



From Our Senior Pastor:

How do you Measure Success?



by PASTOR STEVEN CHIN

How do you measure success? That is a question that church leaders wrestle with. In the business world, it is easy to measure success. Success in the business world is measured by profit. If you own a business and you make money, you are successful. If you do not make a profit, you are not successful.

However, in the church, success is not so easily measured. If our church's income for a certain year exceeds its expenses, it does not mean our church is successful. Author Dallas Willard said that pastors and their churches are measured by the ABC's: Attendance, Buildings, and Cash. Our church has a worship attendance of over 1000 people. We are larger than 95 percent of the other Protestant churches in America. We now own four buildings. Last year we had an income of over \$2 million. But does that mean we are successful?

As a church we seek to please Jesus Christ, the head of the Church. Is He impressed with the

ABC's? I do not think so.

For example, in Luke 14:25-27 (ESV), Jesus was not impressed with the large crowd that wanted to follow Him. In fact, He says some strong words to try to reduce the crowd.

"Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, 'If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.'" (Luke 14:25-27 – ESV)

Now this is not to say we should not look at our attendance or our financial statements. These measures can be helpful in some ways. However, they should not be the ultimate measure of success.

Then how would Jesus define success?

Well, through His apostle Paul, He tells us what He is thankful for in a church:

"We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of **faith** and labor of **love** and steadfastness of **hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 – ESV)

I would say that Jesus looks at our faith, our hope, and our love. You see this trilogy of faith, hope, and love in a number of places, including

1 Corinthians 13:13, Colossians 1:3-5, Ephesians 1:15-18, and 1 Peter 1:3-5. They are particularly in the beginning section of many epistles. I must admit I used to skip over those sections. But they give us insight into what God looks for in a church.

Faith describes the assurance and trust we have in the head of the Church, Jesus Christ. It looks at what He has done in the past and applies it to the present. It also reflects our dependence upon His unchanging Word.

Hope describes the stability, steadfastness, and confidence in what Christ will do in the future.

Love describes the Christ-like relationship we should have with other Christians and to unbelieving people.

There is a saying that has lot of truth to it.

"Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts."

Yes, faith, hope, and love are not easy to be counted or measured. Yet we should focus on these rather than what is easy to measure. Let us begin by evaluating each of our individual lives in these three virtues. Would Paul give thanks for your faith, your hope, and your love? If not, how will you develop those qualities with God's help?



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

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*Missions Conference 2014:***Engage – Living as a Global Disciple**

by SUKHAN LOK,
NEWTON CANTONESE

When a staff member of BCEC *Connections* invited us to write an article to reflect on the Cantonese track of the Missions Conference, we were not sure whether we could complete the assignment in time, because we were busily preparing for upcoming trips in the next few months, including visiting relatives in Hong Kong and Macau during the Christmas holidays and participating in a missions trip to Panama and Costa Rica from the end of January to the end of March. We were moved by the Holy Spirit to share with you our reflection on the Missions Conference, so that we may encourage one another. The theme of this year's conference was "Engage – Living as a Global Disciple." We are thankful that God reminded and inspired us through Reverend Calvin Chu, Director of China Evangelistic Mission, which is based in California. As we reflect on the meaning of genuine mercy, it motivates us to intercede for others and care for our neighbors and our community by actions to make a difference in this world.

The topic for Friday was "Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit." Using Matthew 5:3 and Luke 6:20, Rev. Chu reminded us that "those who were spiritually poor were blessed." According to his analogy, our hearts are pointed, while the world is round, so it is impossible for the world to fill our hearts and for anything belonging to this world to satisfy our desires. We need to be "spiritually poor." Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." We were reminded that whenever we rely on materialistic things in this world more than we rely on God, who grants us everything, we become deceived. When we fail to see God, and we see only ourselves, we think we are God.

The topic for Saturday was "As Long As It Is Day." Rev. Chu repeatedly reminded us that "as long as it is day, we must do the works of Him who

sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work." (John 9:4 – NIV) In reality, no one works in the dark. Sometimes we think we still have plenty of time, so day after day, month after month, year after year, we delay carrying out the mission given to us by the One who has sent us. During the week of the Missions Conference, the phrase "as long as it is day" filled my spirit, my mind and my body, causing me to remember the speaker's message at a Cantonese retreat a few years ago: time flies like the blink of an eye. In New England, a year goes by easily, thanks to the fellowship of the church body. Barbecues in the summer, followed by hotpot dinners during autumn and winter, signifies the passing of a year. More barbecues in the summer, followed by hotpot dinners during autumn and winter, signifies the passing of another year. Very soon, ten years pass by, and likewise 50 years. Will our spiritual life remain the same in 50 years, meaning no growth at all? Do you think God is pleased that we are using our time like this? We need to continuously self-examine our spiritual lives and reflect carefully, until we have the compassion to give ourselves fully to God's work.

The topic for Sunday worship was "Lord Jesus Requests You to Change the World." Rev. Chu used the strong and powerful passage of Matthew 9:35-38 (NIV) to alert us that "the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When He 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."

Rev. Chu emphasized that, unless we have the same compassion as Jesus did, we fail to recognize those who are poor and the poverty in the world. He also reminded us that genuine compassion requires all kinds of actions, including prayer, sending people out, and sharing the gospel with others.

Prayer – Rev. Chu gave us great but practical suggestions. News items each day can become wonderful daily prayer items. When you eat sushi, remember to pray for the souls of the Japanese

people. When you eat Korean BBQ, don't forget to pray for people in North Korea. When you eat Vietnamese pho noodles, remind yourselves to pray for the Vietnamese people. In addition, we need to know the needs of our community, so that we can accurately pray for them. This reminds me of one of the Bible verses that I am very fond of: "Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." (Jeremiah 29:7 – NIV)

Sending People Out – Rev. Chu reminded us, "If we only send out short-term missionaries, we cannot fulfill the Great Commission." Rev. Chu asked a humorous yet meaningful question: "Imagine that our pastor is someone who comes from overseas to Boston for a short-term missions trip. If he only works for a few weeks each year, will there be any natural growth in the spiritual condition of our brothers and sisters?" Rev. Chu encouraged us to send out more long-term missionaries to different parts of the world, and we must not delay carrying out the mission given to us by the One who has sent us, because "the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few."

Sharing the Gospel with Others – Rev. Chu emphasized that we should not only be concerned about the practical needs of the community, but we also need to share the gospel to the poor and the needy, to all people, and to all nations. Of course, sharing the gospel is a commandment by Jesus. Those from other religions are actively spreading the false gospel to the world. We can no longer delay carrying out the mission given to us by the One who has sent us.

More importantly, we need to use our time wisely and seize every opportunity to equip ourselves and share the gospel with our neighbors, our community, our nation, and in every corner of the world. I am confident that this can be done if we are willing to take the first step, have faith that our Father, Son, and Holy Spirit will reinvigorate our compassion to carry out the mission given to us by the One who has sent us, adopt the heart of our Triune God to make a difference, and become a global disciple.



Striving to Fulfill the Great Commission



by GLORY SONG,
CHINATOWN MANDARIN

Praise God that at the beginning of this new year, I have the opportunity to reflect on what I learned and experienced from the 2014 BCEC Missions Conference Mandarin track. One phrase that Rev. Peter Wu repeated throughout that week-end continues to reverberate in my mind even now: “Whatever is most important, treat that as your most important task to do.” For Christians, what is our most important task? In our daily routines, have we treated it as the most important priority to do? As we enter a new year, when everyone is busily and passionately setting resolutions and goals for their jobs, academic studies, health, spiritual growth, and serving, these are important questions that warrant our careful consideration and reflection.

Rev. Wu reminded us that what’s written in Matthew 28:19-20: “Go and make disciples of all nations” is the Great Commission our Lord has entrusted to each Christian. Yet, do we have such vision and aspiration? We were shown one photo that depicted a camel carrying supplies of Coca Cola in the desert. Coke’s mission at one point was to put “a Coke in the hand of every person on earth by year 2000.” If a worldly business can have such a magnificent ambition, then shouldn’t we, as Christians who manage God’s eternal business, have an even bigger aspiration to share the gospel with all people? However, based on the way Christian resources are allocated worldwide, we see that we have not made sharing the gospel our most important task to do.

Rev. Wu illustrated his point using figures from a report on Global Church Member Finance. Each year, the total income received is \$12.3 trillion. Of this, only \$11.4 billion (0.1 percent) is allocated towards foreign missions. Furthermore, of the foreign missions total income, only 1 percent is allocated for unreached regions.

Population Breakdown	Resource Allocation Breakdown
C Region — 33%	91%
B Region — 40%	8%
A Region — 27%	1%

Table 1: Worldwide Christian Missions
Resource Allocation by Region

In the above table, C Region represents countries and people that have already received the gospel, B Region represents countries and people that have heard the gospel but rejected it, and A Region represents countries and people that have never heard the gospel before. The figures indicate that currently in the world, 1 out of every 4 people is still disconnected from the gospel message, but we have only put 1 percent of our human and financial resources towards evangelizing to them.

Rev. Wu also showed us some clips and photos of work that missionaries are doing in unevangelized regions. One of the most poignant stories for me was the condition in Pakistan, where Christians suffer religious persecution. Consequently, for the same amount of work, a Muslim can earn \$5 a day, whereas a publicly professing Christian can only earn \$1 a day. Due to financial hardships, many Christian parents are forced to give their children to do manual labor as indentured slaves, working to make brick. The missionaries there risk their lives to teach the local women how to use sewing machines, so they can make products that generate more money to more quickly redeem their children from slavery.

In his Sunday message, Rev. Wu spoke from Philippians 3:10-16 to encourage us to “press on towards the goal.” A trait common among Chinese people is to be introverted and self-effacing, rarely wanting to take a stand and instead, are frequently downcast saying, “I’m sorry.” Yet Rev. Wu challenged us: if the Lord Jesus calls us to be the salt and light of the world, to be under obligation for the sake of the gospel (Romans 1:14-15), then on the day when we must stand before the throne of our Lord, will we only be able to say to Him then, “I’m sorry?” Yet as it states in Philippians 3:10 (ESV), we “may share in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.” Rev. Wu shared from his personal experience serving in church that if we are

to press on in following the Lord, we will certainly suffer on account of Him, and we will endure discipline in many aspects of our lives. Furthermore, to “press on” is contingent on one important thing — knowing what is the goal. What is our goal as Christians? If we do not know our goal, then we will also not know what we are doing. Rev. Wu exhorted us that sharing the gospel and winning souls for the Lord is our goal. Finally, he gave us a real-life application to consider. Maybe for many people, sharing the gospel abroad and going on missions trips are not feasible. However, in Boston alone, there are many around us that still have not heard the good news. Boston is a city with a strong emphasis on higher education. In an environment that that elevates leadership qualifications, Jesus is looking for people who are willing to be followers after Him. Rev. Wu encouraged us to follow after our church pastors and ministers, and together, pressing on towards the goal, because God cares for our submission and commitment.

When I reflect on this past year, I admit that I did many different things and spent the year keeping myself occupied with various activities. However, in all honesty, I cannot say there was one thing I made a sincere effort continuously, and I also cannot say that in the things I did, even those done for the church, were done purely out of motivation and desire to share the gospel and for His Kingdom purpose. I am reminded of 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 (ESV), “Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it...If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss.” In this new year, God once again is reminding me that His heart is for all people to become disciples. How then do I make this my goal and motivation each day, pressing on to do work that will endure by God’s standards? Even if we do not ever go to Pakistan or Bangladesh, may God open our eyes to see those around us who still have not heard the gospel. May we generously invest our resources and time to do what, in God’s eyes, is the most important task: fulfilling His Great Commission.



Blessings from 2014 Nepal Missions Trip



by PASANG DOLMA,
NEWTON MANDARIN

2014 is my 10th anniversary serving in three Chinese churches for the Tibetan evangelical ministry, as well as my first year being called by the Lord to participate in an international cross-cultural missions trip. During my 20-day mission with the Tibetan refugees in Nepal, I have experienced the full presence of God and guidance of the Holy Spirit. My vision was opened up, my faith was strengthened, and my hopes were fulfilled by God's abundant provisions, amazing grace, and wonderful works. My missionary vision, itinerary, preparation work, fundraising, application, and other ministries in Nepal have also witnessed God's grace, faithfulness, and omnipotence. Praise God for His guidance, protection, and fulfillment of the Holy Spirit. I was able to experience God's love, power, joy, and peace, which helped me overcome difficult obstacles, intense ministries, and spiritual warfare. It's just like what Zechariah 4:6 (ESV) said, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty." This missions trip represents God's blessings and the power of the gospel and prayers that brought me to a successful accomplishment through support from pastoral staff, the missions committee, and many brothers and sisters at BCEC with their generous donations and prayers. Praise the Lord! Thank you, BCEC brothers and sisters, for supporting me throughout this missions trip!

Nepal is located in South Asia; it is the world's largest Hindu nation. Ninety percent of the nation practice Hinduism, 5 percent practice Buddhism, and only a mere 2 percent practice Christianity and other world religions. My first impression of Nepal's capital city was as follows: dirty, messy, disgusting, and poor. There are many different ethnic groups, diverse cultures, temples, monasteries, and stupas statues everywhere. The religious atmosphere is quite strong. Nepal has more than 20 thousand Tibetan refugees residing in six major refugee camps. They all encounter different hardships. The gospel and salvation from God seem to be their only hope and way out.

My main activities of this missions trip in Kathmandu were centered around the Tibetan refugee community. Currently, there are only two Tibetan churches in Nepal, with about 60 Tibetan brothers and sisters and children participating in Sunday worship service. I was invited by the pastor to answer the following questions during Sunday service: Who are we? Where is our true home? How are we to build up ourselves and the fellowship in

Christ's love? These three messages were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and my testimony was encouraging to people. I've also attended two of their Bible studies and had the opportunity to support and know them more through sharing. Their testimonies of overcoming temptations and anxieties have encouraged me to trust and follow Jesus more. I also went with the pastor and his wife to visit the people who were sick, who experienced hardships, and who were spiritually weak. The Holy Spirit had urged us to pray for them and support their living conditions. They are touched and thankful to see Tibetan brothers and sisters who came all the way from the United States to serve and care for them. This magnifies the love and grace of God.

In Nepal, I was blessed to attend three prayers meetings for missionaries from different countries. I was also able to learn about and understand the cross-cultural differences from their needs and difficulties. Their full willingness to make sacrifices has touched me deeply. I was inspired by their prayer requests and the urge to be better equipped. Thank God for my ability to pray for them and for the opportunity to share with them my experiences serving in the Tibetan evangelical ministry.

I was amazed to see how God used my experiences, spiritual gifts, and sustainable professional skills in this missions trip to help the local Tibetan church development project. I spent some of the missions fund to support a two-day retreat and staff meeting. We also had discussions about programs on how to nurture disciples, how to organize, and raise funds for the evangelistic conference for Tibetan spiritual leaders in Southern Asia in 2015, how to modify and develop the Tibetan Bible translation agreement, and also to evaluate the feasibility and financial budgeting of establishing the first Bible training center in the Himalayan regions. Throughout the two-day retreat, the Tibetan spiritual leaders prayed and encouraged each other with concentric unity. Their bodies and souls

have been built and rested. Their love for the Lord has been revived, and their confidence and direction in the Tibetan evangelistic ministry have been enhanced.

During the 20 days in Nepal, I was living in the Himalayan Children Peace House. The pastor and his wife have led the Tibetan orphanage for decades. There are currently 22 children and adolescents; the oldest is 16 years old, and the youngest is 8 years old. I had a great and memorable stay with the kids. I led them to sing praise hymns, dance the Tibetan dance, pray for their blessings, chat and play with them, go to church, and worship God. Although these children have lost their parents or



were abandoned by their parents, the Lord's great love never forsake them. They received love and rebirth in Jesus Christ. They know to fear God, and often rely on God and count their blessings. I had a hard time parting with the kids, but when I see there will be a new force and godly devotion among the descendants of Tibetan gospel ministry, I am full of gratitude for the love and mercy of the Lord.

The 2014 Nepal missions trip has drawn a perfect conclusion to serving in this ministry for ten years. It also provided me with a starting point, as I continue to serve in the missions ministry in 2015. Just like the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:13-14 (ESV), "Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the

prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." May the Lord guard my heart and mind in Jesus Christ, help me build myself up in His most Holy faith, and pray in the Holy Spirit, guarding myself in His great love, and experiencing the mercy of our Lord Christ Jesus for eternity.

More Blessed to Give than to Receive



by PETER WONG

Jesus says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35 – ESV) Last summer, a group of six people from our church, including four youth, experienced firsthand the meaning of these words from our Lord.

With prayers and support from our church, we visited an earthquake zone of a Northeast country. This catastrophic event happened six years ago, which in turn impacted thousands of victims' hearts, especially those children who lost their parents and relatives in the tragedy. We had opportunities to teach English and share our Lord's love with some children and teens who suffered from the trauma of disaster. In addition, we experienced God's power and grace overflowing in the classes we taught. The joy and smiles that came from the students during the two weeks made us feel that our efforts would never be in vain, and it was especially true in the Biblical sense.

The following are reflections from two youth who participated in this life-transforming trip.

Quote from Angel Zhao — teacher for the 4th & 5th-graders in the camp

I had the opportunity to travel to the western part of the North East Country this past summer of 2014. Although it was my second time going,

it was still an eye-opening experience for me. We worked with about 30 kids, mostly in elementary school, for about two weeks. My friend, Savina, and I, taught the 4th and 5th-graders mainly English, although we incorporated Bible stories into our lessons. Most of the time, the kids were very enthusiastic but also pretty rowdy. Through this experience, God tested my patience with the kids and taught me to be humble and to not take things for granted. As God's word says, "Christ alone is sufficient." Some of the students we taught experienced traumatic events, but I was glad they willingly accepted that there is an almighty God who truly cares for them. I continue to pray for these students, and I hope to return soon.

Quote from Joanna Wong — teacher for the 6th & 7th-graders at the camp

In the two-week English class, love was able to bring together people who were strangers, as well as to help ease the pain of the children. For two weeks in the summer, they could at least forget about the traumas from the earthquake. I was glad to be the one to give them the love they needed, as well as to add some happiness to their lives, like a strip of light shining across the horizon at night. I remember their

laughter. Imagining their faces filled with joy instantly brings a smile to my face.

The Bible says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Through my encounters with the children, I learned that despite enduring a distressful and tragic experience, persistence did result in hope and joy. This encourages me to remain strong when facing all the difficulties and obstacles in my own life. I've learned not to take certain things for granted, to treasure and to be thankful for things I have. Not only did the children gain knowledge from me; unexpectedly, I learned essential life lessons from them.

Will you consider stepping out of your comfort zone to experience what Jesus exclaimed: "It is more blessed to give than to receive"? Please prayerfully consider joining this year's short-terms missions team!

To God be the Glory!



Newton Family Christmas Celebration:

The Miracle of Jesus



by TERRI MOCK,
NEWTON ENGLISH

Just imagine our church transformed into a Bible-time Bethlehem marketplace. Families — kids, moms, dads, grandparents, and friends — come to experience the Miracle of Jesus Celebration together. They visit the Village Photographer, and dress-up in Bible-time costumes for a family photo. They stop at marketplace stalls where kids can make a craft or play a game.

There is the Stable where they can hear the great news about the birth of Jesus. At the Bethlehem Bakery, they can make a delicious snack, or go fishing off the Fisher's Pier. They can crush frankincense and myrrh at the Spice Shoppe, and make a clay toy at the Toy Shoppe. At the Census Taker's Office, they can learn to write in Hebrew, or play a game at the Wool Trader. Finally, to relax after a busy trip to Bethlehem, they can have refreshments at the Café.

When we think deeply, we remember that the Miracle of Jesus is really what Christmas is all about. The Miracle of Jesus Celebration, or "MOJ" for short, was our opportunity to share the good news of Jesus with families and friends. The outreach event was held at Newton Campus on Saturday, December 13. The theme was that "Jesus is With Us."

By God's grace, the Newton Campus congrega-

tions worked together to plan the MOJ Celebration in eight short weeks. We had help across the English, Cantonese, and Mandarin congregations, from teens to seniors, and volunteers praying, organizing, decorating, sewing, donating, baking, and using their many gifts and talents to pull off the outreach event. It was an incredible testimony of God's faithfulness to work in and through us!

How did it go? It was awesome! So much fun!

Praise God! He answered our prayers, and blessed us beyond what we imagined!

Here are some stats:

- We had over 275 people at the MOJ Café singing Christmas carols, meeting new people, enjoying refreshments, and having a great time.
- 100 kids came — bright, happy, and excited.
- They were accompanied by 104 adults. There were moms, dads, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends.
- In total, we had 204 guests.
- They were made up of 69 families split be-

tween English, Cantonese, and Mandarin-speaking.

- 28 families or 40% of them live in the neighborhood of Newton Campus.
- As for helpers, we had 75 staff who helped at the celebration and for setup.
- There were many additional others who prayed, brought food, and donated supplies. So many people helped in so many ways.

Praise God! I want to testify to His blessings on us!

- We have experienced what it means to be one community, one body in Christ across our 3 congregations.
- We have experienced the power of God to answer prayer and to work through us, His people.
- He has humbled us to commit all that we are and all that we do to Him.

Praise God for the opportunity to serve together as one body in Christ! MAY ALL GLORY be to God!



1) Brothers and sisters from all three Newton congregations coming together to serve in MOJ 2) A drama scene at the stable 3) Kids learning to write Hebrews at the Census Taker's Office 4) Guests exploring different shops inside the Bethlehem Marketplace 5) Kids making snacks at the Bakery

Reflection on “Grace to the City”



by ROLPHIN HUANG,
CHINATOWN MANDARIN

Before attending “Grace to City – Boston,” I had imagined that it would simply be some training for church planting. However, after two days of meetings, I discovered something more important: gospel renewal and gospel DNA immersion. Only when the grace of the gospel enters our cells will our ministries, preaching, evangelism, and church planting be shaped naturally by the gospel.

According to my understanding of the gospel renewal, its core is knowledge about the gospel. The churches of this world, as well as those of us who have been Christians for a long time, have a dangerous tendency to gradually lose an accurate understanding of the gospel. Increasingly, the gospel has become a religion to a church or to us personally. We no longer read the Bible for the sake of our thirst for God’s Word, but because it is a daily obligation to fulfill. Saying grace before a meal is no longer heartfelt gratitude expressed to God, but it is simply a regular routine before eating. Our Sunday service has also slowly changed from concentrating on worshipping God to bargaining with Him: if I attend worship today, you have to bless me. When we behave like this, we give up the true meaning of the gospel, and we hijack the gospel and turn it into a religion.

We often witness testimonies filled with something like the so-called prosperity theology; obey-

ing God is to exchange for blessings on earth from Him. As mentioned in Rev. Tim Keller’s book, the motivation of this kind of faith is fear and a sense of insecurity. When our lives face difficulties, we become angry towards God, because we feel that since we have put our faith in God, our earthly lives should go well. If that were true, what difference would there be between our God and the deities of China’s ancient civilization? The root of such mentality is the mentality of religion: I obey, so that God accepts me. However, the mentality of the gospel is just the opposite: I obey, because God has accepted me (through Jesus).

It is easy to understand why individuals or churches have that perspective, because religion is simple for human beings to understand and easy to achieve. Religion nicely matches our sinful nature. Meanwhile, rejoicing in God is not easy. Always being thankful to God no matter where we are is much more challenging than attending church for two hours every week. To be sincerely grateful for God’s provision is more difficult than paying lip service to expressing thanksgiving. Allowing God to guide our everyday lives is much more difficult than regarding God as an emergency response service. This means we would only pray to Him during adversity. We place the legalism on ourselves, and we attempt to use being slave to the law as capital for our salvation. We know that disobeying the law is rejecting God, yet we fail to realize that obeying the law or regarding legalism as capital for our salvation is another way of rejecting God.

This is like the story of the prodigal son that we read all the time. It is quite obvious how lost the younger son was, but we neglect that the older son

in the story. Just as in Rev. Tim Keller’s book *The Prodigal God*, what the older son wanted was the same as what the younger son wanted. They both longed for their father’s possessions more than loving their father. The older son’s resentment was no different than the younger son’s. The older son’s superficial obedience was due to their father’s fortune, not his love towards their father. In addition, the older son was also rebellious.

The younger son represented one without religion, while the older son represented one with religion. Both roads lead to death. What we should follow is the third path, which is the gospel that the New Testament reveals to us. Just as Jesus taught us, He is the only way. Since He is the only way, we need to

follow hard after Christ every day of our lives. We can accomplish this only when the gospel enters our lives and penetrates our DNA. As Paul told us in Galatians 2:20-21 (NIV): “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me...For if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

The true gospel makes us realize that we are not worthy (it is meaningful to note that both sons considered themselves worthy). When we admit this sin and are thankful, we can then experience God’s presence and personal transformation through grace. Such transformation comes from within. We believe that the church will experience revival as more believers are transformed. This will naturally further lead to transformation of the culture of our community.





120 Shawmut Ave. Building Dedication Ceremony (9/28)



12/7/2014 Baptism



Chinatown Mandarin Congregation Thanksgiving Dinner (11/27)



Newton Mandarin Congregation: 1-3) Thanksgiving Dinner (11/27) 4) Foliage Trip (10/11)



5-6) Chinatown English Family Fellowship December Gathering (12/13) 7) Parent-Child Dedication: Alice and Chip Tewksbury with Baby Faith from the Newton English congregation (11/9)

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

- 7 LEADERSHIP MEETING
CHINESE
- 13-16 WINTER TEEN CONFERENCE
(HIGH SCHOOL)
ENGLISH
- 14 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS
SPRING SEMESTER PLACEMENT EXAM
- 16 PRESIDENTS' DAY
OFFICE CLOSED
- 16-20 PDAS BREAK
- 19 CHINESE NEW YEAR
OFFICE CLOSED
- 27-3/1 WINTER TEEN CONFERENCE
(MIDDLE SCHOOL)
ENGLISH

MARCH

- 1 CHINESE SUNDAY SCHOOL
SPRING SESSION BEGINS
- 7 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS
SPRING SEMESTER CLASSES BEGIN
- 8 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS
ONE HOUR AHEAD
- 13-15 COLLEGE RETREAT
ENGLISH
- 27-29 CANTONESE MARRIAGE
ENRICHMENT
CHINESE
- TBD CHURCH CLEAN UP
CHINATOWN
- TBD CHURCH CLEAN UP
NEWTON

APRIL

- 3 GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
- 4 EASTER HOLIDAY
NO COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASSES
- 5 EASTER SUNDAY
- 5 BAPTISM
- 18-20 JOSHUA YOUTH
SPRING RETREAT
CHINESE
- 20-24 PDAS BREAK
- 30 3RD STEPHEN MINISTER
TRAINING BEGINS



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, or editing), please contact Helena Fong at helena.fong@bcec.net.

Do you have a story you think would be 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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The printing cost of this newsletter is partially donated by XPress Repographics, Inc.

2014 Annual Meeting (10/26): 1) Over 300 BCEC members attended the Annual Meeting 2) Registration for attendance and voting ballot 3) Staff appreciation 4) Words from our Senior Pastor 5-7) Commissioning ceremony for Calvin Chu, Steve Liu, and Peter Wong 8) 2014-2015 Board of Deacons

