



From Our Senior Pastor:

God Will Make a Way



by PASTOR STEVEN CHIN

As I write this article in the beginning of August 2014, we had just learned from the realtor that Holy Trinity Church (HTC) would be sold to a developer instead of to us to use as a church. Our pursuit of HTC began in earnest after we had acquired 120 Shawmut Ave. (formerly South Cove Manor) in April 2014, and HTC was put up for sale. The building at 120 Shawmut Ave. has many small rooms for classes, fellowships, and meetings but no large space for worship. Estimates to renovate the building to create large worship space were expensive. So trying to acquire HTC made a lot of sense, especially since HTC was right next door to 120 Shawmut Ave. The leaders of the church made a strong offer within the resources we had. We asked the whole church to pray for a miracle. However, in the end, the Lord said no.

I think most of us are disappointed. It seemed, by the timing, that the Lord was leading us to try to acquire HTC. Many felt the Lord would most certainly influence the Roman Catholic Church to sell to BCEC, another Christian church. He had already performed a miracle in allowing us to buy 120 Shawmut Ave. But such was not the case. Some may wonder: why would God not answer our prayers to acquire HTC?

I do not think any of us know the answer to that question at this time. Perhaps we will know in the future. We can only trust that our all-wise Heavenly Father knows what He is doing. We can trust that He will ultimately provide for our needs.

We can learn from the story of how the Lord led the Israelites out of Egypt. Exodus 13:17-18 tells us that, when Pharaoh let the Hebrew people go, God did not lead them to a direct route to the Promised Land but toward the Red Sea. Why did He do that? We find the answer in Exodus 14. It seemed the people of Israel were trapped by the Egyptian Army against the Red Sea. There was no way to escape. But God made a way by parting the Red Sea. He put

them in an impossible situation to show them His miraculous deliverance.

We can actually see God doing this earlier in our BCEC expansion efforts. From about 1998-2012, we were focused on a land swap with the city of Boston on Parcel A (the land behind 249 Harrison Ave.) In 2009, BCEC asked its members to pledge in anticipation that the school that occupied Parcel A would move soon. Over \$8 million was pledged despite a severe recession. However, the school still has not moved off the parcel. Not only that, it was discovered that the city agency we were dealing with did not own the entire property on Parcel A. This would cause more issues and delays. We were frustrated and discouraged regarding expanding in Chinatown. But then in 2012, right after our 21 Days of Prayer churchwide program, we learned that South Cove Manor was moving and wanted to sell to a Chinatown organization. Two years later, we have acquired the building. God provided a way when there seemed to be no way. He has done it before, and we trust He will do it again.

Introducing Awana



by LIANG DING,
NEWTON MANDARIN

A few days ago, we paid a visit to Claire Brosius, the Commander of a 45-year-old Awana program in Countryside Bible Chapel. She revealed the marvelous work God has done through the leaders and volunteers committed to this children's program. Whenever the soul of a child was saved, the Awana flag was raised in the congregation during Sunday worship, inviting the adult church members to celebrate the moment. Before our departure, Claire prayed, tears in her eyes, that our Lord Jesus would use the BCEC Awana program to save more souls for Him.

"We love because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19 - NIV) It is easy to love family members, not hard to love neighbors or friends, but challenging to love those whom our eyes cannot see. We may love by means of giving or even by willingly suffering from inconveniences. But as we prepare to launch the BCEC Awana program for the children whom our eyes can or can't see, we are elevated in the same spirit as Claire, to love by saving one more child for Lord Jesus. With the love bestowed from Jesus Christ, we will embrace every child who comes to us, and strive to build a Christian community for children from different cultures.

AWANA stands for Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed, and is taken from 2 Timothy 2:15. In the challenging world we currently live in, God's workmen shouldn't be ashamed as long as we have His approval by correctly handling the word of truth, but rather edified and honored to be instrumental to His kingdom.

With a history of 60 years, Awana currently serves more than two million kids with half of them in 102 countries outside the United States. Among a number of outstanding Christian children's programs, Awana stands out for the five principles and practices they are guided by: Awana is centered on the gospel; Scripture memory is key; Awana is fun and exciting; Children and youth are trained to serve; Awana is built on strong leadership. Specifically, an Awana night consists of three sections, each lasting about 30 minutes. Kids may attend the sections as their family schedule allows. Counseling time is similar to Bible teaching as we know it; during the workbook time, an adult leader listens as the children recite Bible verses individually; game time engages children in Awana Square games to run and compete, perfect for a break from a long week of academic activities.

To achieve the Awana vision, Awana has developed a remarkable system composed of teaching and learning materials, training materials for leaders, useful tools and motivating goods. Most importantly, the Awana program lets youth serve to practice their faith, and trains them to be leaders, not only for the Christian family, but also for the whole society. The future

may be more challenging than it is now, so without our own Christian leaders, who will strive to make a godly world for our children to live in?

A number of committed leaders from the English, Mandarin, and Cantonese congregations are getting prepared to launch the Awana program at the Newton Campus, but everyone else who is willing has a role to play in the Awana program. Even if you can't be present during our Awana nights, you can still serve the Awana program by praying that the Awana leaders will learn humbly, improve gradually, and serve God's children faithfully.

Now let's end with the Awana prayer that all children and youth throughout the world will come to KNOW, LOVE, and SERVE the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

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Goodbye



by RANDALL MYERS

As I sit here in my darkened office typing this “farewell” of sorts, I still remember the first time Pastor Tom walked by my office and saw me working at my laptop with all the lights off save this little lamp that Lillian (Te) had passed on to me when the previous owner never claimed it. With a perplexed, yet cheerful grin he asked me if I’d like the lights turned on, an offer which I declined. I suppose it’s odd to find your new hire working in a dark office with nothing but a desk lamp on, but then, this was only the tip of the iceberg of the many oddities I brought with me to BCEC. I smile as I reflect on the reality that many a time I also responded with perplexed facial expressions over the next two years learning from what God had prepared for me during my time here. I was a Midwestern boy who had stepped into a New England Chinese Church, and, quite frankly, I don’t know that either knew what they were in for. Again, I smile and chuckle to myself. It was not always easy, but it was God’s good for me and Ashley, a good that was worth the step.

If there was one lesson that I would want to mention in an article of this nature, one thing that I would want to highlight as something I take away from my time here, it would be the overarching theme that came to dominate my reflection on every event I experienced here. Whether it was crunching through emails, preparing for the next missions trip, teaching at Jr. Worship, or planning the TIOB retreat, one reality set the tone for how I thought through and filtered all that I did, the reality that I am a beloved son of God through Jesus Christ. While I didn’t realize it at the time, God intended for this to be the foundation of my time here from the very first week. Intriguingly, here, in my first commissioned ministry assignment, God showed me the foundation of what life itself should be about, a foundation that I doubt I will be able to ever ignore even if I wanted to. Dur-

ing my time here, I have come to believe that this foundational reality, that in Christ we have become beloved sons of God, is the center from which we all must learn to live. Again my memory prompts me to remember that during my first two weeks, Pastor Tom explained his vision for New Community was that we would accept the truth that we are beloved sons and daughters of God who are only enabled to love God and neighbor only as we accept and actualize this reality in our lives. Time and again, as I sat in his office processing the ups and downs of ministry here, he would draw my attention back to filtering all of it through the lens of believing who I am as a beloved son of God. This emphasis in New Community will follow me wherever the Lord leads.

As for our next step, back at the beginning of the year Ashley and I sensed the Lord begin to move in our hearts to pursue mentored ministry with Trinity Life Community, a Christ-centered faith community in Bedford, New Hampshire. For the next two years, we will be closely mentored by their leadership community with the intent of being sent out from their church into a senior pastoral role. I have distinctly sensed that the Lord would have me continue to develop Messiah-centered communities that seek to bring people to wholeness in Jesus, be that in an established church setting, church revitalization or church-planting. Ashley will be pursuing the completion of a Bachelor’s of Arts in Strategic Leadership with an emphasis on education through the Trivium Institute, an academic institution that recently received international accreditation and is being run out of Trinity Life Community. We are excited to see how the Lord will continue to further his kingdom through our family.

Although I know it is not necessarily the American Chinese way, my heart yearns to publicly thank a few brothers and sisters for their support while I was here. Sharon (Yip), thank you for shouldering so much of the ministry to Jr. Worship during the past years and for being patient with me as I was not always the most detail-oriented leader. Your heart for the students is God-given. Thank you also to you and your husband for the many times you watched RG. Phil

and Wendy (Lin), thank you for the strength of your encouragement, and your settled perspective on life. In you both, we often saw a solidarity that is not swayed by popular opinion or every new fad, a solidarity that reminded us of our own parents and missed seeing in them during our time here because of the distance. And thank you also for watching RG. David and Judy (Chang), thank you for being our live-in parents during these final months. I begin to tear up as I consider the graciousness you extended to us during our time there, things I cannot mention in this context, but am truly grateful for. You both have shown us such love. Vince (Lau), you are my brother. There is so much that that one phrase, “you are my brother,” means. You hung with me through all the difficulties of my transition. Thank you so much for supporting me and Ashley. Pastor Enoch, thank you for the long processing conversations we had, unplanned and out of the blue, and thank you Karen, for letting him have those conversations with me (I remember the time we were talking until 1 a.m. or so in Chinatown). And finally, thank you, Pastor Tom. How do you succinctly say thank you to someone who did so much? I suppose I will have time to thank you verbally, in addition to what I write here, but for now, I thank you for being “pastor,” and for embodying one who fights to find his identity as a beloved son of God.

If I may be so presumptuous, I would like to close with a blessing for BCEC.

May God bless you and keep you and continue to make his face to shine upon you. May he continue to demonstrate his covenant love to you and root you in the reality that you are a beloved son of God, representing him in Boston, Newton, and beyond. May your members be known for their faithfulness to the name of Jesus the Messiah, and may God further his kingdom reign on earth through your people. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Editor’s Note: Randall Myers was the former Children’s and Youth Coordinator for the Newton English congregation.



Prayer Walk (6/22): 1) Prayer station at HTC 2) Prayer station at 120 Shawmut Ave. 3) Vision wall inside 120 Shawmut Ave. 4-5) Video showing the history of HTC

EXPANSION NEWS UPDATE

BY EXPANSION COMMITTEE

God led BCEC on an incredible journey this summer. Our church took ownership of 120 Shawmut Avenue during a short two-month period, made offers to acquire Holy Trinity Church, and began the cleanup and preparation of 120 Shawmut Avenue for ministry use.

After taking ownership in June, BCEC immediately applied for Certificate of Occupancy (CofO), which is a necessary step to allow BCEC to utilize the building for church ministry use. During the time of this update, the Expansion Committee continues to work with the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) to obtain the change of usage of 120 Shawmut Avenue from a nursing home to church use. Once BCEC receives the approval from the BRA, we will be able to move forward in the process of obtaining the CofO, allowing ministry usage of the facility.

On Sunday, June 22nd, over 250 members from all 7 congregations joined the prayer walk in Chinatown and the South End. Groups of 3-4 prayed at different stations for the people in the community. They prayed for BCEC to effectively use the new building, to continue to be a blessing to the community, and to use the space for His glory. They prayed for vibrant ministries and outreach opportunities. As a part of the activities, a VISION wall was set up at 120 Shawmut Avenue. Members were able to place sticky notes with what they envisioned as ministries to be held at 120 Shawmut Avenue.

Members also prayed for the purchase of Holy Trinity Church, located next door, as a potential solution that would address the lack of a large worship space at 120 Shawmut Avenue. Although we were not selected as the buyer in the final round of bidding, we thank God for leading our

leadership and members through this process of praying and submitting to His will. To some, this may seem like an unanswered prayer, but we know that God has a better plan for us. We are reminded that the path that God leads us on is not always a straight one. Please continue to pray for the Expansion Committee, as they evaluate options to solve the issue of lack of worship space at 120 Shawmut Avenue.

As we wait for occupancy permission, we are preparing many aspects of the building before we can move in and use this new facility for our various ministries. Many brothers and sisters, young and old, have dedicated their time to help with cleaning and preparing the space. Others have donated furniture and helped to move them.

We are excited about what God has in store for us in this new facility. This isn't just because we now own a new large building. In addition, we are excited to see that God has blessed us with an opportunity to continue to serve Him and His people. We are also excited to see the possible ministries and outreach opportunities this new building will enable us to do. Furthermore, we are excited to experience God's faithfulness, as He answers our prayers and continues to shape us to be a light to the community and the world.



Prayer Walk Day



by ANNA FAN,
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

Prayer involves all our senses. When our senses are opened and vulnerable to the deeper work of the Holy Spirit, we become in tuned with the heart of God. Three prayer stations on June 22 were set up to guide brothers and sisters into prayer with the heart of God for ourselves, the community, and His kingdom. It was amazing as over 200 people across seven congregations and two campuses came out to experience God through prayer.

Station one was located on the corner of Oak and Shawmut Avenue where the low-income residential high-rise buildings Mass Pike and Quincy Towers are. God opened our eyes to see the people (immigrants, tourists, professionals, and students) that come in and out of Chinatown, our ears to conversations amongst youths, families, neighbors, elders, etc., and our hearts to the pain, loneliness, and suffering of the residents. These passersby would ask, "What's going on?" Some shared briefly about God's provision of 120 Shawmut Avenue. Others prayed quietly for that conversation. They were invited to "come and see" 120 Shawmut Avenue.

Our second station was situated at 120 Shawmut Avenue. This station was set up as a re-

flection station, answering the question: Whose feet will I [we] wash in this expanded community? We collected over 70 responses. Here are a few:

- A place where community kids group here and call home
- A safe haven and open community for the poor, outcast, and the weak
- A retreat venue
- House to pray, worship, and draw closer to God

Unexpectedly, this prayer station grew into the dining area and outdoor garden where groups were congregating to pray over and for this space. It was amazing how the Spirit would prompt as individuals and groups walked in and out of 120 Shawmut Avenue.

Station three was a visual and touch experience with God's Spirit, as we faced the Holy Trinity Church. This station prepared us to BE STILL and know that He's God. A video was set up to view the history and background of the Holy Trinity Church. Brothers and sisters sang "He is Lord"



in front of the Holy Trinity Church. Hands were placed on the doorway and stones in prayer. Powerful warfare prayers were prayed that God would revive this place to be a place of worship for many. For me, I was struck by the crucifix on the side of the church. It was positioned with Jesus on the cross facing South End. Tears rolled down my eyes, as this was a strong image for me that signified Jesus' death on the cross for ALL people and in this case, for the South End of Boston.

The completion of station three was a preparation for an extended prayer walk around the South End neighborhood and back to 249 Harrison Avenue. We praise God that quite a few brothers and sisters continued to walk the neighborhood while praying.

By the time you read this, the bid for Holy Trinity Church was given to another. Let's continue in our prayer journey to seek God as spoken in Jeremiah 33:3 (ESV): "Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known."



2014 Cantonese Family Retreat



by JOYCE LIN,
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

The annual Cantonese Family Retreat was held at Gordon College on June 28-29, 2014. There were a total of 177 participants, including families from different fellowships in BCEC, as well as a number of brothers and sisters from other Chinese churches in the Greater Boston area. Our theme for this year's retreat was "Winning at the End Point."

We were thankful that Rev. Dr. Matthew Chiu was the speaker for our retreat this year. He based the four sermons on the scriptures in 2 Kings, listing "two prophets," "two mothers," "two servants," and "two visions" in each of the sessions. Rev. Chiu prompted us to think about how we, as Christians, should humble ourselves and glorify God in the following three areas: family, workplace, and church. He also reminded us through the sermons that we should be wholly available to God, so that we are always ready when-

ever He calls us to fulfill His plan for us in different areas in our lives. We were also reminded to not be limited by the physical difficulties we see, because God's blessings for us can be unlimited, whereas we are often limited by our own mindset. We pray that the brothers and sisters who attended the retreat were spiritually refreshed and were able to rekindle our passion for the Lord. It would be most pleasing to our Heavenly Father that we grasp every opportunity we can to lift ourselves up to the Lord, so that His will in us can be fulfilled.

Rev. Chiu also taught us "The 5 Spiritual Moves," which consists of the following: praising God adoringly, reading the Bible diligently, praying continuously, loving intensely, and spreading the gospel extensively. This is certainly a fun and practical way to remind ourselves about the spiritual disciplines!

In addition to the sermons, there were also workshops tailored to specific groups, which brothers and sisters benefited from greatly. Topics for the workshops included communication between married couples, tips on running successful cell groups, etc. Some of the workshops were so popular that we ran out of seats! Some brothers and sisters had to stand throughout the workshop.

Praise the Lord that during one of the sermon sessions, Rev. Chiu announced that one of the non-believers who attended the retreat had decided to believe in Jesus! That was the most touching moment of the retreat, as we all rejoice in the Lord for this new brother in Christ.

Last but not least, we are extremely thankful for the faithful and responsible sisters who served in the nursery and Vacation Bible School (VBS). It would be impossible for those parents whose children were also attending the retreat to focus on listening to God's Word without their selfless and faithful service.



1-3) Emmanuel Fellowship Retreat (9/5-9/7)

WHAT I HAVE SO FAR LEARNED...

BY SAM NG, NEWTON ENGLISH



I have been attending service at BCEC's Newton Campus for almost a year now. Since I believe that my future ministry will be in a suburban context, I decided that it would be a good idea to complete my Mentored Ministry field units (Gordon-Conwell's internship program) at our Newton Campus. As I am writing this, I am about to complete my second Mentored Ministry field unit, so I guess this would be a good time for me to reflect a little bit on what I have so far learned.

As a TIOB counselor and a teacher for the Newton Mandarin youth, I have come to see that preparing a lesson is the easy part and that the hard part (at least for me) is the delivery of a lesson. When it comes time to teach on what I have prepared, I end up stumbling over my own words and then realize that the transitions between each point of my lesson are not as strong as I had thought. This has helped me to realize the importance of rehearsing the delivery of my lessons, so that I know where I might stumble and which transition points need strengthening.

As one of the Junior Worship teachers, it has been difficult for me to explain biblical concepts, so that elementary students can understand. I have the tendency to assume that the students would know what I mean

even when I use words that are either too theological or simply beyond their level of vocabulary. I have learned that thinking back to when I was an elementary student while preparing a lesson for them would be helpful in this area.

I am also one of the hosts for Sunday worship. I have only hosted a few times and have been a nervous wreck every time. The reason for this nervousness is my lack of people skills and having to stand before a crowd to say a number of things is frightening to me. I have been told that the more times I host worship, the less nervous I will be. As for my lack of people skills, this is an area of weakness that I will be exploring through the rest of my Mentored Ministry field units.

Editor's Note: Sam Ng is one of our supporting seminarians. He is being mentored by Pastor Tom, serving in BCEC's youth and children's ministries at our Newton Campus. Upon graduation, he plans on going into full-time suburban youth ministry.

Summer Evangelistic Meeting



by BEN WONG,
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

Praise the Lord that the Summer Evangelistic Meeting, cooperatively organized by BLM (Boston Local Mission), SOL (Symphony of Life), and LED (Local Evangelical Department), was filled with the fruitful experience of bringing the gospel to our neighbors. The meeting was designed with the gospel message, drama, music, and an altar call for the audience. In reflecting personally during the event, my spiritual journey proceeded through the stages of excitement, pressure, reliance on God, and ended with joy. During the preparation process, the internal pressure posed by the struggles between my pride and limitation brought me to

my knees and to rely on God for His grace and mercy. Coming out of the mist of fear and self-doubt, I was once again reinforced and encouraged by the oneness of fellowship in serving God together with brothers and sisters with the same hope that more people can be saved and transformed in Christ.

"When he (Jesus) saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:36-38 - NIV)

Please compassionately ask our Lord to equip and send the body of Christ (ourselves) to carry out His Kingdom work in our homes and neighboring communities.



Philippines Missions Trip: Serving God with Humility



by JEREMY LEE,
NEWTON ENGLISH

The Philippines was... hot as hell, and I don't just mean that as a degenerate saying. Nowadays, when I attempt to picture how hot hell may be, I literally picture myself helplessly lying half-naked on a bamboo bench in the Mindanao Mountains, wondering for hours whether I would survive the excruciating afternoon heat.

Yet, while that image pervades in my mind, it is accompanied by another image; one of a wise man with a child's grin – strong and determined, alongside his wife – stern, yet sweet, whose heart breaks for every victim, and whose eyes tell a story of how love can overcome pain. They are a special couple, the two of them. They are people whose hands waved goodbye to me only 14 days after I first shook them. I will say that those 14 days transformed my life. While the previous descriptions do not speak to the unmistakable depths of each of their characters, it will have to suffice for now.

Simply put, Manny Pastre and Sharon Tan Pastre do good work. Where they see need, they do what they can. For this reason, their NGO has become a multi-faceted one — with a major program to feed malnourished children (BCEC sponsors a feeding program at one of the dump sites) and another major program, which aims to sponsor young members of tribal communities through higher education, so that they will have the tools to return and help their respected communities.

I was blessed with the opportunity to spend a lot of time with those in these programs. I had no real responsibilities, and this meant I was free to get to know each of them personally. Sir Manny and Mam Sharon above all have been sure to establish a God-first attitude to every individual they take in, and all of them had benefitted from

them personally in addition to through the ministry. Through construction, travel (on boats, ferries, motorbikes, even in truck-beds), and over coffee, I began to understand them, their stories, and even a little about their families. They taught me Cebuano, I taught them what little Chinese I know. They laughed when I ate rice and fish with my hands like they did, and laughed even harder when I told them the heat didn't bother me.

While enjoying *balut* (a delicious 17-day old duck fetus) one evening, a sense of realization struck me as Sir Manny exclaimed, "Praise the Lord!" He said this as he sat back on his rickety, plastic stool in a tone that could almost be mistaken as sarcasm. But this wasn't the first time I'd heard him say this, rather, he and his men often would exclaim "praise the Lord" after they had experienced something good. What they were acknowledging was that all good things do come from the Lord, but moreover what dawned on me was that they *depended* on the Lord and *expected* Him to do great things.

Although Sir Manny and Mam Sharon could be classified as "life-changers" by worldly standards, what makes them so special is that they live out the humble servant life that we so often speak about in Sunday School. The results of their labor are not theirs alone, but more importantly it is evidence of God's work. When a car is needed for ministry, they simply ask God and He provides. When safety is an issue, they pray to God and He protects. When they run into difficulties in their ministry, they pray and God sustains.

After I returned home, it was not long before my mind was consumed by other things — my worries reflecting where my heart was. I wanted to sleep in all the time, I needed to make money to buy myself a car for next semester, and I wanted to go to the beach and enjoy my summer. This is *my* summer, isn't it?

However, when I think back to where I was only a couple months ago, I feel a little guilty. Sir Manny and Mam Sharon are not so different from me, or from any of us really. Sure, they have faith much bigger than a mustard seed, but the mountains they move are not driven by the five cups of coffee or

multitudes of fresh mangos consumed daily. Our God is not only a big God, but He is the same God in the Philippines, as He is here in Boston. The difference is that they use their time and energy caring for things that ultimately matter. They have put themselves in a position where God can work through them. And while the life they lead is not for everyone, the bottom concept remains: am I putting myself in a position to depend on God? Am I allowing God to work through me, or will I continue to compromise His glory and kingdom gain for the sake of my own ambitions?

Either I can continue to live the life I have built for myself and praise God on the side, or I can stop making compromises to my faith. It is easier said than done, and perhaps I sound like an overzealous college kid who hasn't experienced the real world yet. But what's true of me undoubtedly is true of us all — God has given us both time and ability. We just have to use it, but in a way that *He* can use *us*.



Mexico Missions Trip: More than We Could Imagine



by ALICIA TZAU,
NEWTON ENGLISH

This year's short-term missions trip to Mexico was not only a great way in which God used a group of twelve to share His Word, but He also used the Mexican people to show His love to us. Our team of four counselors, including myself, and eight TIOB students served at Iglesia Emanuel, a church in the outskirts of Tijuana, Mexico. There, we led children's vacation Bible school and women's Bible study. Even though this was my sixth year going down to Mexico, God revealed immeasurably more each time.

As we prepared for the trip, Randall (Myers) highly emphasized team unity; we could not spread Christ's love to others and tell them to unify as one body if our team was not unified. I am happy to say that this is one of the most tight-knit groups of students that I have ever been with. We spent a lot of time on and off the field fellowshiping and praying together, lifting up our fears to each other and to God. As we drove from San Diego to Mexico, we were able to encourage one another and to remind each other of God's provision.

My faith was immediately tested the first day when we drove to the YUGO headquarters, where we would be staying for the week. When we took the

wrong exit and got lost for two hours, I was extremely anxious and felt guilty. However, God allowed us to get lost so that He could teach me patience and to put more faith in Him. Because of our detour, we enjoyed a scenic route by the beach, two additional hours of fellowship in the van, and even met a nice KFC delivery man who led us back on track.

At Iglesia Emanuel, we started off every day going door to door inviting families to our programs, playing ball, and jumping rope with the children. It has been such a joy to see the smiles on the children's faces and watch some of the girls transition from VBS to the women's Bible study. The children played group games, sang worship songs, did crafts, and listened to a Bible lesson every day. God truly touched the hearts of the children, which led to about ten children accepting Jesus as their Savior. In the women's Bible study, we feared that the theme of expanding God's kingdom would be hard for non-Christians to grasp. However, all the attendees were Christian, so it was fitting that the women learned about being led by the Holy Spirit to grow the church and to spread the Good News.

We also worked alongside a team from California that did construction at Iglesia Emanuel. Over three days, they fixed the church's rotting roof as well as the electrical wiring. At our mid-week evening service, one of our counselors gave her testimony and one of our students preached a sermon. On the last day, we ended the night with the church praying for our team and a delicious meal that some church members had prepared for us. Pastor Gaudencio was very appreciative of our church's ongoing relationship. He shared

that he prayed with Pastor Tom for all the trash in front of the church to be cleared away, and a few months later, the debris was gone. Not only that, but a beautiful community center was built in its place, where the women's ministry had their Bible study this year. Another prayer request was that the street infrastructure would improve, and soon after, the road was paved. For years he had been praying for a new roof, in addition to the wiring that shocked his wife every time she turned on the lights. This summer, God brought the California team. It was amazing to see God's plan unfold for Iglesia Emanuel and to witness the power of prayer.

YUGO's theme for the week was "Más," which means "more" in Spanish. This is based off of Ephesians 3:20 (NIV), which says, "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." This mission's trip was a time for us to remember that God can always do more than we ask, even if it means getting lost first or having to pray fervently and continuously. I want to thank everyone for supporting the team, and I hope that you will continue to keep us and Iglesia Emanuel in your prayers.



1-2) Youth Workers Appreciation Dinner (5/31)

Dominican Republic Missions Trip: Far More Meaningful



by GRACE WOO,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

This year from July 1-7, twelve BCEC members, including team leaders Rich and Mable Su, went to the Dominican Republic for a short-term missions trip. We teamed up with former BCEC English pastor, Pastor Jack Lum and his 11 family and church members from San Francisco. Here is the summary of what we did:

1. PRAYER WALKS

We visited 62 homes and businesses in Mata de Cafe and Manabao inviting families to Vacation Bible School (VBS), sharing testimonies, evangelizing, and praying for them. Glory to God, nine people accepted Christ as their Savior through this! It was amazing how the Holy Spirit prompted the member with the testimony most reflective of what each Dominican was going through. This sure affirmed how important it was to obey an all-knowing God.

2. VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

About 150-200 children and adults came to VBS where we taught them Spanish gospel songs, played games, performed Bible skits, and sat with

the children to help them with the arts and crafts. The children were so enthusiastic it made me realize that children, especially in developing countries, could be an easy harvest for God's kingdom.

3. DENTAL HYGIENE CLASSES

One of our team members, Dr. Isa Chen, conducted two dental hygiene classes where she taught the causes of decay, proper brushing, and flossing techniques. The rest of us then sat with the children with teeth models, toothbrushes, and floss to practice what they had learned. And thanks to our generous supporters, we were able to provide care bags consisting of a toothbrush, floss, toothpaste, a pencil, and an eraser to each attendee.

4. CONSTRUCTION

Some team members had the opportunity to work alongside the locals in constructing the tin roof of their church. They helped move lumbers, remove old nails, and had the task of bringing down the old roof material into storage. Our fundraised money also helped supply the material for the completion of the new roof, as well as the building of bunk beds for future missionaries. One member shared his experience about this, "Really clear affirmation of God's protection...I didn't even plan to bring the heavier shoes on the trip or even to wear them that morning, but I did. Then I stepped right on a rusty nail, and did not get injured. Praise the Lord for His protection!"

5. BAPTISM AND WORSHIP

We participated in the river baptism of four local believers, and witnessed two people who responded to an invitation to salvation, as well as another who rededicated her life to Christ. We also attended their Sunday worship, and I saw for the first time what a worship full of passion, full of the Spirit, and full of reverence for God looked like.

In conclusion, this short-term missions trip was far more meaningful than any trips I have ever taken. For God had taught me that when I obeyed the Holy Spirit's prompting and prayed for help, my testimony could be used to evangelize to a complete stranger who was resistant at first. God also sustained me, gave me energy and stamina even when I was only able to sleep about an hour each night and ate but a morsel of fruits over there. Psalm 3:5 (ESV) says, "I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the LORD sustained me." He also taught me to be relational like the Dominicans who spent hours with family, friends, and strangers rather than being glued to their phones or TV. I also learned to be grateful living in my old house, having seen how grateful a Dominican couple was living in a house with dried soil for flooring. So thanks be to God for this missions trip! What an unforgettable and life-changing experience!

Panama Missions Trip:

May the Lord Use My Life from Now On



by FRANCIS AND SUKHAN LOK,
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

Last year, we were at the peak of our professional careers. I was the chief engineer of a company-funded development project. I could see the bright future ahead of me for the next ten years. My wife was an engineer, too, and she was promoted a year ago. We enjoyed our jobs and did not see any change in the near future.

Since we have been teaching Sunday School classes in our church for many years, we felt that we needed to equip ourselves in order to serve better. This thought has been going through our minds over the past couple of years. Our jobs have been the major hindrances for us to attend evening classes in a seminary school.

In November last year, my company offered a rare early retirement plan to all employees. My colleagues did not think that I would be accepted, since I was leading an important project. I applied anyway and bargained with God that if I was accepted that I would go to seminary. My wife made

a bet that if I was accepted, she would resign and go to seminary with me. To our surprise, I was accepted with extension to the end of the year for handover of my responsibilities. I later found out that the manager who approved my early retirement was new to his job and did not know me. I believe God was in control of the whole circumstance.

We applied and started our studies in Gordon-Conwell Seminary at the beginning of 2014. We thought we would equip ourselves to serve as better Sunday School teachers. However, God had a different plan for us. The winter of 2013 was the worst among the 29 years we lived in Massachusetts. We started to search for a warmer place for retirement. The idea of Panama came to our mind and we planned for a short-term missions trip between the spring and summer semesters. At this point, God seemed to call us to be missionaries to Latin America.

Our advantages

We feel that our callings to be missionaries are a bit late in our lives. We wonder how much we can do in our retirement years. Because of our engineering background, we always look for the best use of our time. We argued how much time we should spend in seminary in order to maximize our years to serve. We think God's timing is the best because we feel that we have many advantages than those days when we were younger. First, our chil-

dren have grown up and our financial condition is stable. Second, God has shaped us over the years. We believe that we have better tempers than before. Third, we have gathered much experience in serving the Lord as lay people. Finally, we are still healthy and young at heart.



Our experiences in Panama

1. Laymen called late to the missions field

We discovered that our calling as missionaries near retirement age is not unique. When we arrived in Panama, the two brothers who met us at the airport are seminary students. Brother Wu from Costa Rica is in his 50s. He handed his business to his son and came to Panama to study. His goal is to return to his family after graduation and serve the Chinese churches in Costa Rica. Brother Wan from New Jersey is in his early 60s. He gave up his job as an acupuncturist and came to Panama to study. At this point, he is not sure where God will lead him to serve. Since his wife passed away, brother Wan is willing to serve wherever God

wants him to. These two cases gave us much encouragement.

2. Retired clergy entering the missions field

When we visited different churches in Panama, we met a few pastors who became missionaries after their retirements. The first pastor we met was Reverend Michael Chua who is from the Philippines. He is now serving at the Chinese Church of Colon after his retirement. We met Reverend Andrew Leung at the Alliance Church. He celebrated his 91st birthday in May, and he is still serving in his church. When Rev. Leung reached retirement age while serving in New York, he moved on to the missions field in Suriname. He and his wife later moved to Panama and continue to build new churches. The third pastor was Reverend Samuel Wai whom we met years ago in Boston. We met again this time at the Evangelical Free Church of Panama. Rev. Wai took an early retirement from his church in Dallas, Texas and became a missionary to Panama. Rev. Wai is now in his mid-70s and is still physically fit and full of energy in serving the Lord.

Advantages of serving in Latin America

1. Weather

Although we lived in Massachusetts over 29

years, we have never gotten used to the weather here. We have dry skin all year round, arthritis pain in winter, and hay fever during the spring. The weather in Latin America is generally warmer than North America. Since we were born in Hong Kong, we feel much at home with the hot and humid weather in Panama.

2. Language

Nowadays, most of the new immigrants from China to North America or Europe speak Mandarin. We worked with Chinese students in recent years, but we still have difficulties in speaking Mandarin. Maybe we need formal training. However, most of the Chinese in Panama speak Cantonese, which is our mother tongue. Of course they sometimes mix in a few Spanish words in their conversation just like how we mix English words in our conversations here in North America. I guess we will need to learn Spanish soon.

3. Living Standard

We discovered that the living standard in Panama is much higher than what the websites claim. Just comparing the food prices in supermarkets between Panama City and the metropolitan Boston area, most of the prices are similar, and a few things are more expensive. The cost of dim sum in

the El Dorado area is similar to the Chinatown of Boston, but the quality is lower. The Panama housing market is rising and is catching up with the Boston metropolitan area. On the other hand, as permanent residents of Panama, retirees can enjoy many benefits of price discounts from the government.

Conclusion

God has called many of His children at retirement age to serve in Latin America. We encourage brothers and sisters of North America to consider Latin America as their retirement home for the many service opportunities available. Let us serve our kinsman, while enjoying the warm weather in Panama, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and other Latin American countries.



Eighteen Blessed Years



by BOBO TANG,
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

As you read this article, I have already left the spiritual family that changed my entire life. I am now preparing to take on a path of a full-time servant. This journey will be challenging yet rewarding because those people who decide to walk on this path must rely solely on God's grace.

Eighteen years is not a short period of time. Eighteen years ago in July, I first attended the English service at BCEC. I didn't know anybody. Gradually, I made friends within the fellowship and my Bible study small group. These brothers and sisters loved the Lord, and were willing to serve. They were Bernice Cheung, Bob Lee, Davina Ling, Moses Lam, Karen Ong, Vivian Chin, Connie Lee and Tom Tokura. They became my mentors and I really wanted to learn from them. Compared to this English-speaking group of brothers and sisters, I didn't speak fluently, but they still accepted me. Spiritually, their love for God and serving others influenced me deeply. Had they not accepted me, I believe that I would not have experienced such a joyful church life.

I was also touched by our pastors who serve with such humility. They influenced me to be more willing to serve as well. Often after Adult Fellowship, Pastor Steve drove me home from Chinatown to Quincy, and then made the commute back to his house in

Medford. He exercised the love of the Lord and put the teachings of Christ in action. Our pastors sacrifice themselves in the service of others. These great lessons serve me well as I prepare to work on the mission field.

Not only did my brothers and sisters in my small groups and our pastors give me support and encouragement, but also my apartment mates in the past, and the brothers and sisters who joined me in serving in the gospel together. This powerful and motivating force confirmed God's calling for me to serve Him as a full-time missionary. I would especially like to express my wholehearted appreciation to Sylvia Wai, Sandra Chan, Candy Tin, Anna Fan, Yvonne Au, Lilian Mak, Anthony Yau, Florence Wong, John Lok, Eddie Tam, and Maris Yau. They are my spiritual friends and comrades on the battlefield of evangelism. They were angels sent by God who helped me grow by encouraging and molding me. They walked beside me on the path to God's kingdom.

I love my spiritual family, Boston Chinese Evangelical Church, very much. I met my best friends there, and received great training from the pastors. Over the past eighteen years, BCEC equipped me to evangelize, and to serve. They have been faithful to give me a lot of opportunities to serve. During



my time at BCEC, I started to serve on the welcome team, then the food bank, and also Sunday School. After I graduated from seminary, I helped with the Chinese congregations, including Adult Sunday School and the Board of Deacons. BCEC gave me a lot of opportunities to serve in different capacities. I greatly treasure the time that I spent at BCEC.

I see attending BCEC as a turning point in my life. If I didn't attend or serve at BCEC, my life would have been quite different. I hope that you will all cherish your days at BCEC, seize the opportunity to receive training to improve your spiritual life. Learn to serve and prepare yourself to be used by God. Glorify Him, bear much fruit, and live a blessed life.

I am now living with my family in Hong Kong, but in November I plan to start serving in the mission field in East Asia. I miss BCEC, my home church, and my dearest brothers and sisters a lot. Please pray that I will focus on serving with joy. Please also pray for my father's and my sister's salvation. May God soften their hearts with mercy! I hope that one day they will accept the Lord, so they may receive His eternal blessings.

"The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." (Psalm 118:14 – ESV)



Assignments



by CLIFF WONG,
NEWTON ENGLISH

As a feature writer for a local magazine and newspaper, at times it's frustrating to limit a more spiritual standpoint in my writings. Philosophically, I render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, but it's a blessing to sometimes "tell it like it is" from a believer's perspective. This is an opportunity to talk about my various assignments in life, its effects on others, and more importantly, its effect on me.

As a product of Boston's Chinatown and as a first-generation Chinese-American, life was simple but unique. The subculture in which we lived offered a comfort zone that enriched our lives and greatly influenced who we ultimately became. In Chinatown, each of us relied heavily on a strong ethnic background and equally strong parenting for our development. However, life wasn't always utopian, especially for a youth like me, sorely lacking in self-confidence and self-esteem. Whether true or not, my adolescent years were somewhat of a mess! At best, I was average in my endeavors. In terms of ambition, leadership, or initiative, I was somewhat deficient, just another Chinatown goofball getting by. Unfortunately, like many of my peers, I avoided the church in Chinatown and was doubtful of things I could not see. To me, life was tough enough and if I was to succeed, I had to rely on myself. The problem was that – at the time – I also lacked faith in myself, my abilities, and my convictions. At that time, life was truly a mess! I remember once praying aimlessly for mundane needs like respectability, ability... materials things.

I didn't know how to pray, I just prayed out of despair.

Upon graduating college, things changed. In those days, work was hard to find, especially if one lived in Massachusetts while a Republican lived in the White House. Nevertheless, I had to find work. As a math major of average ability, high tech options were slim. The only alternative was a teaching position at English High School. Me, a teacher! The thought made me quiver! The plan was to work a few weeks, earn some cash, then find a "real job." Unexpectedly, what started as a temporary stint became much more. Surprisingly, I seemed to have an immediate knack for the classroom and for students. Regardless of assignment, I seemed to persevere. At that time, English High had an enormous Hong Kong-born student population. Many of them were short on language skills and in dire need of mentoring. With little formal training I was able to assist this group. The transition to teaching was surprisingly seamless and smooth. This early experience was a defining phase of my career. Gone were my doubts and anxieties. While my confidence grew, so too did my caring for others.

Following English High School were several other stops in my career. Each of the new assignments – Wang YMCA, Taft Middle School, Edison Middle School, Boston Technical High School, and Boston Latin Academy – offered new and enriching experiences that further defined my role as an educator. Somehow, rank and/or prestige were of little importance to me. What was important was my service to and bonding with some of the best students one would wish for.

However, the most defining moment of all didn't arrive until I accepted Christ. I was already a guidance counselor at one of the aforementioned exam schools. Despite being a late-blooming Christian at BCEC, I could finally see things more

clearly. How did I become such a different person? Where did I miraculously develop this ability to reach and mentor young people, what enabled me to erase my own problems of doubt and low-self-esteem? There was a time that I believed that my success was about me and a God-given ability. That was only half true. It was not about my accomplishments, but entirely about what God wanted me to do.

I eventually learned how wrong I was about God and that He was always there for me. One of the benefits of being a believer is transformation. I may have earlier received God's help in terms of performance, but not in my heart. At this point, I now believe that all of my "accomplishments" are about God. Regardless of the time and of the challenge, it was all about Him and His plan. I am convinced that my deeds and possessions are a gift from God, not to be taken for granted. His plan for my life was mapped out long before I ever realized. As a semi-retiree, I'm engaged in a part-time after school program in the Quincy area entitled the Dream Project. I provide college access counseling for hundreds of low income Asian students each year. It appears that I did it again! The reality is that He did it again! Since I've already submitted another article about the "Dream Project" in another publication, there's no need to discuss it here at length. This Dream Project began six years ago and, suffice it to say, it's my latest assignment. I feel it's appropriate to borrow the final paragraph from my other article to end this one as well.

In his bestselling novel, the "Purpose Driven Life," renowned evangelist, Rick Warren informs us that God puts us on this earth for "His" purpose. We are here to serve and never to retire. Warren believes that we have an obligation to find our purpose on this earth and to serve it. I may have inadvertently found mine six years ago one Saturday afternoon.



August Moon Festival (8/10): Outreach to the Chinatown community through street evangelism, games, and activities



UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 5-7 MANDARIN EMMANUEL FELLOWSHIP RETREAT
- 6 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS
FALL SEMESTER BEGINS
- 7 CHINESE SUNDAY SCHOOL
FALL SESSION BEGINS
- 7 CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL PROMOTION
ENGLISH
- 14 BAPTISM
- 15 PDAS (PROJECT DESTINY AUTUMN TO SPRING) BEGINS
- 19-21 ENGLISH FALL CONFERENCE
CHINATOWN

OCTOBER

- TBA CHURCH CLEAN UP
NEWTON
- 26 ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER

- 2 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS
ONE HOUR BACK
- 14-16 MISSIONS CONFERENCE
- 27 THANKSGIVING DAY
OFFICE CLOSED
- 29 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
NO CEC CLASSES
- 30 THANKSGIVING SUNDAY
- 30 CHILD DEDICATION
CHINESE
- TBA CHURCH CLEAN UP
CHINATOWN

DECEMBER

- 7 SUNDAY SCHOOL APPRECIATION DAY
CHINESE
- 7 CHINESE SUNDAY SCHOOL
WINTER SESSION BEGINS
- 7 BAPTISM
- 13 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS
FALL SEMESTER ENDS
- 21 CHRISTMAS SUNDAY
- 21 CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY
CHINATOWN
- 22-JAN 5 PDAS BREAK
- 24 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
- 25 CHRISTMAS
OFFICE CLOSED

Missions Trips: 1-2) Nordic Team (7/5-7/13) 3) Lorraine Chung in the Philippines (4/11-4/20) 4-5) Pastor Enoch and Steve Liu in the Philippines (4/28-5/2) 6) Francis and SukHan Lok in Panama (4/28-6/5) 7-10) Dominican Republic Team (7/1-7/7)



Vacation Bible Schools: 1-7) Chinatown Vacation Bible School (8/11-8/15) Worship, small group discussion, Bible drama, and zoo visit throughout the week on this year's VBS theme, "Weird Animals" 8-14) Newton Vacation Bible School (7/14-7/18): Children having fun and learning about Jesus through engaging in team-building activities, games, and Bible stories

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.

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