

From Our Senior Pastor:

Reflections on BCEC's 55th Anniversary



by PASTOR STEVEN CHIN

I want to share some reflections as we celebrate the 55th anniversary of BCEC. I was not involved when BCEC was started in 1961.

I was only 10 years old, and I did not go to any church or know anything about Jesus or the gospel. However, I do have over 40 years of history with BCEC. I want to share a few memories, so that newer members can appreciate some of our history.

First, I have the greatest respect for the 18 founders, some of whom are still worshipping with us today. I am not sure if I would have enough faith to start a church because starting a church is not an easy thing. I think I would have been too easily discouraged and would have given up. So I admire the faith and perseverance of the founders and those who helped in the early years. Yet I am sure they will tell you that they are just ordinary people used by God. You can read about the early years and the challenges in Pastor Tan's autobiography, *Grace upon Grace*.

Second, I remember when I first visited BCEC in 1974. I had just moved back from New York City, where as a college student, I had worshipped at a Chinese church that had an English service. I was looking for a similar church in Boston. I was in for a shock. The worship service was held in the same building as the Pine Street Inn. That meant there were a lot of homeless people around. Many were passed out on the ground on Pine Street. I remember the smell of urine and vomit was so strong that I had to hold my breath to walk to the part of the building where the service was held.

That was not the only shock. I had always worshipped God in English. Even then, I would sometimes get bored with the sermon, and my mind would wander. But at BCEC I was exposed for the first time to a bilingual service. The preacher and worship leader would speak in Cantonese and someone next to him would translate into English, sentence by sentence. The starting and stopping and a different cultural perspective was quite an adjustment. I must admit that it was sometimes very difficult for me to pay attention during the sermon. I did not feel spiritually fed, so I decided I was not going to attend BCEC, at least not at that time. However, the experience made me feel badly for the young people who had no choice (they came with their parents) and were not

growing spiritually. Eventually God guided me back to BCEC and to full-time Christian work. I worked towards establishing an English service that was finally started in 1983.

The third memory I want to share is the constant challenge of having adequate space for ministry. I have already shared about how the worship service was held in the Pine Street Inn. Before service, Sunday School classes were held in the various corners of the sanctuary. I remember we would always have to pause periodically during class and during the sermon while the then elevated Orange Line train would go by. In 1979, God blessed us with the 249 Harrison Ave. building.

I remember how people sacrificed for the new building. Most members at the time were blue collar people working in restaurants or sewing factories. The rest were poor students. I do remember one of the students who gave up lunch to save money to give to expansion.

Nevertheless, even the new building was not adequate for a growing church. There was not enough room in the new building for Sunday School classes. Over the years, Sunday School classes had to be held off site in such places as 34 Oak Street, Tufts Medical School, Tai Tung Outreach Center, and ACCESS. So even though our present facilities are not ideal, I appreciate them nonetheless.

Finally, the happiest memories I have of BCEC are the baptisms. I know in some churches, it is a solemn ceremony. However, in our church there is a lot of joy and celebration. Each baptism represents a person whose life have been changed forever by Christ. BCEC has seen over 1200 people baptized over the 55 years.

So the history of BCEC is filled with lots of challenges and difficulties. Yet the Lord has blessed our church with spiritual fruit for His glory. We give praise to Him, as we celebrate the 55th anniversary of BCEC.



Newton Cantonese Congregation: Chinese New Year Potluck and Celebration (2/13)

Table of Contents

Reflections on BCEC's 55th Anniversary	1
A... Bitter Sweet Transition	2
Farewell	3
ESL Class Ministry Review	4
God's Grace and Guidance	5
Home! Sweet Home	6
The Sound of the Doorbell – A PDAS Musical by God	7
2016 Social Responsibility Conference	8
Cantonese Marriage Enrichment Retreat	9
Upcoming Events	11

A... Bitter Sweet Transition



by PASTOR THOMAS LEE,
BCEC NEWTON ENGLISH — NEW
COMMUNITY PASTOR

I am being called to become the campus shepherd at Grace Chapel East Lexington campus after almost 30 years of full-time ministry at BCEC, and after of almost 40 years of BCEC being my spiritual mother and spiritual home.

I remember vividly my first visit to BCEC as a sophomore in high school — my first recollections are of my Sunday School teacher, Flora Chin, who so warmly welcomed me with a brilliant smile and gave me my first Bible — the Way, Living Bible — on my very first visit. I had never received any gifts from strangers before, so I cherished the greed-covered paraphrase with pictures in black and white... and I remember teacher Sze Kar Wan reading of Aslan the Lion in chronicles of Narnia to us at a retreat, and memories of going to singing hills and Jaffrey Monadnock conference sites where we stayed up talking about relationships. Counselor Bing Yee stayed up with me most of the night to showed me my need for Christ. There I heard Dr. Gordon Fee — pounding on the pulpit, saying “we are like a preying Mantis — deserving to be squashed” — I knew I needed a Savior... that was 1977 — I was baptized the following year by Rev. James Tan and his then assistant Steven Chin at the First Baptist Church on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston’s Back Bay because BCEC did not have its own building nor baptistery then.

Over the years, God has blessed me and my family tremendously and in countless ways through the spiritual family of BCEC. I came to Christ here, was baptized here, met my wife in BCEC youth group, was rescued from my college season of rebellion, started college Bible study groups, learned to teach Sunday School, help lead teens, was called to be teen director, married my HTH — “home town honey,” help start TWR, then became the Branch college minister, blessed to be ordained in 1996, blessed with 3 sons, blessed to baptize all three in their teen years, became

family minister, XO pastor, combined English worship at Quincy School, and help plant the Newton English ministry for last 14 years of worship, CBTs, small groups, Core groups, VBS (Vacation Bible School), Christmas parties, community outreach, TIOB, Jr. Worship, United!, etc. I have witnessed God’s faithfulness in seeing BCEC go from single bilingual congregation in Pine Street Inn 1977 of 150 to now seven multilingual congregations on 2.5 campuses with over 1200 believers. It is by God’s grace that we have been blessed to see and participate in His faithfulness over these 4 decades.

As we celebrate our 20th Social Responsibility Conference (SRC) this year, I am especially thankful for God’s leading BCEC to engage our community and the world. We have strived to show the love of Christ in word and in deeds over the years, and to inspire our brothers and sisters to be salt and light in our community, the nation, and the world. In the last twenty years, SRC themes have included the following: homelessness, HIV-Aids, Fatherless, Refugees, Citizenship, Racism, Community Service, World Vision Boston Hope & Ebola caregiver kits, and this year Justice and Race. I am so encouraged to see BCEC’s ongoing commitment to serving our community in Project Destiny, PDAS, English & citizenship classes, community leadership in safety committee, The Chinatown Coalition, Kwong Kow, and other community initiatives.

I am so appreciative of those whom I have had to privilege to partner with in ministry, and those whom God has allowed me to sojourn with over the years. I have so appreciated BCEC’s commitment to Christ, the gospel, God’s Word, to reaching the lost and ministering to the Chinese community.

I am turning 55 this year, and I had always thought I would minister at BCEC until I retired. But our Lord has different plans. When we launched Newton English, we dreamed of creating a Christ-centered, grace-filled ministry that would be used by God to bring greater integration for the second generation couples and their third generation children. We dreamed of becoming ethnically diverse, of being missional to our local community, and to intergenerational families. Over the years, the ministry at Newton has changed significantly. And the growing needs of the



campus demand someone with very different gifts, abilities, and passions.

I have come to realize my gifting and passions are focused on shepherding people personally, and in teaching informally. The great need for the English minister and Newton Campus is for a gifted preacher and enthusiastic administrator to inspire and to strategize and organize, and that in context of a multilingual tri-congregational campus. Although I can preach and do some administration, they are not areas of my gifting nor passions. So when the opportunity at Grace Chapel was offered to me, Edna and I sought the Lord, together with trusted mature Christian mentors and friends, both inside BCEC and outside. We all sensed God leading me to a new kingdom ministry position that would maximize my gifting and passions for the next generations.

Leaving so many relationships is extremely sad for us, because we have been a spiritual family, fellow sojourners, and co-laborers for almost four decades, I believe God has called us to step out in faith to contribute in a different kingdom way in the next season of our lives. We will be contributing beyond our fairly comfortable historic Chinese Mother Church, and will now broaden to Our Father’s diverse kingdom work. But in a way, we will be preparing the larger American Church to better receive the 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants as we help it to become more diverse, missional and intergenerational.

As long as there are first generation immigrants, there will always be a vital need for Chinese churches like BCEC to serve them well. But we will also need other kinds of ministries for the next immigrant generations that no longer fit into primary mono-ethnic churches. I hope to serve these generations and the all





our lost neighbors and friends in an ever increasing post-Christian America.

I am especially grateful for the New Community congregation and core. We launched with hopes and dreams of creating a new kind of Christ centered — grace filled, inclusive spiritual family. God has blessed us over the years with seeing much of that come to fruition, especially being grace filled and become a spiritual family. We have learned to be received as God's beloved daughters and sons, and we have learned (imperfectly perhaps) to love and extend grace to one another and other congregations. Thank you each for coming on the journey with us. As we sojourned together we saw God's faithfulness: to many of our children and youth being discipled and baptized; to many of us in small groups and CBTs as we deepen our love for God and His word and love and grace for each other; to our diverse neighbors and blended families as they were welcomed; to our entire Newton Campus congregations as we worked towards synergy and becoming one big family offering hope and grace. Now God has called Edna and I to pursue that dream with different members of God's family and kingdom, but BCEC will always be our Mother church, we believe God has much in store for BCEC, Newton Campus, and especially our sisters and brothers at BCEC New Community. To that end and for God's glory, we will always be thankful and prayerful. And we hope to return to BCEC for celebrations and to partner in His kingdom endeavors together.

With much thanksgiving
His Beloved son and servant,
Pastor Tom

FAREWELL

by VIVIAN CHEUNG



Dear BCEC brothers & sisters,

As many of you have already heard, due to recent changes in family needs, I'll be moving to California in early June to be of help for my brother's family. This has not been an easy decision, for I've always thought, and still think, that BCEC is a church family where I'd love to serve until my retirement, Lord willing. Yet God's ways are higher than our ways, His thoughts are higher than our thoughts (Isaiah 55:9). As I'm clearly sensing His call for me to invest my time in the life of my nephew, in the possibly critical years ahead for him, I'm learning to step out in faith in obedience, trusting that His plan is always good and perfect, not only for my family, but also for His church.

Looking back on the past decade of my serving at BCEC, it has been full of grace and joy. I'm really thankful that God has brought me to this grace-filled church family, for it has been a great joy working with a leadership marked with unity in Christ. I'm especially grateful for the community of love and support among the leadership as well as brothers and sisters, which have been keenly felt throughout all my years here. I am very much indebted to all the pastoral and lay leaders of this church for their love and sacrifice in covering for me in times when my family needed me, as well as to all of you brothers and sisters who have labored in prayers for me and my family throughout the years. I am in awe of the community of love that God has built among the leadership and congregations here, and BCEC is forever my home church wherever I may be.

With the recent changes of my family needs, I was sensing God calling me to relinquish my position here as a lesson of faith, so as to join my brother's family in California in their time of need. It has been a difficult decision, not without much struggles, as I have been quite comfortable serving here. However, the Lord reminded me that back when I graduated from seminary, I was clearly led by Him back to Hong Kong, even though my heart would very much like to stay and serve at BCEC. His guidance was so clear that I eventually followed, not without sadness or reluctance, thinking that I would never get to come back to serve at this church where I had been serving and growing through my years in graduate school and seminary. Nevertheless, He did bring me back six years later when the church decided to hire a second woman minister on the Chinese side, which was surely a rare move for Chinese churches in North America. However, nothing is too hard for our Lord. As a servant of His, I am to go wherever He chooses to put me instead of hanging onto what's most comfortable for myself. If it is in His good and perfect will for me to come back to BCEC again in the future, He certainly can do it in His timing and His way.

During my time of struggle in this difficult decision, the following verse of the song "Oceans" by Hillsong has brought me much comfort and strength:

*Your grace abounds in deepest waters
Your sovereign hand will be my guide
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me
You've never failed and You won't start now*

"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9 - ESV) I trust that our Lord Jesus, the Head of BCEC, knows best what this church family would need. He is also the One who calls and provides shepherds in His kingdom. Our Lord is ever faithful, so I believe you all will continue to see His wonderful and amazing provisions in making BCEC a blessing to many!

Blessings,
Vivian



ESL Class Ministry Review



by WINNIE GEE,
CANTONESE 2ND SERVICE

Through a sermon message, Rev. Pak Cheung Lo challenged us to spread the gospel to fellow Chinese people. I prayed to God saying, “God, all the Chinese whom I know are believers. Where do I find Chinese friends to spread the gospel to?” The ESL class was established and started to recruit for teachers not long after that. I knew that this is God’s response to my prayer, and so I started serving in the ESL ministry trembling with excitement. Time flew through the twenty-five years, and it is now time for me to put say goodbye to this ministry.

Looking back at the twenty-five years of ministry, I could only describe it in a few simple words, “Thankful, thankful, and thankful.” Who am I? God gave me the chance to serve in the ESL ministry to let me experience His power and wisdom thoroughly. What I earned is the joy of serving, which I do not deserve. Every time I stepped into the classroom, my heart was filled with encouragement and joy that cannot be put into words when I saw the smiles on the students’ faces and their enthusiasm to learn English. It was most precious that I was able to tell the students about the gospel, bring up the beliefs and values of Christianity, and share living testimony with them anytime throughout each class I taught. They are always so respectful to the teachers. As a result, this is indeed a great opportunity for sowing the seeds.

Serving in the ESL ministry allowed me to really experience God, and it made me learned different lessons. Serving gives me a thankful heart and is a humbling experience. I saw the students’ hardships of how hard they worked in their day-to-day jobs, but still come to learn English on Saturdays. Through the ESL class, I am thankful that I have the opportunity to offer them help in languages. The longer I taught ESL classes, the more I feel that I am inadequate and the need to lean on God. As each student comes from a different

background with different levels of English and their ability levels are also different, I had to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to be creative in my teaching methods for the students and myself to learn and grow together under a relaxed atmosphere and to build relationships with each other. It is my wish for the students to be able to hear the gospel and to learn English in a way that is joyful and easily understandable to them. And so, all the more, I need to pray. The most important thing is to set up a good living testimony among the students and not be a stumbling rock on their road to committing to Christ.

I looked forward to every Saturday’s ESL class. From the first level to when they graduate, I would have spent three years with them, which allowed me to understand and know them on a deeper level. As the time went by, we grew closer as teachers and students, leading to lasting friends being fostered. Sometimes I would invite them to my home, hoping to open up more opportunities to tell them about the gospel. Therefore, as a family, my husband gave them rides, the children did the cleaning, my mother and I prepared food, and we hosted for the students and their children. After a meal, we would tell them about the gospel, sing hymns together and share messages, hoping for God to work in their hearts and to know more about Jesus. I give thanks to God for the opportunity for us to serve as a family and for the children to learn how to serve from a young age.

There were times when I was disheartened in the ESL ministry. No matter how much effort I put into preparing for the lessons, students would leave one after another because of working over time, visiting relatives in China, or finding new jobs. On top of it, I could not help but to feel discouraged when I saw students graduate one by one without gaining the gospel. But each time when I felt disheartened, God would encourage me and let me see that the seeds that were sowed throughout the years were not futile, and I would be cheered up once again. I remember once that the son of a student was troubled because he was having difficulty with English. I took the initiative to give him English tutoring and invited him to join Sunday School. His level of English was on track after a few years. He got baptized later and became a tu-

tor for Project Destiny. Moreover, he began serving full time in campus ministry after graduating from college where he had opportunities to lead unbelieving students to Christ. Another one was a student of ours ten years ago. There were issues with her family and she came looking for me at church. I walked with her through the most difficult times, listened to her pour out her heart over the phone daily, prayed with her, and encouraged her with the Word of God. Her life was transformed when she later accepted Christ as her personal Savior. It would be impossible to count the amazing works God has done for these students and their families.

Lastly, I have to give thanks to God for giving me a faithful co-worker, my husband. Throughout the twenty-five years, he woke me up every Saturday morning, prepared breakfast for me, prayed with me for the ESL ministry, and then took me to church before heading back home. At around 11 a.m., he would then drive to church and give me a ride home. He has always done it willingly without complaining. He is also equally willing to help when the students or their children are in need. I am also very thankful for Headmaster Yu who gave the teachers unlimited support. His love for the students does not stop at serving in ESL with all his heart and might, but he also worked tirelessly for his students’ daily needs. He has set a great example for us.

God is love. If not for the love of God, my husband and I would not have been able to serve in this ministry for so long. Serving in the ESL ministry made me learn that being able to serve God should not be taken for granted. It is all by His grace that we can work with God and experience His work. “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.” This is the greatest lesson that I have learned through serving in the ESL ministry. May God use the ESL ministry for the gospel to reach the students and their families. I wish for Headmaster Yu and all the teachers to go from strength to strength, and to have grace for grace in this ministry, so that the unreached students can see from them the glory of God. May their lives touch lives and be a blessing to the ESL students.



Newton Mandarin Congregation: Chinese New Year Celebration (2/6)

*Newton Visiting Team:***God's Grace and Guidance**

by ALICE NGAN,
NEWTON CANTONESE

Looking back at September 2014, we started organizing the visitation ministry in response to the vision of the Newton congregation. Before visitation began, we had to first recruit members. I have always had little faith, and so I did not have much confidence in this. All because of the grace of God, although the response was not overwhelming after our appeal, over twenty brothers and sisters responded to the call. However, my heart was perturbed, wondering if this would frighten the elderlies if not many of them are there in the elderly home!

On the day of visitation in November, we set off for the elderly home mightily together with our AV equipment, props for games, and refreshments. We only discovered upon our arrival that there was miscommunication. The few large tables, which should have been removed were still there. Without a word, all our brothers went and moved away those heavy tables in just a moment. The number of elderlies there was less than the number of visitors, but our hearts were surging with fire.

“Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken. Though the mountains...” As we sang and exercised, those who were leading were really into it and those who were learning really enjoyed it. Under the sound of singing, laughter, applause, and appreciation, I could not hold back from expressing thankfulness and praise. When the elderlies laughed, we laughed harder. When the elderlies got more involved, we became even more selfless. When we were preparing for the visitation ministry, we thought God wanted us to serve these elderly people, but at that moment, I realized that God was also benefiting us through visiting these elderly people. God wants us to grow through experiencing Him being with us and to ignite the hearts of our brothers and sisters. Let praise and thanks be to God!

The first visitation was for everyone to learn and to experience. The visitation team was established after that. Those who remained are willing to bear the responsibility of doing visitation regularly. Praise the Lord! A visitation team with eighteen members was officially launched. Although some left due to personal reasons, God is sufficient, and we now have twenty-one members. Looking back, during this time of just over a year of visitation, brothers and sisters gave with all their heart and might. For example, during the Chinese New Year visitation, we prepared cakes and pastries enough for dozens of people. To entertain the elderlies, we

were willing to jump around with plastic bags on top of our heads acting as popping popcorns. For each visitation, everyone brought along the love from God from preparation to the day of visitation. My heart is moved and filled with thankfulness with these pictures in my eyes.

During the time between the end of April 2014 until April this year, we visited the elderly home nine times. We once partnered with Enoch Fellowship and organized an open day providing transportation for the elderlies. Since then, we provide transportation for them to attend the fellowship every month. In addition, we organized trainings to equip our members with, for example, basic knowledge for elderly home visitation, as well as sharing the gospel message. We also invited the minister from the New York Christian Short Term Missions Training Center to give us training and practice on gospel visitation. We hoped that this would help brothers and sisters and their family and friends build even closer relationships.

It was inevitable that we would encounter different difficulties during visitations. However, looking back at this time of just over a year, brothers and sisters shouldered different responsibilities and different positions and moved forward towards the same goal with the hope of bringing the gospel to others. Pastor Barry Lam also always stood with us in the fight despite his many pastoral responsibilities. At this moment, my heart is filled with nothing but thankfulness!



Winter Teen Conference (WTC): High School (2/12-2/15) and Middle School (2/26-2/28)

Home! Sweet Home



by PASTOR DAVID AND
NORMA NHAN

Being missionaries, we could identify with what Apostle Paul is saying.

When we were in the Philippines, our primary target group was newly migrants from China, who are mostly business people. However, we also have the privilege to reach out to the natives who are poor. Both groups are “unreached” or “unchurched” within our community or neighborhood unto the remotest part of the island.

For these two different people groups, we saw different needs and approaches in reaching or ministering to them. Obviously, they came from different backgrounds, cultures, and life statuses. Compare to the natives, the business people evidently are much better off. As we approached the natives, we found out that attending to their physical needs such as food, clothing, education, etc. would usually welcome friendships and trust, leading to blossoming relationships. This was not the case among the business migrants who do not need those kinds of assistance as much as the natives do. How are we able to minister to them? On top of this, most of them are either atheists or Buddhists. How then could we reach out to them? This was our constant prayer, asking God for wisdom and grace.

Offering ESL class was just one of the means to the end. Ultimately, we realized just how important building a TRUSTING relationship with them. Not so much with regards to providing physical help, such as food or clothing for life survival. Neither was it by deep discussion about theology or biblical concepts;

“To the Jews, I became like a Jew, to win the Jews.... To the weak I became weak, to win the weak.”
(1 Corinthians 9:20-22 - NIV)

nor engaging in arguments proving or disproving the existence of God.

How the trusting relationship begins or progresses, sometimes, is something we are not even actively aware is happening. All we tried to do is to live like ordinary people and be friends and neighbors to them, that is to live out our faith to reflect Christ, so that they would be curious and initiate asking questions about our faith. Then, we would explain and talk about it.

Over time, we truly understood that “you reap what you sow.” Whatever love, time, and resources we invested in their lives, it is so amazing that they responded with the same. They would open their home, which they would never do to strangers like us. Moreover, they eventually treated us like family whom they felt comfortable in sharing their needs and struggles concerning life or business. This opened the door for us to share the gospel to them.

What a blessing to have a family atmosphere in a distant land where we could call our second home. It is God’s own doing who touches people’s heart and draws them to his loving arm, as “all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.” (2 Corinthians 4:7 - NIV)

As Paul and Barnabas returned from their missionary journey to the church of Antioch, they “reported all that God had done through them and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.” (Acts 14:27 - NIV) What a joy and blessing to be “Home! Sweet Home” in the USA, as the cliché goes. Yes, we came back for our home assignment! After staying four years in the field, we are glad to be with our family and friends and to report God’s mercy and the great



things He has done across the sea or distant land. May our field experience be indeed an encouragement to everyone!

We pray that God will continue to touch the hearts of people to respond to the Great Commission. Jesus said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.” (Matthew 9:37 - NIV) As our church theme this year is “Mobilize to Evangelize,” we pray that all of us will become workers for Jesus and the gospel. Even leading one soul to Him or helping someone to be transformed by Christ is precious in God’s sight. Missions does not only happen overseas, but in our daily ordinary lives as well. Let us be missionaries in our own spheres of influence by offering our lives to God, so that He may use us according to His purpose.

“When Joshua had grown old, the Lord said to him, “You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over. (Joshua 13:1 - NIV)”

Philippines is comprised of 7,107 islands...and our missionary journey has just begun...



THE SOUND OF THE DOORBELL – A PDAS MUSICAL BY GOD

by EDWARD LAU, CHINATOWN 3RD SERVICE



It's 2:55 p.m. on a Friday afternoon, I check the rooms, turn on the lights, get the sign-in tablets ready, and walk over to rest of the team, as we huddle around for a prayer. The only thing echoing in the hall is our prayer, but the quietness and calmness is short-lived before the first sound of the doorbell.

At 3:00 p.m., it rings, and the musical of the doorbell begins.

This is a typical start of PDAS, a student ministry of BCEC for middle and high school students. As the students arrive throughout the day, the sound of the doorbell becomes an exciting chord. Students come in for a variety of reasons: some come for homework help, some come for hanging out with friends, or some come to have a place to go to after school. Others may just come for games and to have a fun time. What they may not have expected is meeting Jesus Christ. Sometimes the students come in cheerfully as they look ahead to the weekend; while other times, they may be drained by the school days and avoid any greetings. Yet, looking at these youthful faces, I can't help, but to reflect upon how Christ brought me to church and changed my life.

It was summertime 18 years ago. I was an immigrant middle schooler who unwillingly attended Project Destiny, our church's middle school summer day camp. I wasn't interested in finding out about God, nor interested to come to a day camp to meet Christians. I came simply because my parents want me to learn more English and transition into the new life sooner. But unbeknownst to my counselors or me, God already had a great plan for bringing me into church that summer. I didn't accept Christ during the camp, yet I was drawn to attend Joshua Youth Fellowship (then called Joshua 4) and begun my journey of faith in Christ. He revealed to me who He is not by any major event, but by tiny steps, one at a time. He showed me He is the one true God that I should rest my faith on. He never hurried me, but He took my hands to grow me in faith little by little.

At 4:30 p.m., we gather all the students for a meeting time, sometimes for a worship song, sometimes just for a short announcement to invite them to Teens and TWR. Some pay attention and listen closely, while some may find it boring, and others just want to rush out to get snacks after the announcement.

Now fast forward 18 years, I have grown through youth and college fellowships and served God in different ministries, as well as on missions trips, God has put forth yet another calling for me this time: deacon. I had wrestled with God a few times, with many reasons as to why I am not ready to be a deacon. But God had once again reassured me He will take my hands and walk with me step-by-step, little-by-little.

While I continue to seek how God will be using me to serve our church as a deacon, my heart has a burden for the youth. I am so blessed to come to know Christ during my adolescent years. It was certainly a great blessing to have counselors who demonstrated Christ's love to me and helped me to learn who Christ is. They walked with me through the good times and bad, through struggling with school work, college decisions, friendships, and relationships.

What my counselors and mentors had done for me during my youthful years, I want to do the same for others, as I look upon the future of our church, helping these youth to find their faith in Christ, as they are coming of age.

At 5:00 p.m., as students get their homework done, the game and activity rooms are open. This is a great time for us, the counselors, to get to know them and hang out with them on a personal basis. This is a valuable time where we can be more than just "supervise them" and instead be a friend and a mentor.

Looking at these innocent youngsters, I start to wonder if the loudest kid will one day become a gentle minister, the shyest one who will become a missionary afar, or the most disruptive one who just become our church leader in 18 years. I can't stop thinking what kind of blessings God may have each and every one of them. I know God is orchestrating this musical right in front of my eyes, and I can't wait to see how He will turn each student into a harmonic instrument for His kingdom.

At 5:50 p.m., the climax before the end is here, students are scrambling to pack up and go home. I stand at the sign-out table and say goodbye to the students, knowing that God has brought them here for a great plan He has on each and every one of them.

At 6:00 p.m., the sound of the doorbell has finally rested, and a prayer to close what our amazing God had put through the 60 kids.

2016 Social Responsibility Conference



“Justice 101: Biblical Justice and Race” 「聖經・種族・公義」



by JAY LEUNG,
CO-CHAIRMAN OF SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY COMMITTEE

Praise the Lord that this year's Social Responsibility (SR) Conference has gone smoothly! As one of the committee members, I had three key thoughts and reminders during the conference:

1) I know systemic injustice does exist, but it is even worse than I thought.

I have a confession to make: I am so influenced by hip hop music. As a result, when we had a luncheon with the speakers after the worship services at Newton Campus, I asked Dr. Harden a question about rap.

I listened to hip hop music when I was very young because I thought it was cool (it also helped that my parents didn't understand the lyrics at all. I picked it up again during my late 20s, because I had new perspectives on life as I became an adult and felt that it actually spoke quite vividly on life in general, but particularly on the (often sad) realities of life.

Why do I mention this? During Mako Nagasawa's workshop on Saturday, I'm reminded again of one of the verses from the rap duo Black Star: “being a black man is demanding; the fire's in my eyes and the flames need fanning.” Why? Throughout the workshop, Mako noted that the criminal justice system allows for implicit racial bias, so that you can judge people of a certain race a certain way, and many of our country's laws and policies are stacked especially against African Americans, especially the War on Drugs. One statistic particularly disturbs me: five times as many white people are using drugs as African Americans, yet the latter is being sent to prison for drug offenses at 10 times the rate of whites. Black men, even more so, are victims of the current system.

Combined that with the racial profiling and police brutality that we have seen in the recent Michael Brown/Eric Garner/Freddie Gray/Tamir Race incidents, and *no wonder being a black man is demanding*. The odds are so stacked against a black man, he has to be on his best behavior at all times just to not get arrested and survive. *The fire's in my*

eyes and the flames need fanning. That's not a burden that non-black people in America would likely have to deal with.

At the end of the workshop, Mako suggested that we should continue to educate ourselves as well as others on this topic. If we feel strongly about where we stand on the topic, he encouraged us to write to our congressmen/congresswomen to make our views known. No matter where you stand, we can definitely at least educate ourselves further. To know how to promote justice, we first need to know what the issues are, what the Bible may teach us on them, and what needs to be done.

2) If it is God's ministry, it will somehow get done. God Himself will ensure that.

I am often reminded of this and would constantly say this to my fellow committee members and brothers and sisters who ask about the conference. However, saying it is different than truly feeling it, and I know that God is truly with us throughout the conference planning process.

There were just so many details and logistics that require much planning and coordination, and I found these to be overwhelming at times. Sometimes it is a second job! When I get home having my brain already fried by work, it is tough when I know that I have to email people and then get on a call with another person at 10:30 at night. Those are the times when I wish I am not part of planning a conference.

However, you can still only prepare for so much, and it was the day of the SR Conference that reminded me of that. So I work in Bedford, and



most of you likely know that trying to get to the city from the suburbs during rush hour is pure torture. So I made a decision to take a half day off and get to 120 Shawmut Avenue super early. I thought that should leave me some time to do some last-minute preparations with time to spare, but I ended up having to use the entire time for them. Even more amazingly, our Friday speaker, Dr. Harden, who mentioned before to me that he could only arrive on time, ended up arriving TWO hours early, so I had to make sure that he was taken care of. Despite the whirlwind of last-minute items, the overall day still went smoothly, and the same went for Saturday and Sunday as well (both the smooth-

ness and the hustling required). I'm reminded that this is God's work, and if it is His work, it'll get done somehow. Conversely, I know that without God, nothing would be done.

3) The conference is a church event and is therefore a church-wide effort.

Lastly, I want to mention that the SR Committee was not the only party who "made this happen" – again, God is the driver of all these. We again want to give our thanks to not only Dr. Harden and Mako, but also our Friday Chinese speaker Elder Bak Fun Wong and the following Sunday School teachers: Pastor Daniel, Shauna Leung (Newton Campus) and BCEC alum, Will Chu.

However, this was also a church-wide effort, and even though many may not realize it, I'm thankful that there were so many contributors behind the scenes and that God has put us together in this church. We have pastoral staff who helped us with coordination, we have people in both the Chinese and English services who are skilled in technology, we have graphic designers, we have people with musical talent, etc. We had many resources that contributed to the success of this SR conference, so thank you to all those who helped out!

I pray that within BCEC we will continue to help and encourage one another in various ministries!

Cantonese Marriage Enrichment Retreat



by TSING MING YU,
CHINATOWN 3RD SERVICE

After marrying Tiffany for nine years, I have to admit that all the rosy images turn into dull regularity in our marriage. Romance turns into mundane family life. Daily chores around the house has become this tiny patch of field that we rigorously attend to. Our effort has paid off. We have the understanding of how to run our family and daily life. Gradually, we feel a sense of pride, because we are like the perfect partners.

Amid the tiring and endless chaos, we pushed aside our marriage relationship and forgot to give the time and space to grow our love. At some point, we could not fathom how we can love each other in the midst of our family and responsibilities. We got lazy, and began to accept that maybe that is the fate of our marriage — warm, but mundane; close at times, but mostly lonely; not bitter, but not always sweet either. Maybe this is how most people experience their marriage anyway, and we should not dream for otherwise. We started to forget that we need to put in effort in our marriage, and furthermore, we did not even believe that putting in effort would make it fulfilling. We have lost our motivation. We used to joke that laziness is the excuse to avoid work in our marriage, but it is now the real hurdle.

Because of a pastor's encouragement, we attended the Cantonese Marriage Enrichment Retreat. Frankly, we just assumed that the retreat would remind us of many familiar concepts about marriage. The only thing that we wished for was a weekend away, all by ourselves. Since our son, Jacob, was born, any alone time with Tiffany is a priceless luxury. Therefore, we headed into the retreat with no expectations.

In the retreat, our wish was granted. We enjoyed our time together and reignited our love for each

other. We even dreamed that maybe time could stop, so that we could be there longer. We had a lot of surprising gains and discoveries. We had the chance to pay attention to each other, and appreciate the wonderful person that God has prepared for us. When we spent time to intentionally focus on each other, we felt amazed and shocked by how perfectly God has put us together as gift for each other. We realized that when we have the strength to love and the blessings of being loved, we experience the precious grace of God. This discovery gives me the aspiration, or some may even call it an excitement to treasure, appreciate, and love Tiffany more. We used to misunderstand love as a feeling or action, but now we know that love is a choice. When we make the choice to love each other, with God's grace, we will have the strength, wisdom, and way to love.

After we left the retreat, we realized that our faith in marriage is not dead. We do not want to lose hope. Instead, we feel the passion to work on our relationship, and we see how much God has already prepared in our marriage — full of grace

and full of strength. We hold on the assurance that it is possible to have a fulfilling marriage, and it can give us great rewards.

Of course, we are not naive to think that this retreat can turn our marriage into a fairytale, and we can live happily ever after as the prince and princess. Marriage does not count on a moment of passion, but a lifelong dedication and commitment. This retreat prepared the path for us to thrive in this life journey.

We chose one of our favorite scriptures for our wedding:

"...for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one's house for love, it would be utterly scorned." (Song of Solomon 8:6b-7 - NIV)

Maybe we need to rest and spend time to appreciate the wonderful gift that God has prepared for us. Attending this Cantonese Marriage Enrichment Retreat has given us the space to slow down. Would you like to give it a try?





Newton English Congregation: Sunrise Worship, Breakfast, and Easter Celebration (3/27)



Christopher Yuan Event (3/18-3/20): Many attended the weekend conference with Christopher Yuan and his parents on homosexuality and Christians' response. It was also the first time that we used live streaming to broadcast a worship service across our two campuses.



Chinatown English College Retreat (3/11-3/13)



Newton English Congregation: Women's Tea, "Princesses of the King" (4/30)

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY

- 8 MOTHER'S DAY
- 27-30 TIOB YOUTH RETREAT
NEWTON
- 30 MEMORIAL DAY
OFFICE CLOSED

JUNE

- 5 CHINESE SUNDAY SCHOOL
SUMMER SESSION BEGINS
- 5 PDAS FAMILY NIGHT
ENGLISH
- 10 LAST DAY OF PDAS
ENGLISH
- 11 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS
SPRING SEMESTER ENDS
- 12 55TH CHURCH ANNIVERSARY
- 19 FATHER'S DAY
- 19 CHILD DEDICATION
CHINESE
- 24 AWANA ENDS
CHINESE
- 25-26 CANTONESE FAMILY RETREAT
CHINESE

JULY

- 3 INDEPENDENCE DAY
OFFICE CLOSED
- 5 PROJECT DESTINY 2016 STARTS
- 11-15 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
NEWTON
- 23 LEADERSHIP MEETING
CHINESE

AUGUST

- 7 PROJECT DESTINY
FAMILY NIGHT
- 20 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS
FALL SEMESTER PLACEMENT EXAM
- 15-19 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
CHINATOWN
- 26-29 SUMMER TEEN CONFERENCE
ENGLISH



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

Managing Editor
Helena Fong

English Editor
Joshua Chin

Printing
Patrick Yeung

Chinese Editors
Shu Yu Ko

Translation Staff
Judy Kaan
See Yee Morante
John Wong

Layout Designer
Charlotte Lai

The printing cost of this newsletter is partially donated by XPress Repographics, Inc.



Easter Baptism (3/27)