) for his message, "Changing the World with Dishonest Wealth." In the parable, Jesus commends the dishonest manager--not for his dishonesty, but for his shrewdness. Jesus calls us to use our "dishonest wealth" shrewdly to make "eternal friends" (verse 9). "Dishonest wealth" refers to our positions, money, and possessions, all of which belong to God and will eventually be taken away

from us. How can we be shrewd managers of what God has given to us now to make good for eternity? To drive the point home, Tom gave three volunteers from the congregation each a \$5 Starbucks gift card, and they were to be shrewd managers and use it not for themselves, but for others. This teaches us that, while it may be easier to splurge on a frappuccino only for us to enjoy, it takes much more wisdom and purpose to treat another person and cultivate an eternal friendship.

One thing we can take away from this conference is that we were all called to serve God's kingdom. And although the call may not be easy, God's faithfulness will carry us through. Thank God for the stories that were shared, and for the willingness of Tom Lin and other BCEC missionaries to leave their homes for the sake of the gospel. May their testimonies lead us to rejoice in the Spirit that enables us to do the incredible, repent of our desire to build earthly kingdoms instead of God's, and rededicate our lives to being missional people, wherever God leads us.



Left: Pastor Enoch, Tom Lin, and Pastor Tom; Right: Sharon, a missionary in the Philippines, shares her story

*Seminarian Sharing:***A Trip to Colorado**

by BOBO TANG,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

Praise the Lord for leading me thus far. Last October, I was able to attend a training program and an interview to be a missionary candidate for the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) at its U.S. headquarters in Colorado. Since graduating from seminary in 2009, I always had the burden to start my application for a missionary position. During a family visit to Hong Kong in late 2009, I took the opportunity to look for a missions organization that shared the same vision.

My intention is to return to China to serve the ethnic minority groups that have never heard the gospel. That is the reason I chose to apply to become a missionary through OMF—a missionary organization that has a long history in serving China. When I visited the OMF office in Hong Kong, I was recommended to apply through the OMF U.S. office since BCEC will be my commissioning church, and it is better for a U.S. missionary to be supported by a U.S. missions organization. Therefore, I contacted the OMF office in the U.S. after I returned. In June 2010, I had a phone

conversation with the Northeast Regional Director of OMF. In the next half year, I submitted a number of forms required by OMF, including the Self Reference Form, the Medical Form, and the Doctrinal Form.

OMF holds a training program for missionary candidates three times a year in February, June, and October. I originally planned to attend the training program in February 2011 after I submitted the application at the end of 2010. However, the February training program was canceled due to insufficient number of attendees. Since I was helping out at BCEC's 50th anniversary in June, I could only attend the training program in October. On October 17, I finally arrived in Colorado to attend the 10-day training program for missionary candidates. The goal of this training program is to create an environment for the OMF leadership to get to know more about the background and vision of each missionary candidate, and to let us know more about the vision of OMF. This is so we can assess whether we can build partnership to do God's work in East Asia.

We spent the first four days in a retreat campsite that was far away from the city. We learned about the history, mission, and vision of OMF, and we also heard representatives of each department share. This experience helped us better understand the available resources for performing overseas

missions in East Asia.

After the four-day retreat, we returned to the OMF U.S. headquarters. We had the opportunity to visit different departments and talk to leaders in each department. We were then scheduled to have individual meetings with the leaders of OMF, and to meet with the home medical advisor and the psychologist. Each missionary candidate took turns to share his/her testimony in front of the OMF leadership everyday before lunch. At the end, I was accepted and welcomed to the OMF family—praise the Lord! In the following days, we received training on creating support networks and fundraising.

I praise God for His faithfulness as He guides me through my plan to become a missionary. The last 10 days in Colorado was a truly joyful and fruitful experience. It allowed me to be away from the busy urban lifestyle, and get the rest I needed. More importantly, I made friends with a group of godly brothers and sisters who share a common vision. I treasure the close relationships we built.

My heart is to be involved in church planting for ethnic minorities in East Asia starting mid-2013. I will appreciate prayer support from brothers and sisters, so God's will can be done through me. Please contact me if you want to partner with me in this cross-cultural ministry.

MISSIONS CORNER: THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

by C.W. (NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST)

When I first went overseas as a young single, I was answering the altar call at Urbana when Rev. Billy Graham issued that challenge. Was I willing to believe and obey Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth? Was I willing to put everything on the altar? Philippians 3:7 – ESV resonated in my ear: “But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.” I laid my possessions down, my car, guitar, and ambitions. I was willing, but I wasn't sure that I could actually handle it. So several of us from BCEC who drove to Urbana spurred one another on to prepare. I studied Bible at Multnomah University for a year and was led to a two-year short term missions trip in northeast Africa; one year to adjust to language and culture, one year to serve.

Africa was amazing! Even though I felt like I was on another planet, after one month, I knew that I was in the right place, and I knew in my heart that Jesus was calling me long term to His world. One day as I traveled alone, I rode on top of a lumbering train through the Sahara Desert. I heard God's still voice touch my heart and call me to the Muslims. That was in 1984 when no one was interested in them. There was literally one Christian work-

er to a million Muslims. Nevertheless, Jesus was speaking to me clearly. After three and a half years of exciting and fulfilling work in northeast Africa, I knew I needed more cross-cultural training.

I enrolled at Fuller Seminary for two years, and met my future wife in Haiti while on a summer trip. After graduation, we stayed in Boston to get married in 1992 and to serve at BCEC until we were ready to go out.

In 1994, my wife and I made a commitment of 10 years to live and labor among the people of North Africa. We stayed there for almost 17 years. Both of our living children were born there. One of our children is buried there.

We learned multiple languages, acculturated to a worldview close to the Bible, prayed and interceded, walked, wept, shared, witnessed, worked, drank thousands of glasses of sweet mint tea, broke round loaves of bread, ate with our fingers, and left behind dear friends and colleagues, as well as brothers and sisters in the faith. One thought that has helped over the years was, “Watch what God is doing and listen to His voice. Then, adjust our lives to Him.” That's what Jesus said in

John 5:19 – ESV: “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing.”

God brought a new believer, a married man of peace, “Peter” across our paths on Valentine's Day in 2006. We invested in his family for over six years to the point of seeing 18 members of his family enter or be touched by the kingdom.

In Isaiah 61:1 – NIV, which Jesus quoted when he began his ministry, says, “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, ... to bind up the broken hearted, ...” God has not only sent us to the ends of the earth, but also to the farthest reaches of our hearts. We found that even after people are saved, they have a lot of issues that needs cleansing. God is curing people in body, soul, and spirit with salvation, healing, and deliverance.

The Lord has led us out of Africa this year to take a sabbatical, as well as to seek His face and transition. I know my life is not my own; God is leading every step of the way. I am continually amazed at how God takes me on “The Road Less Traveled.”



Above: Chinatown English family and adult retreat group photo; Below: Kayaking, Rev. Abe Cho speaking on rest and renewal, and group games

Chinatown English Fall Family and Adult Retreat:

Renewed Through Rest



by VERONICA LAU,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

It's funny coming back home after being away for four years. What was once familiar is not quite the same, and there isn't the same sense of belonging. This was how I felt coming back home to Boston and BCEC after having been in Chicago for college. My closest friends and my dear, dear fellowship seemed to be in the Midwest, not here. On top of that, I was still unsure of what God wanted for me in this awkward time after college.

The Chinatown English Fall Family and Adult Retreat, which was held September 23-25 at Camp Brookwoods in New Hampshire, could not have come at a better time. Honestly, I was nervous about going. I was still adjusting to being in a different fellowship, and I had no idea what to expect from retreat. I'm really glad I went though, because God spoke to me powerfully through the speaker, Rev. Abraham Cho from Redeemer Presbyterian Church, and gave me direction for this post-college stage.

This year the topic of the retreat was Rest and Renewal, Sabbath and Vocation. Rev. Cho spoke on both personal and cosmic rest and renewal. He challenged us on our understanding of the Sabbath the very first night: so often, when we think of taking a "Sabbath," we think of taking a break from our work and not doing anything. But, really, a biblical Sabbath involves entering into God's creation with wonder and worship, and is meant to de-center us from ourselves and our lives and to center us once again on God. When God told the Israelites to keep the Sabbath, it was more than just a day

set aside to honor and worship God; it had greater implications. The Sabbath, Rev. Cho suggested, is an act of justice because it is something everyone is entitled to, and not based on social distinction. It is also a reminder of the freedom that we have in God to rest, and to not allow work and success to control us.

Just as a Sabbath is not merely the cessation from activity, our work is not simply a way to earn money; rather, it is God's calling for us. As our God is "a fundamentally creative and working God," Rev. Cho exhorted us to participate in God's work and creation. God is concerned about all creation; are we, as His children, doing what God commanded us in Genesis 1:28? He challenged us to discuss in our small groups – which were divided by industries – what God intended for our industries, what was broken and fallen in them, and how we could contribute to their healing. These questions were not just something we discussed and pondered about at retreat. When we came back from retreat, we continued the conversation about ways we could bring God's redemption to our respective work places.

I went to retreat full of trepidation, but left the Brookwoods campsite with a lot more joy, purpose, and a sense of belonging. Not because I made new friends and had a lot of fun playing games and fellowshiping with others – although I did, and that certainly helped me feel more at home with

Crossroad. It was because I heard God speak to me clearly. At one point, Rev. Cho said, "I don't think it's that hard to discern God's call for you. Often, I think God corners you into the vocation where He wants you." That went straight to my heart, for in many ways during my three-month search for a job and for God's calling for me, the only opportunities consistently opened to me were those in education. Other than serving in my fellowship, one of the few consistent activities I have always been involved in is teaching and working with kids. As I pondered these things and the joy I have when I am serving in this way, I realized that this is the career that God wants for me – at least for this season of my life. So now, as I pursue this path that God has placed on my heart, I am eager to learn how I can bring God's renewal to the education field.



Su-Cai Fellowship Is Growing



by TAK-LAM CHAN,
MANDARIN SERVICE

Su-Cai Fellowship is growing, and it is thriving. “[It] is like a tree planted by streams of water...” (Psalm 1:3), flourishing from its immersion in the living water. It was nameless at first, not only for a few months, but for at least a whole year. To recall its beginnings is to see God’s grace.

Two years ago, God provided the opportunity to start a new ministry at BCEC in response to a felt need. A group of six immigrant young adults and families from mainland China was brought together to share in the warmth of a home away from home. My wife and I were invited to join them a year ago, and I can remember the first time we went. We were all packed into the church library, and even though some were strangers to me, I was inspired to see several young people from my hometown. Although we range in age over three decades or so, we share the same eagerness in seeking the Lord. The Lord also allows the younger generation to see His faithful provisions in those who went before them. We are able to encourage each other spiritually and to share in the joy of fellowship as we draw closer to the Lord.

The members of the fellowship are typically restaurant workers or business owners who have long working hours and a heavy workload. The power of the gospel causes them to thirst for God’s word, the “lamp unto my feet and light unto my path.” On their only day off each week, they would converge on the church from various communities,

early in the morning, and do so expectantly.

The word “vegetables” (“su cai” in Mandarin Chinese) as used in Proverbs 15:17 came to have special meaning to our group last year. In a society full of strife and hatred, “Better a small serving of vegetables with love” is an important lesson of submission for us, today and for all eternity. This is the meaning behind the name of the fellowship.

Currently, there are 13 families and 7 young adults who come regularly to Su-Cai Fellowship. The meeting time is every Tuesday at 9:30 a.m.. After singing and prayers, we share and discuss scripture in small groups for an hour, and then receive Bible instruction for the next hour. May God bless and transform us and strengthen our faith.

As an outreach activity recently on November 8, we provided and served dinner to 200 homeless men and women, sharing God’s love through food and hospitality. The young people who eagerly participated were so encouraged by their experience of “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” We look

forward to future opportunities to be a testimony of God’s grace.

Su-Cai Fellowship has indeed been blessed. Just as fertility in the Bible has been associated with the spread of the gospel, Su-Cai Fellowship’s baby boom is one evidence of God’s blessing. We’ve had two babies born in two years and four others are on their way. As we thank the Lord for His creative wisdom, we are learning to be like the tree “... which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever they do prospers.”



Su-Cai Fellowship members participate in outreach events such as serving food to the homeless.

God’s Provisions Are Always Sufficient



by SUKI MOK,
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21 – NIV).

Our Almighty God always provides more than we ask. In spring 2009, when our church was undergoing the stewardship campaign, I was struggling with whether I should pledge my car (2001 Volkswagen Beetle) for the Expansion Fund or not. At the time, I didn’t need my car for work, but there was a need to drive people home after Friday night fellowship. It’s also more convenient

to have a car to do grocery shopping and attend the monthly prayer meeting at Newton Campus. During the stewardship campaign, God reminded me to seek His kingdom first and all our needs will be taken care of, so I decided to pledge my car, and trust that God would provide enough rides for the brothers and sisters.

Although I pledged my car including its expenses to the Expansion Fund on a monthly basis, I was not sure when God wanted me to sell my car. Since there was no potential buyer, I was waiting for God to provide enough rides for Friday night before I sold my car. However, car problems started and lasted for about one and a half years. Therefore, I decided to sell my car before bigger problems arose, and it would be worth more if I sold it early. I pledged \$6000 based on the Kelley Blue Book value in 2009. When I started to look for buyers through Craigslist in 2010, one buyer said he was interested in buying for \$5200 after taking

a look at my car and told me he would pick up the next day, but he never showed up or returned my phone call. Another buyer said he was very interested in buying it for his daughter and even brought the cash, but he kept lowering the price to \$4700 even though he told me he had \$5000. I prayed to God that if the amount is lower than \$5000, then it is not the right time to sell my car, so I turned down his offer. About one week later, I had a car accident on the way to Friday night fellowship. The car accident was not serious and it was not my fault, but the insurance decided to total my car in the amount of \$6700. Although I had minor injuries, I was so happy that I didn’t have to deal with selling the car. I praised the Lord for turning the car accident into a blessing and for provided more than I had pledged. Hallelujah! I had fulfilled my pledge by God’s grace.

After I lost my car, God has indeed provided enough rides for brothers and sisters after Friday

fellowship. He has been sending different drivers to make sure those who live very far will get a ride home. I am so thankful for each of the drivers and their faithful servant examples. I especially wanted to thank Pastor Steven Chin. I know Pastor Steve has a busy schedule and is tired by the end of the day on Friday, but he still waited and gave us rides. May God bless you all, and continue to use what you have to bless others!

The "Beetle" I had was a gift from God, and it was my honor that I could offer it back to Him for His kingdom. It was a gift because a sister responded to God's calling and became a missionary about four years ago. Before the sister left for the mission field, she had to give up her

BMW car, which was on a lease contract. While she was praying for someone to pick up her lease so she wouldn't have to pay the contract penalty, God touched sister Scarlett Lam's heart to take the BMW car. In return, she had to give up her lovely Volkswagen Beetle. While Scarlett was praying for someone to take her Beetle, God touched my heart to give away my car (1995 Honda Civic) to sister Bobo Tang who was in need of a car to attend seminary school, and God had brought her to my attention, so I could take Scarlett's "Beetle." God also touched Scarlett's heart to sell her car to me for half price. I never imagined I could own a Beetle. It's one of the best gifts I received from God, as the exterior of the car was my favorite color and

I felt safe driving it. I'm so thankful for Scarlett's generosity and her willingness to submit to God. I have learned that once we put God's kingdom first, He will indeed provide what we need and more than we could ever imagine. May all the glory go to our Almighty God!



Called to Adoption

by WAI CHIN NG,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH



Isn't it amazing how God can bring people from different places together to become a family? This is certainly happening to us, as we continue our exciting adoption journey. It all started in 2003 when God led us to adoption. What a miracle it was that out of so many people in this world, God wove Gracie and us into one another's life. To our surprise, it was not only the two of us who went to China in 2005 to bring Gracie home, but Fannie was also pregnant with Evan at the same time! Just like Gracie's Chinese name (YunYun), we were doubly blessed with two precious children in eight months. In 2007, God moved us to apply for a second adoption, and we have been waiting patiently for over 4½ years. It was during this long waiting period that God moved us to adopt a "waiting child"- a child with special needs.

In October 2010, we took a leap of faith to answer God's call. A month later, we received Nathan's referral from China's Waiting Child program, and God united us in August 2011. This was another miracle because one week after we made the decision to adopt from the Waiting Child program, China invited us to remain on the waiting list to adopt another child from its traditional program. Therefore, if Lord willing, we will soon be bringing home our third child from China.

Speaking of double blessings, shortly after Nathan came home, God surprised us even more.

Fannie is once again expecting! We are speechless of the amazing work God is doing in our family. One after another, God has continuously been pouring His blessings upon our family. As we look forward to experiencing what God has planned for us, we need to seek His wisdom and guidance. It is only through His strength and provision that we can do all these things. "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33 – NIV).

What an honor and a privilege it is that God invites us to take part in this life-changing ministry (adoption) by constantly stretching our faith! Just like Peter, we cannot fully experience God unless we are willing to step out of our boats, our comfort zones. We deeply believe that adoption is a calling, and we humbly respond by being faithful servants to God. By faith, we trust that God has the perfect plan for our family, and He will provide for our needs. With obedience, we willingly follow His commands. "Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you" (James 1:27 – NLT).

In reflection, our adoptions of Gracie and Nathan have been the most profound experiences of the life changing power of love we have ever had. We have truly come to realize that adoption is a

miracle, and this miracle has ever drawn our hearts closer to God.

Over the years, we have never lacked of anything. In fact, our children are a richer blessing to us each day. It is our prayer and conviction that not only we provide for these children a place called home, but we also disciple them to become followers of Jesus Christ, so that they will make a strong impact in this world by carrying on the Christian legacy. To us, there is nothing more important in this world than investing in the next generation for it has eternal value in the Kingdom of God. It is indeed an honor for us to partner with our Almighty Father in expanding His kingdom on Earth through adoption! May all glory and honor be to our awesome God! "I could have no greater joy than to hear that my children are following the truth" (3 John 1:4 – NLT).



On November 26, 2011, the Yens and the Ngs hosted an Adoption Awareness and Orphan Care event at BCEC's Newton Campus. Pastor Tom gave Biblical teachings on orphan care, we watched a video from Family Life, and several adoptive families shared their adoption experiences.

Serving at PDAS



by TIMOTHY TE,
NEWTON ENGLISH

PDAS stands for Project Destiny Autumn to Spring. It's a ministry that runs Monday to Friday from 3-6 p.m., and serves mostly middle school students, but also high school students. The students come from Boston area schools like Josiah Quincy Upper School (JQUS), O'Bryant, Boston Latin School (BLS), Boston Latin Academy (BLA), and Edison. During PDAS, we start the day with homework and reading, which is really important for the students to establish good study habits. Reading is another important part of the students' learning, as some of them don't read that often or may have a reading ability that is below their grade level. At 4:30 p.m. we have meeting time for snacks and announcements, and on Tuesdays and Thursdays we include a worship song and a Bible lesson. This gives us a good break to the day and, most importantly, exposes students to the gospel. After meeting time students can continue their homework or, if they're finished, are free to hang out and play games.

I love spending time with the kids, many of whom I know from when I served in Project Des-



tiny Summer Camp. Before we had PDAS, there seemed to be a large disconnect with the students during the school year. We would have a great time during the summer getting to know the students and becoming good friends, but during the school year we would not see them for a while and might even lose touch. PDAS, however, really helps us to continue to minister to the students all year round, and to bridge the gap with other ministries like Teens and TWR. Earlier in the year, we had a TWR/PDAS "60 Seconds to Succeed" (Minute to Win It) Friday night game night. It was a lot of fun and many of the PDAS students came to church that night. We introduced them to other TWR students and counselors. Hopefully, through these introductions, we can continue to reach out to our students and welcome them into the BCEC community.

One of the best experiences for me is seeing students outside of PDAS. During PDAS we do get to know the kids, but the kids may only see it as a formal setting (like an extension of school). Seeing

some students playing basketball at JQUS, or seeing them at TWR is really great because we get to show the students that, as counselors, we're more than just tutors, but their friends as well.

One reason I wanted to serve in PDAS is that it really helps the community and gives the kids a place to feel welcome and safe, while they are being helped with their schoolwork. Not many other programs in the area are targeted toward middle school students. Its recent shift from a summer camp to an after-school homework center also has its challenges, and it has taken us a little bit of puzzling to figure out how to track the progress of students' homework and reading. At times, it seems we have all the challenges of a classroom without the benefit of a school's structure.

This year we have been blessed to have many more volunteer counselors give their time. All in all, it is well worth it because the parents are genuinely grateful. Recently, counselors met with parents at church for dinner. The parents were all really thankful that their kids have people to help them do well in school and keep them out of trouble. PDAS is a good ministry to share Christ's love to the students and their parents.

I have been so blessed to be able to serve in PDAS. It's a blessing to serve with other counselors who give their time and really care for the students and each other. As BCEC is a church that believes in the power of prayer, it would be a huge blessing if we could have your support through prayer. Please pray for Steve and Emily Liu as they are the only full-time staff organizing PDAS, and for the health of Emily and her baby. Please pray for the counselors, that we would be united in Christ's Spirit and that we would focus not on just academics and schoolwork, but also seek opportunities to share the gospel. And, most importantly, please pray for the students, that their hearts would be softened and that the gospel can really take root for them, even as some of them are suffering loss and hardship.



Pictures from a typical day at PDAS, which includes counselors tutoring middle and high school students.

NEW BCEC PASTORAL STAFF SPOTLIGHT: MEET RANDALL MYERS, JR.

Editor's note: BCEC is delighted to welcome Randall Myers, Jr. as Newton Campus' new Children's and Youth Coordinator. Randall began serving full time on our church's pastoral staff on December 6, 2011.



I accepted Christ when I was four with my Dad. There weren't any unique life crises that I had experienced except the one that we all face as sinners: I could tell that I did things that weren't right, that I deserved punishment for that, and that if the punishment was death, I probably needed someone perfect to die for me, namely Jesus Christ. I was later baptized

when I was seven after watching a baptismal service one Sunday morning. I had asked my dad about what was going on, and decided that if that's what people do in order to signify that they are Christians, I needed to do that, too.

Being a Christian at that time meant doing the things that good people do, such as respecting my parents, not swearing, and going to church on Sunday. It wasn't until I was diagnosed with a disease in fourth grade that I realized there must be something more to being a Christian than just doing the right things. I began to ask God what purpose this disease served in my life. Over several years, I kept wondering what God would have me do with this disease until one day when I walked out of my house humming the song "Knowing You" and sang the line "and to know you in your suffering." At that moment, I began to realize that God had given me this disease, so that I could come to know Christ better through his suffering. This meant so much to me that I decided to pursue full-time, paid ministry. (I call it "paid" because as Christians

we are all in full-time ministry).

I went to school at Moody Bible Institute for two years and then transferred into Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minnesota three years later. My wife, Ashley, and I met at Northwestern and were married at the beginning of the past summer on May 18.

We are currently expecting a baby boy in mid-February, Lord willing. Before coming to BCEC, I served in three youth pastor internships, with my two most recent internships being at the Chinese Community Church of Indianapolis. During my time between colleges, I trained in a traditional Korean martial art, which is what sparked my interest in Asia. I still enjoy conversations about martial arts and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) from time to time. Aside from youth ministry, I have also helped with leading worship at my previous home church and I enjoy studying biblical theology.

My wife and I are glad to be invited to join the body of Christ here at BCEC. We look forward to serving Christ with your community of faith as the Lord permits!

Stephen Ministry

by CHRISTINA LEUNG,
CANTONESE 2ND SERVICE

"Shared joy is double joy, shared sorrow is half sorrow" is one of the goals of Stephen Ministry. When you, your friends, or family members are in need of care, Stephen Ministry can help.

What is the difference between this ministry and other church ministries? Stephen Ministry was founded in 1975 and is based in St. Louis, Missouri. The staff receives training and information from the headquarters, allowing people in need to receive quality care from Christians. Stephen Ministry has helped over 11,000 congregations throughout the world.

BCEC has joined and become a member in 2011. We take advantage of their resources and training courses. Stephen was a deacon during the apostolic times who helped and cared for the needs of his congregation. Similarly, this ministry trains lay Christians to show Christ's gifts of love and care to people in need or in grief. This is indeed a testament of God's love in action.

The hierarchy and details of the implementation of this ministry are as follows:

- Consultant: Church Pastor (Pastor Daniel Chan)
- Stephen Leaders Team: five to six team mem-

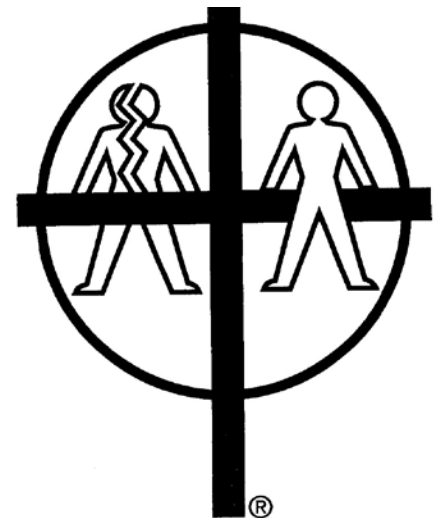
bers ideally. BCEC sent our minister Dora Lam and a sister Christina Leung in August this year to undergo a weeklong leadership training. They are responsible for planning and implementing this ministry.

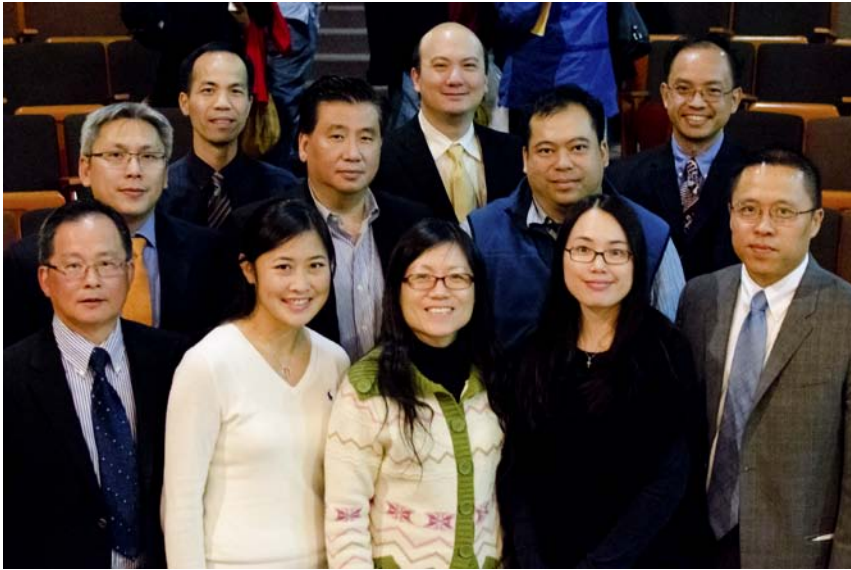
- Stephen Ministers: BCEC member volunteers. They are required to receive a total of fifty hours of fundamental training, 2.5 hours a week. Training includes learning caring techniques, life transition management, spiritual help, rules and regulations, etc. The minister will be assigned a care receiver who is in need of care and who agrees to accept care from the ministry. The minister will meet personally or over the phone with the care receiver at least an hour per week while being supervised and continuing with his 2.5 hours long educational sessions twice a month. Every Stephen Minister must commit to serving for a period of at least two years unless they undergo significant changes in their circumstances. These ministers are not professional counselors, therapists, physicians or pastors. Their motto: We care, God cures.

- Care Receiver: Someone who is struggling with a life crisis or in sorrow due to certain circumstances. The Pastor and Stephen Leaders Team will pray for and evaluate each applicant after an interview with him/her and then make a decision as to whether or not to provide the service. They do not accept applications from minors under the age of eighteen. Stephen Ministers will walk with these

care receivers through their pain and turmoil and will listen patiently to them. They experience the joy of God together as children of God.

The Stephen Ministry Privacy Policy protects and respects care receivers' privacy and keeps their information highly confidential. It is a ministry that you can trust. The Stephen Leaders Team and several brothers and sisters in Christ are actively preparing this ministry in hopes of it being a part of the Chinese congregation next year, so we can improve our caring services programs at BCEC. Please remember us in your prayers.





Above: The 2011-2012 Board of Deacons; Right: The Annual Church Meeting held at JQES



Left from Top to Bottom: Crossroad Thanksgiving Dinner; Joint Newton Thanksgiving Party; Above: Child dedication at the Cantonese 3rd Service. Pictured (left to right): Pastor Daniel Chan, Children: Naomi Yeung, Nathan Ng, Vienna Kong, Ivan Luong, and Larissa Wong; Below: Teens Christmas Outreach Event





Above: December 2011 | Baptism



Above: Elim Mom-to-Mom Christmas celebration; Below Left: Judges score the gingerbread houses at the Teens Christmas Outreach Event; Below Right: Chinatown English congregation luncheon



UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY

- 23 CHINESE NEW YEAR
OFFICE CLOSED
- 27-29 COLLEGE MINI CAMP
CANTONESE

FEBRUARY

- 4 CHINESE CONGREGATION LEADERS MEETING
- 11 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS
SPRING SEMESTER PLACEMENT EXAM
- 17-20 WINTER TEEN CONFERENCE
HIGH SCHOOL (ENGLISH)
- 20 PRESIDENTS' DAY
OFFICE CLOSED

MARCH

- 2-4 WINTER TEEN CONFERENCE
MIDDLE SCHOOL (ENGLISH)
- 3 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS
SPRING SEMESTER CLASSES BEGIN
- 4 SUNDAY SCHOOL
*SPRING SESSION BEGINS
CHINESE*
- 11 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME
*BEGINS
1 HOUR FORWARD*
- 11 STEPHEN MINISTRY SUNDAY
CHINESE
- 16-18 COLLEGE RETREAT
ENGLISH
- 23 CHURCH CLEAN UP
CHINATOWN

APRIL

NOTE: APRIL IS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY SERVICE MONTH

- 6 GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
- 7 NO COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASSES
EASTER HOLIDAY OBSERVED
- 8 EASTER SUNDAY
- 8 BAPTISM
- 14-16 JOSHUA YOUTH SPRING RETREAT
CHINESE
- 20-22 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CONFERENCE



BCEC Connections is a quarterly publication of Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. We'd love to hear from you!

If you would like to help with this publication (writing, translation, editing), please contact Frances Lau at (617) 426-5711 ext 24.

Do you have a story you think would be of a blessing to other BCEC members? Do you have a great photo of a recent church/ministry event you'd like to share? Please send your submissions, questions, or comments to frances.lau@bcec.net. We reserve the right to edit the submissions as we deem appropriate without notice.

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Top and Far Left: Games at the Children's Christmas Party at Newton Campus; Above: Various pictures from the Children's Christmas Party at Chinatown Campus including the preschoolers, games, and skits.