

BCEC *CONNECTIONS*

A publication to inform, involve, and unite the BCEC extended church family



Rebuilding our spiritual disciplines

BY SENIOR PASTOR DANIEL CHAN



Many years ago, BCEC made it a tradition to set an annual churchwide theme to encourage our members to learn and practice the ideas of the theme. Recently, I saw in my journal that our theme 10 years ago was “Spiritual Disciplines.” The topic was

important then, and it remains important now, particularly when many of our disciplines have been disrupted by the pandemic.

Psychologists tell us that 70% of our daily behaviors are influenced by our habits. No wonder some people say, “Habits can be our best servant or worst master.” Good habits can help us succeed. Conversely, bad habits can make us fail.

Ten years ago, a study by the sociologists of Vanderbilt, Pittsburgh, and Kansas universities found that those who won large sums of money in the lottery had much higher rates of bankruptcy than those who won small sums.

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A survey of lottery winners in Florida found that for the five years before 2011, there were 1,900 lottery winners who went bankrupt, which is double the general population's bankruptcy rate. Even the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards pointed out that lottery winners had a bankruptcy rate of one in three. The reasons behind such a phenomenon are many. However, one common observation stands out – many lottery winners had developed bad habits that they could not shake off. These habits include compulsive gambling, drug addiction, and poor financial discipline. For many lottery winners, a windfall of money did not make them more successful in life.

In simple terms, spiritual discipline means good spiritual habits. After becoming a Christian, the grace of God gives us a solid foundation to live a bright and fruitful life that can become a blessing to others. Like the lottery winners mentioned above, if we fail to get rid of bad habits, we will not be able to experience the full blessings of being a Christian. Good habits not only can contribute to a healthy lifestyle, they can also replace bad habits that hinder our spiritual growth. I recently came across the testimony of a movie star. She was a compulsive buyer before becoming a Christian. Whenever she felt bored, she would go out and binge buy expensive stuff. She wore only designer clothing, fearing that cheap clothing would degrade her status. Nevertheless, after she believed in Christ, she understands her value as a person is given by God and not by people. Now when she feels bored, she will pray instead of buying new items. She started wearing cheap but comfortable clothing. She became a joyful and personable woman.

Developing spiritual disciplines may seem like a difficult task, but psychologists discovered that human habits can be set in four to five weeks. In his famous book “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People,” Franklin Covey describes developing good habits as a satellite working against the gravity of the earth. It requires enormous energy to be propelled into orbit. However, once in orbit, it requires very little energy to keep going.

Hebrews 5:13-14 (ESV) says, “*For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*” How can we become mature? It is from being “trained by constant practice.” This advice can certainly apply to spiritual disciplines. Richard Foster, in his book “Celebration of Discipline,” points out that our world has a big problem called shallowness. Nowadays, few people are willing to go deep into academics, hone a skill, invest significant time to perfect a painting, compose a long symphony, or chisel a piece of stone into a sculpture. Christians are not immune to shallowness. Therefore, spiritual discipline is something Christians need to learn. Foster listed three categories of spiritual disciplines: Inward, outward and corporate.

- Inward disciplines include meditation, prayer, fasting, and study.
- Outward disciplines include simplicity, solitude, submission, and service.
- Corporate disciplines include confession, worship, guidance, and celebration.

The practice of any of these disciplines will not produce instant results. Take weight lifting as an example – for most people, it is a repetitive and mostly boring exercise. However, constant practice can increase our physical strength. When the time comes when we need additional strength, we shall be glad that we have it. In the same way, our daily devotions may not always produce insights or inspiration, but it will strengthen our spiritual life against unexpected trials and difficulties. May we therefore start or resume establishing our spiritual disciplines today.

Project Destiny connects young lives to God

BY LOUIS LEUNG, CHINATOWN CANTONESE



Project Destiny is a youth summer program in BCEC serving the Chinatown Boston community. I'm grateful to be part of the team this year. God has been doing a lot of amazing things among us, and let me share with you a gospel moment, which changed a youth's life.

One of my small group members recently immigrated from China. His English skills are limited, so he couldn't understand much in school and in PD. I didn't expect him to understand the gospel much from our sharing during Charting, our Bible time each morning.

On the last day of the summer program, Pastor Steve Liu gave a final message and invited campers to accept the gospel. At the end, we gave each camper a response form to fill out. Sadly, that camper needed to take care of his younger sister in the morning, so he missed the whole message. When he came in, the only thing I could do was to explain to him what the response form was, so he could choose from one of the options there.

Once I explained the fifth option "Yes, I'm ready to say yes to Jesus," he immediately said (in Mandarin), "Of course, I want to believe in God." I was shocked by how casual but affirmative he was choosing that option. Since we were soon going to our field trip location, I told him that I would like to follow up with him later on. Before the end of the day, I got to do another huddle with him, so he was able to listen to the whole gospel in Chinese. And on that day, he decided to follow Jesus. Praise the Lord!



Project Destiny charting: Counselors are doing a Bible skit for campers. (Image courtesy of Louis Leung).

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Summer Washington, D.C. missions trip brings hope to broken people

BY PASTOR KEN LIU



Vince Lau, Matthew Liu, Olivia Yang, Stephanie Lin, Justin Liu, Chris Ho, Samantha Ho, Melody Kwong, Pastor Steve Liu, and Pastor Ken Liu went on a short-term missions trip to Washington, D.C. (Image courtesy of Pastor Ken Liu).



Although it may be tempting to race from one thing to another and wonder, “What must I do?,” at the end of the day, our greatest contribution to those whom we serve is the ministry of presence. It seems like an easy thing, but in reality, it isn’t. It’s easier to be busy and productive, so that we feel like we’ve accomplished something. As a team, we had plenty of tangible things we were responsible for, but the greater challenge is to be present to the staff we were supporting, and to the children we were tasked to care for.

This past summer, a team comprised of Vince Lau, Matthew Liu, Olivia Yang, Stephanie Lin, Justin Liu, Chris Ho, Samatha Ho, Melody Kwong, Steve Liu, and I, ventured down to Washington, D.C. to serve with Little Lights Urban Ministries. Leading up to the trip, the phrase that God seemed to press upon my heart was, “Be present.” I know firsthand how one can be present physically, but not be fully present and attentive relationally. My mind and my heart can be preoccupied with many things and at times, I can miss out on what God is doing in front of me.

I shared this with our team at the very beginning of our trip.

In order to do this, we began each day being present to God and His Word. We spent time reflecting through the Epistle and Gospel of John. We were collectively struck by the love and forgiveness of God, but also the high and costly call to love our neighbor. We looked to Jesus, the Word incarnate who came “in the flesh,” and moved into the neighborhood.

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DC missions team experiences God

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We prayed that we would embody the grace and truth of Jesus, as we spent time with the staff and campers.

We were also present to each other as a team. We spent time meeting in huddles to check in and care for one another through prayer. Throughout the week, I observed everyone's care for each other, as we prepared meals, worked on our assemblies, and listened to the challenges that we faced during the week. Everyone was eager to learn, grow, and be used by God for His purposes.

As we prioritized being present to God and one another, it gave us the strength, courage, and resilience to be present to the staff and kids, albeit awkwardly and imperfectly at times. Our team was split into four different sites. The Little Lights Center is the original building where staff offices are located, as well as meeting spaces for their after-school programs. Historically, Little Lights has served the public housing community, Potomac Gardens. Because of their tremendous impact, the city has offered after-school space not only in Potomac Gardens, but also in other nearby public housing communities. For the first few mornings, we prayerfully walked between the different sites to get a sense of the neighborhoods and the context in which we were serving. The contrast between the upscale row houses versus the living conditions of public housing was stark. Equally stark was the beautiful space within those walls for young people with a dedicated staff who cared for them.

As we ventured off to our different sites, many of us were struck with radical hospitality, which surprised quite a few of us. After all, weren't we the ones who were supposed to welcome the children with open arms? Aren't we the ones who are supposed to serve? How quickly we forgot that we were entering their homes and neighborhood. Many of us could attest that the moment the children walked in, they gave us big hugs. No awkward icebreakers were needed. They dove right in and accepted us.

Another impression was a strong sense of community. Warm hugs were liberally given and received. You could sense the genuine care expressed between each other and the familial atmosphere. But like in any family, there were clashes, outbursts, and conflicts that needed mediating. We got a crash course on de-escalation, mediation, and conflict resolution! I can't speak for everyone, but I know for myself, it was a considerable challenge knowing how to handle certain situations with truth and grace.

Whenever I felt particularly useless and unhelpful, it was always illuminating to see how the staff dealt with the children. Everyone had their own style for sure, but there were a few things that stood out. For starters, there is a relational capital that the staff had that none of us could possibly achieve in the short time we were there. It takes time, consistency, and simply showing up in these kids' lives in order to build that credibility. Secondly, they knew how to balance truth-telling and grace remarkably well. Not everyone was perfect, but all in all, they demonstrated the tough, sacrificial love that was needed. They also displayed incredible warmth and patience.

At the end of each day, we went home to the "retreat house" to rest, debrief, and get ready for the next day. After our wonderful dinners, which we documented on Instagram, we spent time debriefing what we experienced.

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DC missions team serves community

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The team served at the Little Lights Center in Washington, D.C. (Image courtesy of Pastor Ken Liu).

We spent some time praying and journaling the ways we sensed God at work and the times when we felt God seemed distant. We spent two evenings discussing what it meant for us as Chinese Americans serving a predominantly black community. It was important to create space to delve into the messiness of the topics of race, culture, and ethnicity, and to unearth our complicated feelings surrounding them. Often, Asian Americans are sidelined in the race conversation. Where do we fit into what is normally a black and white conversation?

Thankfully, we had an opportunity to spend time with the founder of Little Lights, Steve Park. As a Korean American who has dedicated 25 years of his life serving the black community in D.C., it was a great privilege to learn from someone on the front lines of the work of reconciliation. Steve shared his story, including his testimony from ardent atheism to faith in Christ. As a recipient of radical mercy and acceptance himself, it formed the foundation for his work with children in his neighborhood, which eventually evolved into Little Lights Urban Ministries. Steve gave an abbreviated presentation from his “Race Literacy 101” class, which delved into a deeper understanding of the good news and how its implications include justice, freedom for the oppressed, and a heart for the poor. We also learned about the historical and sociological realities for African Americans and its continued impact today. Moreover, Steve also helped us understand our own complicated histories as Asian Americans, which are often sidelined in the national discourse on race. Although the realities of the divisions in our nation can be discouraging and sobering, people like Steve, Mary, and their team give me great hope that in the midst of all the challenges that exist, the kingdom of God is still at work, bringing hope to broken people, places, and systems.

As I reflect upon our trip, I am so thankful for the opportunity to be part of this team. We were stretched and challenged in so many different ways. We were faced with our own insecurities and inadequacies in working with children from another culture. We were confronted by the ugly truths and realities of inequality and systemic racism. Yet, we sensed God’s loving presence and moments of truth and grace breaking through. It was a blessing to see our team come together to serve and love wholeheartedly. This opportunity to serve could not have happened without your prayers and support. We praise God for your partnership in the gospel and feel blessed to be sent by Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. Our God is great, and greatly to be praised (Psalm 145:3)!

2022 Missions Conference

BY MICHAEL HO, CHINATOWN CANTONESE



Every year, Boston Chinese Evangelical Church hosts an annual Missions Conference in November to encourage brothers and sisters to get involved in global missions. Together, we can see God's work in different parts of the world and pray for global partners and the unreached people groups that they are serving. Moreover, we can even explore God's calling in our lives.

This year we invited four speakers who shared messages in English, Cantonese, and Mandarin. The speakers drew from a wealth of experience in global missions, particularly in the region of East Asia. Based on principles drawn from Bible passages, they encouraged us to obey the Great Commission, bringing the gospel to peoples of the world. They were also telling stories of God's work in different countries, as well as the testimonies of people accepting Christ.

In our weekly electronic church newsletter, we publish missions prayer items. This is to encourage us to regularly pray for our global partners. The BCEC Missions Fund is set up to financially support many global partners. Every year we plan to send short-term missions teams to different places in order to partner with the ministries of the long-term missionaries.

May our Lord continue to transform BCEC into a missions-oriented church, so that we would become more involved in global evangelism.

**HAPPY
LUNAR
NEW
YEAR!**



Years of the Rabbit include 2023, 2011, 1999, 1987, 1975, 1963, 1951, 1939...

2023 is a year of the Rabbit, starting from January 22, 2023, and ending on January 21, 2023.

It is a Water Rabbit year.

The Rabbit ranks fourth among the animals of the Chinese zodiac. The following are the 12 zodiac animals in order: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig.

Summer local mission

BY JOHN WONG, NEWTON CANTONESE



Among the 40 people who registered for the summer local mission program in August, 24 came from Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. (Image courtesy of Boston Short Term Mission).



Cosponsored by Boston Short Term Mission and Greater Boston Chinese Alliance Church, this year's summer local mission adopted a hybrid format. Online activities were held in the evening and included an opening ceremony on August 14, evangelism training from August 21 to August 24, vision sharing on August 26, and a closing ceremony on August 28. Evangelism was held in person, and participants could choose to join our full camp from August 21 to August 28 or intensive camp from August 27 to August 28. This time 40 brothers and sisters from different churches signed up, including 24 from Boston Chinese Evangelical Church, who also participated in an in-person

commissioning ceremony during our Chinatown Cantonese worship service on August 21.

This year's instructor was Pastor Danny Ma, who is the vice president of International Fellowship of Christian Short Term Missions and lives in Chicago. Through Zoom, Pastor Ma provided evangelism training on topics that included basics of evangelism, use of evangelism tools, caring ministry through telephone, visitation, counseling after an evangelistic meeting, and follow-up ministry of new believers. Besides teaching us on principles, Pastor Ma also shared many testimonies with us about his personal experience.

In addition, each morning participants enjoyed worship through songs, devotion, and role play; devotion materials were written by the pastoral staff of different churches. In the afternoon, participants had the opportunity to practice what they had learned from the training in the previous evening: street evangelism,

restaurant evangelism, caring through the telephone, visitation of residents in elderly housing, field trip evangelism, and "Everyone is a Soldier" campaign at different geographical locations simultaneously.

Praying walking and a workshop on making an evangelism tool were added to this year's schedule. Because the tool was a cross handcrafted by the participants' own hands, it was extra meaningful to those who were giving it out and to those who were receiving it. Participants formed small teams when going out to evangelize. They were assigned small missions to complete such as taking a selfie with restaurant staff, so team members were able to build relationships, encourage one another, and learn from each other.

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Summer local mission: Prayer and action

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This year's summer local missions was cosponsored by Boston Short Term Mission and Greater Boston Chinese Alliance Church. (Image courtesy of Boston Short Term Mission).

An in-person evangelistic meeting titled “Overcoming Depression: How to Tackle Mood Disturbances” was held with Greater Boston Chinese Alliance Church’s Pastor David Yip as the speaker.

Whether participating for the first time or having participated many times already, many wrote in their response forms that they had learned a lot this year and experienced God’s presence while evangelizing. We sincerely thank God for His protection and guidance, our instructor for his compassionate teaching, different churches for their enormous support, participants for their wholehearted participation, team leaders for their

service, prayer warriors for their ceaseless intercession, and Greater Boston Chinese Alliance Church for their warm hospitality. Here’s a review video of the activities: https://youtu.be/ocK_5Ggxrt0.

May God motivate more brothers and sisters to fulfill the Great Commission, joining efforts to spread the gospel. In the past, Boston Short Term Mission usually collaborated with a single local church to cosponsor local missions, concentrating on a specific region for evangelism. We pray that, in the near future, God will grant us a vision to collaborate with multiple churches at

the same time, so that we may proclaim the gospel throughout Greater Boston. Finally, I encourage all of you to register to participate in next year’s summer local mission and winter local mission, so that we may join in unity to bless our family, our friends, and our community.

“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (Luke 10:2 - NIV)



Participants made a cross as an evangelism tool to give out. (Image courtesy of Boston Short Term Mission).

The birth of WeTalk 800 online ministry

BY PASTOR BARRY LAM



On a stormy night in March 2020, a group of passionate adult Christians gathered on Zoom to discuss privately how to overcome the attack by the powerful enemy that was the coronavirus pandemic. In this unprecedented situation, fear was widespread. They were determined not to be controlled by death and hopelessness, but to seek Christ who overcame Satan and death, and turn danger to the opportunity of serving people and furthering the gospel. At the time, there were already like-minded friends who saw the lack of medical and personal protective equipment and organized heroic teams to collect and distribute items such as masks and sanitizers, on the streets, and to hospitals and elderly housing. They showed compassion even as the virus was ruthless.

One of the passionate Christians gathering was moved by the Holy Spirit and came up with an idea: since everyone was stuck at home, why not use Zoom to create a virtual platform for sharing educational information

such as virus safety, management of physical and mental health, faith matters, nutrition, recreation, etc. People can learn something and channel their energy. They can experience the church not as an organization keen only on conversion, but a Christ-following community sharing the love of God in word and deed.

Although others present that night did not stay on, God provided more suitable team members for this mission. With limited experience, resources, or future planning, these members were courageous to hold the first WeTalk 800 online event on Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at 8:00 p.m. The program is named “We Talk” to mean it is not a one-way lecture, but open to questions and conversations. “800” indicates the 8:00 start time.

The WeTalk800 Zoom ministry of Newton Campus was thus created under this chaotic social environment.

We did not have high expectations when we started, with only five people in the committee. However, God amazingly led and provided many wonderful guest speakers and helpers. Through each program, God caused many people to be blessed. One of the programs titled “On the Edge of Life and Death,” which was held in June 2020, was a testimony by someone who recounted how God brought him from near death

from COVID back to life. This evangelistic Zoom event was attended by over 300 people. After it was uploaded to YouTube, there were 1,000 views. The family members of the brother who gave the testimony became Christ followers as a result. Praise the Lord!

As of this writing, around ninety (90) WeTalk 800 programs were produced. The content was varied and included evangelistic meetings, concerts, food, travel, health, faith matters, and games. We made contact with up to several thousand people. Participants included members of other churches, people in other parts of the country and people in Hong Kong. Since July of last year, with relaxing COVID rules in society and church, WeTalk 800 events went from every Wednesday to every first Wednesday of the month.

What is the future of WeTalk 800? No one knows. We desire to be like the donkey used by, as he rode into Jerusalem. It does not matter if it is one hour, one week, one month, one year, or a lifetime. No matter the circumstances, eternally belonging to the Lord is our ultimate goal.

Chinatown August Moon Festival brings together different congregations

BY PEGGY HO, CHINATOWN CANTONESE



Boston Chinese Evangelical Church's Local Evangelism Department (LED) participated in the Chinatown August Moon Festival on August 14, 2022. (Image courtesy of Peggy Ho).

BCEC Local Evangelism Department (LED) participated in the Chinatown August Moon Festival on August 14, 2022. After the pandemic, it was time for our church to be “out there” again. Most importantly, it was time to let the community know that we “only moved” since our 249 building was gone.

As one of the LED committee members who was in charge of the planning and organizing of this event, I was most encouraged by the participation of brothers and sisters from different congregations. Since our church is so big, it is hard to know everyone. However, I met and talked to a few brothers and sisters whom I didn't know before, and it is a blessing to serve together.

Learning to serve with brothers and sisters can be challenging sometimes.

It is God's way to mold and change us. God never intended for us to be loners. He desires us to be in this community of believers, so we can experience God and grow together. I asked my prayer partners to pray that God will help me with patience, self-control, love, and peace.

It is an amazing feeling when you see God's work among us and know what God wants to teach us. It is so easy to take credit for all the hard work you put in, but in the end, you still lack one important component to make the whole project work. You feel defeated. Nevertheless, God's intention is not to discourage us, but to mold and change us. At the end, all we can do is to give all the praise and glory to our loving Heavenly Father.

BCEC members travel to Nepal for short-term missions trip

BY PETER WONG AND MACRIN TAI



BCEC members Peter Wong and Macrin Tai visited Nepal from September 10 to September 21. The third person from left is Brother Ram in Kathmandu. (Image courtesy of Minister Peter Wong).

Thank God for giving my wife Macrin and me the opportunity to visit missionaries and local evangelists in Nepal from September 10 to September 21.

Sharing by Peter Wong

Nepal is a country of mountains. The highest mountain of the world, Mount Everest, is in this country. Most of the 13 million people believe in Hinduism. Temples and monks are all over the country. In this trip, we visited three cities, namely Kathmandu (the nation's capital), Pokhara, and Lumbini.

The host missions organization of our trip is Galilee International US. We were amazed to see God sending young missionaries to this country to serve the Nepali people. We had the opportunity to listen to stories of some indigenous disciples of the missionaries. One of them is a young Christian whose name is Ram. He was an idol maker before knowing Jesus. When he knew Jesus Christ, the true God, he gave up his career and moved

to Kathmandu to earn his living as a building constructor. With the help of another believer, they built a church in his village in seven days. Out of 40 families in the village, there are four families who trust in the Lord. They have weekly fellowship of Bible study and worship in this church.

In Pokhara, we visited and supported a couple who were called by God to share the gospel among a community of Buddhists. God gave us opportunities to have fellowship and sharing of two discipleship courses with them. Their love and hearts for their neighbors are so deep that they are willing to go the extra mile to serve and help. Even though they have been working for seven years in the village without any believers yet, they do not give up and continuously sow the seeds of gospel without any complaints. I pray that God will bless their efforts and grant them spiritual fruits of new believers in 2023.

In Lumbini, where Buddha was born, we visited two local churches and shared the Word of God with the indigenous believers. They are poor in material goods, but faithful to God. Even though the church in the village is very simple, most of them responded positively to share the gospel with their neighbors.

May God bless the Nepali people, so that more of them will believe in Jesus Christ!

Sharing by Macrin Tai

In Nepali, "hello" is "Namaste."

Thank the Lord for giving me the opportunity to share my experiences during my short-term missions trip to Nepal!

Nepal is my second short-term missions trip.

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Nepal: Sending people to serve the Nepalis

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Compared with the first time to East Asia in the summer of 2019, this was a cross-cultural experience due to the fact that Nepal is mainly Hindus, polytheists, and the language and culture are very different!

1) First of all, thank the Lord I had not contracted COVID and the local dengue fever throughout the trip! The co-workers and family members who were supposed to receive us contracted dengue fever two days before we arrived in Nepal!

2) The rugged mountain road on the edge of the cliff was a near miss.

Because Nepal is a mountainous country, 80% of the population lives along the mountain! From the capital Kathmandu traveling to other cities, you must use the only mountain road built along the cliff, so traffic jams are very common and serious.

Driving from Kathmandu to Pokhara takes 7 hours, driving from Pokhara to Lumbini takes 7 hours, and driving from Lumbini to Kathmandu takes 5 hours.

Therefore, when we visited missionaries and local churches in Pokhara and Lumbini, we often left at 5 or 6 in the morning to avoid serious traffic jams!

Due to backwardness, most of the roads in Nepal were dirt roads. In addition, the rainy season has just passed. The roads were full of mud ditches. The average speed for a motor vehicle was about 20 miles/hour! I told the local missionaries that every time I passed through the mud ditch, I was like riding an elephant! Every minute on the mountain road is like riding on an elephant once every minute.

Although we have gone through a long and rugged mountain road, when we think of the local co-workers who have chosen to serve the local Nepalese, as well as minorities without status and orphans in this environment for many years, we felt not only grateful for them. We were also grateful that God had protected us for the whole journey. Full of surprises!

3) God loves everyone.

Lumbini is the birthplace of Sakyamuni, but God established His church in this important place of Buddhism!

The rural church we visited was a very simple hut with a small podium inside. A few old sofas were used as podium chairs. Two elders sat on plastic chairs in the last row. Later I was given a dirty plastic chair to sit on. In fact, I hesitated to sit down at the time, but thought that it might be a VIP seat for guests! Nevertheless, I sat down!

During the whole worship, God showed me that they worshiped as a family. Among them were an elderly couple, several couple young or middle-aged parents with their children, and two teenagers. They were devoted in singing hymns and praying in Nepali. It seemed to me God was listening and accepting their worship in heaven! I deeply felt that God really loves everyone in the world!

In fact, this small church relied on an elderly pastor to lead the worship every Sunday. I felt that this rural church was very promising. I believed that God personally shepherded them and led this church through His servants!

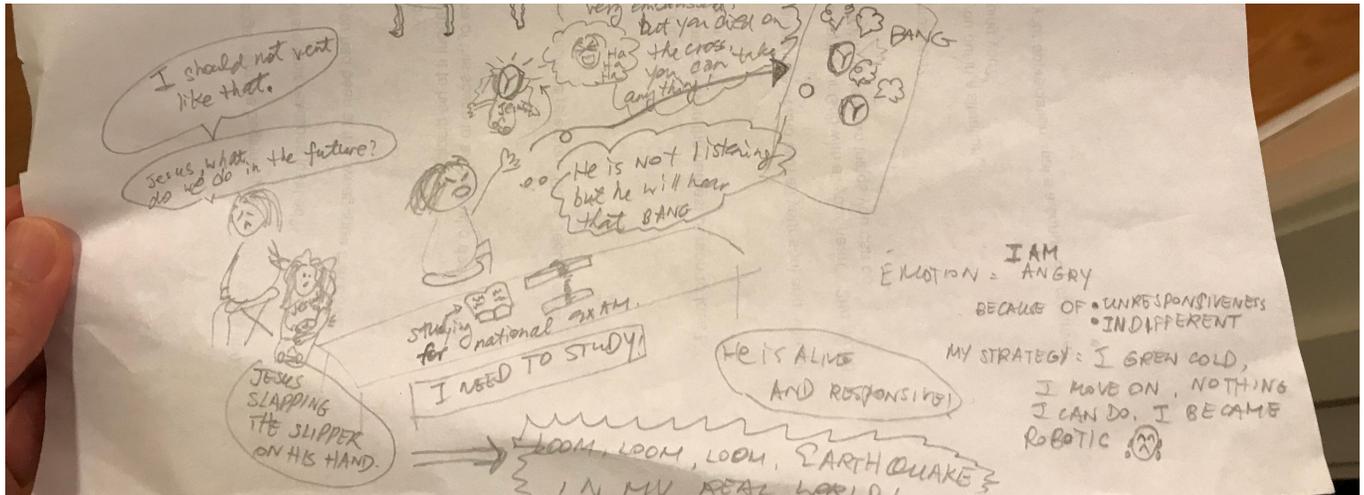
4) The last thing I wanted to share was that this short-term missions trip had given me a greater understanding of the tent makers I heard about when I was young! Especially tent makers serving in the at-risk countries!

Thank you God for calling many young Chinese people willing to leave their hometowns, willing to start a family and have children in the local area. Through their serving, the gospel was able to spread over the world, so that everyone can hear the gospel and repent!

May God continue to use His servants in the front lines to save the souls, and utilize us to be their shields at home! Thank you!

Experiencing God through an earthquake

BY THE BARRIER BREAKERS



A drawing of the earthquake. (Image courtesy of the BCEC Inner Healing Ministry).

After experiencing a particularly difficult week at work, I felt myself beginning to withdraw emotionally. I had made a series of mistakes at the office, where people had laughed at me. I still felt the sting of embarrassment. To make the week feel even harsher, someone who was supposed to help me solve a problem instead challenged me in an authoritative manner.

Because I could feel myself rapidly heading into an emotional shutdown, I called a dear friend to pray with me.

I had practiced inner healing with this trusted friend many times over the years. On the day I called her, she compassionately prayed with me. She then asked me questions to guide me without injecting her opinions, so I would be able to express myself freely and hear God.

After we prayed about what had been going on at work, a memory of my late childhood vividly came to my mind and I shared it with her, too.

Academic achievement was extremely important in my family. I was expected to strive for good grades, so I could successfully provide for myself as an adult. Even if I married, the goal was to work towards a career to be financially independent and self-sufficient. In this atmosphere, I had developed a strong work ethic to excel in school.

As a teen, I had just prepared to spend another long evening intensely studying for an important upcoming national exam. My father entered my room to tell me I needed to put my books aside. He said I needed to get ready to spend the evening with a family visitor. I was dismayed at the sudden shift in plans. I pleaded with him to excuse me from the family gathering and allow me to study.

My father firmly insisted I would join the family and spend the evening with the relative that would arrive shortly. Typically, my father had the final word. He left my room, and closed the door

behind him.

I was quite upset. I felt fear for my future. Something was terribly wrong for me to not be allowed to study. I was confused because I was sure studying hard was a good thing, but I felt my father did not honor my efforts. Our communication was one-sided. I did not feel heard. I felt I was unimportant. I felt that it was the way it was, and I had no say. Ultimately, I cannot feel when I experience a spirit of inhibition. I felt my father was unresponsive and indifferent to my pleas. I wanted to vent, but I was not allowed.

In an angry outburst of emotion, I grabbed my slippers and threw them across the room, so they slapped against my bedroom door. I did not get my father's attention. I did what I was told and put aside my studying that night.

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Earthquake: Praying through fear

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However, I felt emotionally cold, stoic, and robotic.

I was crying when I shared this memory with my friend on the phone. She gently asked me to visualize Jesus in the situation I had just described to her. She gave me space to search.

“What is Jesus doing?” she asked.

I replied, “I see myself slamming the slipper on Jesus’s face, and I laughed at Jesus because He can take it. I see Jesus has a slipper and is slapping it lightly on His own hand, next to me, pondering.”

My friend asked me, “What is your prayer?”

“I should not have vented this way,” I apologized while still crying. “Ultimately, I disrespected Jesus. Knowing Jesus is my friend, listening next to me, I ask God, what should I do now?”

Suddenly, I heard a sound, as if a truck ran under my house — loom, loom, loom — and things started to shake. Earthquake! Then it stopped. I stopped crying at that moment.

“Did you feel that?!” I asked my friend.

“Yes!” she said, who had also felt the tremor.

That day an important truth was revealed. Jesus wanted to tell me that my Heavenly Father is definitely alive and responsive. Hallelujah!



Vacation Bible School's Rocky Railway delivers good news to children

BY LORRAINE HO, CHINATOWN ENGLISH



Vacation Bible School took place in person during Summer 2022. (Image courtesy of Lorraine Ho).

The church has a long tradition of summer children outreach. Vacation Bible School (VBS) caters well to the needs and learning styles of elementary-aged students. Even in the face of COVID, we were able to hold outreach online and remotely. We were thrilled to be able to transition back to in-person VBS for the second year in a row in 2022. Every day was filled with topical activities to emphasize each day's message of how Jesus's power pulls us through difficulties in our lives. Each afternoon, we created science lessons that matched this year's Rocky Railway theme. Educational topicals included technology, steam power, electricity, and magnetism.

It has been incredibly rewarding to serve the children through VBS each year. God revealed a couple of important areas to me. The children's faces were full of seriousness and sincerity whenever I shared the gospel message with them. They were in awe of our God, who sacrificed all that He had for us despite our sinfulness. Children are ready to receive Christ at a young age, and we ought to work hard to reach them, so they pursue God and enjoy His blessings the rest of their lives.

Secondly, with all that has happened with COVID and the political changes in the United States,

Hong Kong, and China, we may think our opportunities for outreach have significantly diminished in recent years. Yet, serving in Children's Ministry gives me a window into existing opportunities and future potential. I meet new immigrants visiting our ministries on a regular basis. Every year, VBS has been a place where these young friends get to experience how fun church is for the first time in their lives. Despite their lack of proficiency in English, they feel the warmth from the team of volunteers who love and serve them.

Chosen child sponsorship

BY PASTOR STEVE LIU



Boston Chinese Evangelical Church sponsored 169 children through the World Vision Chosen program. (Image courtesy of Pastor Steve Liu).

This fall, BCEC had the opportunity to partner with World Vision to sponsor children in southern Honduras. Over several weeks, pastors, guest speakers, and the Social Responsibility Committee encouraged our community to share the love of Christ through starting sponsorships. Between our six congregations, we ended up sponsoring 169 children whose families are part of the Promesa De Sur area development program. Through our sponsorships, their community will receive \$79,000 each year to help with schools, clean water, health initiatives, and family support.

Promesa De Sur, which includes the southern city of Choluteca and the surrounding rural regions, is affected by climate change related natural disasters and deep poverty. Challenges include drought, lack of drinking water, sanitation,

widespread unemployment, drug use, broken family structures, teenage pregnancy, and many children who do not attend school. Promesa de Sur is currently in the “Plan” phase of its area development program in which World Vision builds relationships with leaders in the community and builds an action plan with them before starting to work shoulder to shoulder with people in the community to achieve those goals. Each ADP progresses through four phases: Plan, Establish, Empower, and Graduate.

The child sponsorship event is called “Chosen” because it reverses the choice dynamic from traditional sponsorships. Instead of sponsors choosing a child, the children choose their sponsors. Over the course of two weeks, BCEC members took pictures of themselves in the lobbies of church buildings and the Josiah

Quincy Elementary School, or at home to send to Promesa de Sur. The Social Responsibility Committee, which had been envisioning the drive event since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, worked with World Vision staff to set up, plan, and execute the event.

Then, after a delay of several weeks due to tropical storms, the World Vision team in Honduras gathered and hosted community children for a sponsorship party, where they were greeted with photos of BCEC sponsors to choose from.

We praise God for the opportunity for our church to live out gospel-motivated generosity and love. We pray that these relationships will not only bless families in Honduras, but also that sponsors would be blessed, as we grow in obedience to God’s call to love not just in words or talk, but in deed and truth (1 John 3:18).

BCEC participates in World Vision Global 6K for Water

BY ELYSIA MOY, CHINATOWN ENGLISH



The World Vision Global 6K for Water took place on May 21, 2022 at the Boston Common. (Image courtesy of Marisa Moy).



This was Boston Chinese Evangelical Church's second time partnering with World Vision's Global 6K for Water. The Social Responsibility Committee hosted this campaign to raise funds for water projects, including hand-washing stations and clean water pipelines, in communities where World Vision serves in.

More than 800 children under the age of 5 die daily from diarrhea caused by contaminated water, poor sanitation, and improper hygiene.

The task of collecting water falls mainly to women and children, especially girls, who carry water an average of 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) a day. Without easy access to an improved water source, their days revolve around a walk for water: gathering enough to cook, clean, bathe, and drink. This greatly hinders many women and girls from attending school.

Praise God for all the brothers and sisters who participated in the Global 6K! Together, we raised over \$25,000 for water projects. The World Vision Global 6K for Water Race Day occurred on May 21, 2022. BCEC runners, walkers, and dogs all gathered on that warm Saturday morning at the Boston Common to begin the 6K in prayer. Daniel Fellowship and Elim Fellowship also participated at separate times and locations.

Stephen Ministry trains five brothers and sisters

BY GRACE HONG, CHINATOWN CANTONESE



The sixth Stephen Ministry training graduates (from left to right): Wilfred Chan, Cevia Leung, Lan Ying Ng, Anna Kwong, and Jacky Wong. (Image courtesy of Grace Hong).

The sixth Stephen Ministry training graduates were Wilfred Chan, Cevia Leung, Lan Ying Ng, Anna Kwong, and Jacky Wong. The brothers and sisters worked diligently during classes. They practiced their first visit. They practiced holding a supervision meeting.

July 3, 2022 was the big day: Commissioning Day. The five graduates were led by their four Stephen ministry leaders. The five Stephen Ministry graduates were commissioned at the Newton Cantonese worship service and Chinatown Cantonese worship service.

Below are the trainees reflections on the Stephen Ministry course.

Reflection by Jacky Wong

Praise God! The past 20 weeks of Stephen Ministry training showed me how much I have to learn and reorient my life. God is an all-powerful God, with all things in His hands.

God is a healer. God's plan is higher than ours. The lessons affected my life and made me more humble.

Stephen Ministry embodies Christ's love, and this is experienced by the care receivers. I believe, in addition to using this ministry to help those in need, we are commanded to fulfill the Great Commission by our Lord Jesus. As a result, we walk with the Lord through the whole process, representing Him as we serve. Therefore, we must watch our actions and behaviors. We must testify for the Lord, glorifying Him and benefiting others. What we do has great meaning, to love the Lord and love others!

Reflection by Cevia Leung

Stephen Ministry gave me the opportunity to train in a caring ministry that is rooted in Christ. The course is based on the Bible's teaching, while inspiring me to depend on our loving Lord for everything throughout the learning process. It also builds up a person's faith and uses caring techniques that promote peace for friends, family, and all interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, it empathizes the pain and

suffering of others, Through our own lives and actions, we can show God's love and care.

Reflection by Anna Kwong

Psalms 103:8 (NASB) says, "*The Lord is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in mercy.*"

Thank God for this opportunity to use God's love and care for those in need. Many suffering people have come to know God's love through this ministry.

1 John 4:7 (NASB) says, "*Beloved, let's love one another; for love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.*"

Truly, without love, there is no caring. The world would be in chaos. Stephen Ministry means "love" to us.

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Stephen Ministry: Trainees learn how to care for others

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The five graduates were led by their four Stephen Ministry leaders on Commissioning Day on July 3, 2022. (Image courtesy of Grace Hong).

Reflection by Lan Ying Ng I did not know about Stephen Ministry before I joined the training. Now I know it is a Christ-centered form of care to help those in need. Stephen Ministers discuss the care receivers' feelings and thoughts. Then we understand their needs, so they can return to their normal lives and persevere through their renewed lives.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV) says, "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*"

This verse reminds me, as I become a Stephen Minister to not depend on myself. In all things, I am to depend on God for His leading and guidance.

Reflection by Wilfred Chan

Over the past 20 weeks of Stephen Ministry training, I have learned to emulate Christ's love, so I may be humble when serving my care receiver. This will allow him to experience Christ's love. May God help me in His mercy, so the care receiver believes and gives glory to God. In Scripture, John 15:5 reminds me to abide in Christ.

John 13:34-35 says I am to love others like how Christ loves me. Matthew 25:31-46 reminds us to love others like we love Christ. I pray for God's help to balance serving in different ministries and my family duties, so I can use my small service to bless others.



The trainees practiced their first visits. (Image courtesy of Grace Hong).