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CCCO-K



John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

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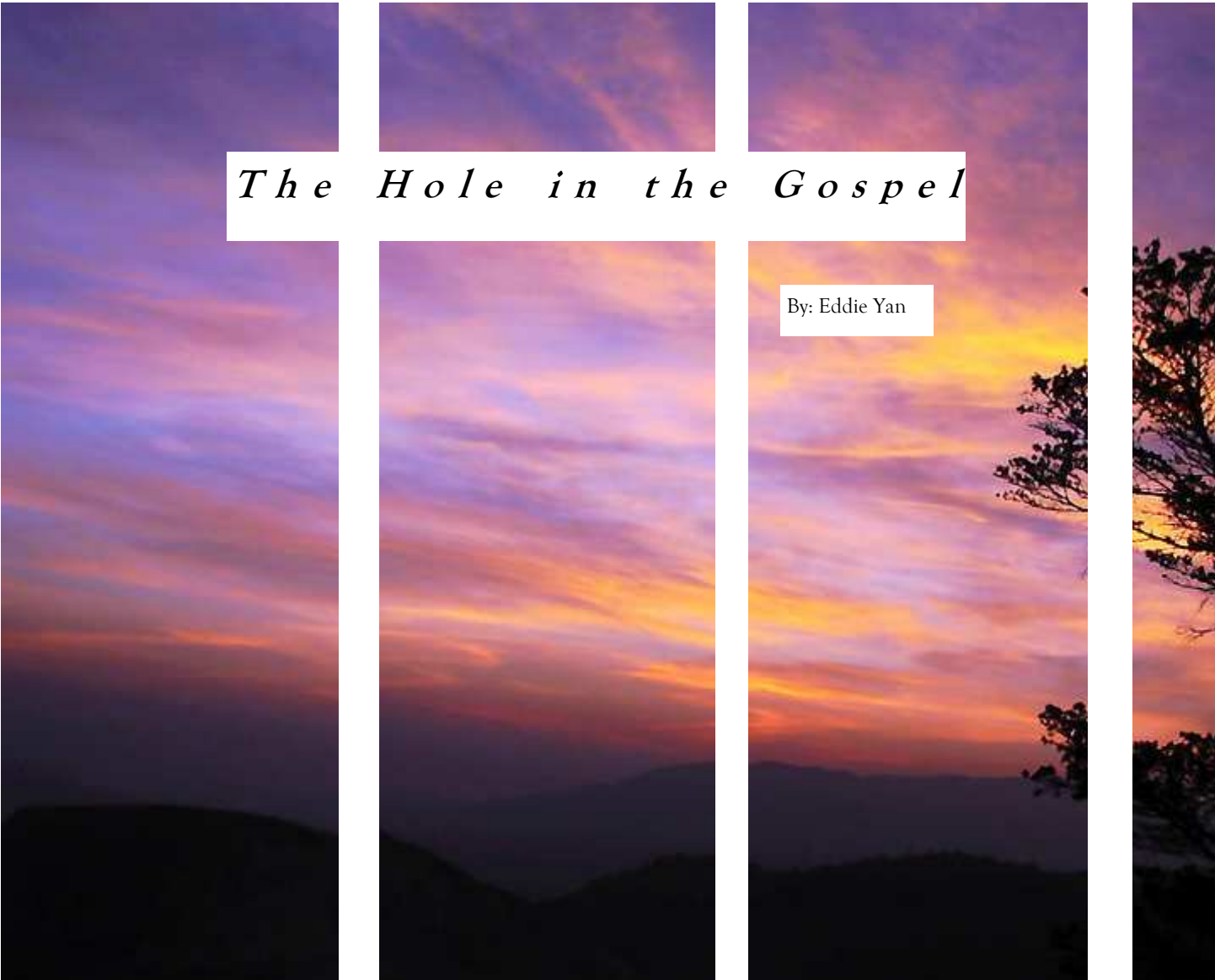
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The Hole in the Gospel

By: Eddie Yan

This issue of *CCCO-Konnect* has a collection of Baptismal testimonies from sisters and brothers who were baptized in last Christmas and this immediate past Easter. The new “grapes” come from all walk of life and various age groups. The article collection also includes daily devotions from some of our church family members, with here or away, about their faith journeys. We also have an article about the birth of a children worship team. Together with an Easter theme cover, they remind me of a book I am currently reading by Richard Stearns, *The Hole in the Gospel*.

Stearns was the CEO of a successful luxury goods company when he felt the leading of the Lord to head up World Vision, with a burden and vision to minister to the less privileged - to plug the hole in the gospel, in a figurative speech. These articles and the Easter cover design also remind me of the speech I heard recently from Leonard Buhler, President of “Power to Change Ministries” (formerly “Campus Crusade for Christ”) on how the gospel and crucifixion of Christ demands our one hundred percent commitment: “The Life”. Right. The gospel of the Bible was designed for the whole humanity – for those who live in the West, in the East, in the developed world and in the under developed world; for our spiritual, emotional, mental and physical needs. The gospel of the Bible also demands our unreserved commitment to the cause and to the cross.

It is my prayers that the articles and the cover design in this issue of *CCCO-Konnect* will bring us closer to these thoughts.

Sharing from Carmen

By Carmen Yan

Dear CCCO brothers and sisters,

Greetings once more from the south (Philadelphia)! I realize that an in-depth update is long overdue, but I have yet to find the time for sitting down and writing it out...after classes end in a few weeks, perhaps. :) I did, however, want to contribute a short piece to this CCCO-K edition so that I could share with you a general idea of how God has been working in and around me recently, cuz He sure has been doing some AMAZING stuff!

Last summer, my family and I had the chance to visit Taiwan (!) so during our time there, I tried to re-contact as many of my friends as possible whom I'd grown close with when I lived there. The gatherings we had ended up being precious times of face-to-face meals, fellowship and, in many instances, prayer together (**Picture 1**). It was such a blessing to see them again, though briefly. Many of them are isolated from Christian communities (mostly since they moved to new places and Taiwan lacks quantity & quality churches), so it meant a lot to them to be reminded of the existence of a God who lives outside of themselves. Our hearts are deceptive and our ears often inclined to lies; no matter where we live or what our backgrounds are, we desperately need community to consistently keep one another oriented towards God, towards the Gospel.



Above: Picture 1

Left: Picture2

Back in Philly this second year, I have been immersed once again in a sea of discovering more about God & His Word & His world & myself (His creation!). Being at Westminster continues to feel like drinking from a firehose (shooting out chocolate instead of water... rich, sweet stuff). Getting more involved with my church here, Renewal Presbyterian Church, has enabled me to apply my school learning to real-life contexts. I continue to serve in a community group (**Picture 2**...yes, there is a lot of American pride. But wait, can you see the little Canadian leaf I am holding up? ^^), work with at-risk youth who live near our church (**Picture 3**), and volunteer as a librarian at the local elementary school where most of those youth went as kids, since they sadly don't have enough funding to hire a full-time librarian. In all this, the Lord is teaching me what it means and looks like to actively "love my neighbour" and bring the renewing power of the Gospel into the very community where our church is located. We are only just starting with that work, at the relationships-building stage, but we pray that by His grace over the next few years, our neighbourhood will start seeing fruits of the transforming work of Christ in its midst. Come and check it out if you're in the area! And if you come visit in the fall, you might even be able to catch a game of football...with me as one of the players! (That is...our church's women's flag football team...and I am still hesitant about participating...the decision is TBD :P).



Above: Picture 3

Also VERY excitingly, Renewal will be sending out a short-term team this summer... to TAIWAN! Yes...it feels like things have come a full circle. This team will be led by a brother who was an OMF partner in Taiwan with me (like me, he has since returned for further study and attends Renewal). They will serve New Life Bilingual Church, one of the churches I attended when I was there! And they will be able to hopefully build upon those relationships God granted us in years past as well. (see bit.ly/HvdxHO for the promo video...you might recognize some of the Taiwan pictures!) Of course, I really wish I could go as well, but the timing will not work out for me...so instead, I have the privilege of helping out with their training and standing behind them in prayer. If you'd like, please do the same! This first trip will be an amazing opportunity for Renewal to develop a long-term relationship with this church and/or others in Taiwan.

My own summer (June to early August) will be spent in...North Dakota! Is it a major tourist destination, you ask? Not exactly...the closest major airport in the States is a 7-hour drive away, in Minneapolis! But there is a training center there to prepare workers who want to do Bible translation work. The program is called SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics – all workers with Wycliffe go through this program, as do people from other missions agencies and even non-Christians, since for once, Christians are on the front of the wave for this kind of research). The different training tracks include learning how to create a written alphabet for an oral-only language, what goes into creating a translation of God's Word, and techniques for teaching non-literate communities how to read and write. I will be focusing on that final training track, which I think will fit well with my God-given background and passion for helping people see the value of developing strong literacy skills. There is a long, cool story behind how the Lord has been leading me down this path, but I'll have to leave that for another time! Basically, He has simultaneously deepened my own appreciation of Scripture and opened my eyes to see the great need around the world for those who have the light to bring it to those still in the darkness (around 2000 people groups still do not have the Bible in their own language today! Now THAT is a true scandal). So that kind of work is what I tentatively plan to be involved with after I graduate from Westminster in May 2013.

Thanks for reading! I definitely covet your prayers for all this and very much appreciate those who have already, all these years, been extremely supportive as I continue to explore how God would have me invest this life

(continued on page 5)



by Karen Wong

Children's Worship Ministry Update

Since the beginning of this year, we have started training and teaching some of our youth and young adults (Pure Energy, YF and H2O) what it means to worship and how to serve God specifically through the worship ministry. Our vision has been to train up new leaders to serve the children during the Sunday worship time in both lively and engaging ways.

The training sessions have been a great success! During February and March, the youth had the opportunity to learn through four different training sessions. The first session was an introductory Praise Night followed by a time of dessert and discussion. For our second session, we had Pastor Cameron Dunn from the Biker's Church as a guest speaker who spoke to us on 'What it means to worship.' In our third session, the youth then began to learn about the musical aspects of worship. During this session, Salina Yan also did a mini-workshop on working and relating with children. Our final session was an informal jam session which involved the youth having some hands on experience with various instruments. All sessions were very enjoyable and it left the youth asking for more!

All this would not have been possible without the help of a group of very dedicated individuals who ran these excellent and enriching sessions. A big thank you goes out to Tim Lau and his worship team (Emily Ho, Ivan Huor, Chung Kan, Jonathan Lam, Jeffrey Soo and Manson Yan) who put so much heart into putting everything together. Also, there were many others who worked behind the scenes to make these sessions possible and we have been so very blessed by them.

As a result, we now have a solid and exciting new children's worship ministry team. Our new recruits are: Jack Han, Mandy Hui, Cynthia Teoh, Rebecca Tsang, Priscilla Wong, Andrew Yip, Eric Yip, Rachel Yip, and Andy Zhu. We have split them up into 3 different teams and they will be serving on a rotating schedule. We also have adult helpers paired up with each of these teams to help guide them as they serve.

Upcoming in April, we are looking forward to our kick-off BBQ. This time of fellowship will give the entire team the opportunity to get to know each other more and to also pray together as a team before we embark on this new journey together. The youth will be serving from May through to the end of June. Throughout the summer months we plan to have some more get-togethers and informal jam sessions in order to gear up for serving again in the fall.

It has been a great blessing witnessing all the age groups working together to serve the Lord. It has been so refreshing seeing the excitement in the youth as they take on these new responsibilities. Our prayer is that not only will the children be blessed by these young new leaders but the leaders themselves will continue to grow and mature as they serve the Lord in this very special ministry. ■

Getaway Sharing

by Eugenia Ling

By Saturday night, Getaway 2012 had initially seemed like a disappointment to me. My own selfish desires and expectations had been so high that they were not attained. But God had so much planned for the weekend, things that were beyond my wisdom and understanding. My heart was so troubled and was yearning for some kind of sign that God was working that weekend, and thankfully, just before I was heading for bed (Rev.) Josh had found me moping around. I explained all my disappointments and worries to him. I told him that a treasured friend was attending Getaway and that it was a hassle to even get her to come. I truly wanted her to know Christ more than anything and to experience the love of God that weekend. We had then settled the conversation with (Rev.) Josh encouraging me to go and ask my treasured friend if she had accepted Christ during the alter call. Honestly, I didn't have much faith in what (Rev.) Josh was asking me to do and didn't really want to do it...but I knew I could take a chance this weekend. So I was patient, waiting for the right time to ask and on Sunday morning God gave me that chance. A fellow roommate had been taking quite a bit of time in the bathroom which pushed me and my treasured friend to another bathroom, just the two of us. Though it sounds a bit funny, I think it was as if this was God's plan after all. We had about a short conversation in the bathroom (while brushing our teeth), I asked her and she had indeed accepted Christ! My heart was at peace after that little conversation in the bathroom that morning, and the last day of Getaway turned everything upside down. There was an open mic period for about two hours at noon time, and just seeing the youth coming to speak one after another without a pause in time, made my heart almost cry. I was so full of joy knowing how God was working in a lot of youth that weekend and all their testimonies were remarkable. All those selfish expectations and desires didn't even matter anymore because what happened throughout the weekend was God's will, and that was all that needed to be said and done. God works in mysterious ways, ways that I cannot even fathom and I am honestly thankful for that. I am learning to understand God a bit more every day and it truly is building my character as a Godly woman one day at a time.

(continue from page 3)

of wonderful freedom He has purchased for me. I love hearing updates about you guys via my parents/brother, but would also love to hear from you directly if you are so inclined to share! Ask them for my email address. :)

I will leave you with a quotation I have found especially meaningful this past year. With all that I am involved with, and maybe you can relate, it would be easy and natural to burn out from the demands of everything & everyone. But I have been learning to run on a special fuel – an ever-increasing wonder of who He is & what He has done & what He is doing. I have found that when I am running on this fuel, I continue to grow in passion and joy for all that I do! Once I start running on the fuel of self-efforts and self-glorification, however, things start crashing down. So hopefully this is something you can consider in your own life, and for CCCO as a body.

Also, a special prayer request for D, second from the right in picture 3. We just got news that her mother passed away from an illness (April 6th). D is 18years old and has no father around either, so she's truly "on her own" now... but she has been coming out to our homework help and Bible discussion groups for years, so she has heard of God and she knows His message. Pray that God will help her see her deepest need for Him in this dark time.

"God calls us to dive into the ocean. He calls us into ever new regions of his fullness, his immensity, his all-sufficiency. There is more for us in Christ than we have yet apprehended. Let's never think that we have him figured out or that we're seen all he can do. The Bible is not a guidebook to a theological museum. It is a road map showing us the way into neglected or even forgotten glories of the living God." — Ray Ortland, When God Comes to Church

Still exploring,

Carmen <>< 

by Marcus Chang

To be honest at first church is a total joke, pointless, and waste of my time. I went ever since I was a child but never understood the reasons behind it. All I did was memorize bible verses, sing songs, and get taught the stories of Jesus. When I was a child I didn't have a choice, however it seemed fine since I had no control over my own life. It wasn't that bad. But I started to hate going to church when I was 11 years old. To me it was really like a broken CD, just repeating itself over and over again. Year after year they still repeat the same stories, parables, and morals. I really had enough, not only did I not learn much; it wasn't even an enjoyable environment for me to be in. It was like this up until last year that I really took this religion seriously.

This all happened back at getaway last year, which was an event for YF at camp Galilee. This is where the magic happened. That night changed my life in such a tremendous way that there was no turning back. As Pastor Rob, the preacher there was preaching that night, something inside of me was just screaming to let it all out. I was afraid of making a fool of myself in the middle of a sermon, so I held my tears in. I couldn't understand why this was happening. I felt guilty for some reason even though I did nothing wrong. I kept this in until near the end where Pastor Rob started talking about what Jesus did for us on the cross. That's where he really struck home. I began to sob to Christ, resisting until I couldn't keep it in any longer. At first I felt embarrassed of just crying, until I realize that I wasn't alone, I wasn't the only person in the room who was touched by the gospel. As this was happening he told us "For those who want to repent come forward and we will say a prayer for repentance". So I took this opportunity to go up because I felt it was the right thing to do. To this day that decision was well picked, considering how much I grew in my faith. I see church like it is a second home to me.

Though I never enjoyed church back then, yet somehow I still remember one bible verse which was taught by auntie Ivy and it was ***"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know" Jeremiah 33:3.*** Whenever I felt troubled about not understanding things, I would just remember this verse. I used to be a person who judges everyone, but now knowing Christ and trying to be more like Him, and make changes in my life. I'm trying to change that habit of judging even if it is very hard to do. As I continue to make changes in my life, I would like to be baptized and accept Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and saviour.....and trust Him all my life. Amen! ■



In October 2003, I got married and moved to Ottawa. That year, I totally could not adapt to the Canadian life. Food did not taste the same. I will faint and vomit during a car ride, I could only stay at home and feel very unhappy. A year later I started to adapt to living here and began work and got to know some good friends.

Last year, my good friend, Ada Fang Tao Ren asked me to come to church. I only went so that my son could participate in some children activities. Church was completely unknown to me. When I first joined the Alpha course, I did not have the foggiest idea of what it was about. But when I had time, I would take my son to CCCO.

In October this year, my mother came to the States and felt ill because she could not adapt to the living environment. Her health was getting poorer every day and even to the point of having difficulty with her speech. I was very worried and anxious, and I wanted to buy an air tickets to the United States to visit her. That day was a Friday and I attended the Alpha course. When it was time to pray, the pastor prayed for me, and for my mother. Then the other brothers and sisters also prayed for my mother. I was moved to tears and I believed in God at that very moment. When I got home at 11 pm, I called my sister in the States. She just came back from visiting mother, My sister said that she just came back and her speech was not clear. So she spoke slowly. I was very happy, and extremely grateful to the Lord Jesus when I heard that she was better. I told my mother on the phone that I believed in the Lord Jesus she was very happy for me. She asked me to thank these brothers and sisters in church. When we prayed to our Lord, He listened and healed my mother. My mother's health is getting better every day. My heart would like to follow our Lord Jesus Christ completely. I still do not know God enough. I will start coming to church to know more about Jesus. I understand that I am a sinner and I need Him to be my saviour. ■

God in My Life

by Jack Han

I was born and raised in China. Despite my affections for the country, the reality is that it is a nation that seldom knows God. The only times where I had heard anything about God were from fiction books about Western culture. China was also a country whose culture was based off of very rational ideas. In such a country, there was little room for Christianity, which is based purely off of faith. Naturally, I grew up convinced that this “God” was a work of fiction, and that I had all the reasoning to support this belief.

My family immigrated to Canada when I was eight years old. I was a child filled with Chinese mentality. Settling in Mississauga was very hard for me. We had a family that we were very close to here, but the language barrier was tough for me, who was used to contributing a lot in class, to overcome. I clearly remember, in Grade 3, attempting to debate with my teacher about the existence (or lack thereof) and her patience at putting aside the conversation. The family that mine knew eventually introduced us to their church, the Mississauga Chinese Baptist Church. It was at their Friday fellowships that I first heard the good news of Christ’s purpose on earth. However, back then, being kids, myself and the other children were constantly on the run from the aunties and uncles. Church was just another bore, and Friday nights were just another opportunity to play Gameboy and Yu-Gi-Oh! cards with other children. Thinking back now, I realize that my relationship with could have begun so much earlier.

Five years ago, my family moved to here in Ottawa, which naturally meant that Christianity once again had no part in my life. I was lost in the motions of everyday life, and it stayed that way for the next three years. I was a youth who got top grades in school. To be honest I did not really need anything and I thought I had everything figured out. In March of 2010, my aunt passes away in China. At that point God had already started to work in my mother’s life. That summer, while I was away at a track and field meet in London, Ontario, my family got into a car accident. The car was beyond fixing and my mother’s foot was severely injured. From that day on she was a Christian, started coming to CCCO, and to my dismay at the time, tried to get me to come along. I tried to resist, but eventually I was “dragged” with her to church.

One of my first experiences in church was the Alpha program that took place last fall and winter. It was during Alpha that I was exposed fully to the Gospel. The discussion also made me think more about life. By the end of that year, I had concluded that Christians were “nice” and even though I would never be one of them, it was a “nice” faith.

Every year during March Break, there would be a youth retreat with several Chinese churches from Ottawa. When I decided to go, I simply thought of it as another opportunity to get away from home and hang out with friends from church. However, that retreat was different. On the second night, we had a Bible study, as we did the night before that. The pastor that was preaching, Rob McKee, was preaching such a wonderful message. At the end of the sermon, he asked that anyone who felt like they needed something more to their life, if they would please raise their hand. At that moment I felt the Holy Spirit working in me, and I raised my hand. That was the moment I accepted Jesus as my personal Lord and saviour. After late night worship, myself and several others participated in a small Bible study run by some Grade 12 students until two in the morning. That night I confessed my sins to God, asked His forgiveness, and began my walk with Him.

“No one said a life as a Christian would be easy, but I can guarantee you that it will be the most fulfilling.” That’s what Rob McKee told us youths that night in Getaway. My walk with God so far certainly has not been perfect. Jesus himself said that Christians are called to suffer for Christ. However, through this I have realized that God has always given me all that I needed, and has always been faithful. Since March, the Holy Spirit has transformed me greatly. I now view many things that I have previously viewed cynically with a different perspective. God calls us to love everyone, and that is what I strive to do. I give God thanks for the people around me who encourage me in my walk with Christ. I thank the Pan family for praying for me all this time, and especially Eric for first welcoming me to the church. I thank Pastor Josh for leading our Youth Fellowship and calling me out for our talks over coffee. I am also thankful for the opportunity to fellowship with the other youths every Friday and for their encouragements. Romans 12:2 reads, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” As I continue my spiritual journey, my prayer is that I will not be changed by the world, but be transformed by the Holy Spirit. I pray that I bring praise to God in what I do and that I trust Him now and always.



by Jessica Lok-Ting Leung

People who know me, know that I love telling stories, so it is my honor, to tell you guys my story. People who know me, also know that I usually tend to tell pretty boring stories, but I promise you this one isn't boring! If you really listen between the lines, you will be able to hear my excitement, joy, and gratitude for everything that has happened and how God has just blessed my life.

Lets rewind to a year and a half ago, if you asked me weather I wanted to get baptized, I would have said "no, I'm not ready" in faster than a second. And furthermore, it was completely justified in my head. To me, Although I believed in God, I felt like that was enough. Getting baptized felt like a label, or more precisely, a sacrifice of normal life, and I wasn't ready to neither promise nor give up anything.

Luckily a series of Fortunate events occured, or in other word events that were not in my plans, but in God's plans. I befriended people who were really influential in my life. These friends were not only church friends that I would see on Sundays and then forget for the rest of the week, but these friends were the real deal. People I would spend every waking moment with, friends that I would learn to love. Patient friends, and friends who were eager to guide and support me in my walk with God. I think God knew that friends were the biggest deal in my life and it was through them that he transformed me and brought me to him.

The day I seriously considered getting baptized was easter weekend at the church service in Kingston. I remember being super pissed off that week cause it was an exact year since my car crash and I was thinking about how useless I was and how I haven't really improved that much in a year..." That day, the pastor was talking about how we are sinners and how even the best of us mess up sometimes, and we were looking at Judas...the message was very basic, but it was what I needed. Afterwords, communion took place and I suddenly asked myself: "Why am I not doing communion, I am so ready for it!" And it was at that exact moment that I decided to get baptized. I've talked to friends about when God gives you that "Woah moment", and that was mine. I now...Pretty dramatic huh?...not...haha

But it meant a lot to me. And since then God has provided me with a lot more "woah moments which totally surprise myself"...

In Hong Kong, God gave me isolation and time, Time to really search for myself and to figure things out. Many are scared that the summer away from fellowship will cause your faith to remain stagnant, but mine continued to grow. For the first time in my life, I was completely isolated from bad influences....And my social activities solely consisted of fellowship, worship, learning, etc...They say that you can never be bored in Hong Kong since there is so much excitement all around you, well although work could be the boringest thing ever, and my friends would often go a-wall for random periods of time...My spiritual life was the most excitingest thing ever. That summer I learned the true power and meaning of worship during the Hillsong Concert and re-prayed the Lord's Prayer. I learned the courage it takes and willingness to rely on God when going out on the streets evangelizing...cause literally, you are useless with out him guiding you...importantly, I learned that God is in control, that his plan is THE PLAN, and that he will most definitely take care of you and answer your prayers.

A big reason why I was afraid to get baptized was the fact that I was afraid of the sacrifices I'd have to make as a Christian, but now I realize, that in getting baptized, there are no sacrifices, just an opportunity to have a relationship and grow closer to God. Being Christian may cause me to encounter problems and challenges along the way, I know being christian isn't easy, but with God, all things are possible...and I guess that's the beauty of life. ■



by Aaron Leung

For as long as I can remember I've been going to CCCO. While I was still in grade 1 I would go to church on Sundays and sing and then go to kfc. I would call on him for help whenever I had problems in my life, but It would be many years before I began to truly believe in the lord. When I was young I didn't have any Christian friends at school so I wouldn't have faith in Christ. I kept going to church for years but only as an empty shell. I didn't feel as if there was a point. I never played attention to the sermon cause I was young and quite frankly I didn't care. Me and my friends would disrupt the sermons by being loud and fidgety. While at children's ministry I was in my opinion a tyrant towards whoever was teaching. I didn't have respect for them. I was growing farther away from Christ throughout the years. At school I would try and have nothing to do with Christ as I grew older. It was too "uncool" for me.

As I grew older things started to become more important than church in my opinion. At first I would skip church if I had too much work to do. That would soon escalate to ohh I'm so tired to go. Soon I just wouldn't go to church until my parents forced me too. It was too much of a drag for me. I would only come on very special occasions or when my parents forced me. I started to not believe that God was here. That would affect my personality as well. I developed bad characteristics and didn't feel the need to change. I wasn't a God centered person and my personality played for it with how I treated my friends and family. What I watched and listened to on tv or the radio. By the time I reached grade 7 I was an atheist. I still went to church but it was mainly because I was forced to by my parents. I remember one time I went to Pure Energy and told everyone I was Atheist. Josh was teaching sexed on that day. As I remember back to it now I feel I was just so stupid.

I would only start really knowing Christ when I went on getaway. Getaway was probably the highlight of my life. Pastor Rob would have a sermon on sin and obeying god. He would tell us everyone was a sinner and that it doesn't matter who you were. God forgives all no matter what you've done in the past. This wasn't knows to me, but at that moment something in me just snapped. Maybe it was because I was without distractions for 3 whole days with no video games, face book and TV or maybe Pastor Rob was that compelling. To this day I would never know but it was because of that time my faith in God would be renewed. Something that was dormant in me for many years. During get away I kept thinking of all the sins I've committed in my life. I felt guilty and wanted change. Maybe when I was young it was just something I wanted to run away from. I guess it was part of God's greater scheme. I realized the Jesus made for us so that are sins could be paid. I was just humbled when I understood the true meaning of his sacrifice.

After that moment I started going back to YF and service again. I would learn more about the lord and feel a sense of calling to a greater scheme. I believe I became more patient, respectful and just nicer in general. I would feel as if my life had an actual purpose. I had a wanting to be a better person and live in God's image. I felt better about myself. I wanted to atone for my sins one day. I also wanted to do missions trips and do things for god. That's when I would go to Ouje. Expecting to teach I would actually be taught. My character was better and my faith would go stronger.

When debating baptism I had trouble. For over a year sinse get away I wanted to get baptized but I wanted to atone for everything that I've done in my life. So many things that I wish I could take back. I didn't feel like I deserved to be baptized. Josh told me that baptisms not about being worthy. It's to identify us with the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. I after much debate I decided that I want to follow God. That I want more out of my life than what I have now. God made me who I am. That I want to accept the lord. I look back now and see how much help I really needed. How lost I really was. Every time someone mentions stupid things I did from my past I try and hide my face from the shame. God's been working on me a lot. I've been reading my bible everyday, going to YF and actually paying attention during the sermons. I've been praying for my friends as well. I think God has made me a better person. ■

by Alyssia Ma

I had spent several days wondering about what I should write in my testimony. A lot of people that I know had inspiring, life-changing stories, and my life doesn't. I now realize that I should be very thankful to God for blessing me with the opportunity to know him at this age, and be able to trust Him with my life.

I started going to church since kindergarten, I had prayed every night with my mom, and I had sincerely believed in God. But my prayers were empty, and were often done as a ritual. I remember going to Sunday school, and memorizing bible verses for treat, and not to learn. When I turned 13, I had started to do everything that didn't please God. I would spend days locked up in my room, playing on my iPod or reading magazines, I stopped reading the bible, and would skip going to church because I was "Too Tired".

Last March, I attend the Getaway and being away from all of my distractions made me realize that I was no longer working on my relationship with God. I felt really empty, because I never realized how much I needed Him, until I push Him away. The Getaway was a great experience for me, and I started to connect with God again.

My friends and family would often ask me if I was going to get baptized, and I would always say that I didn't want to make a commitment that I wouldn't be able to follow.

Around four months ago, I was asking myself why I still couldn't feel my relationship with God growing, and I realized that it's because I wasn't even trying. I learned that I had always asked so much out of God, even after that He had already given me everything, and I did nothing in return.

So now, I want to be baptized and fully accept God as my savior. He has blessed me with so much, and I want to connect my life to Him, living a godly life. I know that I am a sinner, and will never be perfect, but I am willing to continue making good decision, and try to trust the Lord with my life. ■

by Ada Fang Tao Ren

Hello, everyone. my name is Ada Fang Tao Ren. In June, 2004, our family immigrated to Canada and settled down in Ottawa. In 2006, our daughter was born and we were very happy. Everything was going smoothly. On February 4, 2007, I decided to commit myself to the Lord when I was at home. I remembered that two sisters from the Alliance church came to visit me. They introduced me to my Lord, and taught me Roman 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." I understood that God first loved us. As long as I trust in Him, repent and confess my sin and accept Jesus Christ as my Saviour, He will forgive my sins and giving me eternal life.

I remember in the summer of 2007, my daughter was five months old then and she had constipation. Usually she had bowel movement only once a week and that was under difficult circumstances. I often took her to see a doctor, but that did not solve the problem. Then we saw a specialist. I did everything that the specialist told me to do and still the problem persisted. I thought about my Father in heaven and began to pray. But I did not know how to pray. I just said, "Father, please help my daughter. I beg you treat her." I just continued to pray like this. One day, my husband called me at work. He said there was good news for me. I asked him about the good news. He just said that when you get home, you would know. When I got home, my husband was very happy and told me that Kelly could have a bowel movement on her own. When I heard the news, I was so touched that tears continued to flow. I really thanked the Lord. Defecation is a basic function that should come naturally, but it was very hard for my daughter that year. O God, you're the Mighty God. In you, everyone is possible, thank you. Later, because of work, I could not come to church. Two years ago, Amy invited me to her cell group meetings. I've only been there once. These two years, Amy and her husband often called us to care for us. During the Alpha course last year, Amy called me. I told her that I was busy. Amy asked me what was occupying me and, if there was anything she can help me with. Also she said that, "Our Heavenly Father can help you". She then touched my heart. My daughter's constipation was cured by God. Why did I not want to go to church? In this way we decided to participate in a course. My husband and our two children were very happy. During last year's Alpha Course, my husband had decided to believe in the Lord, and got baptized at Easter this year. This brought us back to God's family. God, I want to thank you for giving us a good home. Please let us grow in your truth and grace. Let us be a good witness for you. Oh Lord, let me look up to you and follow your path of righteousness. Do not deviate. And always have a grateful heart. ■

by Yan Bing Guo

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” Luke 19:10

I was brought up in an atheist country, and therefore did not have a chance to get to know God. After I was married and moved to Canada, I started to come in contact with some Christians. Several years ago, a Christian friend invited me to go to church. But because of various reasons, I turned that friend down every time. But my gracious God had not given up on me. Last year, my friend, Ren Fang Tao, although being a new Christian herself, she sincerely invited me to their Friday evening Alpha group discussion. She also told me that my son could join the Awana children program. Due to her repeated invitation and encouragement, we finally decided to join the Friday evening small group. My son also liked the fellowship activities. Three or four weeks later, two sisters approached us to preach us the gospel and invited us to believe in Christ. My husband and I made the prayer of commitment and asked Jesus Christ to forgive our sins and to become our Lord and personal saviour.

After committing ourselves to our Lord, we continue to go to church, join the Sunday School, worship, cell group, and then the Alpha course. This allows me to gain more knowledge of the Bible and the Christian faith. Before this new commitment, I would always worry about many things. Now, I have learnt to trust and defer my problems to my Lord. This has given me peace in my inner heart. I realize that I still have many weaknesses to address. I know that I will need to rely on Jesus Christ to win the battle in the very end. ■

Praise in the Desert

by Nancy Nam Quach

I grew up in Vietnam. Before fleeing to Canada, life was full of suffering and trauma, resulting in my many mental and emotional scars. Through my husband, Calvin Ly, I was introduced to Pastor Francis Wong and his wife Esther Wong. Early last year, my emotion had experienced another upheaval. Fortunately, Esther Wong was very patient in listening to my problems, and she helped me to find solutions to my problems and provided counseling. Gradually, I started to come to church worship and to attend Sunday School. I learned from Sunday School the Lord's prayer. It started with: “our Father in heaven”. I then understand that God is my heavenly father and I am his daughter. I needed this heavenly father to love, help and guide me. I also came to know and subsequently joined the woman's prayer group. This is a group of sisters who come together to share their life and challenges, encourage one another and share each other's burden. This is something that I have always aspired to.

On May 3 last year, Pastor Francis Wong's wife, Esther, brought another pastor's wife, Mrs. Quach to come to my house to preach the gospel. I understood at the time that I was a sinner and I needed Jesus Christ to be my personal saviour, to take over my sin, and to give me eternal life. So I followed their lead and pray to God to commit my life to Him.

After committing myself to the Lord, I will still have to face many difficulties. For example: in recent

months, because of allergy problems, I could not participate in Sunday morning worship. But my Heavenly Father always looks after me. Every time I was in need, he would give me timely help, and would give me enough grace and strength to face it. Isaiah 9:6 mentioned that God's name is “everlasting Father”. No matter how much our earthly father loves us, he will leave us one day. Only our Heavenly Father is eternal. I will trust him, follow him and serve him for the rest of my life. ■



Last Christmas, I attended a gospel drama called “Going Home” that left a deep impression on me. Actually, am I not a lost lamb, who is trying to find my way home.

I remember when I was 17 years old, I first heard of the gospel of God’s heavenly kingdom from my high school friend’s mother. But I was facing the pressure of the college entrance examination, and I did not find out more about this gospel. After I got admitted to University, I went to Shanghai to study and then work. After I was married, I got to hear the Gospel for the second time. It was preached to me by my mother-in-law, who was a devout Christian. She often talked about Bible stories or proverbs to us and she would sing praise hymns every day at home. The first praise hymn that I learned from her was “What a friend we have in Jesus”. No matter where it be serious matter or trivial matter, she would say: “In everything, we pray and ask for. Do not worry about tomorrow because our Lord will prepare everything for you.” My husband and I would gradually attend church service with her. We also started to read the Bible. Whenever we came face to face with difficulties, we would pray to Jesus. When we first started, we still entertained some doubts, but eventually, we came to feel the grace of our Lord. It was a wonderful experience.

Ten years ago, we wanted to immigrate to Canada But because of some obstacles we did not apply. At that time, we felt that it was a pity that we gave it up. But my mother-in-law said that our Lord Jesus was blocking us, which would mean that the timing was not right and that we should sit back and wait. When I first heard about it, my heart was in doubt. But after a few years, I slowly felt that our Lord Jesus was preparing and arranging for us. He was leading us step by step to go forward. A decade later, when we apply for Canadian immigration, everything was going very smoothly. Starting from application to finally getting our visa, it only took us one year’s time. I knew then that our Lord had opened the door for us to move to Canada. So I always feel that my husband and I are truly blessed. His gift has always been so rich and full, and exceeds what we have prayed for.

When we were in China, we went to a church which had a Sunday school program that was far from perfect. So after my son was born, my husband and I stopped going to Sunday Service. Instead, we stayed home to watch the kids. After we arrived in Canada, under God’s guidance, we came to CCCO. There were so many friendly and loving brothers and sisters, who helped us to adjust to this new environment, foreign language, and new classmates and teachers. They helped us to go through the most difficult first few months in this country. My son was only four years old and he had a hard time to adjust to this strange environment. Thank to our gracious God, and the care of brothers and sisters in church and the concern of his teachers in school, he overcame these difficulties in three months. He has finally settled down and felt comfortable with the new language and new friends.

We are indeed blessed. Without God’s arrangement, we cannot settle down so smoothly. What is even better is that now we have the opportunity to further study the Bible, through pastors’ sermons and the seeker’s class, we come to realize that all men are sinners. But our Lord Jesus had taken over that burden and cleansed us of our sins so that we could reconcile to God and be recognized as righteous. He freed us from our heavy burden so that we could go forward without the heavy baggage. How wonderful is this. This lost sheep has finally found a way to come back home and it is now full of joy. ■

by Rolland Liu

In retrospect, my first impression of Christianity was the cross I saw on my grandfather and grandmother's calendar on their door. I also saw a big white piece of paper filled with praise hymns, and there were many people attending and singing hymns. However, since that early initial contact with Christianity until I made up my decision to be baptized in Christ, a long time had passed without me knowing more about Christianity.

Ever since my young age, I received an education that taught me to use an atheism system to explain everything surrounding me. But when I tried to get to the bottom of some of the questions, like, how the Universe comes about, how come it is so orderly, could it ever go towards chaos; why we have consciousness and conscience, how to evolve such complex organs such as the eyes and brain. I had tried to find solutions in the framework of materialism and the theory of evolution. But I still could not understand. So out of rational thinking, I thought that maybe there is a God.

During university, due to the influence of my mother, sometimes I would browse through the Bible to look for stories. But there was nothing that stayed with me until I heard her recited a passage during her prayer time. I was intrigued as to who could have spoken those words. Then I found out that it was our Lord Jesus Christ who taught his disciples about the Lord's prayer. Since then, this text has stayed with me and whenever I am in need, I would automatically recite it repeatedly. It has brought me peace and strength. I could also somehow feel the existence of God. After graduation, I got a job, got married and lived in Shanghai. Very often, my parents would come to Shanghai to visit and stay with us. For four or five years, we would go to church together every Sunday, listening to the Word of God. Each time when we had done worship, I would feel very much at ease. It was as if I had my battery recharged. But unfortunately, I very rarely read the Bible, and almost no prayer life to speak of. Since the birth of my child, due to some constraints in our life, for four years we seldom went to church service. In that period of time, I began to doubt if I should really believe in Jesus Christ.

Praise the Lord. He let us successfully immigrate to Canada. In July 2011, our whole family landed in Ottawa. After we settled down in August, the first thing we went out to do was to find a church, hoping that we could meet more friends in this foreign city. At the same time, we felt for a longing for God and felt that we were all indebted to Him. Praise the Lord. He brought me to the Chinese Christian Church of Ottawa, which is now my spiritual home. On the one hand, we were treated with selfless love and help from a lot of brothers and sisters. This is from this love and grace from God through them that we feel this is our spiritual home. On the other hand, the Sunday School class for new believers, the Alpha course, and seminars on subjects like parental care, all formed a better foundation for my faith. The love of God and Jesus' sacrifice on the cross are no longer a vague concept to me. On my journey of faith, I am no longer a passive follower, but have become an active participant. In August last year, under the leadership of Pastor Yu and his wife, my wife and I had made a decision to repent and follow Jesus. In our daily lives, our whole family would begin to pray. We have become more lenient and patient with our son, and we have learnt to trust, be humble and be obedient to God. I also learned to reflect on myself more often. I was pleasantly surprised that the transformation of my son, Mu Yuan Liu. When he first came to Canada, he had been a constant source of my headache. Now, he has many friends, become more sensible, and likes to go to church. He has learnt to sing hymns, and has often asked us to pray for him.

Thanks to the Lord. He had used 30 years to prepare for me. He has never strayed nor abandoned me. When I went looking for Him, He let me find him. When we pray to Him, He will give more than what we ask for. Thank you, Lord, for dying for my sins and let your precious blood washes away my sins, so that I can come before the Father, to walk the road in front of me with no fear. Lord Jesus, I am willing to be baptized in your name, to become a child of God. Please make my life a new and revitalized one. ■

by Vincent Mok



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Praise in the Desert

Hi, everyone. My name is Vincent Mok. In 1982, I immigrated from Hong Kong to Canada. Then in 1988, I moved to Ottawa. I got married in year 2000, and we have two sons.

Before I had come to know the Lord, my life was very boring with no real goals in life. Every day was just a routine of going to work, leaving work to go home, having dinner and then going to sleep. We rarely participated in any social activities. So I did not have too many friends, and I had low self-esteem. We were hesitant to make any major decisions because we were overly anxious and always worrying. I also had no patience, and would not receive any criticism kindly (especially from my wife). As a result, we were always quarreling over trivial matters.

About a year ago, a sister from the CCCO church had repeatedly invited us to go to her church for a gathering. Finally we accepted her invitation to attend a Sunday worship. That day happened to be the first time that her husband did a testimony during the church service. Since then, we continued to participate in the Sunday service and other church gatherings. On April 1, two sisters from CCCO (Ivy Cheng and Amy Wong) preached to us the gospel and asked us if we believed in the existence of God, and whether we were willing to accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord. We responded by saying that we were willing. On that day, they helped us to commit ourselves to the Lord. However, after the decision, I still entertained some doubt about whether it was too early to make that decision. Did I really believe in the existence of God? But in the aftermath of one event, then I discarded all doubt and really believed in the existence of God and convinced that my decision was correct.

In September last year, my elder sister found out that she had lung cancer. The cancer had spread to her spinal cord and it affected her movement. My sister was a very healthy person. She did not smoke and she attended her aerobic class at work every day. She seldom drove, but preferred to walk or take the bus instead. This cancer suddenly came upon her without warning. It was hard to believe. I now believe that it was God who made all these arrangements.

That was just the beginning. Now, we have been praying for her every day. Pastor Francis Wong, his wife, Esther, and brothers and sisters of CCCO prayed for her too. Our heavenly Father really loves her. She went through radiation, spinal cord operation, chemotherapy and physiotherapy processes. All these went very smoothly. Her cancer had been in retreat and her health had gradually improved. We were so very grateful.

After all these, I found myself becoming more spiritual and I began to study the Bible every day. I want to learn more about the teaching of the Lord, and to learn more about patience. I begin to accept my wife's well-intentioned criticisms and start to participate in more church activities, fellowship and Bible Studies. I also come to know more friends.

Lord, I confess that I am a sinner. I sincerely repent for the sins that I committed. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He died on the cross for my sin. His blood can cleanse my sins, so that I can be born again. Lord, I want to thank you for bringing me, my wife and my two sons to the CCCO Church family. I know we still have a long way to go. But the Lord will be with us, lead us, teach and guide us for as long as we live. ■