



*From Our Senior Pastor:*

## What Do You Do All Week?



by PASTOR STEVEN CHIN

Many people, including even church members, believe the myth that pastors work only one day a week. The myth comes from the fact that they may only see the pastor working on Sunday when he preaches or teaches. Even if they do not believe this myth, many church members may still wonder what he does the rest of the week. So let me share a little from my own life and ministry. I hope it can help you, not only to understand the ministry of our pastoral staff, but to appreciate and support them more, especially in prayer.

I would first say that there is no typical week for me. Although there are regular activities like Board of Elders meetings twice a month or weekly all staff meetings, many things change in my week depending upon the need. If there is a couple getting married, there would be premarital counseling sessions. If there is a death, there is the need to comfort the family and to lead the funeral service and burial. If someone is sick, it may include a visit to the hospital.

Pastoral staff members have regular office hours, but they do not spend all their time in the office. We try to give our pastoral staff some flex time to help them juggle the demands of ministry and the demands of family life, personal life, and spiritual health. As a result, sometimes you may see them in the market on a weekday, but they may have had a

late meeting the night before.

Generally, I find myself working for the church around 50-60 hours a week. Monday is generally the day off for most pastoral staff. However, it is not uncommon for me on a Monday to catch up on my work or prepare in advance for a sermon. The church provides vacation time and sabbatical time because ministry can be quite stressful. I am sure these times of rest and renewal have blessed the church because many of our staff have served the church for decades.

My role in the church has changed over time as the church has changed. When I first started out working for the church, I was more concerned with short-term ministry on the front lines, such as picking the songs for the weekly fellowship meeting or printing and folding the Sunday bulletin. Now I deal with more long range issues like planning for future expansion options or thinking about the organizational structure of our complex church.

The apostles provide a model for pastors in Acts 6:4 by making prayer and the ministry of the word as priorities. So let me touch on these two priorities. I admit that for years I struggled with making prayer a priority in my life. Now I realize how little I can do without God's help. I have also adopted a better daily routine by praying for about 30 minutes before I even get out of bed. We have tried to integrate dedicated times of prayer into our staff meetings or elders meetings.

Preaching is certainly not just getting up and speaking what is on my mind on Sunday morning. It involves a lot of study and preparation. Preachers must make sure that what they say is in accordance with what the Word of God teaches.

Preachers must also present the principles in God's Word to their audience in a relevant and interesting manner. All this requires time and preparation. In seminary, I remember one professor suggested that pastors put in an hour of study for every minute preached. That means 40 hours of preparation for a 40-minute sermon. However, I quickly realized that kind of preparation is only possible if that is all I did all week. So with all the other demands of ministry, I am happy if I can spend even half an hour for every minute I preach. Of course, for a pastor, this time demand for sermon preparation, which affects many people, is set against time to visit a sick individual member or time with family, so that the wife is happy, and the children are following the Lord.

A famous pastor surveyed the deacons in his church, asking them how much time they expected him, the pastor, to spend in various ministry activities like sermon preparation, counseling, outreach and evangelism, visitation, meetings, administration, etc. When he compiled and added up all the hours, it came to 114 hours a week. That means the leaders of the church expected him to minister 19 hours a day for six days if the pastor were to meet their time expectations for the many areas of ministry.

This means for some people our work expectations for our pastors may be too high. Not only should we scale back our expectations to realistic levels, we should also support pastors by assisting them when we can. One of the hardest jobs for a pastor is to find volunteers who are willing to serve. We should also support pastors in prayer, knowing that there are many demands on their time. They need wisdom in time management and strength from the Lord.



2015 Annual Congregational Meeting (10/25)

### Table of Contents

<i>What Do You Do All Week?</i>	1
<i>God is our Greatest Reward</i>	2
<i>Serving the Chinatown Fire Victims</i>	4
<i>Mentor's Tribute</i>	4
<i>Doing Justice?</i>	5
<i>Unforgettable Experience</i>	6
<i>Before and After</i>	6
<i>Reflection on Urbana 15</i>	6
<i>Serving God through Racial Reconciliation and Social Justice</i>	6
<i>What Story Will You Tell</i>	7
<i>Obedying God's Calling</i>	7
<i>A Chat about Winter Boston Local Mission</i>	8
<i>Finding True Rest in Serving Christ</i>	9
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	11

# God is our Greatest Reward



by PASTOR BARRY LAM

I still remember when Pastor Daniel Chan and Pastor Kenneth Kwong asked me about starting the ordination process. There was hesitation inside of me. On one hand, I have never wished for or contemplated the idea of becoming a pastor. I also firmly believe that God has His timing. If He thinks it is time, then it would happen. If not, I would continue to work on the things, which I should be doing right now. On the other hand, I was not sure whether I am competent enough, and so I prayed together with my wife, while thinking that this would be a go ahead if God says yes to it through His servants. Thus, the ordination process started. Praise be to God! Looking back at my path of ministry until the point of ordination, God did not only let me experienced His faithfulness and loving kindness, He also taught me two spiritual lessons, which are important for me in serving Him with all of my life.

## 1. Surrender completely and follow Him closely

I still remember that when I was young, I used to envy those people who know what their dream is for the future or what their ideal career is. Some classmates in my secondary school days already knew they wanted to become accountants, designers, medical doctors, and so on when they grow up. But for me, I could have never thought about what

industry I wanted to pursue, which would become my lifetime career. Not until I started studying music in college, I thought I would surely enter the musical industry. But after I graduated, God wondrously led me to work in an IT company. I still remember the day I received my first paycheck, I was extremely happy, giving thanks to God for giving me a job that offers a reasonable salary, good prospects, and is stable. I could never have thought that God would call me to resign from this job to study full time in theology after working for less than 4 years.

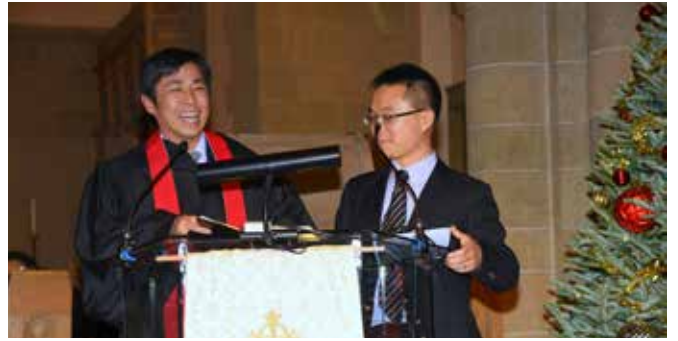
I still remember vividly how I prayed this to God during the last year of my theology course. "Lord, please tell me where You want me to serve you after I graduate. But as much as possible, please do not let me serve as a minister or pastor at a church." God did not give me a reply during this bargaining that I made. Until one day, finally, I changed the direction of my prayer and said to God, "Lord, I am willing to open up myself. Please point me to where You want me to serve." Before long, God broke the silence and pointed me to the church at which I am to serve Him. At that time, I finally understood what lesson God wanted me to learn: surrender completely. Be it the location, position of responsibility, or type of ministry in which I would serve are all unimportant. The most important thing is to take up the cross daily and follow Lord Jesus in response to His calling. Follow Him, and He would show me the way I should go, the things I should do, and give me all the gifts and power that are needed.

## 2. God Himself is my greatest reward for serving Him

In the beginning, I had many worries while I was contemplating on whether I should step into full-time ministry. I worried whether I am competent, how people would perceive me, and whether there will be difficulties in my livelihood. But God used His own Word to encourage me. In the Old Testament of the Bible, the Book of Numbers 18:6, God told the Israelites that He has selected their fellow Levites from among the Israelites as a gift to them, dedicated to the Lord to do the work at the tent of meeting. The Levites did not have a share of inheritance like the other tribes and it seems to us that it is unfair. But God spoke to Aaron, 'I am your share and your inheritance.' (Numbers 18:20 – NIV) God Himself is the greatest reward for me for serving Him. He is also my greatest assurance. My values, life goals and my livelihood and being are all about Him. Many parents wish their children to succeed, but in the ordination ceremony, my family and I see that the blessings and guidance of God are more important than all the vanity of this world.

Lastly, I would like to give thanks for the love and support from all the pastors, my co-workers, and brothers and sisters. Please continue to remember my family and me in your prayers. I wish that in the days to come, we will be united in serving the church of the Lord together. May all the glory be to Jesus who loves us and laid down His life for us.





## Serving the Chinatown Fire Victims



by JOHN WONG,  
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

First of all, a quotation from a portion of the press release (dated November 17, 2015) from Pastor Steven Chin provides the background to this article: “Boston Chinese Evangelical Church (BCEC) opened its facility at 120 Shawmut Avenue on October 23 to victims of a recent fire at 84 and 86 Harrison Avenue in Chinatown. The 40 displaced residents are occupying 18 rooms at the church building, which was the former location of the South Cove Manor nursing home. They reside on the top floor while the church is renovating the first floor of the building. In addition to the rooms, the residents have access to a common and dining area.”

When the final group of residents moved out on December 7, more than 36 individuals from our congregation and additional helpers from different city departments and Chinatown organizations had volunteered in different shifts for front desk duty, which involved watching the front doors (including overnight shifts during the first two weeks), serving as translators between the residents and city officials, helping the residents understand and fill out paperwork for temporary or permanent housing, and contacting potential landlords on their behalf. In addition, 16 individuals or small groups provided home-cooked meals or takeout dinners during their 45-day stay, and several worked behind the scenes to take care of their living areas, recruit additional volunteers, or

keep in contact with city officials. Others visited the residents to offer friendship and moral support, invited them to church activities, and prayed with them. Some continue to keep in touch with them even after they moved out. Because many of the residents are either staying or working in one of the restaurants in the Chinatown area, we may run into them from time to time, as I have twice in the last few weeks already!

I enjoyed my time spent with some of the residents, and I know they appreciated all the assistance that our church was offering them. For most of them, this was their first time learning about Christianity or hearing about our church, even though they had been living in Chinatown for many years. During dinnertime in the last week of their stay, they treated me like their friend and even shared their own food with me, and I learned about their stories, their struggles because of the fire, and their future plans. One of them even joined me and a group of church volunteers to serve food at Boston Rescue Mission.

I concur with what Pastor Steve expressed in the press release about being “thankful that God has provided our church with the space and necessary resources to help” and be good neighbors to these residents. As also evident from the nearly 300 people from our congregation who showed up at our Boston Hope event last May to build Ebola Caregiver Kits for World Vision or the 15 individuals who provided home-made Christmas cookies to Boston Rescue Mission last November, I am proud of how willing so many in our church are to extend the love of God to those in need, and I am touched by the joy that you expressed for having participated. Let us continue to serve Him and His creation with passion and joy! Please contact the Social Responsibility Committee (either

in person or by emailing us at [srministry@bcec.net](mailto:srministry@bcec.net)) if you are interested in joining the committee or lending a helping hand at one of our regularly scheduled events serving at Boston Rescue Mission and Chinatown Respite Care.

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” (Matthew 25:37-40 – NIV)



## Mentor's Tribute



by CLIFF WONG,  
NEWTON ENGLISH

As a writer for the Sampan Newspaper, it gives me great pleasure to finally write about a fellow member of our congregation at BCEC. The January 8th article was a tribute to a former student and volleyball player at Boston Latin Academy. Her name is Yani (Emily) Weng, a graduate of BLA in 2011. Ms. Weng has recently distinguished herself with an act of compassion and selflessness that set her apart. When she reads this, she'll probably be embarrassed once again, just as she was about the Sampan article. When I disclosed my plan to write about her again, she

responded. “Is this necessary? What about others who also volunteered?” A decade ago, Emily was equally modest and unassuming at Boston Latin Academy. To my delight she hasn't changed a bit.

In case you haven't read the Sampan article, here's a brief synopsis. Emily was 11 years old when she and her family immigrated to the US. Like other immigrant families, the Wengs lived in a tiny Chinatown apartment and struggled to make ends. Emily was an overachiever who strived to be her best at everything. Her greatest strengths are her willingness to accept challenges and more impressively, to maintain integrity in the process. Despite her disadvantages, she has persevered. Her success continued from Boston Latin Academy to Boston College to her current calling serving domestic violence survivors. Like everything else, Emily does her job with the utmost dedication.

This tribute to Emily is a result of her recent deeds above and beyond the call of duty. In October, there was a two-alarm fire in Boston's Chinatown. The fire devastated the homes and hopes of over 40 people. Most of them were left homeless and in some cases — penniless. Several Chinatown agencies came to the rescue, most notably, Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. BCEC provided temporary refuge for the victims at its Shawmut Avenue facility. Volunteers were needed to pitch in at various capacities. Among the volunteers for front desk duty between midnight and 7 a.m. were Emily and me. It was such a treat to catch up and be on the same team again. While I volunteered for 2 days, Emily devoted 7. I'm semi-retired and pulled double duty for just one of those days. Emily pulled double duty (at BCEC and at her day job) for seven days without a murmur. True to

form, Emily brushed off her accomplishment with the explanation that it was convenient for her to volunteer. She insisted that her mother's apartment was nearby and volunteer duty at that hour provided convenient "quiet time."

I believe that Emily Weng's strongest asset is her faith and how she applies it to her life. At a time when people are preoccupied with worldly needs, a few like Emily seek ways to put others first. She demonstrates a love, sacrifice, and a spirituality that makes her special. As a fellow member of Boston Chinese Evangelical Church, I understand Emily's persona. She emulates the Lord in all of her endeavors. She once said that as a Christian, one should serve outside the confines of church walls, not just within them.

What motivated Emily Weng towards a Christian life? I'd like to believe that my former coaching partner (Rob Huie) and I — both Christians — may have had something to do with it. However, the improved passing, hitting, and serving of volleyballs could not have been the stimulus. Emily recently shared her reasons for becoming a believer. Thirteen years back, Emily's father, Zhi Qin Weng was seriously ill. While the family suffered through this nightmarish time, members from BCEC were on hand to provide comfort. Emily's father eventually past away. During this time, church members continued to offer condolences and support. This was the beginning of a special friendship and that special friend is Emily Yanyi Weng, a gift to us all.



## DOING JUSTICE? (APRIL 22-24, MAY 1)

by PASTOR THOMAS LEE



What does Micah 6:8 (ESV) mean to the Chinese heritage Church in America? "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love kindness (mercy) and to walk humbly with your God."

From Ferguson sparking the "Black Lives Matters" slogan and now campaign, to the slaying of nine African American brothers and sisters in the historic black Mother Emmanuel Church in Charleston SC, to the election rhetoric against Muslims, to the undocumented immigrants debate, to Urbana 2015 challenge for justice, and even to the Chinese New York City police officer on trial for shooting a African American man, the issue of race and justice in America screams for a Christian perspective and response.

We are a historic ethnically Chinese church. We have endured past victimization of racial discrimination, but now we have become the so-called "model minority." We have worked hard and pride ourselves on our individual and collective achievements, but have often forgotten we have been beneficiaries of the Civil Rights Movement led by African American ministers like Dr. Martin Luther King, and many of us have been unknowing recipients of affirmative action.

As a church, we have emphasized evangelism and missions, and in recent times on mercy ministry and caring for those with less privileges. But we have shied away from "politics," and like most evangelicals, we oftentimes fail to see issues of systemic evil and injustice. We have separated justice from mercy, and social responsibility from evangelism. However, we need to hear God's call for biblical justice and mercy. And we must understand and walk with brothers and sisters who do not look or worship like us.

We, the Social Responsibility Committee, is pleased to announce our 20th Annual Social Responsibility Conference (April 22-24, 2016). The theme is "Justice 101 – Biblical Justice and Race." It is our great honor to have Dr. Mark Harden, the Dean of Gordon Conwell - Boston Campus (CUME) and Mako Nagasawa to be our plenary speakers.

Dr. Harden will be our first African American preacher in over a decade at BCEC. He has a passion for biblical justice and race relations. He holds a Doctorate from Michigan State and two Master's degrees. He has pastored in three church concurrently, while teaching theology in seminaries and founded Detroit LOVE Inc. — for faith based partnerships of churches and missions for youth outreach and intervention. He has been the dean of the Boston campus of Gordon Conwell —Center for Urban Ministerial Education since 2014. Dr. Martin Luther King is one of his heroes, and he has MLK on his screen saver.

Mako Nagasawa is a Japan-American who hails from Stanford. He was on campus staff and was the Boston area director with InterVarsity for many years. He has recently found "New Humanities Institute" and has written a study guide for "New Jim Crow," as well as many articles ranging from Trinitarian Nicene theology to Christian Mysticism and Hell as the Love of God. He is blessed with his Chinese-American wife Ming Wei (psychologist from Harvard), and two children who all live in Dorchester. Mako has previously come to BCEC in 2014 guest speaker on Restorative Justice, and he was our plenary speaker on Spending Yourself (for the outcast & needy) in 2009.

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for addressing these timely and timeless themes of Biblical Justice and Race. Hope to see you all there.

Shalom.



*Urbana 2015:*

## Unforgettable Experience



by PASTOR DANIEL CHAN

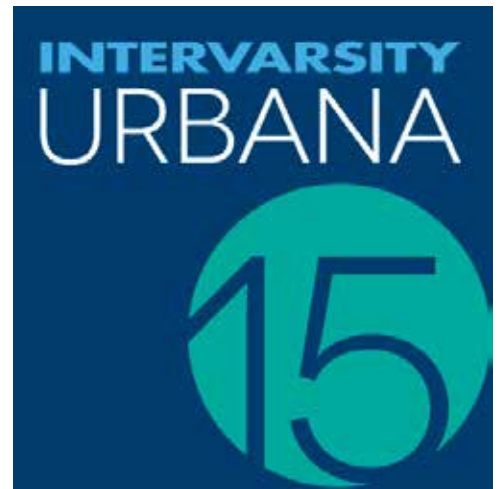
On a Saturday afternoon of August 1806, five Williams College students were praying together outdoors. Heavy rain came suddenly, and they hid themselves in a big haystack nearby to continue with the meeting, discussing about the theology and practice of mission. Several years later, the first American missionary organization was established and sent out missionaries under their influence. The historians recognize this as the beginning of the American mission movement. In the following two hundred years, college students took on important roles in mission work.

The history of the Urbana Student Missions Conference goes back to 1946. There were 575 North American students meeting inside the University of Toronto, discussing about the commission of world mission. Two years later, the venue of the meeting moved to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and was held every three years. Since 2006, the venue moved to the city of Saint Louis, Missouri, but still uses the name Urbana.

At the end of year 2015, our church had around 30 people attending the Urbana conference, and I was one of them. This was my first time and was an eye-opening experience for me: a huge conference center; 16,000 participants; wonderful exhibitions and hundreds of topical seminars. This was not something that I get to experience every day.

The organizer had everything well planned out. All meetings started and ended right at the designated time. During dinner, over 10,000 people sat down for their meal comfortably without any constraints or confusion. A sister who led the music worship team said that they started practicing a year ago. That is why the lyrics that were sang on the stage and those that were displayed on the screen matched perfectly with each other without mistakes. I had the opportunity to dine out with one of the main speaker of the conference, Rev. Dr. Patrick Fung, who is also an old friend of mine. He said, every night an hour before the meeting starts, all program organizers (including him) must attend the prayer meeting, to pray for their ministry and for the participants. No wonder the Lord did amazing work throughout the meeting.

The organizer in charge of the whole conference is a missionary who our church supports, brother Tom Lin. He also worshiped at our church during his time at college. He invited the participants to fill in an aspiration form. One of the questions asked was whether the participant is willing to join short-term



missions (spending less than 1 year in the field), mid-term missions (spending 1 to 2 years in the field) and long-term missions (in the field for 2 years or above). Among the participants from our church, four of them indicated that they are willing to be involved in all three types; two of them indicated they are willing to join both short-term and long-term missions trips; nine of them are willing to join a short-term missions trip.

Praise the Lord for His work on our youth. Pray that we could help them put into action what God has touched their heart to do.

## Before and After

by ANONYMOUS (BCEC MEMBER)

Before going to Urbana I was pretty certain that God had called me to be a sender and not a missionary. After all, if I was called to be a missionary then it would have happened the two times that I applied to be one.

But then at Urbana I attended a seminar called Design in the Developing World: Using Engineering/Architecture in Missions that changed my mind. The speaker was an architect who worked for a Christian nonprofit organization. He shared that engineers and architects were the few occupations that were much needed in North Korea. And that being an engineer or an architect meant that you get an easy access to a visa with no questions

asked in countries that do not welcome the gospel. It was then that I realized why God insisted that I studied architecture over all the other artistic careers that I could have chosen. He was in fact preparing me to go out into the field one day, but it will happen according to his timing, not mine. God is after all the LORD of the harvest. (Matthew 9:38)

## Reflection on Urbana 15



by ZACH LEE,  
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

Going to Urbana 15 was an eye-opening experience for me.

Having gone three years ago, I was hesitant to return because I was weary of hearing the same message again. However, God used Urbana to speak to me and inspire me to live for His kingdom each and every day, regardless if I am here in the United States or globally. At Urbana 15, God reminded me that He promises to bring us through and out of the storms of life, not around them. He reminded

me that he uses hardship and difficulty in our lives to teach us more about Him and His character. This was refreshing to me because it made light that the Christian life is not easy, but our rewards will be great in heaven if we look to serve the Lord in all that we do and proclaim His goodness in our lives through our actions and words.

## Serving God through Racial Reconciliation and Social Justice



by MEIHUA LI,  
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

Urbana 15 was an unforgettable experience, and I am thankful

that I could participate again. I still remember at Urbana 12 when I just became a new believer. It was at that time that I reaffirmed my faith in God. God continued His work even after the conference. He cultivated my interest in serving people overseas. Three years later at Urbana 15, God once again stirred my heart and challenged me to share the gospel with people in different cultures. The themes of racial reconciliation and social justice struck a chord with me at this year's conference. In-

terestingly, Christina Cleveland, one of the plenary speaker, called out the reasons for disunity-racial division. Also, Brenda McNeil, seminary speaker, described reconciliation as a ministry (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). Both messages seem to go hand-in-hand. I cannot wait to read the two books written by the two speakers and to share with others what I have learned.

## What Story Will You Tell?



by CAITLYN FONG,  
NEWTON ENGLISH

The theme for this year's Urbana was "What story will you tell? This challenged us to go tell God's story with our lives. Before going to Urbana, I knew in my head that suffering is part of following Jesus, but I did not really understand what that meant because I grew up going to church with a supportive Chris-

tian family. However, at Urbana, I heard personal stories from brothers and sisters facing persecution firsthand, both in this country and all over the world, and it changed my perspective of living as a follower of Christ. I realized that I was willing to follow Jesus, but only to the point where I was comfortable. I did not truly want to know God's will for my life because I was afraid that He might take me somewhere I did not want to go. But I was convicted by this quote from Francis Chan: "Following Jesus is scary because we don't know what He has planned for us, but what's even scarier is the thought of letting Jesus walk away from us." Even though I still have many fears about the future and uncertainty about where God is lead-

ing me, I have come to realize that I would rather risk my life telling His story than live without Him. In Philippians 3 (ESV), the apostle Paul writes, "For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith — that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead." God's story is always greater than our own, so what story are you going to tell?

## Obeying God's Calling



by JEREMY LEE,  
NEWTON ENGLISH

We know our God is able to do great things, but I think there is also something to be said about *expecting* our God to do great things. That was the case for me this Urbana. While I approached Urbana 15 with a bit of apprehension, perhaps a hint of selfishness, and a clear lack of preparation, finally being able to trust and have faith that God was going to work in my heart over the course of those four arduous yet rewarding days made a world of a difference.

At Urbana 12, I made a general promise to myself that I would serve the Lord in the missions field. And surely, it was not a promise lightly made. Yet, the commitment I made to the Lord at Urbana 15 — to serve in overseas missions for two years or more — was made with a different kind of rigor. Three years removed from that first prom-

ise, I find myself beginning to discover the value of money, the draw of security, and even the weight of responsibility to others. I can now understand what kind of sacrifice and suffering following Jesus may mean. But I also have become more mature, more aware of who I am as a person, and far more aware of who I am as a child of God. I know that God has called me to missions, and it is a call I cannot ignore.

God has always given me a missions mindset. Over the course of my life I have been on many short-term missions trips, ranging from the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana, to Tijuana, Mexico working with Yugo Ministries, to the Philippines visiting Grace Community Empowerment. These were some of the greatest experiences of my life, and I always found myself wanting to stay longer — wanting more. Throughout the past year, God has been tugging on my heart regarding missions; it was only at Urbana that I finally allowed myself to listen.

Right now, I am pumped up and excited about missions. I feel like I am ready to go and take on anything, specifically overseas. Perhaps I am

young, naive, and ill-prepared to go. Perhaps I am just another case of the countless overzealous college students who have never experienced the real world. But maybe that is part of my strength — that I am ignorantly fearless. I truly believe that God is a God of provision and that when we seek Him first and expect Him to take care of us, He will. It is this child-like faith that I yearn for so badly — one that I have encountered first-hand overseas yet so rarely here in the United States.

I want to learn what it means to truly depend on God. I understand that I am simply his instrument, and that it is by His strength and not my own that His kingdom work is done for His glory. 1 Corinthians 1:27 (NIV) states that "*But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.*" Still, deciding how it is that God wants to use me remains uncertain. For the time being, I am looking to grow my experiences professionally in order to be the best businessman that I can be, so that I can make the greatest impact. Thus, I will continue to prepare and equip myself until it is time not only to listen, but to obey.



## A Chat about Winter Boston Local Mission



by SAMUEL ZHENG,  
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

While we were eagerly discussing about Christmas Eve in Boston this year amidst the mildly warm winter, a cold current quietly arrived in this city. During this cold weekend, we chose to either stay home with heating, eat from a hot pot while chatting leisurely with family and friends, or put on layers of clothing to go shopping for Christmas gifts for families, friends, and colleagues. There was another group of people who wore their thick clothing and stood on the street. They endured the cold wind with splendid smiles on their faces and continuously gave warm greetings to passersby.

They are brothers and sisters from different local churches in New York, Connecticut, and Boston. They surrendered their three-day long weekend to the Lord, so they could spread the precious gospel of Jesus Christ to those who live in the districts of Boston and Quincy and have not yet heard about Jesus. Together they learned different methods of sharing the gospel and evangelizing. They performed street evangelization, helped newcomers

during evangelistic meetings, and patiently answered any questions they had about the gospel.

Praise be to God! More people attended the evangelistic meeting than they anticipated, which exceeded everyone's expectation. After discussion among staff members of the Boston Local Mission and the minister from New York Christian Short-Term Missions Training Center, they changed their original plan and divided the brothers and sisters participating in this winter short-term missions training into three groups. The first group was comprised of brothers and sisters who spoke Mandarin as follow-up counselors to accompany newcomers, the majority of whom speak Mandarin, during the evangelistic meeting. The other two groups took turns to pray for the attendees of the evangelistic meeting and did street evangelization. We saw God's plan and His blessings, even though this part was different from the original plan.

Because of the love of our Lord Jesus, brothers and sisters from different areas were brought together to sing, praise, and worship our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of God's unconditional love, they interceded for each other, looked out for each other, and helped each other. Because of the love of Lord Jesus, they embraced the extreme cold to learn, to evangelize, and to preach the gospel of our Savior.





## Finding True Rest in Serving Christ



by PASTOR KENNETH KWONG

I am grateful to the church for giving me a six-month sabbatical from July to December last year. It allowed me to have stillness away from my ministries and use a new angle to reflect on personal growth and serving the church. I appreciate the Chinese staff and elders who went above and beyond to share my work. This was all evidence of God's grace.

Writing an article about the sabbatical year is not difficult because it was not a vacation. I would not have much to share if it was just resting at home. However, the church gives pastors this time for learning, growing, and broadening their ministry experiences, so that they would be refreshed and re-energized when they return to work for the benefit of the congregation. Therefore, I took two seminary courses, prepared a list of books on a believer's growth, and participated in a short-term mission trip.

I compiled this list of books and attended two seminary courses because I encountered many inquiries while serving Christians who are engaged in scientific research. I felt inadequate to shepherd them on how to truly live out their faith at work.

The Pentateuch theology and New Testament theology courses helped me understand biblical truths more deeply in order to teach young people more effectively. I also identified a number of books that support believers in applying their faith and living out more meaningful Christian lives.

I chose to go on a short-term missions trip in Far East Asia and hoped to learn more about that country's life, culture, and politics, so that I can better minister to the immigrants from there. The short-term missions trip fulfilled my goals. I met many local people of all different ages and saw first-hand their worries and challenges. I also came to better understand their local beliefs and lifestyle. When I returned, I felt more prepared to connect with immigrants from this country at a deeper level, which would help us to better engage in our faith.

In addition, I also had an unexpected gain: one's true rest is found in God's provisions. A week before my departure for the short-term missions trip, I was very busy with its preparations. My wife's car's seat belt signal light was on, and the car failed state inspection. I was already short on time, but my wife needed the car for work, so I had to take care of it right away. After doing some research on the Internet, I learned that a dealer needed to check the problem. It would cost \$100 just to take the car in. Whether the dealer could find the root problem was also questionable. This repair may cost way over \$1000. I was dreading it because

the airfare and hotels for the short-term missions trip had to be paid in advance. Where would I find extra money to fix the car? The timing was horrible. I immediately prayed to God for help so that His power could be revealed. In my worries, a friend mentioned an auto repair shop where they had computer access to find the problem. In addition, I knew the owner of the shop; he was a fellow believer. He found the problem — which was electrical, but the car still had to be taken to the dealer. He gave an estimate of \$400 to \$600. I was a little relieved because this came from a trustworthy person. Before I left, I told him that the door on the driver's side was bumped in the past and asked if this could be repaired. He opened the door, checked the electrical connection under the seat, made sure they were not loose, and then I drove away. Miraculously, on my way home, I noticed that the seat belt signal light disappeared after he "pressed" those electrical wires. The car passed inspection without costing any money! It did not become a distraction for my short-term missions preparation. Praise the Lord for giving me peace to go on my trip. This experience reminded me that rest is not found in the absence of work, but rather true rest is found in meaningful work within God's providence. When we believe in His power and rely on Him only, He would solve our problems. We can lay down our worries before Him and gain true rest and peace. May God bless you all.



**Panama Missions Trip (12/28-1/13):** 1) BCEC Panama Team — Francis Lok, Suk Han Lok, Brian Tong, Haifu Yu, Mei Yin Lo 2) Over 40 brothers and sisters joined together and formed the Panama Chinese Alliance Church missions team. 3) One of the outreach ministries of a local church, Panama City Chinese Evangelical Free Church, is a Christian broadcast program. 4) We also served the community by fixing bathrooms and installing new plumbing systems. 5-6) Around 400 children attended our Vacation Bible School.



Chinatown Mandarin Congregation: Thanksgiving and Christmas programs in various fellowships



2015 Missions Conference (11/13-11/15)



Newton Mandarin Congregation Thanksgiving Program (11/25)



BCEC distributed hundreds of welcome kits to new residents moving into new housing in the Chinatown area in December before Christmas. The kits include a cloth bag, an evangelistic book, and information about BCEC. May the Lord bring fruit from these scattered seeds.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FEBRUARY

- 8 CHINESE NEW YEAR  
*OFFICE CLOSED*
- 12-15 WINTER TEEN CONFERENCE  
(HIGH SCHOOL)  
*ENGLISH*
- 12-19 PDAS BREAK
- 13 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS  
*SPRING SEMESTER PLACEMENT EXAM*
- 15 PRESIDENTS' DAY  
*OFFICE CLOSED*
- 26-28 WINTER TEEN CONFERENCE  
(MIDDLE SCHOOL)  
*ENGLISH*

### MARCH

- 5 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS  
*SPRING SEMESTER CLASSES BEGIN*
- 6 CHINESE SUNDAY SCHOOL  
*SPRING SESSION BEGINS*
- 11-13 COLLEGE RETREAT  
*ENGLISH*
- 13 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS  
*ONE HOUR AHEAD*
- 25 GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
- 26 EASTER HOLIDAY  
*NO COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASSES*
- 27 EASTER SUNDAY
- 27 BAPTISM
- TBD CHURCH CLEAN UP  
*CHINATOWN*
- TBD CHURCH CLEAN UP  
*NEWTON*

### APRIL

- 8-10 CANTONESE MARRIAGE  
ENRICHMENT  
*CHINESE*
- 19-22 PDAS BREAK
- 22-24 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY  
CONFERENCE



Children's Christmas Party: 1) Chintown Campus (12/20); 2) Newton Campus (12/12)



3-6) Chintown Christmas Party for ESL Students (12/20)

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.bcec.net)

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7-9) New Year's Prayer Meeting (1/1)