

From Our Senior Pastor:

What Does Global Warming Have to Do with Me?



by Pastor Daniel Chan

For the past year, we not only faced the coronavirus pandemic, but we also faced unusual climate extremes. At the beginning of 2021, Texas experienced an unusual cold front and snow. The airport of Dallas had a record low temperature of -2 degrees Fahrenheit. Because of the cold, power outages resulted in 150 deaths. Going into June, there were unusual heat waves in the US West Coast. Many cities had temperatures of over 110 degrees Fahrenheit. Even Denver, a mountainous city, had record-setting days at over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Not only that, southwestern states had droughts that occurred once in a century. The water flow of the Colorado River was drastically reduced. The hydroelectric

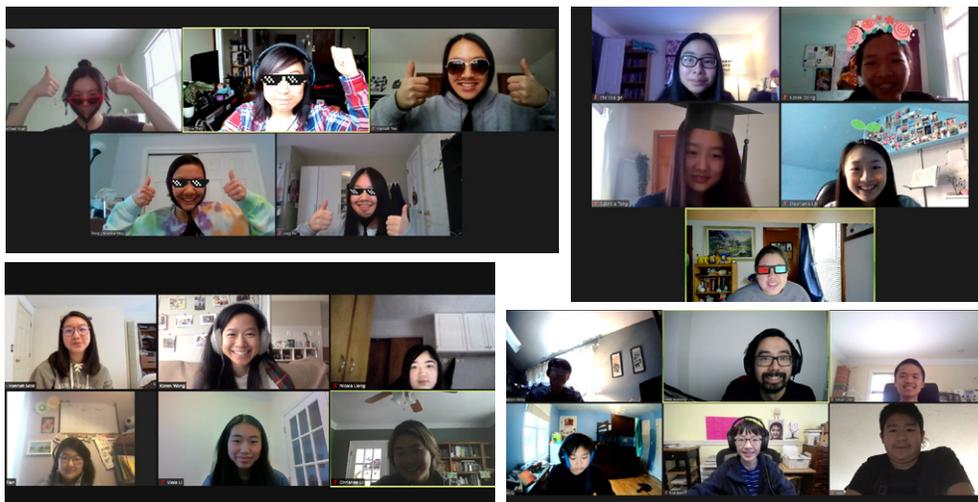
power stations on the river had to stop production. Europe, Asia, and Africa also faced similar extreme weather. If they did not suffer flooding, then they experienced droughts. Some people think it is global warming that leads to temperatures increasing every year. However, scientists tell us the situation is even more dire. The climate is getting unusual and extreme. Hot days are getting hotter; cold days are getting colder. When it should have rained, it didn't. When it rains, it turns into floods.

In March this year, the theme for the Social Responsibility Conference was "Green Grace: Christian Love through Environmental Stewardship." We invited several speakers to share topics about conservation of the earth. They all unanimously encouraged us to cherish and protect the land, air, and ocean that God had given us. This is truly a timely reminder. Genesis tells us that after God created the earth, he delegated the responsibility of governance to man, allowing man to manage the ecology of the earth, including the "fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Genesis 1:28 – NIV). God's requirement for man is found in 1 Corinthians 4:2 (NIV): "Now

it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful." Therefore, when we face the fact of global warming, both governments and individuals should think about what they can contribute.

Scientists tell us that poor and disadvantaged countries are the most affected by climate change. Wealthy and advanced countries or groups have the resources to deal with harsh environments, whether it is flood or drought, heat waves, or cold snaps. But for poor countries and groups, this leads to struggles for survival. Global warming is largely due to the high consumption of developed countries. This leads to social injustice, or at least unfairness.

Considering the above factors, as Christians, we can first work on a personal level. We should pay attention to our carbon footprint. That means saving on consumption, electricity, water, and energy. We should also try our best to reduce pollution, avoid waste, protect ecosystems, and participate in material recycling and more. We live in a metropolitan area. We may not be able to avoid driving, eating meat, or using electrical appliances. However, we can choose not to live a high-consumption lifestyle.



Winter Teen Conference (2/2-2/15): The teens and counselors met online with worship sessions, small groups, and messages from Pastor Cristobal Tong.

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60th-Anniversary Special Coverage:

Invitation to Serve



by Elder Brian Hui,
Chinatown Cantonese

I clearly remember the time when I moved to the Boston area. It was the summer of 1978...after my commencement in Ithaca, job interviews, and job acceptance...oh, and how can I forget — my lonesome journey to my new job, driving my '72 Chevy packed with all my belongings. As I look back now, I realize how every step was part of God's perfect plan.

I was born in China, raised in Hong Kong, and immigrated to the United States with my family in 1972. I attended Cornell University and graduated with a Bachelor's and Master's in Mechanical Engineering. After graduation, I worked as a mechanical engineer in the Aircraft Engine Division of the General Electric Company in Lynn for thirty-one years until my early retirement in 2009 to focus on full-time ministry.

During my junior year of college, I was invited by my best friend to attend a Bible study fellowship. As I knew more about God, my life started to change. Three years later, I accepted Christ as my Savior. The invaluable experience that I gained from the Cornell Bible Study Fellowship was the foundation for my involvement in the church ministries.

My first experience with Boston Chinese Evangelical Church (BCEC) was through my Cornell classmate, who was my roommate in Boston. One Sunday morning in the summer of 1978, he took me to "the Chinese church in Chinatown." When we walked into the building, I could not believe my eyes. All I saw were walls painted with graffiti, filthy floors, and homeless people hanging out in the hallway filled with smelly air. As I recovered from the shock, I asked him, "Are you sure we're in the right place?"

He paused for a moment, turned around, and led me out of the building. He looked to the left, across the street towards a new building under

construction at the street corner, and said, "We are in the right place, but not for long. BCEC has been borrowing this homeless shelter, Pine Street Inn, for the Sunday services. They will move into the new building soon. (This "new building" back then was the 249 Harrison Ave. church site that we had the New Church Dedication Service on June 30, 1979, and have to vacate and return it to the city by the end of June 2021. Here, I thank God for His church space provision for the last forty-two years).

My roommate continued and said the church congregation has endured much over the past few years. They learned how to be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. Now God has answered their prayers and removed the obstacles in every stage of the building process. By looking at the new building, no one can deny God's faithfulness.

Since then, this "Chinese church in Chinatown" has been my spiritual home for almost forty-three years. I met my wife, Karen, in Joshua Fellowship, of which we were two of the founding members. In 1980, we were married in the church. BCEC's second Senior Pastor, Pastor Jacob Fung, officiated our wedding (the first wedding that Pastor Fung officiated in BCEC. My wife and I thank Pastor Fung and Mrs. Fung for their long time support and loving care).

God gave us two children, and they have been growing strong spiritually in the church since their early childhood days. For my family and me, these years have been full of thanksgiving and praise.

I remember how I first got involved in church ministries. During one of the "Pine Street Inn" Sunday worship services, Pastor James Tan, BCEC's first Senior Pastor, announced that he needed some help to set up the place for worship service. He did not feel well that morning and had suffered fast heartbeats after moving some partitions around. I felt it immediately in my heart as if I heard God's whispering, "My son, this is your opportunity to serve my house. What are you waiting for?"

I was much younger then, full of energy and fervent in spirit to serve the Lord. I introduced myself to this kind and humble God's servant

(Pastor Tan) on the following Sunday and told him that I wanted to help. He said he already had help to move the furniture, but he needed someone to write the Chinese Sunday bulletin. Back in those pre-computer days, this was not an easy task. I had to pick up the information from Pastor Tan's house before Thursday. Then I had to transcribe all the Chinese words onto a wax stencil using a steel point pen, which served as a master copy for subsequent printings. No matter what, I had to deliver the master copy back to Pastor Tan's house before the Saturday morning deadline. It was a lot of work, but it gave me a chance to keep up with my Chinese writing.

Since 1978, I have served at BCEC in various capacities including the Board of Deacons, Expansion committee, and Joshua Fellowship.

In 2001, BCEC revised its Constitution to initiate the Board of Elders (BOE) as part of the church operational structure. BOE is the highest governing body of BCEC and has the responsibility of overseeing the spiritual growth of BCEC. A special feature of the Constitutional revision is the inclusion of lay elders in the BOE, in addition to all the ordained pastors of our church.

After lots of prayer and discussions with my family, I accepted Pastor Steve's invitation to go through the four-year training and ordination process to become a lay elder. Special thanks for God's selection and the training from Pastor Steven Chin, BCEC's third Senior Pastor.

I was ordained as a Lay Elder in 2004. Praise the Lord that He gave me the opportunity to serve Him in a different role.

My burden is to equip leaders and encourage believers toward spiritual growth and kingdom expansion. Along with preaching regularly and teaching Sunday School, I hope to stimulate life change among the congregation.

October 18, 2020 was such a joyous and thanksgiving filled occasion. We installed our beloved Pastor Daniel Chan to be our fourth Senior Pastor of our church. Praise God for His provisions and blessings for our church.

June 2021 marks BCEC's 60th anniversary. We would also like to take this opportunity to recognize our three former beloved Senior Pastors, Pastor



James Tan, Pastor Jacob Fung, and Pastor Steven Chin for their contributions and shepherding of BCEC throughout the church's 60-year history.

God has been faithful and gracious in blessing the ministries of BCEC in the last 60 years; thousands of people have heard the gospel with many responding in faith and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Also, many brothers and sisters continue to grow to maturity in Christ and accept God's invitation to serve Him faithfully here and around the world.

Our theme for this year is "Journey Ahead." Let us unite together under our new Senior Pastor, Pastor Daniel's leadership and journey boldly ahead with God's grace. May God have all the glory.

Ephesians 3:20-21 (KJV):

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."



Remembering 249 Harrison Avenue's Impact on Project Destiny



by Steve Liu,
Chinatown English

The 249 Harrison Ave. building has hosted many community-outreach programs over the years such as community English classes, Local Evangelism events, sports outreaches, and more. I would like to share about my experience serving in Project Destiny, which is our youth-outreach summer camp, as well as an after school program that serves Chinatown area middle schoolers and high schoolers.

Like many who have served a summer at PD, 249 became not just a church, but a second home to me. Counselors were here every day for seven weeks. During the day, we performed Bible skits here in the sanctuary, we taught classes upstairs or downstairs, we served dozens of cafeteria style lunches in the basement, and we earned the respect of some of the neighborhood youth on the basketball court, many who lived right across the street.

At the end of a long day, we would raid the kitchen fridge for ice cream or fruit. If we were hot or exhausted from taking care of campers all day, we'd go to the dark air-conditioned sanctuary and take a nap on a pew, maybe while listening to somebody play piano. Then later, we would go practice skits on the stage with wiffle ball bats and improvised props. On other days, some campers would come back wanting to hang out again, since they couldn't get enough of camp, so we would play more basketball with them until dinner time.

Our dinners, of course, were provided by generous BCEC members who cooked in the little run-down kitchen. Dinner was served with Chinese-style plastic plates, mismatched old silverware, and lots of love.

I can't begin to count the number of significant life-changing conversations I've had with PD teammates here over the years. The same can be said for one-on-one huddles we had with campers, and for the times when we were able to guide campers to pray the sinner's prayer.

Many of them have grown up here and are now helping to lead our church into the journey ahead.

Thanks to the outstanding location, near the school, Oak Terrace, and Tai Tung Village, God gave us plenty of opportunities to serve and interact with kids and families. Until a few years ago, PDAS, our after-school program, was here every day throughout the year. 30-70 students each day would come for homework help, activity clubs, mentoring, and Super Smash Brothers.



The Project Destiny ministry to middle school and high school students (PDAS) was based out of the 249 Harrison Ave. church building for many years.

We met all kinds of kids: some serious and studious, many very talented, and others who were more likely to get in trouble or be depressed. I remember sometimes one of the youth would have to bring his baby brother with him, and put him to sleep under a table, because he didn't want to miss coming to church. Another girl would always come with a tough-looking gang of friends and a tiny little dog stuffed into her bag.

Other kids, we were talking to their teachers all the time because they were so behind in homework or projects. Obedient or complicated, I love them all the same, but I was always especially grateful that the kids who got into trouble or had big struggles would want to keep coming back. I hoped

it was because they sensed the love of God through our counselors. And it was love, because the team of counselors made sacrifices and went the extra mile, and we held them close in our hearts, as we prayed for them.

And I think for those kids, 249 Harrison Ave. was a second home, too. They spent as much time there every day as they did anywhere else. It was a place of stability and community. For those with difficult family circumstances, it was where they felt the safest.

It's the only place they'd hear about Jesus and forgiveness. It's where they first heard that worship song that still sticks in their heads today, even

though it may have been a long time since they've been to church.

So thank you, BCEC, for sharing this space with them — especially whenever we would break a wall, write bad words on the tables, or leave nerf gun darts all over the sanctuary.

I praise God that He gave us such an amazing second home for so long, where we could reach out to hundreds of youths going through so many different things over the years. He gave us the privilege of walking alongside them through their most challenging times with the hope of the gospel and the love of Christ.



Sharing the Gospel: Bidding Farewell to 249 Harrison Avenue

by Pastor Daniel Chan



Like many brothers and sisters, I will miss the 249 building. It was Boston Chinese Evangelical Church's only building for 14 years, until the 237 Harrison Avenue office building was acquired in 1993. The 249 building is a place of many wonderful memories. For me, I met many people who became lifelong friends. In the sanctuary during the 1983 Missions Conference, I was called to seminary studies. The hallway bulletin board was where I first spoke to a sister, who would become my wife. In 1991, the second floor was where Pastor Tom Lee and I worked on top of two folding tables for two years. I was also ordained here, observed countless Sunday worship services, attended decades of baptisms, and witnessed tears and laughter during fellowship. I believe we all have unique memories of this place.

However, some memories of 249 are less pleasant. Every few years, the basement would

flood after storms, with sewage backing up the pipes. I recall the first time this happened in 1987 when I was an intern minister, with sewage reaching 7 to 8 inches deep. The sickening contents were cleaned up by me and a custodian brother, which we fervently hoped would never happen again. This was not to be, as our low-lying location was susceptible to subsequent flooding. However, the blessings of 249 outweighed these inconveniences.

The construction of 249 took place under Pastor James Tan's supervision. I reread his autobiography *Grace Upon Grace* to refresh my memory. Pastor Tan recalled in 1961 how he left his church over doctrinal differences, despite not having another job lined up. While he did not know the way forward, God used Genesis 12:8 to encourage him. The passage was about Abraham being called to Canaan, where he "went on toward



the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent." With this encouragement, Pastor Tan had a tentmaker heart by founding BCEC. For the church's first 18 years, tent-pitching was foremost with rental of different places, until the construction of the 249 building in 1979. After the building was complete, Pastor Tan continued to have a heart of tentmaking, as he felt a young pastor should lead the church. He again stepped down without a job offer at age 60, passing on his baton. Pastor Tan believed Romans 4:17, that God was a God who "calls into being things that were not."

We were contacted by the City of Boston in 2018 about selling 249 for a new Josiah Quincy Upper School campus. The school had sought a new location for many years and hoped to connect our land parcel to theirs. Our elders, deacons, and members considered this proposal for over a year. Finally, during a special church meeting on May 5, 2019, more than 90% of voters approved the sale of 249 to the City of Boston. After the sale, the City of Boston allowed us to continue using the 249 building until June 2021. Time has flown by in the blink of an eye. We face space challenges without 249 going forward, as renovations take place at our Newton Campus and the Josiah Quincy Elementary School auditorium, which we rent for Chinatown Campus Sunday worship services. We will need wisdom in arranging

worship locations. However, the past 30 years have shown me that BCEC's brothers and sisters share Pastor Tan's tent-pitching genes. When we have insufficient space or are launching new ministries, we nimbly find space to lease or borrow. Places we have used include schools, college classrooms, auditoriums, the Oak Terrace community room, storefronts at Tai Tung Village and Mass Pike Towers, and rooms at other community organizations. While having limited space does inconvenience us and cause unease, this lack also humbles us to work with the community for solutions.

The Bible tells us in Numbers 9:18-20 (NIV), *"At the Lord's command the Israelites set out, and at his command they encamped. As long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. When the cloud*

remained over the tabernacle a long time, the Israelites obeyed the Lord's order and did not set out. Sometimes the cloud was over the tabernacle only a few days; at the Lord's command they would encamp, and then at his command they would set out." When the Israelites left Egypt, their tents and the tabernacle symbolizing God's presence were all mobile. To set up and take down were recurring events, with when to stop and go revealed by God with the cloud. No one knows or can plan for after the pandemic or external factors. We have no way of knowing if the pandemic is truly over. However, the God who led the Israelites is still the same. May we observe the times like God's cloud. May we continue to pitch tents, spreading the Good News of the Kingdom and training disciples.

Thanksgiving for the Building Process of 249 Harrison Avenue



by Pastor Emeritus Steven Chin

Before sharing about the process of building 249 Harrison Ave., I first want to remind our brothers and sisters that the Bible never uses the word "church" to refer to a building. "Church" always refers to the people, the believers. So this building is not a sacred space like the temple in the Old Testament. In this past year with the pandemic, we have found that the church can still function even without using a building. Yet a church building can be a useful tool in fulfilling the Great Commission to make disciples.

249 Harrison Ave. has been a blessing and a useful tool for our church. From its opening in 1979 until today, there have been over 4,000 worship services here in the sanctuary, in Cantonese, in English, and in Mandarin, that have given glory and praise to our God. The Word of God has been preached from its pulpit. Countless people have come to Christ in this building, not just from the preaching, but also from the various ministries, including our Community English classes and Project Destiny. Over 1,000 people have been baptized here. Many couples were joined in holy matrimony here. Many children have been dedicated here. Many ministers, including myself, were ordained here. The rooms have been used for Sunday School classes for the young and old. Many children got introduced to our wonderful God in this building. Many fellowships got their start in this building. They were used by God to encourage its members to

develop and grow lifelong relationships with the Lord and others.

Most of you were not a part of BCEC in 1979 when the building first opened. Let me share with you a bit of what it meant to the members of the church at that time to have this new building. For the details, I encourage you to read Pastor Tan's autobiography, *Grace Upon Grace*.

Our church was started in 1961 60 years ago this month. Initially, it met in members' homes and in rented storefronts. When I joined Pastor Tan as his assistant in 1977, the church was meeting in rented portions of the Pine Street Inn. This was not a hotel, but it was a home for alcoholics and homeless people. I remember my first visit to BCEC going up Pine Street. There were men lying on the ground drunk. There was a strong stench of urine and vomit with flies buzzing around. I literally had to hold my breath to go into the bilingual worship service.

So the congregation desperately wanted its own place. The small congregation of about 125 adults was able to buy a plot of land on the other side of Pine Street from the city of Boston. But raising enough money to construct a building on that land was a challenge as the church was composed largely of restaurant workers, sewing factory workers, and students. The estimated construction cost was \$500,000. A half a million dollars does not seem much to us today, but for the church at that time, it was huge. That figure did not even include any air conditioning because it was unaffordable. However, the members saved and sacrificed. Christine Chan was a college student at the time. She later married Pastor Fung's son, Tim Fung, and went overseas to serve the Lord. As a poor student, Christine had no money to give. Even though she was already thin, she went without lunch to save money to give to the construction of 249 Harrison Ave. The financial challenge motivated people to pray and depend

upon God. And God provided. The building of 249 Harrison Ave. not only provided a facility for ministry, but it built up the faith of its members in an unforgettable way. To the members of BCEC at that time, the opening of 249 Harrison Ave. was a miracle from God. God went on to use the building as His tool to help the church to grow in number and in maturity.

We do not know how the Lord will lead in the future or what challenges we will face, but God's provision of 249 Harrison Ave. will never be forgotten by those who lived through it. We thank the Lord for the product of the building and the process that God took the members through to get there. I hope our church can learn the lessons of sacrifice, perseverance, and faith from those who have gone before us.



Senior Pastor Daniel Chan, founding church member Jane Chin, and Pastor Emeritus Pastor Steve Chin attend the 249 celebration on June 13.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CORNER

Global 6K for Clean Water

The Social Responsibility Committee invited Global 6K for Clean Water participants to share their experience.

Christina Ho, Chinatown Cantonese

Participating in the Global 6K allows me to slightly experience the challenges and struggles of those lacking the most essential but basic need — water that I often take for granted or feel entitled to in everyday life. Not only was I encouraged, but also, friends, family, and brothers and sisters in Christ who made the donations to support this worthy cause have truly touched and made a difference in other people's lives. I am thankful for God to allow me to partner with Him in His kingdom to share His love.

William Leong, Chinatown English

Our small group was focused on service opportunities, so we were always looking for a safe way to serve during the pandemic. We had been an online small group all year, so it was great that we had an opportunity to not only raise awareness for a great cause, but get to enjoy each other's company outdoors!

Ling-Mei Wong, Chinatown Cantonese

My husband Szechun Leung and I participated in the Global 6K for Clean Water in honor of our daughter Serena Jean Leung. She was born March 19, weighing 7 lbs 14 oz and measuring 19.5 in. Serena went to heaven March 28, when her heart suddenly stopped. As her Mama and Baba, we do not know the purpose of her passing. But one day, we will go to her and be a family reunited.

Our Team 6K in honor of Serena Leung raised \$6,575, providing 131 individuals with clean water. We cannot have more time with Serena, but she made a difference in the lives of others.



Love Your Block Neighborhood Cleanup (5/1): Brothers and sisters from BCEC volunteered to clean up Chinatown.

Helping Local Schools as Remote Teaching Assistants

by Victoria Chan and Emily Liu,
Chinatown English

Teacher's Perspective (from Victoria)

My students call me Ms. V. Chan and I have been a fully remote teacher at JQES since the start of the pandemic last March. This year, I taught a fully remote first-grade Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) class, which in itself had many challenges. Getting students to focus through a Zoom screen was incredibly difficult when they were at home with so many distractions around them. Whether it was a YouTube video or a TV playing in the background, a sibling crawling over them with toys, or students with their cameras off, there was always something else that was distracting my students from learning. No matter how many reminders or incentives were given or conversations with parents, it was difficult to keep students engaged on Zoom. However, I noticed that having students in small groups was more effective because they were able to participate and engage more with the lesson and with each other. On the other hand, working with one small group at a time led the other students to have to work independently.

Therefore, when I first saw that BCEC was partnering with the school for remote TAs I was excited. All the prayers to get help were being answered. With students being at home, they had less interactions with other adults and students than if they were in school. I wanted a remote TA in my class to help my students with different learning needs and for the students to have another interaction with a teacher that wasn't me. Many of my students needed support with foundational

reading and writing skills, thus getting support from a TA would be helpful. This was also another opportunity for students to practice their social conversational skills in small groups. When I told my class about having another teacher come to help our class, many were excited to meet her.

Volunteer's Perspective (from Emily)

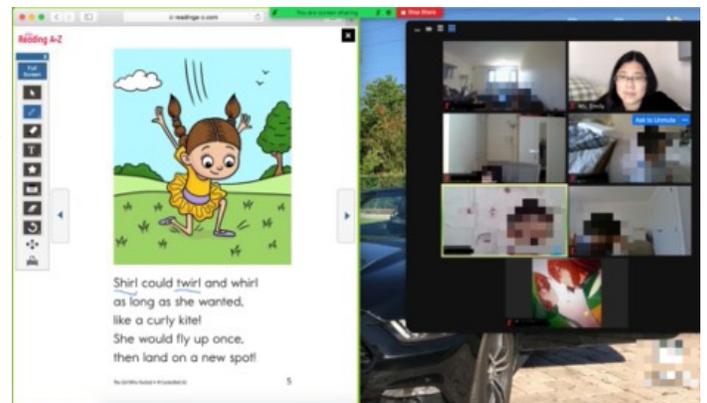
When BCEC put out the call for Remote Learning Teacher Assistants, I was happy to volunteer. I had seen the incredible amount of energy and work that my daughter's teachers put into remote schooling, and I was eager to help. We ended up with a team of nine volunteers who were matched with classroom teachers at JQES and JQUS, from 1st grade through 11th grade. The TAs spent at least 2 hours a week online with their classes. Some TAs spent much more time attending classes, in addition to their time working with the students.

I was matched with Ms. V. Chan at JQES. From March to June, I worked with small groups of students on Thursdays and Fridays. Ms. V. Chan assigned me with two consistent groups and I met with each one for an hour. The time flew by quickly as we played word games, practiced guided reading, and reviewed sight words. I enjoyed getting to know each student and learning about their interests and their quirks.

Like students who are at school in person, their energy levels varied — some students were highly engaged and talkative, and others were more reticent. Occasionally students would experience internet issues and lose connectivity, or just “disappear” behind their black Zoom rectangle. In

Ms. V. Chan's 1st grade class, most of the students had their cameras on, and I could see their faces unless they were wandering around their room. However, other Remote TAs in the upper grades shared that students never turned on their cameras and rarely used their microphones. Their main interaction with the older students was through the Zoom chat and emoji reaction responses. However, as the volunteers consistently showed up and made themselves available to help the students, they experienced some breakthroughs with students opening up and being more responsive.

Overall, I was very grateful to serve and connect with the local school in Chinatown. As a stay-at-home-parent with young children, the pandemic was isolating, as it limited my interactions with others in our community. Although we did not meet in person, this ministry still provided an opportunity to put BCEC's vision into practice: “Because God has blessed us, we strive to be a blessing to the Chinese/Asian community and to our neighbors, by sharing the love of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are compelled by a passion for God and compassion for people, all for the glory of God.” This virtual volunteer experience was a fulfilling and encouraging ministry for me, and hopefully also for the students and teachers who participated.



World Vision Global 6K for Clean Water (5/22): Many brothers and sisters joined Team BCEC in the World Vision's fundraiser to raise money to provide clean water to communities around the world that lack access. One group from the Cantonese congregation met and completed the walk together at Jamaica Pond.

Working Two Decades with Pastor Jacob Fung



by Pastor Emeritus Steven Chin

I had the privilege to work under Pastor Jacob Fung, who went home to the Lord on January 22, 2021, as Assistant to the Pastor and as Associate Pastor from 1979 through 2000 (21 years). He was the longest serving Senior Pastor in the 60-year history of BCEC. Pastor Fung was installed as Senior Pastor on the same day as the 249 Harrison Ave. building dedication. Under his leadership as senior pastor, the church grew from one bilingual worship service of 200 people to four worship services — two Cantonese, one English, and one Mandarin worship services — with 750 adults combined when he retired in 2000.

For many Chinese churches in North America, it starts with a Chinese service in Mandarin or Cantonese. As the children grow up, the Chinese service would be changed to a bilingual service. Later they may add an English-speaking pastor and an English language worship service. Historically in North America, the English pastor would last 2-5 years and then leave. However, Pastor Fung and I worked together for over 20 years.

I want to share with you some of my reflections of why we were able to work together for so long. This long-term relationship was able to bless BCEC. In many other churches as pastors come and go, there is a leadership void when the pastorate is vacant. When a new pastor is found, there is the challenge of adjustments to new directions, new values, and new ways of doing things. When the leadership changes frequently, the church is often caught in a cycle of starting over and over. BCEC has been blessed with many of our pastors serving for decades. Some of Pastor Fung's characteristics as Senior Pastor greatly contributed to the stability of myself and the other pastoral staff and to the growth of BCEC. Let me share three characteristics:

1. Biblical Convictions in Essentials

I know for me, Pastor Fung's rock solid dependence on the Word of God made it easy for me to serve with him. With a changing world and changing morality, we were able to see eye to eye on the various issues that came up. I think this is because we both saw the Word of God as our guide and the final authority. Popular opinion can change, but the Bible contains God's universal truth to us. So we generally agreed on issues that came up in our 21 years of working together because our foundation was the same.

Pastor Fung was also able to help me grow in my understanding of God's Word during that time. He had a biblical conviction concerning the importance of world missions. To be honest, early in my ministry, I was not concerned with world missions. But through the different speakers Pastor Fung brought in for our missions conferences, I came to see this as a biblical mandate.

Of course, we did not always agree. The closest I came to leaving BCEC was when Pastor Fung and I disagreed on who could take communion. I wanted those, for instance, who took a step of faith at the conference to be able to take communion immediately, whereas Pastor Fung felt they should wait until after they were baptized. Being idealistic and young, I thought affirming salvation by faith alone was the most important value. Pastor Fung listened to my thoughts but stood his ground. Later, I realized this was not big enough of an issue to split over.

2. Flexibility in Non-essentials

Although Pastor Fung had strong Biblical convictions, he was open to ideas that the Bible did not explicitly address or prohibit. He did not cling to tradition for tradition's sake.

The bilingual service was, what you may say, a "tradition" at BCEC when Pastor Fung arrived. The older members generally loved it because they could worship as an entire family and because they could worship and learn English at the same time. On the other hand, the English-speaking young people saw the bilingual worship as boring and irrelevant. There was a lot of heated debate about what to do. Many felt any change would split the church. I firmly advocated for two services — one in Cantonese and one in English. Pastor Fung actually agreed, but he said the time was not right. It took four years of praying and God working before Pastor Fung said it was time. The change in 1983 to two services allowed the church to grow in number and in maturity and kept the unity of the church. Pastor Fung taught me that not only is making the right decision important, but also the timing of the decision is important as well.

In another example of Pastor Fung's flexibility, many of you know that Pastor Fung loved traditional church music. But when I asked him if the English worship service could use guitar and drums and use new music not in the hymn book, he gave his blessing. Pastor Fung believed worship needs to be based on God's Word, but different cultures may have different expressions of worship.

3. Delegation and mentorship

Unlike our founding pastor, James Tan, Pastor Fung was fluent in English, as well as in Mandarin and Cantonese. Therefore, he could use his full authority to direct the English-speaking ministries. Pastor Fung said he could speak and understand the English language, but he did not understand how the American Born Chinese think. As a result,



(From left) Pastor Jacob Fung with Pastor Steve Chin and Pastor James Tan at the 50th-anniversary celebration.

he delegated and entrusted the English-speaking ministry to me. Pastor Fung did not micromanage me or insist on his way of doing things. Instead, he gave me a lot of freedom to do things as I saw fit.

Pastor Fung did not see me as a threat to his authority, but actually mentored me and elevated me for higher leadership. I was hired as Assistant to the Pastor under Pastor Tan. My three roles were youth director, janitor, and secretary. When Pastor Fung became Senior Pastor, I offered to resign as I understood he may want to pick his own staff to work with him. However, he wanted me to continue.

A year after the English service started 1983, Pastor Fung said he wanted to ordain me and make me Associate Pastor. He saw the English-speaking congregation needed its own pastor. I actually had no understanding about ordination and was not seeking it. Nevertheless, he said it would help the church. So, because of his initiative of the process, I was ordained and became Associate Pastor.

Fifteen years later when Pastor Fung announced his retirement, I was concerned about who would be the new Senior Pastor. I was assuming the pastor would be a Chinese-speaking minister brought in from outside of BCEC. I wanted to be on the search committee, so I could provide some input on the successor, and ensure I could work with him. To my surprise, Pastor Fung recommended that I become the Senior Pastor, and the church agreed as well. Although I had been at BCEC a long time, in Chinese churches English-speaking pastors (especially those who could not communicate in Chinese) were not even considered for the Senior Pastor position. Yet Pastor Fung became a pioneer and was willing to break tradition and entrust me to be the Senior Pastor.

I know Pastor Fung, like all of us, had his strengths and weaknesses, but God used him and his biblical convictions on essentials, his flexibility on non-essentials, and his willingness to delegate and mentor others to help bless BCEC during his time as Senior Pastor. May he hear the commendation from the Lord, "Well done, faithful servant!"

Reflection on My Commissioning



by Ben Wong,
Chinatown Cantonese

Thank God for His grace, as I reflect on how I eventually came to serve at Boston Chinese Evangelical Church in a full-time position. He built me up and trained me to communicate well with my own family, have true fellowship with brothers and sisters, and work well with pastoral staff, so that we could become great partners of His team. In 2013, I decided to attend seminary to better equip myself to follow Jesus and to affirm His calling while I was still a new believer.

The following verses have been imprinted on my heart since I first read it: *“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”* (Matthew 11:28-30 ESV)

This passage helped me to truly know Jesus. He gave me peace while I was going through hardships during my graduate studies. It turns out

that this passage has always been in my heart and prepared me for my life of ministry.

I have always worked hard to glorify God. One day, He closed one door when my position was eliminated due to company restructuring. It was a blow to me, but I then took it as an opportunity with joy and decided to discuss studying theology with my wife, Winnie. God gradually moved her to be submissive with faith. I was also reaffirmed by the pastors at BCEC. With God's provision, I was blessed with sufficient finances, good health, and energy to manage both my studies and my young family with my two-year-old daughter, Larissa.

God's grace was sufficient for me and my family!

After I graduated from seminary, God led me and revealed His fields for me to work. My calling for spreading the gospel was ignited early on when I first believed in Jesus. The flame in my heart for the calling, coupled with my prayers and His flowing life within me, intensified. It helped me see more opportunities in different environments

and situations to care for people around me. An opportunity surfaced in God's timing. I applied for a full-time job at BCEC. After interviews by church leaders, I started my full-time service in 2020 and became a pastor assistant. During this pandemic, I have been following Jesus to help shepherd and care for the elderly brothers and sisters. May God grant His servant more diligence and perseverance! I will continue to press on towards the goal in our spiritual home, and be grateful to count His blessings all the days of my life. Praise God!



Ben Wong with his wife, Winnie, and daughter, Larissa, on his graduation from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

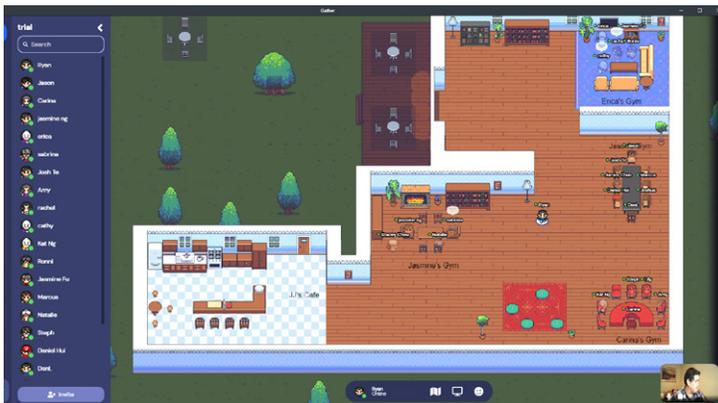


A retirement celebration for Dora Lam took place online on May 23. Dora served at Boston Chinese Evangelical Church for more than 20 years. May God bless her in retirement.

Bidding farewell to 249 Harrison Avenue building

Boston Chinese Evangelical Church held a celebration for its 249 Harrison Avenue building on June 13, 2021. The church was completed in 1979 and was sold in 2019 to the City of Boston to build a new school building for Josiah Quincy Upper School.





UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY

23-25 **RELAUNCH WEEKEND**
IN-PERSON WORSHIP AND
MINISTRIES RESUME

AUGUST

8 **PROJECT DESTINY**
FAMILY NIGHT

9-13 **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**
CHINATOWN

13-15 **BASECAMP**
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

14 **COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS**
FALL SEMESTER PLACEMENT EXAM

SEPTEMBER

4 **COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS**
FALL SEMESTER BEGINS

6 **LABOR DAY**
OFFICE CLOSED

18 **LEADERSHIP MEETING**
CHINESE

OCTOBER

31 **ANNUAL MEETING**

NOVEMBER

7 **DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS**
ONE HOUR BACK

7 **MISSIONS CONFERENCE**
CHINESE

14 **MISSIONS CONFERENCE**
ENGLISH

25 **THANKSGIVING DAY**
OFFICE CLOSED

27 **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**
NO CEC CLASSES

28 **THANKSGIVING SUNDAY**

28 **CHILD DEDICATION**
CHINESE

English College Retreat (3/12-3/14): The English College Retreat took place online with Rev. Vernon Cheung as our speaker this year. Students worked on care packages for the retreat. They also used Gather.town to play games.



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 Ling-Mei Wong at lingmeiwong@gmail.com.

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. 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
Ling-Mei Wong

English Editor Joshua Chin	Translation Staff Ming Ho Brian Hui
Chinese Editor Kelvin Li	Wanda Lam Susanna Tzau
Layout Designer Charlotte Lai	Ling-Mei Wong



Easter Baptism (4/4): 1-4) English 5-10) Chinese