



From Our Senior Pastor:

The Faith to Cross Over



by PASTOR STEVEN CHIN

In a few months, our church will mark a new chapter in its 53-year history. In the second quarter of 2014, we hope to finalize our purchase of 120 Shawmut Ave. This is the first new property our church has acquired in Chinatown since we bought and renovated 237 Harrison Ave. in 1992, over 20 years ago. At that time, the church had about 550 adults regularly attending worship. Today, we have about 1000 adults attending worship each Sunday in Chinatown. As a result, the new space is very much needed.

We thank the Lord in guiding our church in acquiring this property even though it has been a long and winding journey. Faced with lack of adequate permanent space for ministry in Chinatown, our church has been trying to swap land with the city on Parcel A, so we could build a new facility. By faith, in 2009, during the depths of the recession, our members pledged \$8.4 million towards a project that was still in its conceptual stage. However, the process was delayed by the Josiah Quincy Upper School's continual use of the land, and most recently, by some title issues regarding the parcel. Many of us felt discouraged about the prospects of expanding in Chinatown.

What has happened is not something any of us could have dreamed of. Only the Lord could have orchestrated this. He guided the leadership of South Cove Manor to decide to expand in Quincy instead of Chinatown and to sell their property to a Chinatown organization. The Lord helped us to be selected as the buyer of this unique piece of property. Humanly

speaking, our church's reputation in the community, as well as our readily available funds, were major factors. But, ultimately, it was God answering our prayers.

Although we appreciate the new space that 120 Shawmut Ave. offers, the church leadership was faced with difficult and expensive decisions about how to renovate the building for our church's purposes of worship, edification, and outreach. As I write this article in January 2014, there are indications that the Lord is not finished working. Our decision to acquire 120 Shawmut Ave. may have opened new doors of opportunity to expand. At this point, we do not know where this will lead, but I am confident that the Lord will guide and provide for our church as we seek Him and trust in Him.

I am reminded of the story of the Jewish people after God miraculously freed them from bondage in Egypt. In Numbers 13 and 14, after twelve spies were sent to scout out the Promised Land, the people lacked the faith to take the land as God told them to. They were scared and wanted to go back to Egypt. God punished them for their unbelief by making them wander in the wilderness. He did not allow them, with some exceptions, to enter the Promised Land. After a new generation rose up, one that had not witnessed the miracles of the Exodus, the Jewish people were again challenged to cross the Jordan and take possession of the Promised Land. This time, as recorded in Joshua 3, the people faithfully obeyed as the Lord worked another miracle. They crossed over and took possession of the land.

There are lessons for our church today:



2013-2014 Board of Deacons

- We need to seek the Lord's guidance regarding what He wants us to do. Although financial reports, physical analysis, and legal counsel are important, ultimately, we seek God's will through humble and fervent prayer.
- Once we determine what He wants us to do, we need to follow His will by faith. While we may seem like grasshoppers compared to the obstacles we face, we must trust the Lord to provide the resources we need.
- As we think about how much each of us will give towards the cost of renovating 120 Shawmut Ave., each of us must trust the Lord to provide the financial resources our own family needs, just as He did in the expansion pledge in 2009 during the recession.
- Finally, while we may have a lot of good memories and secure feelings in our old building on 249 Harrison Ave., we must cross over the Turnpike to a new, bigger, and better ministry over at 120 Shawmut Ave.



New Year's Day Churchwide Prayer Meeting (1/1)

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Christmas Outreach Celebration 2013



by BEN WONG,
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

With thankfulness to our beloved Jesus, the Christmas Outreach Celebration was held on December 22nd at the Quincy Elementary School in Chinatown. In my perspective, the entire outreach event from preparation to closing of the door at the school's cafeteria reminded us of our own limitation and God's amazing power, as mentioned in Proverbs 19:21 (NIV), "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." One purpose for Jesus' birth into the world is to make His name to the lost who accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. On that day, this purpose was proclaimed among the ages of people from young to elderly, and relationships have been built. Praise to Jesus Christ, our Lord, for this memorable occasion of unity and courage among the helpers, the opening of eyes to the truth among the newcomers, and the repentance and re-

birth among those who accepted the good news into their hearts!

Give thanks to God for bonding together all the helpers and other brothers and sisters into one body by one vision that is to proclaim Jesus Christ's name through prayers or deeds. There were helpers from multiple congregations and multiple New England states involved in numerous stations, from the welcome table to the clean-up team. In terms of human effort, it was a big challenge and with many uncertainties. It was only in God's hands that He delivered the entire event from preparation to finish. More importantly, there was joy and peace in serving God and witnessing to the newcomers during this outreach event. Undoubtedly, the helpers were striving towards a mutual goal, which was to trust God to make Jesus Christ's name known to the local Chinese community.

Give thanks to our one and only true God for His faithfulness to the people who are still lost spiritually. God provided them with a cloudy day despite the rain in the weather forecast. People of all ages and life stages attended this Christmas Outreach Celebration. With God's providence, these people had the opportunity to hear what was

preached about Jesus by the speaker, Elder Chuk-lam Yuen, and may the truth now resonate and transform their hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Give thanks to God for reaching out to the hearts of those who accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. "...there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10 – NIV). One goal of this outreach event is to encourage newcomers to continue bringing their children to Sunday School and attending Sunday worship services themselves. May God's work in their hearts be supported and nurtured in their growth in Christ throughout their lives.

In closing, I would like to request for your prayers that God will continue to provide more disciples of Christ to evangelize the good news to those who desperately need the hope of Christ in their lives (see Romans 10:14-15). It is evident from this outreach event that God has blessed us with the quantity of helpers and newcomers. Let us continue to pray that both the helpers and newcomers will continue to be followers of Jesus in their daily lives, with hope that we will not be ashamed but be courageous, so that Christ will be exalted (see Philippians 1:20).



1) Children's Christmas Celebration 2) Many attended the Cantonese 3rd service and listened to Elder Yuen's message 3) Introducing BCEC and the gospel

PREVIEW OF NEW CHURCH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

by ALICE TEWKSBURY, NEWTON ENGLISH



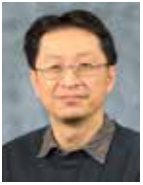
BCEC is in the process of deploying a new Church Management System to improve data management and communications, to better forecast ministry needs, to encourage congregational involvement, and to provide an online giving and reporting interface for church members. As the number of church attendees continues to grow and our congregations becoming more diverse (7 congregations, 3 languages, and 2 campuses), our church needs to have a robust tool that is easily accessible by our staff, ministry leaders, and its members. This tool will help our church make more informed decisions based on more accurate data. It will also reduce the administra-

tive overhead, permitting more time in shepherding and addressing the spiritual needs of our congregations.

In the upcoming months, we will complete the transfer of existing membership data into the new system. We will also start to collect input from staff and ministry leaders to tailor the system to BCEC's needs. We will also begin to pilot the implementation of the church directory, the online giving component, and the check-in/check-out system with the children's ministries. Further communication will be forthcoming to the BCEC community about the launching of this system as more information is obtained from the pilot phase.

If you have any question or are interested in serving on this project team, please feel free to contact our IT Deacon at bod.it@bcec.net.

Mandarin Ministry under Transformation by the Gospel



by PASTOR ANDY SU

Thank God for His grace to allow me to serve in our church for the past 11 years! This amazing grace has guarded my unworthy serving through love and patience from our pastors, elders, deacons, and brothers and sisters in Christ. As we approach the end times, I could deeply sense my limitations to serving in the coming days. Since my knowledge of the other ministries in our church are limited, I will reflect on the vision for our church's Mandarin ministry.

Thank God for His guidance for our Chinatown Mandarin Ministry! In the past 14 years, we have had a group of coworkers serving in unity and grace. Despite the huge diversity of ages and backgrounds, we continue to make a sincere effort to keep the unity of the Spirit. As we look forward to the next ten years, we are faced with similar challenges experienced by other North American Mandarin Ministries.

In the past AFC Mission 13, some pastors from China shared about amazing urban city church development in China. God is planting many city churches among first, second, and third tier cities in China. They are still in the early stages, but some have focused their attention on the foundation of the gospel. They try their best to prevent building churches on foundations of a twisted gospel by secularization. Some Chinese pastors shepherding in North America share how the American Dream through consumerism and individualism have penetrated deep into the core of evangelism and discipleship. We have lost the

foundation of the gospel to the secularization. We as believers might only be concerned about choosing a church that meets our own needs rather than obeying God's calling to serve and devote ourselves to a church in need of breakthrough with humbleness and perseverance. Church leaders are more focused on targets with more resourceful potential to build up churches rather than making disciples among all nations without boundaries in resources and cultures. Some Chinese pastors who are shepherding American churches are also training China urban churches. They share deep concerns for the major bottlenecks in the American Dream. In the same time, China's dream arises with even tougher challenges than the American dream. China's dream is striking hard at developing urban churches now. The only breakthrough point for both sides is still returning to the root of the authentic gospel. To revisit the core of the gospel, it will renew our interpretations, applications, and discernment of the problematic schemes of both dreams. With the gospel in the book of Acts, we will take up the cross and let the gospel transform believers and non-believers, our church leadership, and our communities.

In the next ten years, both urban churches in China and North America will come to a turning point. When the gospel renews believers and churches in China, Christianity will become a major revival in China. In the past twenty years, the revival is just little rain drops for the coming tsunami of revival in China. This ten-year revival will lay the foundation of the coming tsunami revival through the next two generations. Previous huge scales of this revival will be the Roman Empire transformation by the early church in 300 years. This kind of revival will be a global mission revival. Some Chinese pastors even envision planting American churches in China after ten years to spread the seeds of revival through returning to the gospel.

In North America, we do have two major chal-

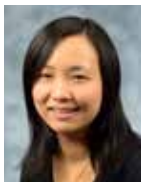
lenges of gap — young pastors and young believers. This kind of gap unraveled in the church for the past twenty years and surfaced in the past five years. We have very few Mandarin young pastors to inherit the torch of retiring Mandarin pastors. The young generation from China has a difficult time adjusting to the North America church culture cultivated in the past 30-50 years. Many pastors and ministers serving the young generation keep reminding us to be humble students of the young generation without being oversensitive or judgmental. Let us empathize the stress on them and connect with them with gentle and sensitive hearts. This will allow us to guide them to Christ through our loving hearts and build them up in the gospel.

For these two gaps in North America, China has had a major breakthrough. Many young pastors around 30-45 have built up young urban churches. As we understand how tough it is to shepherd churches, Biblical church history tells us many unexpected difficulties could block the speed of revival. It is invisible spiritual warfare beyond our understanding. However, the passion of taking up the cross for Christ at any cost was manifested in these Chinese pastors. This is a spiritual awakening for North America. His kingdom advances in steps beyond our imaginations. The imminent signs of the end times descended upon the entire world quietly. Let our Lord wake us up! Do not let this land of Puritan cultivated for two hundred years fall into the same trap like the European church downgrading from a global mission center to a continent in need of evangelization. The dream of the Puritans is the original and authentic American Dream, the dream that His kingdom will come. Please pray that we guard the gospel from socialization. By transforming the gospel from evangelism and discipleship, we will serve this generation faithfully and be ready for His Second Coming.



Ordination Ceremony of Minister Andy Su (12/15)

“Unlocking Your Talents and Being Unleashed” for His Kingdom



by VIRGINIA NGAI,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

It has been some time since the BCEC Missions Conference “Unlocking Talents for God’s Kingdom” back in November 2013. So in preparation for writing this article, I listened again to the final sermon that Rev. Billy Lo, the youth pastor of the Scandinavia Chinese Christian Church of Stockholm, gave entitled “How to Get Past Your Jordan,” which focused on Joshua 3:1-17. On this second listen, I realized that what Rev. Billy shared speaks into my current situation, and I was able to gain fresh insight from his message that I’d like to share with you as it relates to God’s invitation in my life towards following Him and participating in the Great Commission.

As a recap, Rev. Billy shared that God asked Joshua to cross over the Jordan with the Israelites, but He did not give them a “next step” for what to do. They were asked to wait for further instruction. Rev. Billy encouraged us to assess what “Jordan” God may be asking each one of us to cross, in order to respond to His invitation to unlock our talents for use to further His Kingdom. He said that this process is one of risk and that He will usually not give you the whole picture of

what He is doing, but more likely, He will give you one step, and you will need to take it, and then rely on Him for the next one.

Rev. Billy shared that in his own faith journey, he has learned to rely on God and pray as He waits for the “next step” for ministry. He said that for example, after working six years with second generation Swedish Chinese youth, He asked God during his sabbatical for direction as to whether he should continue serving in this capacity or switch over to ministering to first generation Chinese youth in Sweden. After six months of praying and waiting on God for an answer, God renewed His calling and asked him to continue ministry with the second generation because if they were not ministered to, the Chinese church in Sweden would die off. Rev. Billy also said that although he knew that God called him into this next step, he still had no clear picture at the time of how to build up the second generation church. He said that God usually works in this way when He directs us because He requires our faith to trust Him to take us on “a way we have never been on before.” (Joshua 3:4) The Israelites had to dip their feet into the Jordan River and not know what would happen next, but after they took that first step of faith, God stopped the upstream waters and made a way for them to cross over on dry land.

As I reflect in the way that God has been moving in my walk with Him, I recognize that He is also asking me to take one step of faith at a time, and to be okay with not knowing where that will lead me. I have been discerning over the last three years about a possible call towards overseas missions, while also having no idea of how I will get there. Just three years ago, I

would never have considered the current path I am on to be possible as I continually follow after Him. But after being encouraged by BCEC missionary Chris Pang to apply to be part of an OMF short-term missions team due to my increasing burden for Taiwan, I took a leap of faith and just did that. I remember that first step, and being filled with uncertainty, fear, and doubt about whether I should take it. I even asked OMF if I could postpone my application for six months, as I pondered. But after finally preparing for and going on the trip last summer, God has been faithful in showing me “next steps,” one at a time, sometimes small, sometimes larger ones. God has been leading me on a journey where increasing faith, obedience and prayer are necessary in order to receive the next steps He has prepared. Currently, I am discerning about a next step in enrolling in seminary, which I never thought as a possible step before. I hope to use the training to get a solid Biblical foundation for ministry in the field.

At the Chinese Mission Convention held in Baltimore the last weekend of December, the goal was to help believers be “unleashed” for His Kingdom. I now can connect the two action commands that were offered by Rev. Billy to “unlock your talents” and now by the conference to be “unleashed.” If you are thinking about how you might use your God-given talents effectively for His Kingdom, I encourage you to take another listen to Rev. Billy’s sermon and take a step of faith in His direction and know that He will be faithful to provide the next step.



Chinese Mission Convention 2013: Humility and Commitment from the Lord



by CHUAN ROLPHIN HUANG,
CHINATOWN MANDARIN

I could still sense the fire burning in my heart for a long time even after returning to Boston from attending the Chinese Mission Convention 2013 (CMC2013) that was held in Baltimore. Although the conference spanned a mere four days, each day's sermons and seminars touched me in many ways. I truly experienced the work that the Holy Spirit did in my heart through this event.

Although there is much to share about, what lingers in my mind every time I reflect on the conference are two stories told by Rev. Yi Wang, who hails from my hometown of Chengdu. These two stories are also intimately related to our church's theme of discipleship for this year. Every time I reflect on these two stories, what emerges before my vision is the faint glimmer of yellow light from the conference stage I had seen through eyes blurred by tears.

Rev. Wang recounted a time when he was riding his bicycle on his way home. He passed by a vendor who was selling noodles on the side of the road. Since the gas canister he had been using was almost out, the man had laid the can sideways on the ground and used one foot to continually rotate the can in an effort to cook one last bowl of noodles with the little amount of fuel remaining inside. Using this illustration, Rev. Wang shared, "I think I should make such a commitment before God — that in my first 30 years, I can be used by Him while standing upright; in the 30 years that follow, I can be used while lying sideways; in the last 30 years, I can be like that the gas canister on the ground, continually treaded on by the

Lord in order to serve up one last bowl of steaming hot noodles."

I was deeply touched by his illustration. Many people are willing to be used while standing upright — chest out and standing on stage for others to see. There are also some who are willing to be used while lying sideways — quietly doing the work of the Lord, out of sight and with no recognition from men. But how many are willing to be treaded upon on the ground and shaken up? The image conjured by the term "shaken up" connotes neither the grandiloquence that incites excitement to people's hearts and ears nor the awe-inspiring righteousness associated with acts of self-sacrifice. What touched me was the simple humility before the Lord that this term implies, where there is none of the glamour before men, only the constant treading of the Lord's feet. There is a Chinese idiom that says, "Hardship increases status." More literally, this phrase means that you can rise above others in stature only if you are able to endure hardships. In contrast, what is the gospel? What is humility from the Lord? It is that you are worthy of serving others only if you are able to endure hardships. While deeply touched by this realization, I am also at the same time heartbroken inside because I know that I am not able to do this yet. But as the Apostle Paul said, "...for Christ's sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10 – NIV) In the same way, when what is impossible for men is achieved, it is evidence of a miracle from God.

The second "story" is not really a story. Rev. Wang shared about the air pollution in China and spreading the gospel there (the former being the reason why many do not wish to go back to do the latter). In addressing this challenge, Rev. Wang read aloud a poem written by an elder of his church — Early Rain Church in Chengdu: "The happiest thing, is not the loving words between the two of us, but to bend my knees together with yours in prayer...the most touching thing, is not you kneeling down before me (proposing), but to serve the Lord and His beloved people together with you...and the most ro-

matic thing, is to gradually grow old together with you in the haze (from air pollution), the most romantic thing is to undergo therapy (due to the pollution) together with you 20 years later."

The Chinese embrace Confucian teaching. As Confucius once said, "To live together with people of noble character is the best thing in the world. If one does not consider his surroundings when selecting a place to reside, how can he be considered wise?" I have to say I also subscribed to this belief. Within Chinese churches across North America, we frequently hear about complaints against the church, dissatisfaction with the fellowship, and disappointment with Sunday School. The combined influence of the Chinese secular culture on the church and intrusion of American individualism on Christian faith has caused us, many times, to not actually be in search of a church or a fellowship. Instead, under the influence of Confucianism and consumerism, we more often are shopping for a church that "fits us," as when we hope to meet our "other half" at the best time of his or her life. It is as Rev. Wang shared during his sermon, what we are actually searching for is a "customized" Jesus Christ — our strong sense of individualism has stripped Christ of His position as King, and we are willing to follow Him only when we have in essence crucified Him.

The moment we focus our sight on being able to meet our perfect "other half," it is no longer love and instead, more like "shopping." A Christian with a clear vision for God's kingdom will less often ask, "What can the church do for me?" and more often ask, "What can I do for the church?" The cross is not just the source of our salvation, but it is also the lifestyle by which we should live each day. What I truly need is to experience brokenness in the gospel — for the gospel to break our pride, our self-centeredness, our greed for an easy and comfortable lifestyle, and at the same time, our fears. When we have committed ourselves to a church we have come to see and know as imperfect, that is when we come to understand the love that comes from Christ living in us.

Unleashed to Do Immeasurably More



by RYAN SO,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

On December 26, about 50 other brothers and sisters and I from BCEC journeyed to the city of Baltimore to participate in the Chinese Mission Convention 2013 (CMC2013). The Convention had two main tracks, an English track and a Chinese track. I attended the English track, and I will be sharing my experiences from that perspective of the convention.

Each day of the convention started with worship and a speaker talking about a topic on missions. From there, we were released to go to a multiplex panel, which had three different tracks that could be followed. We were encouraged to choose a track and go to these multiplex panels, as the topics spoken on at each day were expanded. The three different tracks available were "Mobilizing Missions

among Asian American Churches and Christians," "Everyday Missions," and "Gospel-Centered Venture/Start-up Lab." After the panel, you could have attended two different workshops, ranging from a myriad of topics such as Parenting Missionally, Reaching the Homeless, and Challenges of a Missional Life as a Pastor. Finally, at the end of the day, we congregated once again for a plenary meeting, where we once again worshipped and heard from another speaker.

As you can see, CMC2013 was quite a jam-packed event. With workshops and speakers galore, there was much to learn and understand during the five days of the convention. For me though, one thing stood out the most. Being missions-minded and having an attitude to preach the gospel doesn't just form overnight. It has to be practiced, cultivated, and nurtured. If we as Christians are to be missional, we must practice it every day of our lives. For some of us, it may mean answering God's calling to go on a short or long-term missions trip to another country. For some, it might mean serving in BCEC's local missions outreach ministries. I think of Project Destiny Autumn

to Spring (PDAS) and the ESL and Citizenship classes that we offer. I think of the College ministries that try to be light on their campus and reach out to the student bodies. For others, it is reaching out to that non-Christian friend at work. A purposeful Christian life isn't one where we go to the most prestigious colleges in the United States or get a high-paying job. Nor is it getting married to the person you love. A purposeful Christian life is one where we surrender our desires and dreams to Jesus and follow what He did. These things may come, a great job, an amazing spouse, but they may not. We need to pursue the lost people. We need to go after a life that Jesus lived; His life was unattractive, unimpressive, and undesirable by the world's standards.

"You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you arise." (Deuteronomy 11:18-19 – ESV)

Web of Women:

Planning a Women's Ministry at BCEC Chinatown Campus



by JOCELYN CHU,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

One of the most impactful periods of my time at BCEC thus far is finding a group of sisters to walk with and further develop my spiritual faith. Our friendship goes back to the fall retreat of 1996 — most of us were in the same discussion group over that weekend. We had so much fun together that we decided to keep meeting. And the beauty of it was that we weren't meeting just to pray, we

played as well! Basketball, hiking, road trips...we lived our lives alongside each other, and we did a lot of growing up with one another.

With one another... that is what we are called to do. There is something special about sisterhood, and I believe God has placed this desire in us as women to connect and live out our faith in relationships with one another. It is a blessing to be part of a Women's Ministry Planning Team for the Chinatown English congregation. The group — Karen Liao, Emily Liu, Margaret Lam, Eleanor Yu, Lynn Chan and I — were brought together by Pastor Enoch about a year ago to brainstorm the possibilities for a women's ministry. Our meetings have culminated in a commitment to a "pilot year" of planning three large group events and intentional reaching out to and prayer for women in the English congregation in Chinatown. The ministry has taken on the name "Web of Women" (WoW)

for that is what we desire women to experience — a deeper connection with and a greater sense of support from other sisters at BCEC.

Our first event was held in November at the Liao home. Over 40 women of different ages and life stages attended the breakfast. It was a wonderful opportunity to see each other in the same space, to share some personal stories of sisterhood, to ask questions of each other, to start defining for ourselves what we would like to see for women at BCEC, and to just connect.

As we plan for the next get-together to be held on January 25, I've been reminded to pray. The hard work, I've discovered is not in the meticulous planning of a program, but in the unceasing prayers of a faithful servant. For it is in and through prayer that we will see God moving and bringing about authentic connections between sisters at BCEC.



The first gathering for the Women's Ministry, Web of Women (WoW), at Pastor Enoch's home (11/9)

Women's Ministry at BCEC New Community



by EDNA LEE,
NEWTON ENGLISH

It was over two years ago that a few of us gathered to pray and brainstorm of what it meant for women at BCEC New Community to connect and support one another in our spiritual walks. We sensed that we wanted deeper and more transparent relationships with one another beyond the surface conversations on Sunday or the mixed gender Bible study groups. There were a good number of older single and married women who were at a stage of spiritual maturity to provide friendship and mentoring to other women. As a result, six months later in September 2012, God provided 6 leaders, and 17 women joined these groups. Some groups have flourished, and some have met challenges of scheduling and bonding as a group. We thank God for deeper friendships and an opportu-

nity to be a blessing to one another in the joys and difficulties of life.

We also wanted to provide an opportunity for all women of New Community to meet and connect. Our groups have hosted two "Women's Tea" this past year. We've had a wonderful time of conversation and fellowship by just meeting together. God is good!



New Community (Newton English) "Women's Tea" (11/2)

"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." — Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV

Peter Brothers' Fellowship Retreat



by BEN TANG,
NEWTON CHINESE

The Peter Brothers' Fellowship Retreat was held in the Charlton Mountain Area on October 25-26, 2013. The theme for this year was "One-to-One Partners: Life Changing Life." During the retreat, each brother had the opportunity to get to know another brother on a deeper level, with the hopes that the two may become good friends or spiritual/prayer partners. Many activities, sharing, and games were planned to achieve this goal.

On Friday afternoon, eighteen brothers departed from different directions for the retreat. Due to the Friday evening traffic, the usual 45-minute commute turned into a two-hour ride. Although farm after farm and a vast golden field silhouetted against the brilliant sunset and its glow of late October were passed along the way, the brothers were in no mood to enjoy such scenery. The one thing that occupied their minds was to quickly arrive at their destination. They traveled the mountainous area in the dark, relying solely on the car headlights in front of them, many times losing their way. But eventually, everyone arrived safely at the retreat site, and they enjoyed a late meal together.

After dinner, Brother Ben Gee led everyone to listen to a downloaded talk entitled "There is much depth in the way man speaks and communicates." The talk encouraged us to use our ears to listen, our eyes to see, and our heart to think. In fact, the Chinese character for "listen" is comprised of the characters for ear, eye, and heart. How amazing! After this, we began our one-to-one partners' activity.

We randomly selected 9 pairs of partners. Within each pair, one person had their eyes covered with a black cloth, while the other person led their blindfolded partner to explore new places. The first time through, neither partner made any sound, with the one who could see leading the one blindfolded by the arms. The second time through, both partners could communicate with one another. The two times were remarkably different and we were left with a deep impression that to have a partner walking beside us and communicating with us provides a great sense of confidence and security. Afterwards, partners had the opportunity to get to know one another more intimately, mutually sharing what was on their hearts.

A prayer meeting and devotional time was held Saturday morning on October 26. During the prayer meeting, everyone gave thanks to God for being able to arrive safely in spite of the dark the night before and for the opportunities to temporarily leave behind the bustling city and to set aside our busy work to attend the retreat. Let us give all the glory to God! We also shared some details from the process of getting to know our partners and prayed for Sister Frances Lau's recovery. Afterwards, we enjoyed an abundant breakfast.

After breakfast we had a time of praise and worship. Altogether, we sang four songs: "Every Day," "Love Does Not Hold back," "Amazing Love," and "Love Binds Us Together." Every day is God's grace, the sacrificial love of Jesus, such amazing love, how can it be! Before we came to be saved, we were complete strangers to one another, but now God's love has allowed us to bind together, becoming brothers in Christ.

After singing, Brother Chan Siu Kin taught everyone some warm-up exercises and afterwards, Brother Terry Tzu led us to play a ball toss game. For a game so seemingly simple, it was actually

quite challenging and induced much laughter from the group. After the game, there was free time to break into our partner pairs for more sharing. Our conversations included topics on our experience growing up, coming to Christ, and our work. A plentiful lunch was followed by the free time. Afterwards, we took a walk around the lake and built our own fire. One unfortunate thing was that we came a few weeks too late when much of the colored leaves had already fallen, and we missed the opportunity to enjoy the foliage. The grounds were covered with yellow leaves, creating a desolate fall scenery.

During our afternoon sharing, everyone agreed that our time together was too short! It's true! Twenty-two hours together was indeed not enough. Perhaps next retreat can be longer! During sharing time, everyone brought up that the selection of partners was evident of God's arrangement, as many selected pairs of brothers had similar backgrounds and experiences. For example, both Ben Tang and Brother Chan Siu Kin both recovered from a stroke, and the two naturally conversed about health issues. Brother Eric Szeto and Brother Jian Gong both were married back in Hong Kong, and had similar experiences regarding this. Naturally, these connections made it easier to break into deeper conversation. Brother Ho led the last activity, where we wrote a letter to ourselves, detailing our commitment to God and to ourselves. At four in the afternoon, the retreat ended, and the brothers packed up to head home.

The purpose of this retreat with the one-to-one partners component was to allow brothers to open up themselves, being willing to take a risk, and to take the first step towards getting to know and establishing a friendship with another brother. We believe that we were able to achieve this goal through this retreat.



Family Christmas Celebration:
“The Even Better Christmas Sing-A-Long”



by RANDALL MYERS,
 NEWTON ENGLISH

This year the Newton Campus congregations celebrated Christmas with the Family Christmas Celebration. The name of our program was “The Even Better Christmas Sing-A-Long,” which featured Kevin Lin (played by himself) as a suburban youth on the search for the true meaning of Christmas. The skit began with Uncle Vince (played by Vince Lau) greeting the audience and welcoming them to a sing-a-long when suddenly Kevin burst into the room wondering what Christmas was all about. The skit unfolded with many people providing suggestions for the purpose be-

hind Christmas, punctuated by songs that seemingly supported those reasons. However, at the end of the skit Kevin discovered that behind the gifts that are given, the partying that often commences, and the moments of quiet reflection and family gathering, the birth of Jesus and his perfect sacrifice gave Christmas its true meaning, that Jesus was indeed the “Even Better” reason for Christmas.

Our hope this year with the Celebration was to also provide a context for seeing Christmas as a time to bless others. After the skit concluded, families were invited to participate in packing school supplies and graduation gifts for Sharon Tan’s ministry with Grace Community Empowerment in the Philippines. The supplies were furnished in an assembly-line fashion and were topped off with a photo and personal note from each family that packed the backpacks. These gifts will be presented to students who graduate at the school Sharon Tan works with in May. When the backpacks were finished, families gathered in the basement for pizza, refreshments, and fellowship.



1-2) Community English Class Thanksgiving Outreach (11/23)

Immersed for 30 Days, Changed for Life



by CAITLYN FONG,
NEWTON ENGLISH

For a month this past summer, I attended a Christian leadership program run by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary called Compass. It consisted of three expeditions: a wilderness expedition in upstate New York, a theological expedition led by the faculty at Gordon-Conwell, and an overseas ministry expedition in Nicaragua.

Including me, there were 30 students from all over the United States and Canada participating in this immersion program. Although we spent time as a whole group, we were also divided into four smaller groups with each group being led by a Compass mentor (a seminary student at Gordon-Conwell).

I really got to know my small group during the wilderness expedition, a 10-day backpacking trip through the Adirondack Mountains. We hiked the fourth tallest peak in the Adirondacks, and it was definitely one of the hardest things I have ever done, as I'm not an outdoors person at all. There were no showers, no bathrooms, and it rained every single day, which was difficult to get used to. However, leaving my comfort zone helped me to learn how to be vulnerable with God and solely trust Him, not my own abilities.

We also had a 24-hour solo, a day when each of us fasted and camped out away from the others. When I first heard about the solo, I was quite scared to be by myself, especially at night in the

dark, for that long. However, when I actually spent time alone with God for the entire day, I found that I really enjoyed the experience. It was refreshing to be able to step back and reflect without any distractions and just enjoy God's creation. It opened my eyes to how awesome God is to have created such beautiful things in nature.

Our second expedition was theology. During that week, I realized I was being safe with my faith. I have grown up in the church, so I have learned all the Bible stories and the basics of Christianity, but I have never really tried to go deeper or ask the harder questions. My knowledge of the Christian faith was challenged, and I had to turn to God and His Word for the answers instead of ignoring them. I was reminded that God is extremely complex, and I will never fully understand Him or how He works, but that is part of what makes Him so amazing.

The final part of Compass was a missions trip to Managua, Nicaragua. I have been on BCEC's Mexico Youth Missions trips several times before, but this experience was different, as each small group had to brainstorm and create our own art projects with the local youth. I don't know any Spanish, and I am not artsy or creative either. As a result, I had to depend on the other members of my group to help me, as we worked together to complete our project with the Nicaraguans. Many things did not go as planned during the week; a few times we needed to get more materials, or we were behind schedule, which forced us to take a step back and trust that God's plan was greater and better than ours. In addition, we were not sharing the gospel directly since we didn't give Bible lessons or sermons, so we had to rely on God to work through us in a different and indirect way, and trust

that He was working even if we could not see the results overtly.

During those 30 days, it felt like being trapped in a bubble — no technology, surrounded by people who have a passion to serve the Lord. I loved it because I could really feel God's presence, especially during worship time every night. God made me remember that He is working all around me, even through the "small" things like worship. I just have to look for Him.

Compass stretched me more than I initially wanted, but all the challenges were worth it because I grew more than I ever would have imagined. The friends I made, the memories I have, and the lessons I learned were part of a life-changing experience that I will never forget.



1) In the mornings when we arrived at the school site in Nicaragua, numerous preschoolers were so glad to see us. They would run up to us and give us big hugs. 2) As part of our art project in Nicaragua, we wrote our own sins and hardships on a ceramic tile, and then broke the tile and put the pieces at the bottom of the wooden cross we built; this symbolized laying our personal struggles and burden at the feet of Jesus. 3) It rained every single day we were in the Adirondacks, but we had fun despite the rain! This picture was taken in the middle of a shallow river in the pouring rain. 4) Enjoying a break from our long hike up the Adirondack Mountains. It felt nice to take off our heavy backpacks and rest once in a while.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN SUMMER 2014

Want to Work with Children?

Summer Sunday School (Chinatown & Newton), Junior Worship (Newton) Sundays throughout July & August
Volunteer for 2 weeks or the entire summer. The Children's Ministry is looking for enthusiastic volunteers interested in serving children by teaching lessons, as well as leading small groups, games, or craft activities. If interested, please contact Lorraine Ho (bceckids@gmail.com) for Chinatown Campus and Randall Myers (randall.myers@bcec.net) for Newton Campus.

Vacation Bible School Tentative: July 7-11 or July 14-18 (Newton)
August 11-15 (Chinatown)

VBS is an awesome summer community outreach for elementary-aged children from Chinatown, Newton, and the Greater Boston area. We are looking for rising 8th graders, high school, college students, and adults to volunteer on a full or part-time basis. Please contact Lorraine Ho (bceckids@gmail.com) for Chinatown Campus and Randall Myers (randall.myers@bcec.net) for Newton Campus.

Want to Touch Lives of Teens?

Project Destiny Summer Camp June 16- August 6

Cost: support raising expected

Looking for a way to give back to the community or grow in your faith? PD Summer Camp serves middle school kids in our Chinatown community. We're recruiting a full-time team of youth counselors and part-time admin interns for an 8-week adventure of life and ministry together in the city. Senior Counselors live in Chinatown for the summer, and Interns commute on days that they serve. Go to www.project-destiny.com to find out more, download forms, and apply by Feb. 23.



PDAS+ June 30-August 1

Interested in meeting and serving youth in our community but don't have lots of time? Project Destiny Autumn to Spring (PDAS) is our year-round after school ministry for youth in our Chinatown community, which extends into the summer as PDAS+. Between 3-6 p.m. M-Th, counselors model Christ-like character and love while leading games, activities, devotions, and free time. Come serve for 1-3 afternoons per week. We'll provide training. Interested? Contact Steve Liu (pdas@bcec.net).



Want to Serve College Students in Boston?

Want to serve right here in Boston? Maybe God is calling you to serve in the College Ministry! Whether you're passionate about small groups and seeing them flourish or like to help shape our large group gatherings, there is an opportunity for you. This is a great chance to put your God-given talents to serve Him by serving your peers. You do not need to be around all year to serve this summer either, you can help out even if you're just back for the summer. For more information, contact Calvin Chu (calvin.chu@bcec.net).

Want to Participate in Global Missions?

Dominican Republic, Bethany Teams July 1-7
Approx. Cost: \$1800*

We are forming an intergenerational team to work side by side with local Christians to reach their community for Christ. The team will serve in areas such as children's and sports ministries, construction, and door-to-door evangelism. Please contact Rich or Mable Su (richsu01@gmail.com).

Mexico Youth Missions Team, YUGO July 27- August 3
Approx. Cost: \$1300*

BCEC is sending a team of youth interested in missions to Tijuana, Mexico. The team will be assigned to a local church where they will participate in a wide range of ministry opportunities including children's programs, women's Bible studies, and sports outreach. Space is limited. If you are interested, please contact Randall Myers (randall.myers@bcec.net).

Nordic Team, COCM July 5-13
Approx. Cost: \$1,700*

The team, along with local church leaders, will run a Cantonese and English speaking youth and young adult summer camp. There will be opportunities to share the gospel, lead small groups, and workshops. Experience in youth and young adult work is preferred. We are looking for 5 team members who are English speakers, understand/speak Cantonese and/or Mandarin helpful. Contact Lorraine Ho (bceckids@gmail.com) if interested.



* Note: Costs for all of these trips are partially subsidized by BCEC and by fundraising, upon approval by the Missions Committee. You do not have to pay this whole sum out of pocket; please do not let cost deter you from your interest in short-term missions. All Short-Term Missions application deadlines are **March 16, 2014**.



Annual Meeting (10/27): 1) Members gathered in the auditorium of the Josiah Quincy Elementary School 2) Registration for attendance and voting ballot 3-4) Randall Myers' commissioning ceremony 5) Update and discussion on expansion 6) Staff appreciation



7-10) New Community (Newton English) Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner (11/29)

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

- 14-17 WINTER TEEN CONFERENCE (HIGH SCHOOL)
ENGLISH
- 15 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS
SPRING SEMESTER PLACEMENT EXAM
- 17 PRESIDENTS' DAY
OFFICE CLOSED
- 17-23 PDAS BREAK
ENGLISH
- 28-3/2 WINTER TEEN CONFERENCE (MIDDLE SCHOOL)
ENGLISH

MARCH

- 2 STEPHEN MINISTER COMMISSIONING
- 2 CHINESE SUNDAY SCHOOL
SPRING SESSION BEGINS
- 8 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS
SPRING SEMESTER CLASSES BEGIN
- 9 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS
ONE HOUR AHEAD
- 14-16 COLLEGE RETREAT
ENGLISH
- 21-23 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY SERVICE SEASON
- TBD CHURCH CLEAN UP
CHINATOWN
- TBD CHURCH CLEAN UP
NEWTON

APRIL

- 4-6 CANTONESE MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT
CHINESE
- 18 GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
- 18-27 PDAS BREAK
ENGLISH
- 19 EASTER HOLIDAY
NO COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASSES
- 19-21 JOSHUA YOUTH SPRING RETREAT
CHINESE
- 20 EASTER SUNDAY
- 20 BAPTISM



1-5) Newton Mandarin Thanksgiving Potluck (11/28) 6) 9/15/2013 Baptism 7) 12/8/2013 Baptism 8-13) Moses Fellowship (Chinatown Mandarin) Christmas Party (12/22)

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

If you would like to help with this publication (writing, translation, editing), please contact Helena Fong 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 or ministry event you'd like to share? Please send your submissions, questions, or comments to helena.fong@bcec.net. We reserve the right to edit the submissions as we deem appropriate without notice.

Visit us on the web at www.bcec.net

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