



From Our Senior Pastor:

A Golden Opportunity for Ministry



by PASTOR STEVEN CHIN

I recently became a grandfather. I enjoy my granddaughter very much, especially since I do not have all the responsibilities of the parents. However, becoming a grandparent also reinforced in my mind that I am getting older. I had thought the title for grandfather in Chinese (gung gung) was reserved for really old people. Now I am in that category. However, I am not alone. Many of my peers are aging with me. You can tell we are all aging when the common topic of conversation is our health issues.

Actually, the American population is aging. In 1960, just before BCEC was started, the number of people age 65 and over was 17 million or 9.2% of the population. Today the number of people 65 and over is about 43 million or about 15% of the population. Many of us know that the baby boomers (or those

born in the 1940's, 1950's, and 1960's) are reaching retirement age, causing stress on the Social Security system.

All this has made me realize that we need effective ministry to the elderly. We all know the importance of ministry to children and youth. They are certainly the future of our church. However, we should not neglect the importance of ministry to senior citizens.

Senior citizens not only have physical challenges, but they also have emotional and social needs as well. They may feel useless and unappreciated, as our society values youth, beauty, and strength. Many also feel isolated and lonely. Of course, elderly also have spiritual needs, as many face death without the sure hope of eternal life in Christ.

The Asian culture has generally seen increasing age as a positive thing. Age generally comes with increased wisdom. God's Word also seems to value age and wise living.

Here's what the Bible says about aging:

"Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life." (Proverbs 16:31 – ESV)

"Wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days." (Job 12:12 – ESV)

As a church, we should value our senior citizens. Although they may not have as much energy or see as clearly as before, they have much wisdom to impart on others. We need to value their past service and accomplishments. I hope that younger people will be led by the Lord to minister to our elderly. With the forthcoming acquisition of 120 Shawmut Avenue, we will have new opportunities to minister to this age group and to reach out to other senior citizens.

We also hope our senior citizens will continue grow and serve as they are living longer. While we may be retired from a job, we do not retire from the Christian life. The Psalmist challenges us to see the golden years as years of opportunity to minister and to bear fruit.

"So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation, your power to all those to come." (Psalm 71:18 – ESV)

"They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green," (Psalm 92:14 – ESV)

May the Lord raise up more people to minister to our senior citizens. If you have ideas or a willingness to serve this age group, please share it with our pastoral staff.



Cantonese Joint Retreat (6/29-30)

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*Nordic Missions Team 2013:***Drawing Closer to Make it Last**

by CHARLES LAI,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

For two and a half weeks this past July, Vernon Cheung, Adrienne Lee, and I travelled as the Nordic Missions Team to support the Scandinavian Chinese Christian Church's (SCCC) week-long SummerCamp. All three of us have served on this trip before, and this time we focused on discipling and building upon previous relationships. As we prayed and prepared with this goal in mind, I began to wonder how God would use me this trip. I felt neither well equipped nor sufficient enough for this goal. After all, I am the youngest and least experienced member of the team.

We arrived in Avesta, Sweden a week before the actual camp for a weeklong training led by Pastor Enoch. Right when we arrived at the campsite, we were welcomed warmly by our fellow leaders from last year. It did not take long to pick up where we had left off as we had kept in touch. It was refreshing and fun to see them again, and encouraging to see how many of them have grown since last year! Some who served as Junior and Youth camp counselors were now Head Responsibles (Co-Team Leader) for the entire Junior and Youth Camp. I was excited to see how God would use the newly-cultivated batch of leaders. This encouraged me and dispelled some of the doubts I had before.

If God could strengthen and cultivate these young leaders, why couldn't He do the same with me? I began to have more faith and placed some of my worries onto Him, hoping that God would reveal more to me during SummerCamp.

This year, over 450 people from countries such as Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark came to SummerCamp. Adrienne and I served as small group leaders in the Youth Camp (ages 17-22) while Vernon served as a small group leader in the Young Adult Camp (ages 22 and up). My small group was the youngest and possibly the shyest of all the youth groups. It was difficult at first for my Finnish co-leader and me to lead them in topics such as forgiveness and grace, but gradually, the youth started to engage more in our conversations. Keeping in mind both the camp's vision of "reaching out to draw closer" as well as our team's goal of discipling and building relationships, I grew more confident and comfortable in God to reach out to my small group.

One person I reached out to and grew closer with was a guy in my small group. We first met last year and had clicked right away. We spent much of the time after each evening worship session talking until lights out. It was easy to connect with him because he was around my age. Topics like athletics, girls, school, and social life were naturally the



Nordic Missions Team and Pastor Enoch Liao

focus of most of our time. Through these long conversations, I was reminded again of how big God really is: despite our different countries and cultures, we were able to talk about the same God and the same topics that I talk about with my friends here at BCEC.

As SummerCamp drew to a close, I realized that I had made a lot of progress in what I had hoped for most: lasting relationships. I saw that this was God's blessing and plan for me all along. He showed me that He did have a reason for me to be in Sweden this year, despite my doubts, and used me through all my flaws to connect and build upon relationships from before, through His love and grace. Our team is excited to be staying in touch with our friends there. Through this second trip, I am reminded and humbled again that God loves and accepts me just as I am. All He asks of me is to simply trust in Him.



1) Co-Leaders Group 2) Youth Camp Group 3) Co-Leaders praying before camp 4) Scandinavian Brothers 5) Teaching the young people to make smores

EXPANSION NEWS UPDATE

by EXPANSION COMMITTEE

On June 16th, BCEC held a Special General Assembly meeting to decide on the acquisition of 120 Shawmut Avenue as a physical expansion for our Chinatown ministries. Praise God for the 400+ brothers and sisters who participated. The Quincy Elementary School (QES) auditorium was standing room only. In addition, over 100 people also sat or stood in the foyer of the elementary school. All six congregations were represented; all generations came.

The meeting began by worshipping our Almighty God through songs of praise and thanksgiving. Robert Huie, chairperson of the Board of Deacons, then officially called the meeting to order. Minutes from the last general assembly were passed, and Anthony Lai (co-chair of the Expansion Committee) followed with a presentation of the final summary of the Due Diligence findings for 120 Shawmut Avenue. Steven Chin (Senior Pastor and co-chair of the Expansion Committee) then shared the church leadership's strategic perspective for the acquisition. This was followed by a Q&A session, where Anthony Lai and Gerard Fong (vice chair of the Expansion Committee) addressed questions from members. Their responses, insights, and recommendations were based on many months of interacting with those who have worked tirelessly and dedicated their time to the Expansion project.

A Call to Prayer & Personal Testimony by Elder Jack Lee — In addition to leading the assembly in a time of corporate prayer, Elder Jack shared his excitement about the opportunity that God has provided.

His passionate and heartfelt testimony recounted many of the challenges and blessings we experienced over the past 52 years in terms of space needs. Having served as a Children's Sunday School teacher for over a decade, he shared about what our teachers and children go through due to the lack of permanent space for Sunday School classrooms. He reminded us that this was not just a business transaction, but more importantly it was a spiritual journey and a challenge to us by God to remind ourselves that we need to rely on His wisdom and guidance. We prayed in pairs and then we voted.

Response Hymn & Benediction — And as we sang "Tis So Sweet," Minister Barry Lam reminded us that regardless of the outcome of the vote on whether to move forward or not with the purchase of 120 Shawmut Avenue, we needed to remind ourselves of God's goodness and faithfulness to BCEC.

A Resounding YES

The congregation voted upon the following resolution:
To approve the purchase of South Cove Manor at 120 Shawmut Ave. Boston, MA at a purchase price not more than \$4,000,000 subject to such terms and conditions as may be determined by the Board of Deacons and the Board of Elders. The result of the vote was: YES votes - 399; NO votes - 23.



Project Destiny 20th Anniversary Reunion:

Celebrating 20 Summers of Project Destiny



by KAM HO LAU,
CHINATOWN 3RD SERVICE

This is a very special year, the 20th summer of Project Destiny (PD). There is always a special place in my heart for Project Destiny. Almost 15 years ago, I attended PD as a camper. Because of that, I started attending BCEC. I met God and made a commitment to follow Him at PD. God bought me back once again in 2004 as a Junior Counselor. Through the past 10 years of involvement, God has shown me more than what I could ever wish for.

Through PD, I discovered and developed the gifts that God has given me to serve. In addition, I learned the unconditional love that God has for me. God will use a bunch of sinful people to serve Him together to show the campers His unconditional sacrificial love. Sometimes, the ways that God works is hard to be explained in the view of His people. God used PD to guide me into the passions that He placed in my life, which is to be a teacher in the city. I discovered through PD that I love to work with students, so that I could build relationships and make an impact in their journey of life. I can say that I got more out of

PD than the work and hours I've spent in the ministry.

This summer, I had a unique opportunity to be part of the PD 20th Anniversary Planning Team with Emily Liu and Evangeline Wong. Planning the anniversary weekend events was definitely a faith journey. Even though we have each been part of the PD summer camp, none of us had any idea of how to plan an anniversary reunion. There were so many unknowns, but our God provided every step of the way, from ideas to helpers, from thoughts to actions. Working with different PD staff and campers from the past in planning these events helped me to see how PD has played a role in each person's life. I saw how the PD summer urban outreach ministry has brought people from different life stages and different gifts, as well as different congregations together, so spiritual lives could be transformed for His glory. As a result, we were celebrating the work that God has done through PD during the last 20 summers.

During the registration period, I had a chance to speak with many of my past campers and staff as I invited them to attend the anniversary weekend. I realized that being on the planning team was not just all about tasks, but a chance to start conversations with



PD 20th-anniversary reunion banquet

people about how things have been since PD. Even though they all might be at a different place along their spiritual walk with God or even around the world, it was a chance to start the conversation and to see the work that God been doing. Praise God that through the weekend of festivities, more than 200 people came to join the celebration. I was able to see many of my past campers all grown up as young men and women. We talked about the days from PD, little moments that were still memorable even today.

As the theme for this summer's 20th Anniversary, Celebrating God's Faithfulness in 20 Summers of PD, God has been faithful to PD, using this outreach ministry to do His work here in Chinatown. With 700 campers and 200 staff members, the God who was with the counselors in 1994, is the same God who is here with our ministry today! Looking back at the past 20 years, God has used this ministry to help me as well as many others to find their destinies and unite brothers and sisters to walk together in this journey towards our destiny!

PD Reflections



JOCELYN CHU,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

As we celebrate the 20th year of Project Destiny at BCEC, it is good to go back in time and bear witness to God's faithfulness and goodness to this ministry. We often hear about PD's impact on the lives of the campers, but as a counselor serving on the team in 1995 and then in 1998, PD has had an incredible, life-changing impact on me.

One of the most powerful experiences I had at PD was prayer walking. In 1995, the boundaries of the combat zone extended literally into Chinatown; remnants of streetwalkers and addicts were evident in the little side streets behind the Tufts dorms. At the same time, this neighborhood was home to hundreds of residents packed away in tiny apartments above shop fronts and restaurants. Prayer walking opened my eyes to the plight of the city and the love of God for its dwellers. Project Destiny for me represents a commitment to claiming Chinatown as much as it is about claiming the souls of the campers for God.



JASON CHU,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

Having served at Project Destiny both as a Teacher Mentor Counselor and a Planning Team member, I had the privilege of not only teaching middle schoolers but also mentoring the counselors themselves. I experienced what it was like to have daily quiet times and a personal relationship with God. It allowed me to be more disciplined and to put my trust in Him. It also gave me the opportunity to have prayer partners and to be vulnerable in sharing my struggles as well as the praises that He had put in my life. The PD community was a blessing, and the chance to share the love of God with the campers made it that much better. There's no better feeling than seeing God at work in the lives of the campers and using us counselors to witness to them. Needless to say, Project Destiny was a life-changing experience!



WILL CHU,
BCEC MISSIONARY

The biggest lesson that PD has taught me through having served as a counselor for 3 years was the

power of prayer and the invitation to partner with Him in ministry. I remember there was once a day at camp when the government lunches had not arrived, and we were all nervous because we weren't sure how we would feed the 60 students. We decided to try praying for the food to arrive. At first I thought that this was not very smart because we should just head out to Chinatown Cafe and buy lots of fried rice, but as some of us started to pray, my fears and anxieties began to go away, and within 5 minutes of prayer, the government lunches had arrived! As I serve every day now on the college campuses in Saint Louis, I am reminded of God's invitations to join with Him in ministering in ways that may not seem productive but are extremely fruitful.

Praise God for 20 years of His work through PD!



SHIRLEY CHUI,
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

As Project Destiny (PD) celebrates its 20th anniversary this summer, I am also celebrating my 20th anniversary with BCEC and a blessed life walking in the light of God.

That's right! I was one of the campers during the first two summers of PD. At the end of the first PD camp, I raised my hand and committed to know more about Christ. And at the end of the second PD camp, I raised my hand to accept Christ as my savior.

I loved PD so much that I went back to serve as a counselor nine years later. It was one of the most joyous and craziest times in my life, serving with a family of twelve awesome counselors and six hyperactive junior counselors. Just like Paul said in Philippians 4:13, 19 (NIV), "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength... And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.", I truly experienced God's amazing grace and power during the three-month ministry, despite sleeping just five to six hours each day and spending many hours of planning for classes and activities. Serving in PD was super fun and very rewarding. It was through PD that I developed my passion for youth ministry.

Today, I am proud to be the product of PD!

TIM HO, CHINATOWN ENGLISH

I can certainly say that Project Destiny has given me many great and lasting friendships, whether it be with fellow staff members or even former campers that I have had the privilege to watch grow up and become counselors and leaders themselves. But more importantly, PD has helped me to understand a little better how to love others, love God, and love His work through all of us. When I served at church once or twice a week, it was simple to put on my best face and be enthusiastic about everything. However, being in proximity with the same people day after day really taught me how to love others through their weaknesses and to accept the same grace and love when I made many of my own mistakes. I saw how easy it was for me to place my worth in my abilities or how good a counselor I was, but gradually learned that God is the one who truly changes people's hearts and makes PD work. I am very thankful to have been involved in a small part of this ministry, and I am also thankful for all the lessons it has helped me to bring to other ministries and communities.



SUSANNA LAU,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

My first experience with Project Destiny was through cooking meals for the staff. I never thought I would have the opportunity or time to serve as a counselor, but that changed in 2007. I finally had the chance to join the team as a Senior Counselor. Initially, I believed it would be a great opportunity to gain experience teaching middle school students. As it turns out, I learned more about God and having a heart to serve than just creating and executing lesson plans.

Leading up to the first day of camp, I was more nervous about the way my cooking class would go. Would the campers learn anything? Would we burn the church down? Thankfully, we did not burn down the church, but over the course of five weeks, I learned it was more about the time spent with the campers than trying to teach them to make something edible. Seeing the campers learn about God reignited my own excitement for Him.

During training, Pastor Enoch said he wanted PD to be a life-changing experience instead of just a once in a lifetime experience. My faith deepened during that summer since I had to rely on God no matter how much I tried to do things on my own. Relying on God is a constant struggle, but I think of the opportunities He has given me to grow. My PD experience usually comes to mind, and I am encouraged to persevere in situations I am confronted with in my spiritual journey with God.



COLLIN LEE,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

I was involved in Project Destiny for four years; two years each as a Junior and Senior Counselor. Every year that I served in PD, I was constantly reminded and humbled by one simple idea: God loves me. And because of this, I am called to show His love to the people that I find difficult to love. I realized my own need for love as a fallen man who needs grace from his team and, more importantly, God during this exhausting summer ministry. Likewise, I saw the campers and fellow counselors as people who needed the same love that is found only in God. Through these four years of being reminded of my need for Christ's love and to love as Christ loved, my heart goes out to the people who are lost and in need of God's gift of grace, hope, and salvation. This has developed my personal ministry and heart for people, which could even lead to a potential career path of counseling in the future. This would give me the opportunity to show Christ's love to those in need and also constantly be reminded of His grace in my life because I cannot love except that He loved me first.



DEREK LEE,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

While walking along Oak Terrace, I heard a voice call out, "Derek?" I looked up, and there I saw Ms. Goon (or Hannah). Wow! It had been about three years since I last saw her, but she still remembered me from when I was a Project Destiny (PD) camper.

Little did I know, God was calling for me through her. I remembered how the counselors were caring and loving, but I would have never expected them to remember my name or face after

PD. It wasn't until I started serving as a counselor myself that I realized how much the counselors had cared and prayed for the campers.

Serving in PD had made me realize that it is not about how well made the sandwiches are or about how prepared I was to teach how to throw a frisbee or about how well small group discussion went. It was about loving others as Christ has loved me first. Perhaps this includes praying for and remembering campers even after PD has ended.

These days, I find it strange when I see past campers and ask them how school is going, they often say that they are working now. Praise God for teaching me how to model Christ's love to others through serving as a PD counselor!



WAI CHIN NG,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

God used Project Destiny to shape my character in the early years of my serving at BCEC. Over the years, I learned to trust in Him, obey His commands, and serve others. All those lessons have become an integral part of my life and deeply impacted my relationship with God, even to this day. If I could just use one word to describe my PD experience, it would be "AWESOME." God was really awesome at shaping my perspective of missions through Project Destiny. Not only did I grow in my walk with God, I also discovered my passion for youth ministry. As a result, I continued serving as a PD counselor for four summers and also served as a youth counselor for 10 years. Looking back, there are so many memories to cherish, lessons to value, and blessings to count. What was once imprinted on a pen still holds true in my heart, which is "Project Destiny Never Ends."



BRIAN TSE,
CHINATOWN ENGLISH

Project Destiny was an integral part of my life. During my high school years, participating in PD while experiencing so many transitions in my life was quite difficult. At the same time, it helped me to become who I am today. By God's grace, serving in PD as a Junior Counselor for three years has helped to shape my view of what it means to be a servant leader. Although I personally felt capable to lead a small group, teach a class, and be a Senior Counselor, God knew that my heart was not in the right place. He humbled me, and allowed me to learn what it meant to have a servant heart. This growing understanding of a servant heart has allowed me to serve God, giving Him all of the glory. It has permeated into every facet of every service opportunity I have participated in thus far in my spiritual journey.

MISSIONS CORNER: SOMETIMES ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK

by ANONYMOUS

Over the past six months Ben* and I have been visiting with some Arab guys who are temporarily living in Boston. Abu Nader* is from Dubai and knows a great deal about Islam and has even memorized large portions of the Quran.

About three months ago, during one of my visits, Abu Nader began asking me many questions about the Bible. He knew little about it but was curious. From the kinds of questions he was asking, I gleaned that he had been getting some of his information from the Internet, probably from Muslim websites designed to attack the veracity of the Bible. He asked many questions, including the following: Who wrote the Bible? When was it written? Why are there four Gospels? Why are there so many different translations of the Bible? What language was the Bible written in?

After talking about the Bible for over an hour, Abu Nader asked me if the name Mohamed was in the Bible. I told him I was not aware that it was. He went on to explain how the Hebrew word, דמחמ (machmad), found in Song of Solomon 5:16, is really the word Mohamed. After a lengthy discussion, I told him I could not accept his conclusion. I of-

fered to continue a discussion with him about the Bible over email. But he said he would only do this if I accepted that the Bible talks about Mohamed. He said he could not believe a book that had been corrupted. I asked him, "Who told you that?" I also asked him if he'd ever read the Bible. He said he hadn't. So I asked him, "Instead of accepting what other people say about the Bible, why don't you read it yourself and ask God to show you whether or not it is true?" It came time to leave. When Ben and I got to the car, we prayed that Abu Nader would be convicted to read the Bible.

Last month, Ben went to visit Abu Nader again. He said to Ben, "You know – my whole life, I have never read the Bible, but over the past two months, I've read the entire Bible." Ben asked, "The Old and New Testament? The entire thing?" Abu Nader replied, "Yes, the whole Bible. And I have some questions." In fact, he had 3 pages of questions, front and back, with Scripture references and notes.

One question he had was, "What is the meaning of this?" as he held up his fingers in the form of the cross. "What's the meaning of the cross? And does it mean that all the

world's sins are forgiven? If all the world's sins are forgiven, do you think that the people who killed Jesus knew He would forgive their sins, so that's why they killed Him?"

This led to two hours of discussion with him and 5 other Arab guys where Ben was able to share how Jesus on the cross prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do..." And how God changed the Apostle Paul's life and later wrote, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Ben described that God changes our hearts when we realize that He loves us, and so we don't want to keep doing bad things.

We praise God that Abu Nader accepted the challenge to read the Bible and that he is searching for answers. Please pray that he will continue to read the Bible and that God would speak to him about his need for Jesus. Sometimes, all you have to do is ask!

**Not their real names*

Cantonese Marriage Enrichment Retreat



by DAVID AND JUDY CHANG,
NEWTON CANTONESE

As a couple, we attended the Cantonese Marriage Enrichment Retreat this past April in Boston. This was the first ever Cantonese-speaking retreat put together by Chinese Families for Christ (CFFC). You may ask why we decided to attend this retreat. Was it because we were experiencing difficulties with our marriage or because we were no longer in love?

In a society defined by busyness, we, as a couple, occupy each day with work, raising children, taking care of elderly parents, and expressing love through acts of service. But as heart-to-heart conversations gradually decreased with our increasing busyness, our relationship also became increasingly prone to bickering over the smallest differences of opinion. There

are endless problems in life and as a Chinese proverb states, "There is a skeleton in every household." Oftentimes in our marriage, we direct so much of our energy to resolving problems. As a result, this led us to slowly reduce the time we spent in protecting, strengthening, and growing the love that God had originally given to us in marriage.

To even attend this retreat may have been a daunting task for many couples who have children. This retreat was only meant for couples, so many families needed to arrange for relatives or friends to take care of their children for almost three days in order to attend. Although it was difficult to arrange, all those who were in attendance, whether newlyweds or couples who have been married for decades, found the experience to be valuable and enlightening.

During the retreat, we were able to fully devote our time and attention to our spouse, and we had a lot of time to have intimate conversations, which are precious opportunities that are hard to come by. Furthermore, we had the chance to rekindle our love. This is something we may have neglected during our marriage. During this time, we also learned to accept one

another, understand one another, and express our love in action. All this reminds us once again that the love God has given us is wonderful, and needs to be protected and maintained. In this process, there may be times of sweetness and bitterness, but regardless, it is worth our effort and time.

During this retreat, not only did we receive guidance from experienced teachers, but we were also served by couples who had previously attended this retreat. Their prayers and thoughtful preparations before, during, and after the retreat allowed us to relax and be enriched by the experience. We are grateful for their willingness to minister to us.

We thank God for allowing us to attend this Cantonese Marriage Enrichment Retreat. In order to really take hold of the richness of the content, we need to personally apply these lessons in our lives and not just discuss the theories on paper. We hope that you and your spouse will also have an opportunity to attend this retreat in the near future, as it will surely benefit your marriage.

*TIOB Retreat:***A New ID**

by RANDALL MYERS,
NEWTON ENGLISH

This year's TIOB Retreat, A New ID, was focused on the idea that those who have placed their faith in the Messiah, Jesus, have a new identity before the Father. Our sessions, discussions, and devotionals were centered on Ephesians 1, where Paul writes his praise to the Father for bringing all things under the Messiah's authority, concluding with a prayer that the believers would grow to know Him. The importance of this prayer could not be more appropriately understood than by looking back to the verses 3-14, where Paul continually mentions that everything a believer has in relation with the Father is only passed onto us "in Christ" (1.3; cf. 1.4ff). Everything in these first few verses directs us to worshipping the Messiah for the identity we have in Him because He chose to die for our sins and rise again on the Third Day. The beauty

is that Paul wanted this mindset to extend beyond an "event" of salvation, so that we would recognize that our entire lives are bound up in Christ. Indeed, the truest thing about us each day we live is that our identity is rooted in Him.

Processing how this truth relates to our lives on day-to-day basis can be difficult, especially if it is the first time you've been introduced to it. While we began with traditional, preaching-based sessions, it seemed like something more needed to be done for TIOB to connect personally with what being "in Christ" meant. Our speaker, Reverend Nathan Wells, made the suggestion that perhaps we move into a discussion-based session format. It was such a blessing, personally, for me to see the students and counselors willing to embrace this challenge on the second day. During our sessions we sat as small groups and Reverend Wells would speak for a time and then allow our groups to discuss what he was sharing and follow up with questions and feedback. For my small group, this was what really opened our eyes that who we are in Christ can truly change the way we live. It can also keep us from running after all the methods of perfor-

mance-based acceptance that our culture tries to push on us to determine our self-worth. Instead, it became clearer that our worth was not bound up in our performance, but was instead bound up in the value the Father placed on His Son, Jesus, since, as believers, the Father sees us "in Christ."

As with any retreat, there had to be space for rest and fellowship, which everyone in TIOB found ample time for due to the rainy Memorial Day weekend. Andy Te was able to keep us entertained with new and exciting indoor games like Ping-Pong, dodge ball and four-way Ping-Pong Soccer (this is played by only blowing on the Ping-Pong ball in an attempt to get the ball into any of the three opponents goals). Ramen noodles topped off our evening fellowship, especially when our lack of a microwave resulted in pathetic attempts towards heating Kraft Macaroni and Cheese. Overall, I found the retreat both spiritually refreshing and challenging for myself and my small group. We hope to keep an eye towards our identity in Christ through our lessons and activities in the coming year at TIOB.



1-3) TIOB at NewtonSERVES



4-8) Appreciation and farewell party for Phil Chew (8/11)

Stephen Ministry:

Be a Stephen Minister

by SHU-YI ZHAO,
CANTONESE 2ND SERVICE

Praise God that it has been one and a half years since Stephen Ministry has begun at our church! We have truly seen God's amazing work throughout. The eight co-workers from the first session prepared diligently to strengthen their car-

ing strategies. They strive to share God's love with a merciful heart and trustworthy attitude. They believe in the Stephen Ministry motto of "We Care, God Cures." To many, a cup of cold water may seem trivial, but to those who are going through difficulties, it can become an invaluable gift and blessing.

In August 2013, we will begin recruiting for new co-workers. Would you like to join our team? During the two-year commitment, not only can you help those who are in need, but you your-

self will experience God's abiding presence. As you accompany others through their darkest times, you also will learn, grow, and experience God's amazing grace together with the person you are helping.

We hope that everyone will participate enthusiastically. We will launch a 20-week training course in Cantonese at the end of September and begin assignments in March of next year. The caring model for Stephen's ministry is 1-on-1; we therefore need many co-workers to meet the need. May God bless this ministry.

Responding to God's Call



by ALICE NG,
NEWTON ENGLISH

"For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance." (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4 – NLT)

Stephen Ministry is a distinctive Christian ministry, which focuses on serving people in times of need. Through our love to others, we model Christ's unconditional love for us. We share each other's burden to show we are united as one body in Christ. With the support of BCEC, I was given the opportunity to be trained as a Stephen Ministry Leader in June 2013 with 250 others in Florida. We went through 58 hours of Christ-centered ministry training in one week. We were all overwhelmed with information and given a plethora of materials to bring back home to equip us for the work we would do in our local Stephen Ministry. I was gratefully challenged.

The training was amazingly well organized and well presented. I am thankful for that because it

helped me to gain more confidence in moving forward to serve in this ministry. Before accepting this commitment of serving in Stephen Ministry, I was always hesitant to help others. I did not know what to say or how to act to show my care or support. I did not have the confidence that I would say the right word or share the appropriate Bible verse with those who are hurting. I felt like Job's three friends in the Old Testament, trying to comfort the suffering Job.

While participating in the training and reading some of the required materials by Stephen Ministry, the first thing I learned is that I need to be a good listener. With this knowledge, I need to practice and continue to learn and to grow. Stephen Ministry's model is to train all Stephen ministers to be Christians with compassion, faith, skill, and trustworthiness in all he/she does. Ministers become the channel of care to others, and let God take care of the healing. God is the center of the whole process.

BCEC has over 1000 congregational members in our six worship services. Among our church members, there is a high percentage of elderly, immigrants, and families with diverse values and beliefs. In addition to all these, there are health, economic, and relational issues, as well as other unanticipated events that drop upon all of us. How

can we show support and God's love to those who are walking through their difficult situation alone? They may be questioning if God is still there, is God still in control, or does God care? How can we remind them of God's love while they are dejected and hopeless? There continues to be a need for more Stephen ministers. Are you willing and able to serve? Please pray for God's calling and guidance.

My age indicates that I am not young anymore! I took a huge leap of faith and a big step to leave my comfort zone to commit to this ministry in early 2013. The commitment is high, but my work will be focused on training and equipping new ministers to serve. I hold on to God's calling and with His help I accepted the role gingerly and with great humility. I am blessed with God's salvation. As a result, He desires me to pass this blessing to others through whatever I am called to do. Please pray that all Stephen ministers will continue to trust and lean on our Sovereign Lord to carry us through this ministry. God is the Potter, and we are the clay.

Let our Lord be glorified and praise His Holy name!

We Care and God Cures



by PATRICK YEUNG,
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

Stephen Ministry is about bringing care to those who are having difficulty coping with a crisis. Thus far, our ministry is limited to Christian brothers and sisters. We meet our care receiver in person once a week for about an hour, in addition to the telephone calls in between. Not only do we provide care and support to our care receivers, as Stephen Ministers, we also receive support ourselves. We have supervision group meetings twice a month where we receive support and encourage-

ment from our fellow Stephen Ministers, so that we can stay focused and be assured that our care receivers receive the best possible holistic care.

Throughout the course of training and caregiving, God opened up my eyes to the needs of my care receivers — they desire me to listen to them without passing judgment and give full acceptance of who they are and the feelings they have. I remember one care receiver I cared for had a physical condition that made his legs and feet swell so much that they were hard to the touch. Throughout our conversation, he had to pause many times to take deep breaths from the pain and discomfort. It was obvious that he could not concentrate on our conversation. I realized no medications he was taking at the time could alleviate his discom-

fort or pain. I believe the Holy Spirit touched me to offer him a foot massage — telling him that I learned that from a Christian brother who is a professional massage therapist — and that I would be happy to serve him. He agreed, so I washed his feet and performed a foot massage with skin lotion. Although it was tiring since I needed to expend extra energy because the feet were very hard due to the swelling, it was very rewarding when I saw a look of relief on his face. It is only a "cup of cold water," but at the right time, God can use it to help those in need.

I remember several weeks ago, Pastor Kenneth talked about how practicing "serving others" can lead to increased willingness or ease to love. Indeed, I find this principle to be quite true. I don't

know whether there will be other rewards in heaven for me, but I know that God has already rewarded me with more love towards those with needs.

Since then, I talk to him, wash his feet, and massage them during my subsequent visits. I bring him one verse each time I visit him and pray with him. I also tell him about how and why Jesus washed his disciples' feet as I wash his.

Dear brothers and sisters, whether you are a Stephen Minister or not, as lay people, you can do your part. There are many, many people around us who are broken and hurt. I pray that we can purposely reach out to those around us (especially the quiet ones) and learn about their needs. Remember, we care and God cures!

Be His Instrument



by ANNA HUANG,
CANTONESE 2ND SERVICE

I am not good at expressing myself. However, through the Stephen Ministry training materials and regular meetings with the Stephen leaders team, I've learned not only skills of how to care for people in need, but also what words to say and actions to take. The first time I visited my care receiver, I found that she was going through difficult times, was full of worries, and was doubtful about whether or not God's love exists. She thought that she wasn't a good person. I patiently listened and asked her to tell me about her painful experiences, relieving her of the burden of keeping all her emotions inside of her. Although that was all I could do, I was willing to care and listen, and asked questions when I deemed it appropriate. I let her know that I accepted her as Jesus first accepted us. I assured her that I would keep her information confidential and that I respected her privacy. She felt comfortable telling me her stories freely. God miraculously healed her broken heart, and even after a few weeks, I saw that she was completely different – she was a lot more cheerful. She told me

MEET NEW STAFF: A PRODUCT OF MY ENVIRONMENT

by CALVIN CHU, CHINATOWN ENGLISH



BCEC is very special place because in so many ways, it represents God's grace to me. It is where I formed some of my closest friendships, where I met my wife, Lindsey, and now where I earn my living, all of which I do not deserve.

Growing up in BCEC, I had been labeled a "church punk" or "kwaijie." Maybe it was my deliberate and audible misuse of English grammar in Sunday School, my raucous and showy demeanor at Teens, or the 100 other headaches I gave my counselors. Either way, I earned my reputation with stripes. Ask any of my counselors and they will tell you something along the lines of, "We really weren't sure about Calvin." They were right to be concerned; I led a selfish and sinful life for years.

that although she went through a lot of hardship, God revealed Himself to her. She agreed with how Job felt about God, "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you." (Job 42:5 – NIV) Sisters from church visited at her bedside and brought her lovely hymns and recorded sermons. She said her difficulties had become God's blessings.

I learned a lot from her when I was at her side trying to comfort her. After hearing her testimony, I experienced God's existence. Romans 8:38-39 (NIV) says, "For I am convinced that neither

So, how did I become the Student Ministries Director, serving in the church that saw me at my worst? I strongly believe God has a keen sense of irony. More importantly, I know God has bigger plans than we can imagine. That's why I know exactly what Paul means when he writes,

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life (1 Timothy 1:15–16 – ESV).

I am here not because I am good enough. The Lord knows I've burned all those tickets. No, I am here because God miraculously turns lives around. I am here because God uses broken and flawed people, like me, to display his perfect patience, mercy, and grace to the world. So while I do not deserve the opportunity, I am so humbled and blessed to be working at BCEC and Lord willing. He will use me to help lead this next generation, church punks included.

death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I hope more brothers and sisters will join Stephen Ministry and will experience God using them to heal people suffering in hardship. May you experience the grace of God and glorify Him.



Social Responsibility Ministry's Seasons of Service: Volunteering at the Rice Sticks and Tea project (5/11)

Spiritual Discipline Book Reading Campaign:

Life Can be Transformed



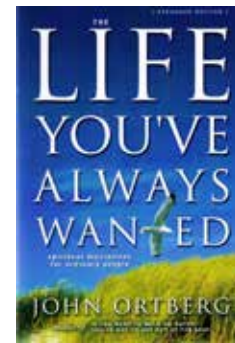
by BENJAMIN TANG,
NEWTON CANTONESE

I find myself easily influenced by what is going on around me. When I am in driving, if other drivers drive their automobiles ruthlessly, or honk from behind for no reason, then I suddenly become furious, and find myself cursing their actions.

Maybe my life is too busy: do I become overly sensitive to the voices around me from other people, but ignore the voice and teachings from God?

I think this is true. This spring, I attended the Sunday School for the reading campaign “Spiritual Disciplines.” I found out there was an immense difference between trying and training to do something. It is easy to get tired and give up trying; however, training means setting a goal and developing discipline. The author of the book gives the example of an Olympic athlete: a runner receives rigorous training, and slowly he is able to achieve his goal. Another example is of a pianist who has to practice painstakingly so she can have an outstanding performance. Just as a runner needs training and a pianist needs practice, likewise as Christians, we need spiritual disciplines.

This book is very meaningful. For instance, I myself sometimes have this problem of “approval addiction” that the author talks about. I understand



that real transformation is transformation from the inside out. I am impressed by one of Soren Kierkegaard’s saying, and use it here to encourage others regarding the hope of transformation: “Now, with God’s help, I shall become myself.”

Live Like Christ



by TERESA WONG,
NEWTON CANTONESE

I bought an iced coffee and a donut from Dunkin Donuts last night after work. As I was about to leave, a dirty-looking man, who was probably in his

fifties, walked up to me and asked for change. I ignored him. Even still, he opened the door for me, but I neglected to thank him. I left Dunkin Donuts feeling indifferent towards him. Later that night, I did my devotions and felt so ashamed. Why hadn’t I practiced Jesus’ teaching of having a merciful heart?

From reading the book, *The Life You’ve Always Wanted*, I learned that the most important thing for me to do is to change the old me. I should live

the life that God wants me to live. Throughout our spiritual journey, we should strive to live more like Christ. We should feel what He feels, think like Him, and do what He would do in every situation.

I would like to thank all the brothers and sisters, as well as pastoral staff who promoted this spiritual book campaign to us. It certainly helped to nurture and build up our congregation spiritually.

Lessons Learned



by WINNE GEE,
CANTONESE 2ND SERVICE

“The Life You’ve Always Wanted” Sunday School course on spiritual practices has helped me with my spiritual renewal. These ten lessons have opened up new spiritual horizons for me, and have inspired me to reflect on my own life. With lectures presented by Elders, and small group discussions each week, we were able to open up and to share our experiences. It was really a time of lives changing lives and

an opportunity for fellowship, learning, encouragement, and prayers between brothers and sisters.

The lesson I remember the most was how the quality of our spiritual life is not defined by the amount of time we devote to reading the Bible and praying, but rather by the real changes we make in our lives. Are we loving God more than before? Are we loving others more than before? With this goal in mind, I can now reflect on my own life and focus on making real changes.

I consider myself a busy person; I have always been occupied by small things here and there. Through the practice of “slowing,” I learned to re-

mind myself to live an unhurried life, to return to God and to peace. I learned to be still and listen, and to contemplate His Word, so that I can prioritize my life and arrange my daily routines around listening to God. All this is to invite Jesus into my life and to think about “what would Jesus do?”

Now that the course is over, it’s time to practice what we have learned. I pray for guidance from the Spirit, so that I can make real changes in my spiritual life and to become more like Christ. This is my new goal and my hope.

Always Room for Growth and Learning



by JEFF LIU,
CANTONESE 3RD SERVICE

As a Sunday School teacher and as a student, I always ask myself how I can improve my spiritual life through practicing. Here are my three ways of practicing:

- Gaining knowledge — This allows me to open my eyes, to recognize my own insignificance, and to better know God and His work.
- Discussion and learning from one another —

From subjective understanding of the message to objective discussions, encouragement, and prayers, they all help me understand and seek God’s will.

- Application — A mandatory step to growth. It includes allowing God to enter our lives and learning to obey through adversity, growing in faith, and integrating faith and daily living.

During the spring quarter, the Chinese congregation studied the book *The Life You’ve Always Wanted* in Sunday School. The book focuses on discussion and application. With extraordinary observation skills, the author points out the blind spots we often overlook, yet impact our spiritual

life. In each lesson, we could easily identify goals we need to target. As long as we devote some time and follow the author’s recommendations for training, we were all able to benefit from the book. Moreover, through learning with brothers and sisters in the discussion group, we were able to share our common struggles and strengthen our fellowship in encouragement and prayers.

There haven’t been many Sunday School courses on spiritual disciplines. Reflecting on this quarter’s Sunday School class, I realize there is still room for growth and learning. I look forward to more similar courses and more time for practicing these spiritual disciplines in the future, so that we can all experience the amazing transformation in God.



1-6) Vacation Bible School at Chinatown Campus (8/12-16)



7-8) Vacation Bible School at Newton Campus (7/8-12)



9-12) Summer Teen Conference (8/16-19)

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 15 BAPTISM
- 16 PDAS (PROJECT DESTINY AUTUMN TO SPRING) BEGINS
- 20-22 ENGLISH FALL CONFERENCE
CHINATOWN
- 22 NEWTON CAMPUS 10TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

OCTOBER

- 5 FELLOWSHIP BIBLE STUDY LEADER TRAINING
CANTONESE
- 12-15 NEW COMMUNITY CONFERENCE
NEWTON
- 19-20 CHURCH CLEAN UP
NEWTON
- 27 ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER

- 3 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS
ONE HOUR BACK
- 15-17 MISSIONS CONFERENCE
- 28 THANKSGIVING DAY
OFFICE CLOSED
- 30 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
NO CEC CLASSES
- TBD CHURCH CLEAN UP
CHINATOWN

DECEMBER

- 1 THANKSGIVING SUNDAY
- 1 CHILD DEDICATION
CHINESE
- 1 SUNDAY SCHOOL APPRECIATION DAY
CHINESE
- 8 CHINESE SUNDAY SCHOOL
WINTER SESSION BEGINS
- 8 BAPTISM
- 14 COMMUNITY ENGLISH CLASS
FALL SEMESTER ENDS
- TBD CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY
CHINATOWN
- 22 CHRISTMAS SUNDAY
- 24 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
- 25 CHRISTMAS
OFFICE CLOSED



Philippines Medical Trip (4/16-5/2): 1-5) The Philippines Medical Team set up five clinics at trash dumpsites and cemeteries where the poorest of the poor reside in Cebu, Philippines. The doctors were able to serve over 470 patients and trained over 80 local students and ministry staff on basic public health issues.



Philippines Missions Trip (5/9-24): 6) Pastor Tom about to take the hour long ride to visit a church plant in a tribal area 7) Pastor Enoch with a worship leader at a church plant in a tribal Muslim village 8) The missions team with local church planters and pastors 9) Squatters living above tombs and crypts 10) Steve Liu and Pastor Tom at a church plant in tribal Muslim Village 11) Pastor Tom with a former assassin now turned pastor/church planter 12) Missionary Sharon Tan Pastre and her husband

BCEC Connections is a quarterly publication of Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. We'd love to hear from you!

If you would like to help with this publication (writing, translation, editing), please contact Frances Lau at (617) 426-5711 ext. 24.

Do you have a story you think would be of 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 frances.lau@bcec.net. We reserve the right to edit the submissions as we deem appropriate without notice.

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Project Destiny 20th-anniversary reunion (8/9-11): 13) Charting night 14) Picnic