



CCCO-K

APRIL 2013 VOLUME 19

1 PETER
2:24


He himself bore our sins
in his body on the cross,
so that we might die to
sins and live for righteousness.



Editorial	1
Sermon by Pastor Calvin Fong	2
2013 Church Ministry Outlook	
Elders Board	6
English Ministry	7
Cantonese Ministry	8
Mandarin Ministry	9
Youth Ministry	11
Children's Ministry	12
Missions Ministry	13
Gazing at God's Faithfulness	Carmen Yan 14
2012 URBANA Sharing	
Valerie Kong	18
Learning, Discovering and Gaining Clarity for My Calling	Shaun Liu 19
Great need for the Gospel	Natasha Cheung 20
True Worship with Freedom Empowers Mission	Jonathan Lam 21
The Great Invitation	Jennifer Gin 22
2013 Ottawa Youth Getaway Sharing	
Eugenia Ling	23
Peter Zhou	24
2013 Easter Baptismal Testimony	
Elizabeth Chen	25
Raymond Chung	26
Mandi Gin	27
Michael Gong and Changchun Ren	28
Jeffrey Wong and Peter Zhou	29
2013 Easter Membership Transfer	
Qiwen Liao and Xuefen Nie	30
God's Wings	Anita Yeung 31

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Footsteps of Spring



With the sudden change of seasons overnight, April weather in Ottawa never ceases to surprise us! While we were seemingly sinking into desperation by the freezing drizzle and unstoppable snow the day before, the next morning we witnessed greenery covering the hills and birds chirping away in the parks. How marvelous and unbelievable! "Weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning." (Psalm 30:5). This picture is being painted in Brother Raymond Chung's testimony in this issue of the CCCO-Konnnect.

It appears that our CCCO church family is facing a similar challenge as well: many are puzzled in the resignation of our Cantonese and Mandarin pastors. How interesting to hear the Chair of our Elders Board, Tim Law commented: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." Do you want to find out why? You must turn the pages and read the articles.

In her devotional book "Streams in the Desert", Mrs. Charles E. Cowman wrote:

"It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good". (1 Sam. 3:18)

See God in everything, and God will calm and colour all that thou dost see!" It may be that the circumstances of our sorrows will not be removed, their condition will remain unchanged; but if Christ, as Lord and Master of our life, is brought into our grief and gloom, "HE will compass us about with songs of deliverance." (Psalm 32:7)

To see HIM, and to be sure that His wisdom cannot err, His power cannot fail, His love can never change; to know that even His direst dealings with us are for our deepest spiritual gain, is to be able to say, in the midst of bereavement, sorrow, pain, and loss, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath, taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21)



Pastor Calvin Fong

Well, it has been a most eventful few months of 2013 hasn't it! Pastor Francis' departure. Pastor William turns down our invitation to serve with us. And most recently Pastor Joshua's (Yu) resignation. It's hard to know and understand what in the world God is doing!

It has been encouraging to see brothers and sisters from the entire church engaging in prayer during these uncertain times. Most recently we heard from various leaders in the two Chinese congregations sharing the current need and situation. We need to, as one, engage in prayer and seek God for His direction and His vision for CCCO.

In the English congregation we have been systematically studying Jesus' Sermon on the Mount over the past several months. In the Sermon we have seen how God's people are to live and it is in stark contrast and many times contradictory to the way worldly citizens live. In one of the most familiar passages of the Sermon Jesus teaches his disciples how they should pray. "The Lord's Prayer" or probably better "The Disciple's Prayer" reminds us that prayer is not primarily about asking God to do something for us, rather is about bringing us into a place where we can glorify and worship Him. The following is an edited excerpt from the message I gave on February 3, 2013 on prayer. As we enter this time of uncertainty may we direct our attention and focus wholly on Him.

PRAYER

There's a new TV show debuting tonight on CTV following the Super Bowl. According to the commercials it's a crime drama that stars Kristin Lehman as Detective Angie Flynn. But the twist or difference of this show compared to other crime dramas is that it attempts to not only find out in traditional fashion, "who dunnit" but goes deeper and as one reviewer says discovers the "why dunnit." It's emphasis is not only on the crime, in this show it is usually murder and goes beyond trying to simply figure out who committed the crime but tries to get to the reason for why the crime was committed. The shows name is "Motive" and the catch line goes, "The murder is only the beginning."

In chapter 6 of Matthew we saw that Jesus does have concern with our religious actions when he addresses what he refers to as "acts of righteousness" or "acts of piety." These are outward acts meant to show our devotion and reverence for God and

meant to help us grow in our Christian lives but the Pharisees had, just as they did with the Law, used them for self-serving purposes. They had used these acts of righteousness; giving to the needy, prayer and fasting, to draw attention to themselves and their so-called religious devotion and not to, as the acts were supposed to do, bring glory to God. Their acts of righteousness were hypocritical. Jesus, in this portion of the Sermon, teaches us that it's not only important that you do these acts of piety but that the reason why you do it is just as important. The "why dunnit" matters.

Matthew 6:5-15

Prayer

⁵"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹"This, then, is how you should pray:

'Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹Give us today our daily bread.
¹²And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³And lead us not into temptation,^[a]
but deliver us from the evil one.^[b]
¹⁴For if you forgive other people when
they sin against you, your heavenly Father
will also forgive you.

¹⁵But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

But Jesus gives further teaching on the issue of prayer when he also tells us not to pray as the pagans pray in a babbling manner with flowery and many words. The word here for babbling is "*battalogo*" which can be translated as "stammering" or "stuttering". It's praying in a way that might be described as "Blah, blah, blah!" Pagans believed that their many word and eloquent words made their prayers more likely to be heard by their gods. Last week we took a brief look at the story of Elijah and the prophets of Ba'al when the pagan prophets prayed for hours only to have their prayers ignored since we know their gods simply don't exist. Jesus says don't pray like them.

But does this mean we should ever pray with any length? Does that mean the focus of our prayers is to be direct and succinct? Are all long prayers to be avoided? I don't think so. There are times when we are called to cry out to God and sometimes that means it takes a long time and uses a lot of words. Jesus isn't condemning the length of prayers rather he is warning us not to degrade prayer into the mere recitation of words. Prayer should never be a mechanical utterance of words. In the KJV verse 7 reads, "**But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions...**" The admonition is not against repetition rather it's against VAIN repetition. Jesus is speaking against any prayer that is done with the mouth when the mind and heart aren't engaged. When the focus is on quantity and not quality or length and not depth – those are the prayers we need to steer clear from.

I think there are several reasons why we can get caught in the trap of lengthy, mechanical prayers. First, we don't under-



stand the purpose of prayer. Why does God give us this incredible gift? What did God, through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ, allow us this access to His very throne room? What does it mean and how can we follow Paul's command to, "pray without ceasing?" Second, we don't understand the nature of God. We don't know God the way we should and so we launch into these long, mindless prayers. I mentioned last week that sociologists have observed that the better we know someone the more comfortable we are with silence. And third, we don't understand the relationship we have with God and that God wants to have with us. We have a wrong view of the kind of relationship God desires to have with His people – both individually and corporately and our prayers reflect our perspective on that relationship.

We could go through each portion of the Lord's Prayer in extensive detail and there would be great value to that but I would believe you have heard messages on the Lord's Prayer before so for today and for this series I won't do that. In overview fashion I believe the Lord's Prayer helps us to focus on three things that should help us overcome our misunderstandings on prayer and hopefully help us grow in our understanding and practice of prayer.

A. Prayer is an Acknowledgement of God's Greatness

First, Jesus says we should pray, **"Our Father in heaven, hallowed (or holy) be your name"**. This opening phrase teaches us that prayer is an acknowledgement of God's greatness. We recognize that God is in heaven – He is above all things and greater than His creation. His name is holy and we are to revere it as holy.

Too often we gloss over this in our prayers. We begin with "Father in heaven", "Heavenly Father" or some other variation but it can or has been reduced to a formulaic sentence. We don't spend time – either in our prayers or in our daily living – to acknowledge who God is and His greatness. We quickly say, "Heavenly Father" and then launch right into our needs and requests. As we pray we need to learn who God is.

One note from this opening phrase. Again, I won't be able to share in detail every phrase in this model prayer but from this opening phrase note that Jesus tells his disciples to address God as "Father". As you may have already known this term of relationship and intimacy was completely foreign during this time. God was a great many things to the people but "Father" was not one of them. It's interesting to note that when Jesus talks to his disciples he never refers to God as "Our Father" rather he always says, "My Father." But here, in his teaching on prayer his use of "Our Father" opens the door of son-ship to all who receive him as Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ is uniquely God's one and only son but we are God's children by adoption so we too, like Christ have the privilege of referring to God as "Father."

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name" is a reverent recognition of who God is and an acknowledgement of God's greatness.

B. Prayer is a Commitment to God's Glory

Jesus continues saying, **"...your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."** After acknowledging God's greatness our first request is a commitment to God's glory. Our desire is that HIS kingdom come and that HIS will be done on earth just as it is done in heaven.

His kingdom is obviously not a physical kingdom one can find on a map with boundaries and a capital city. The kingdom of God is where God reigns and rules and that is in the hearts and lives of kingdom citizens. And when we pray for his kingdom to come we are praying that more and more will come to salvation through Jesus Christ and allow God to reign supreme in their lives. The second portion of this phrase recognizes that God's will is always done in heaven but not always done on earth so it is a request that His will be done on earth just as it is in heaven. So when we pray this part of the prayer we are also praying that we would submit and commit to the kingdom of God and to His will being done!

Again, how often do we gloss over this portion of the prayer. Our tendency is to ask God to do what we ask when prayer is primarily meant to ask God to help US do what HE asks. We need to diligently seek to understand God's will and work around

us and pray that He would show us how He wants us to act. We need to ask God to use us to share the gospel with those around us – in our neighborhoods, our schools, our workplaces and in this neighborhood. Ask God to open our eyes to the many opportunities He gives us and then ask for the courage and strength to act or speak when those opportunities present themselves.

“Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” is a willing commitment to God’s glory.

C. Prayer is a Dependence on God’s Grace

Finally the last portion says, **“Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.”** We acknowledge God’s greatness. We commit to God’s glory and then we launch into our needs? No, even in our needs we pray for dependence on God’s grace.

Jesus acknowledges that we have needs in our lives that require God’s work. Whether it be our daily needs for food, the courage and humility to forgive or the strength to resist temptation we need God to be at work in our daily lives. But Jesus teaches us to pray that we would learn to trust and depend on God for these things and to learn to be wholly and completely dependent on Him. Later on in the Sermon Jesus instructs us not to worry and chase after these things like the pagans do because God wants to and will take care of our every need if we learn to depend on God’s grace.

We think we know what our needs are but don’t you think God knows better? If not then of course we will have our laundry list of things and needs and requests. But as we learn to know God we learn to trust God and allow His grace to be poured out into our lives in the manner in which He chooses. From our physical needs for food, our spiritual needs to forgive and our moral needs for strength.

“Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one” is learning to depend on God’s grace.

There is certainly much more we can and should learn from Jesus’ teaching on prayer. But this morning I wanted us to see the simplicity in which Jesus desires his disciples to pray. Simply yet rich and full in meaning and if true prayer captures our hearts we might find ourselves more committed to prayer individually and together.

Jesus’ example here is not meant to be copied and repeated over and over again as it then can also become “vain repetitions” or “mindless utterances” rather it is meant to be a model of prayer for us to follow and learn from. We need to learn the essentials of prayer and allow those essentials to penetrate our hearts, fill our minds and then as a result flow from our lips.

One final question to ask and answer that should help us in our understanding of prayer. The question is often asked, “If God already knows what we need and even what we want, why do we pray?” Why tell God what he already knows? Once again, I think this question comes from a misunderstanding of the very nature of prayer.

Prayer is not, at its essence our way of telling God what we need or want. It’s not telling God something He doesn’t already know. Prayer is our way of expressing and showing our total desire to be wholly His. No holding back. God delights in the prayers of His children because it shows His people who He is. Eugenia Brown puts it this way. **“She sees prayer not so much as a grocery list of wants or a way to change God’s mind, but rather as a way to regain perspective in her relationship with God. Like Jesus, she says, ‘we pray to deepen our relationship with God. We pray to remind ourselves of our place of humility, to remind ourselves that God is God, and we are not. To submit myself to God in prayer changes me. I believe that God loves me enough to want to transform me into all that God created me to be, but I must cooperate in that transformation. Every time I pray, I cooperate just a little bit more.’”** God wants us to come to Him, not in a mechanical, impersonal way but like a child would come to a Father and in simplicity with a heart of humility, trustfulness and thoughtfulness pour our hearts out to Him. May God grant us the desires of our heart as we pray and as we pray may the desires of His heart be ours. ■

2013 Church Ministry Outlook

Elders Board

K. Tim Law

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,” said Dickens. This statement describes aptly our church at this crucial moment. It is a bad time as we are losing two pastors within a few months. It is a good time because it allows us to pause and turn our eyes upon our Lord before we forge ahead.

The departure of two pastors definitely creates a void in our ministry. Some worry that our church may face disasters. We thank God for His providence that there is so far no panic in the leadership nor among brothers and sisters. Instead, we see an increasing number of brothers and sisters rising up to fill the void as seen in the ministry outlook reported by the Cantonese and the Mandarin Core Groups. Some, with a strong sense that the church is in crisis, even joined the leadership to take up weightier responsibilities to serve our Lord. As well, we are experiencing a renewed spirit in our church prayer life. The monthly church-wide sunrise prayer meeting, for instance, attracts quite a few brothers and sisters to attend and there we feel God is our refuge as we pour out our hearts before Him.

Pausing before the Lord has led the Elders Board to realize we have fallen short of what we committed to do in 2008 in implementing the new Board structure. We have now resolved to restore the main roles of the elected elders, which are: to provide overall strategy, planning, and direction for the church, in collaboration with the pastoral staff, to guide, support and review ministry plans and progress, and to review staff performance. We believe this new leadership culture will aid the church to carry out her mission in a more gratifying way.

Efforts have been made through praying together, discussion and communicating among brothers and sisters to fill the void vacated by the pastors. We sense the urgency of it and are striving to remedy the situation in a manner abiding by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Supporting caring ministry is a primary target this year in spite of losing two pastors. Plans have been mentioned in the outlook reports of the various ministries. The Elders Board considers this ministry being of such importance that the review of it will be conducted on a bimonthly basis.

We recognize we are engaging in a spiritual battle as we decide to follow God particularly at this trying time. We are not naive that we are heading down a smooth road. Our church is now like a car with two of the four wheels being spare tires. We are bound to encounter hitches and glitches. Let us persist in trusting God, unite our spirit, bear with one another, and not lose heart.

Looking ahead, we are confident that God’s goodness and mercy will follow us because: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty (Zech. 4:6). ■

English Ministry Summary

(Spring AGM)

Pastor Calvin Fong

For 2013 the ECG has determined a need to clearly understand the direction for the English ministry including a plan for discipleship, outreach and growth. The H2O ministry has been growing and stable over the past year with the addition of (older) adult influence and leadership. The ECG believes we need to address the need for growth among the families. As well we need to continue strengthening the relationships in the congregation.

We will be exploring using Billy Graham's "My Hope" for 2013 which includes training, prayer and an evangelistic outreach opportunity scheduled for fall. This is a personal, relationship-based evangelism tool.

These are the main areas of focus for the English Ministry for 2013:

- Discerning God's vision and direction
 - o April 7th gathering to pray and share together regarding direction for English ministry
 - * Identity
 - * Focus
 - * Outreach, growth and discipleship
 - Option to use Billy Graham's "My Hope" evangelistic strategy
 - "My Hope" includes training and evangelistic event
 - o Day Retreat to follow up on above (early summer)
 - o Integration of ministries based on determined direction and strategy including Sunday Worship, Sunday School, LIFE Groups, prayer meetings, etc.
- English Ministry Relationship and Caring Plan
 - o As determined by the Elders Board the need for caring ministry development in all congregations
 - o Relationship building among congregation
 - o Welcome and integration of new comers
 - o LIFE Group as one vehicle for relationships and care
 - o Implement previously developed visitation and care plan
 - o Systematic leadership to congregation visitation

Through this process we desire to achieve the following:

- Well understood and articulated vision and direction for short and mid-term future of the English ministry
- Ownership of the vision and direction by the English congregation
- Discipleship roadmap
- Caring and Visitation plan and implementation
- Evangelistic mindset and outreach opportunity
- Every member of English congregation involved in a LIFE Group or fellowship group ■

Cantonese Ministry

Grace Wang

In the year 2013, God gives our Cantonese Congregation with new challenges. There are a few positions in the Cantonese Ministry which are vacant after Pastor Francis Wong has left us. We miss you, our dear Pastor Francis! On the other hand, give thanks to God, there are many brothers and sisters in Christ who are willing to take up the vacant positions in the Cantonese Ministry. The members of Cantonese Core Group 2013 include Iris Lau, Kitty Ma, Arvin Choi, Vincent Leung and Wilson Hui.

There are new brothers and sisters in Christ who participate in the Wednesday night prayer meeting, thus it gives us new encouragement and also we feel the leading of the Holy Spirit. Starting in May, on alternate Wednesday morning, we have prayer meetings for seniors and for those who have time during the day. We hope that God will expand our prayer ministry so that CCCO will become The House of Prayer of all Nations.

This year, one of the major objectives of the Cantonese Ministry is on “Spiritual Growth” so that we will love God deeper and wider. In order to help our CCCO members in the Bible studies, in March, there is a certificate course held by CCSTAS on the studies of books of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. In April and May, we continue the “Word of Life” bible studies for all the churches in Ottawa on “Exodus.” In June, we will have the bible conference given by Dr. David Pao. We hope that all these bible studies and seminars will help CCCO members to challenge themselves to study more of the bible and understand the bible better.

Furthermore, the Cantonese Ministry will put an emphasis on Caring Ministry. If CCCO members have any need, please feel free to contact Tim Law, Grace Wang or Anita Yeung. We encourage you to watch and care one another so that CCCO will become a Caring Congregation.

In the fall of last year, the “Good Morning CCCO” fellowship has been replaced by CCCO Adult Fellowship which is held on the third Friday evening of every month from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm. So far the CCCO Adult Fellowship has about 30 members on average. We have adopted the model of a small groups within a big fellowship. The fellowship is led by Ivy Cheng and Maria Ma. Other committee members are Mo Lan Mak, Hin Lun Kan and Patrick Ma. In addition, we have Men’s Group on the fourth Saturday evening of every second month. The leaders are Eric Ling and Herbert Yu. Last January, they have invited Pastor Gary Tse to give a training on small group leadership. The core group will do a mid-year review for all these small groups and fellowship. May God continue to lead us to do better in these areas!

About the Cantonese outreach activities, there are ping-pong ministry on every Monday and ESL on every Tuesday. Through friendship building, we hope that the people in these programs will get to know Christ eventually. In April, there will be an evangelical musical drama in Ottawa, “The Unending Story”, from the Grace Melodis of Toronto for two nights. CCCO is one of the host church. May the Lord use all these activities to bring people towards Him! ■

Mandarin Ministry

Mandarin Core Group

Mandarin Core Group has adopted “To be a blessing to others” as our theme in 2013. Our desire is for us to grow in Christ by following His example and His teaching in Matthew 20:28,

“the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Edification and Fellowship

One of our ways to nurture our congregation and “To be a blessing to others” is through the cell group ministry. We have planned a series of cell group leaders training and sharing sessions to equip and support our cell group leaders to serve in their cell groups. We had a special training session by Rev. Chi-Hung Siu in December, 2012 and we are studying the book, “5x5 Cell Group Leaders’ Training Guide” by Rev. Leung Ting Yi. We have already recruited assistant leaders in each cell group to work with the existing cell group leaders to build up their cell groups. We currently have 4 Adults Cell Groups and 1 Senior Fellowship Group. Within the Senior Fellowship group, we also have 4 sub-groups with group leaders in each of the Senior Sub-groups. It is our prayer that our Senior and Adult group leaders will be equipped to co-work with their assistant leaders to minister to their group members. Our goal is to encourage all those who regularly attend our Sunday Worship to join one of the Adult cell groups or Senior Fellowship Group. The intention is that our people will grow by learning, sharing, caring and reaching out to new people through the cell groups gathering and outside cell group interactions. For more information about our Senior Fellowship Group and Adult Cell Group Ministry and, please contact Daniel Jin and Lapkin Ip or one of the cell group leaders (Chunsheng Li, David Zhou/Morris Zhang, Jiping Zhu/Youlian Pan and Michael Wang)

Evangelism

II Timothy 4:2 ” Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season”. Evangelism continues to be our focus. We had conducted Alpha courses and Alpha follow-up courses for the past 3 years. We will also continue to do personal evangelism via our Senior Fellowship group and Adult Cell Groups. In addition, we plan to have a more focus out-reach initiative starting in September 2013. The burden of reaching out to the Mandarin speaking pre-college/college students has been in some of our leaders’ heart for awhile. We had talked about it and prayed about it. Now is the time for action and don’t miss the opportunity. Catch the wave while we can. Hence, the Mandarin Core Group has decided to launch it this September and let’s “be a

blessing to the pre-college/college students”. Please pray for us and if any of you have a burden to partner with us in this ministry and join us in prayer for the preparation in the launch of this ministry, please contact Youlian Pan or Morris Zhang.

Worship and Teaching

Though we do not have a full time Mandarin Pastor at this time, we will do our best to provide the best pulpit ministry and best worship environment for our congregation. We have a dedicated team to plan and arrange for the appropriate speakers for the pulpit. We will also want to further train and develop our current worship team members so that the team members will be enriched in both their relationship with God and their technique in leading our congregation to worship our Lord. We will explore different worship team training avenues to equip our worship team members. Our worship team is also looking to expand. If you have a desire to participate in this ministry, please contact Michael Wang or Baohua Zhang.

Additional Programs

In addition to the above major foci, we also have multiple group activities and inter-church programs for the edification of our Mandarin Congregation. Here are some of the key programs in 2013.

Inter-Church Devotional Meeting by Rev. Caleb Huang on April 12, 13, and 14 at CCCO.

CCIC Across Canada Evangelical conference by Rev. Luke Zhang on June 14 at CCCO.

Inter-Church Bible Study Methods Training by Rev. Jonathan Lai on July 19 and 20 at OCAC.

Mandarin Congregation Summer Retreat on Aug. 10 at CCCO.

Inter-Church Evangelistic Meeting by Rev. Yujian Hong on Sept. 27, 28 and 29 at OCAC.

Annual Mandarin Congregation Christmas Celebration on Dec. 21 at CCCO.

Mandarin Core Group

In 2013, we have Youlian Pan, Morris Zhang, Michael Wang, Baohua Zhang, Esther Ip and Lapkin Ip in the Mandarin Core Group. As you can see, we are lacking female representatives and are praying that our Lord will provide us appropriate sisters joining our MCG in the near future. Together we will be a blessing to others and glorify God. ■



Youth Ministry

Pastor Joshua Wang

Youth Ministry: Senior High *Youth Fellowship* (grades 9-12) and Junior High *Pure Energy* (grades 7-8)

C&Y Core team: 5 members (Pastor Josh (chair), Oscar Cheung, Salina Yan, Duo Duo Wang and Jonathan Lam)

Pastor Josh Wang, volunteers:

Junior High: Oscar Cheung, Samantha Cheung, Sylvia Leung, Manson Yan, Anders Von and Volkingburgh

Senior High: Volunteers: Shelly Wang, Emily Reid and Shaun Liu

Vision: At CCCO our youth ministry desires to see our students transformed by Christ and develop a passionate faith that is rooted in Scripture; so they would dynamically shape the people and culture around them.

All events, retreats and trips are designed according to these five objectives (2013).

1. Making disciples

Our desire is to provide an environment where the gospel is shared, disciples are made, baptized, and taught all that Christ commanded. Equip and challenge the youth to live Spirit filled lives by providing opportunities for the youth to fellowship, share their faith, grow, lead and adopt an attitude of serving others. (ie. Leadership retreat, retreats, Discipleship Week, *community service, Ouje-Bougoumou mission trip etc.*)

2. Biblical teaching

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ” – Romans 10:17 Part of our vision is that the youth would develop a passionate faith that is rooted in Scripture. We will ensure that the Word of God will be faithfully taught and preached to them so that God would strengthen their faith, reveal to them their sin, and call them to rest in his grace and send them to be light in the world. (ie. Regular Bible studies on Fridays and Sundays, Your Word is Truth (Pure Energy), *New Testament overview series, parents & family etc.*)

3. Outreach

We regularly emphasize that the Great Commission applies to all believers and God has placed them in various environments to be a light to their spheres of influence. In youth ministry, our desire is to have events that facilitate a comfortable peer environment for non-believers and newcomers (ie. Coffeehouse, NoN, Rock the River, unified city-wide, activity *nights etc.*)

4. Family awareness and congregational support

As C&Y, we acknowledge that believing parents are responsible for the spiritual growth of their children but our desire is to work alongside parents to build into their children. We hope to draw greater awareness to family issues in the church to generate more cooperation as the discipleship of parents is part of every congregation's care. C&Y would like to partner in strengthening the relationship between the students to their parents (ie. Parents & family 12 week series with the youth, meeting with parents, weekly updates, encourage to join our growing C&Y prayer meetings 2nd and 4th Thursday each month)

5. Relationships and counseling

We have a commitment to pray and be available for youth in times of joy and pain. Taking the time to disciple, encourage youth to grow in their faith. We have a commitment to have leaders who exemplify Christ, so that our teaching and actions provide a strong model of faith, marriage, relationships and service for the youth.

C h i l d r e n ' s M i n i s t r y

Salina Yan

Children's Ministry is operated under CCCO Children and Youth Ministry.

Children's Ministry Team is formed to oversee all CCCO Children programs and reports to C&Y core team.

Children's Ministry Team member for 2013 term: Salina Yan (Chair) , Jean Lam (AWANA co-commander), Roger Yip (AWANA co-commander), Amy Kong (Sunday TOGETHER Sprout Program coordinator), Michelle Wang (Sunday TOGETHER Seedling Program coordinator)

Four Objectives are set for 2013. Program and directions are planned accordingly.

1. Family

Children's Ministry strives to support and encourage the building of God-centered families, one of the priorities is to engage parents to redeem their responsibilities and privilege to plant and nurture faith in their children.

2. Teaching, Training and Equipping

- a. To ensure the use of an accurate, complete, formal, God-centered curriculum in teaching God's word to the children throughout this short stretch of 4/14 window opportunity.
- b. To strengthen children worship in music time on Sunday.
- c. To connect training opportunities for children workers in order to be equipped to teach children effectively and to lead children to know, love and follow God.
- d. To ensure child safety at Church and at all organized church related events.

3. Prayer

- a. The children's ministry will continue to uphold and shaped by prayer.
- b. Core team leaders, teachers, children workers and parents are encouraged to pray for each other and for the children who are under their care.
- c. This ministry will strive to uphold CCCO marriages, families and our future generations in prayer.

4. Mission and Outreach

- a. To teach children recognizing the importance of global mission (Matthew 24:14).
- b. To outreach to unchurch children and families. ■

Missions Ministry

Patrick Ma

The Missions Department has integrated community outreach (formerly called Community Ministry) into the Missions Ministry as a single comprehensive ministry. The goal of CCCO Missions Ministry is to fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) and the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-39).

Objectives and Plan

A: To promote missions awareness and education among all the three congregations including children and youth.

Plan

- Collaboration with Ministry Pastors on Missions planning, coordination, and implementation.
- Praying for missionaries, communicating with missionaries and arranging missionaries' visits.
- Promote Short-Term Missions opportunities to all congregations.
- Coordinate Missions Conference Nov. 4-10, 2013 with Rev Daniel Lau.

B: To adjust some long-time CCCO missionaries' financial support in order to support some new missionaries.

Plan

- Review long-time supported CCCO missionaries' budget and free-up funds for the newly supported missionaries.

C: To maintain current outreach activities which are organized by the three congregations.

Plan (Partial list)

YF - with St. Luke's Soup Kitchen, Shepherds of Good Hope, The Mission, etc.

English (H2O & Adult) – Residents at 100 Empress

Cantonese – English Class, Ping-Pong Games

Mandarin – Alpha Course and Follow-Up

Church wide collaboration with and support for the Gracious Light Christian Centre's community outreach and inter-church ministry.

For brothers and sisters who would like to participate/involve in Missions activities, short-term Missions, or serving on the Missions Committee, please contact Joseph Lam (Chairperson), Wilson Hui, Frederick Cheung, Patrick Ma, Bao-Hua (Bob) Zhang, or George Kong. ■

Gazing at God's Faithfulness

Carmen Yan

Dear CCCO brothers and sisters,

One year later, I find that I can & should start my sharing with the same opening paragraph I wrote to you in April 2012!

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!

...and He truly has. :) There is not much “new” news to share with you this time (for once!?). Currently, by God’s grace, I am still drinking in rich, sweet teaching from the fire hydrant of Westminster. I still have yet to really digest about 90% of what I have been learning (looking forward to doing that in the decades to come...and probably eternity too). I am still exceedingly enjoying my job at Westminster’s library. I’ve still thankfully had chances to pop back to Ottawa here and there, re-connecting with you and recharging at home. I am still being crazily blessed by deepening relationships with a number of sisters as we share openly and honestly with one another about our sins, struggles, revelations, and joys. I have fallen even more deeply in love...with my local church. ;) Continued involvement in the life and members of this church has brought me great joy and given me frequent opportunities to apply my school learning to real-life contexts. I am still seeking to serve and love well a small group of teens in the neighbourhood of our church (picture 1, right)





+ a larger group of young adults (& 1 baby!) in the area where I live (picture 2, left).

I can think of only 2 completely new things that happened: (1) a wonderful summer spent in North Dakota learning about the principles of linguistics under some very gifted & humble missionaries (much more detail was given about this in my email updates; let me know if interested!) and (2) I participated in a season of American football. That's right...I was actually persuaded (and agreed...only out of love for my fellow brothers and sisters, haha) to get cleats, train through scrimmages, and play the cornerback position! 8 Sunday afternoons of unexpectedly abundant fun, fellowship, and flag-pulling

(yeah – no tackling!) ensued.

It has definitely been a season of plenty for me, marked both by relatively peaceful stability and rewarding growth. There have certainly been ups and downs...but it has not been difficult to see the goodness & majesty & power of YHWH our God on display amidst every celebration and challenge. However, the season that looms ahead on my horizon threatens to soon overtake this one, and I have been wrestling with that “threat” lately. After I complete my Biblical studies degree in May, Lord willing, I will return to North Dakota for a second summer of missionary training and then launch into a period of partnership development (“support raising”) as a member of Wycliffe Bible Translators. And then...? Unknown! After how long will I leave? To where? With whom? Doing what? The answers to those questions are all quite vague, and I am tempted to start almost regretting this road which stretches out before me as my season in this oasis draws to a close. The sight of what fearful things might happen (matched with an unsuitable project? lack of strong community? the demands of living in places where there is a theological famine? no access to the comforts and conveniences of the Western lifestyle?) is beginning to eclipse my gaze of God and His glory.



Two weeks ago, God led me to **Joshua 4:1-24**. Our Sunday sermon was focused on that passage, and we were reminded as a congregation to be intentional about setting up “memorial stones” throughout the course of our lives (both individually and corporately, as a church body), and then look back on them often. This was what Joshua and the Israelites were commanded to do when they stood poised to finally enter the good land God had promised them hundreds of years ago. They were to do this because God knows how quickly our fallen human minds forget the mighty works that He does in our lives, the lengths He goes to graciously bless us and mercifully deliver us from what would otherwise be crushing circumstances. The Israelites were faced with the task of driving out some pretty scary people to claim their inheritance, and so God instructed them to fear Him instead of fearing their situation. Whenever a new obstacle comes across our paths, like the Israelites, we also too quickly tend to run to the treadmill of mounting anxiety and fear, instead of looking back at the clear evidence of His sovereignty over all things, including every detail of our lives – past, present, and future.

The enemy of faith is forgetfulness; the natural inclination of our minds, of our hearts, is not to turn *to* God, but *away* from Him. So what is one foundational way to stay nourished and to not just sustain faith, but grow in it? Mark down, look back, and remember what He has done in your life. Savour & chew & swallow those memories, those “stones of remembrance” your faithful Father so often has given you as undeniable evidence of His love and care for you.

And so in this moment, I am reminded to look back at those landmark moments of how YHWH’s mighty hand & outstretched arm has worked powerfully in my past to bring me to where I am today. I am reminded to mark down (in writing

and/or by orally retelling) the numerous testimonies to His goodness, which I can so clearly see here & now in this season of plenty. I am reminded to carefully note where these stones can be found, looking back even as I look ahead, so that I can proceed with confidence, inspired to greater future faithfulness by HIS faithfulness to me.

This Easter weekend especially, I am reminded of the most significant stone of all – **the rolled-away stone of Christ's empty tomb**. Even if it comes to pass that those undesired possibilities of my future become reality (the project isn't the best match; there is no strong community; the dryness of spiritually empty areas takes its toll on me; there is no access to the comforts and conveniences I am accustomed to), or even if something completely undesirable AND unexpected happens...*even so*, may God grant that I will be able to say with Paul, "I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content" (Phil 4:10). On what basis can he say those words, with sincere joy, even as he sits in a filthy jail? On these 2 foundational truths known and embraced by Paul, proclaimed by the rolled-away stone:

(1) **"the Lord is at hand"** (Phil 4:5) – Christ goes before me, Christ is with me, and Christ makes his dwelling in me. That rolled-away stone cries out the truth of His resurrection: Jesus is ALIVE. His sacrifice for our sins has been accepted, and those who believe on him for the cleansing of our sins are inseparably and eternally united with him. As our risen Redeemer, Christ is with us always, until the end (Matt 28:20)...and He cares well for His own.

(2) "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But **to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account**. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith" (Phil 1:21-25) – Our purpose in life, as resurrected men and women who are already living out the eternal life Christ purchased for us, is to advance the battle lines of God's Kingdom and serve the soldiers who fight alongside us. While the empty tomb strengthens us by reminding us of our sure victory, there remains unfinished work. When Mary saw the resurrected Saviour standing near that stone, she was charged with a task: to tell others what she had experienced. "I have seen the Lord" (John 20:18)! Likewise, we have been kept on this side of death because we have an important (com)mission to carry out, and by the Spirit's power in us, we can consider every hardship in this fight to be a "slight momentary affliction" compared to the eternal weight of glory for which we are being prepared (2 Cor 5:16-18).

No matter what storm clouds loom on your horizon, remember the faithfulness of our God. We are not to trust in ourselves, but in who our God is and what He has done. **Looking back AT His work will give us the confidence to move forward IN His work.**



And [Joshua] said to the people of Israel, "When your children ask their fathers in times to come, 'What do these stones mean?' then you shall let your children know, 'Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground.' For YHWH your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as YHWH your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of YHWH is mighty, that you may fear YHWH your God forever."

[Joshua 4:21-24]

"For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as yours?"

[Deuteronomy 3:24]

*This is my prayer in the desert
When all that's within me feels dry
This is my prayer in my hunger and need
My God is a God who provides*

*And this is my prayer in the battle
When triumph is still on it's way
I am a conqueror and co-heir with Christ
So firm on His promise I'll stand*

*And this is my prayer in the fire
In weakness or trial or pain
There is a faith proved of more worth than gold
So refine me Lord through the flames*

*This is my prayer in the harvest
When favor and providence flow
I know I'm filled to be emptied again
The seed I've received I will sow*

*I will bring praise; I will bring praise
No weapon formed against me shall remain
I will rejoice; I will declare –
God is my victory and He is here*

*All of my life, in every season
You are still God;
I have a reason to sing
I have a reason to worship*

[lyrics to *Desert Song*]

Lord, forgive us for turning away from evidence of your faithfulness; cause our gaze to be increasingly fixed on you as we look back at our past, around in our present, and forward to our future. May this be our shared prayer... ■

Carmen ◇◇





2012 URBANA Sharing

Valerie Kong

Dear CCCO family,

Thank you so much for your prayers and support for us during Urbana! It was truly a blessing to be able to experience this missions conference, and it's amazing to see how God answered our prayers for logistics and rides in unexpected ways leading up to our departure. In the four and a half days of the conference, God opened my eyes to see the work He is doing around the world, to hear the testimony of many faithful servants who have answered His call, and to learn about His plans for His local church and for me in my present and future mission fields.

While there was a lot to take in with daily Bible studies, morning and evening sessions, and the workshops/seminars that were offered each day, I was reminded throughout the conference of the privilege and joy of having already responded to God's invitation into His family, and God's command and calling for each of us to share this invitation to all those around us. With the theme of the conference being "The Great Invitation", I learned that as we all live missions both locally and globally, we have a responsibility to give every opportunity to others to taste the delicious banquet He has prepared and we must be faithful with the resources and harvest that God has given us!

Every morning we would gather for Bible studies in one of the many, many meeting rooms used by the conference. I especially appreciated our study of Luke, and was refreshed with the new things I was learning that I had missed before when reading the book. Through the parables of the shepherd and the lost sheep, the woman and the lost coin, and the prodigal son, it reminded me of the urgency and great celebration that comes when we are part of God's active pursuit of the broken and lost as we were once before.

It was wonderful to hear from so many different people – students, entrepreneurs, activists, and church leaders – about their experience of letting go of themselves to allow God to use them to change the lives of others. It really helped me to understand and grasp what barriers we have and also put up around ourselves that prevent Jesus from fulfilling our lives. He is truly enough for all our present and future desires and needs.

Attending the various seminars and listening to the speakers left me with many questions, but also many answers of how God is guiding me. I realized the 'where' may always be unknown to me no matter how much I pray and plan, but if I am striving for God's purpose to make "disciple-making disciples" (David Platt) of all nations then I can be completely satisfied in my time here on earth. I hope you will share this excitement with me, and continually seek to be transformed so we may experience transformation at home, in the local church, in our city, and at CCCO. ■

Learning, Discovering and Gaining Clarity for My Calling

Shaun Liu

Initially I was reluctant to attend Urbana 2012 as I had already attended the Urbana 2006 session when I was a university student but eventually I was at peace with the decision to go; after attending the conference, I now recognize this as perhaps one of the most important decisions I made.

The conference offered an amazing experience of gathering with 16,000 Christ-followers to worship together in many languages (English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, Swahili, Korean, Hindi, and more); the multilingual aspect reminded me of how “from every tribe and language and people and nation, you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God” (Revelations 5:9-10). In these stadium gatherings, we were also blessed with privilege to prepare over 32,000 medical kits for AIDS caregiver packages to Swaziland Christian volunteers who care for the people with AIDS in that country. Having communion and counting-down for the New Year were also highlights as well as listening to inspiring testimonies from students and seasoned missionaries.

As for myself, I learned in three different ways. The first aspect is that I gained knowledge from the seminars I attended. I learned about thinking theologically about immigration, creation care theology, and the struggle of Christians living in Palestine-Israel. The second aspect is that I learned new things that I plan to apply to ministries where I am serving, such as the Career Home Group; I was made aware that a Bible study’s main purpose is not merely to gain knowledge or finding how it can be applied to our lives, but as a way to “meet God” as a community and hear his voice. I also gained a better understanding of the imperative and process of discipleship through what David Platt shared in his sermon and seminar workshop. I also really enjoyed the seminar on Simple Living for Just Giving (decreasing consumption in order to incur savings for the purpose of giving).

The third aspect was developing clarity with my calling. Prior to the conference, I knew I no longer desired to continue my public service career and had been applying for seminary studies. I had planned on becoming a Bible scholar and perhaps study for a doctorate at Oxford’s Wycliffe Hall. On the fourth night of the conference, following a convicting exhortation by a veteran missionary, a call was made for who is willing to lay their lives for Jesus and commit to short, medium, or long term missions. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 came to mind for me: “for Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.” I knew then and there that I wanted to give all of my life for the service of God’s Kingdom. I am convinced that I can do nothing less. I would not be satisfied for anything less. Jesus is worth laying down one’s life. I stood with 4400 others who committed to long-term missions that evening.

In regards to what area I should serve for building God’s Kingdom, I knew that as much as I would enjoy being a Bible scholar (I’ve been studying Biblical Greek and reading theology as a hobby), I am convinced that that can wait and that there are more urgent tasks in the field of global missions. I then recalled the conversations I had with Wycliffe Bible Translators and Pioneer Bible Translators these past few days, the 6 years I have been praying for Bibleless people groups, and Vision 2025 which is the goal of having a Bible translation for every people group started by 2025. Currently there are 6800 identified language groups of which 2000 people groups have not yet had a single verse of scripture translated. I was in awe and excited for the prospect of joining in perhaps the last generation of linguist-translators needed in the mission field. Given my gifts, temperament, and passion in this area, I am confident that this is likely the area that I can make best use of what God has given me for His Kingdom. I had many affirmations from fellow Christians to whom I have shared my calling.

As of now, I am planning to study at Regent College to study Greek and Hebrew as well as study at the Summer Institute of Linguistics to acquire the linguistic and language acquisition skills required for the work of Bible translation. I know that the training process will be long and the commitment once deployed in the field will be even longer among a Bibleless people group in isolated areas of the world. Nevertheless, I look forward to the learning process, to continue to know God and make him known through his Word, and serve wherever the Holy Spirit leads. ■

Great need for the Gospel

Natasha Cheung

I have waited to go to Urbana since my first year in university. Since this conference only happens every 3 years, I decided in my freshmen year to wait until my fourth year before going to Urbana. I had just moved to a new city, I was still trying to adjust to Toronto's busy city life, and university presented enough new challenges that I felt that going to Urbana '09 would be too much. Some of my friends went in 2009 and after hearing their sharings on the things that they learned and experienced, I was so excited for when I'd be able to go.

When my fourth year started and people I knew started signing up for Urbana, I felt that I was supposed to sign up but my heart didn't feel ready. I hadn't really connected with any Christian churches or fellowships in Toronto and my own disposition made me hesitant about reaching out to people. I didn't feel that I was really growing spiritually in university, which made me question whether I should be going to one of the biggest missions conferences in the world. I think that in a way, I had anticipated and had my heart set on going to Urbana '12 for so long that I'd forgotten my excitement and personal reasons for going. And so I was unsure about signing up...whether I was going for the right reasons or whether I had any reasons at all. Even as I got on the bus to go to Urbana, I wasn't sure what to expect and what I wanted to learn from this conference. The only thing I was hoping for from God was any sort of direction; a glimpse of what He wanted me to do for my future after I graduate.

I have to say that I experienced so many different emotions and thoughts, and I learned so many things about myself and about the Word during Urbana that I don't know how to put it all down in words. During the conference, I attended many interesting and thought-provoking seminars, gained new understandings on familiar passages, and got the chance to hear from people who are doing amazing work around the world, all for His glory. Libby Little, David Platt, and Calisto Odede were some of the people that I quickly grew to respect and look up to during the conference. The teachings and wisdom that these people have completely blew me away. Many of the things I heard, I had to unpack and consciously think through when I came home because there was just so much that was presented. I was so excited to feel my own hunger for the Word being renewed and fulfilled – something I've been looking and praying for since I started university.

I was also really glad for the opportunity to reconnect with people from CCCO, especially Valerie and Jen. Studying in Toronto made it difficult to keep in touch with old friends over the years, so I was really thankful for the time that I got to talk and catch up with them. Hearing about the all the work and change in H2O made me so excited about how God is working in CCCO!

Lastly, one of the major impacts in my life was how Urbana helped change my perspective of missions and made it a more viable reality, instead of what "super-Christians" do. It changed my basic notion that only those who are 'ready' and those who are, in a sense, worthy of God's work should go and evangelize. And I'm not saying that we shouldn't be ready when we are in the mission field, but that God can work through us, prepare us, and change us as long as we are willing to follow Him. From listening to the testimonies, I also came to realize that mission work isn't God telling us to forgo all our dreams for the mission field, but that He often gives us the opportunity to incorporate our passions and abilities, like teaching or business, into the work that we are doing for Him.

Urbana gave me a chance to reconnect with friends, with my personal ambitions, and with God. It gave me a renewed passion for theology and a small glimpse of the work God is doing around the world. Most importantly, this conference showed me the great need in the world for the Gospel and the things that God can do if we choose to give our lives to Him. ■

True Worship with Freedom Empowers Mission



Jonathan Lam

Dr. John Piper once said “Mission Exists Because Worship Doesn’t”. Urbana 2012 has further my understanding to the depth of this statement – the glimpse of multicultural worship of God at Urbana, when all people from all sort of cultures come to worship of God, when all nations are able to worship the creator God freely in their own languages own customs own expression with freedom without condemnations.....this beautiful picture of worship with brothers and sisters at Urbana really makes me to look forward to that day when REAL worship begins at the new heaven and new earth where there will be no more tears. I believe that what we have experienced at Urbana is nothing like that day when Jesus takes us back; yet this kind of worship is so freeing so refreshing that it really reminds me that Jesus is truly the good news for all nations to turn back to Him. Deep down in us, all mankind, we desire to be free. A lot of people in the world still doesn’t know what they (we) need to be free from what, but deep down the truth is that people without Christ is still in slave of the world and the value of the world, and Jesus is the only way to break this chain by sucking all our Sin into His death and yet overcome it by His resurrection! When we truly experience the freedom of Christ, of cause we want to share it to everyone. Perhaps our action toward Mission will no longer be promoted by our duty or obligation, but by our love of God because He so loves us first by freeing us so awesomely for real!

Dear Church, brothers and sisters, the body of Christ, let’s commit ourselves to prayers! We must remember that for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. PRAY that members of CCCO may truly be free to live, free to run, free to worship of the creator God, redeemer God! May our community be free from Sin, free from bitterness toward others and the past, free from unforgiveness.....Oh dear brothers and sisters, forgive me, forgive one another. Let’s encourage one another to love one another, so that we may truly be a community that marked by grace and mercy. Oh blessed are the peace-makers, for they will be called children of God.

When we see His Kingdom come at CCCO as in heaven, we will no longer need to push or guilt trip people into Mission....we will be empowered to GO willingly with joy and freedom...because we so look forward to Worship! ■



The Great Invitation

Jennifer Gin

I had the privilege of joining with around 16 000 other believers as a global community to learn about God's mission, his heart for the nations, and in turn, my mission and heart for the nations. We were invited -which was the theme of the missions' conference.

Every day was filled with new opportunities to meet with God. Every day we were able to engage in Bible Studies, hear from speakers from around the world, hear powerful testimonies, sing in worship in multiple languages, choose from hundreds of seminar workshops, visit the exhibit hall to talk to different mission organizations, and meet people from all over the world with a different story. Whoever you are, wherever you are in life, whatever questions you have, passions stirring in your heart, maybe you are someone who doesn't know much about missions, or perhaps have already committed to lifelong missions... there were special invitations for you at Urbana. There was something for everyone at Urbana. There was no stopping God from speaking powerfully to the many souls at Urbana. Some people heard God speaking into their lives by confirming their strengths and passions through seminar workshops such as "Christians in Journalism" or "Advocacy in Missions". Some people were drawn to their knees with repentance and were able to meet with God in the prayer room. They had the opportunity to spend the afternoon in prayer and meditation to actively hear from the Lord. Some people were able to speak with exhibitors such as OMF, learn about Bible translation work, learn about what the next steps are to getting there, and have made a real commitment to surrender their life to building Christ's Kingdom. Some people heard God speak to them through David Platt, giving them a new understanding of what life looks like as a disciple of Christ. Some people were given a new passion from God to go across the world to touch the lives of unreached souls. Some heard from God telling them their home is their biggest mission field. How beautiful is this picture of different Kingdom-warriors from all over the world gathered at Urbana with different personal invitations ready to GO.

Many have received their invitation from God and have accepted. Will you meet with God, accept your invitation, and join us to as a Kingdom warrior? ■

2013 Ottawa Youth Getaway Sharing

Eugenia Ling

Getaway 2013 was my second year. It was an amazing experience but more importantly, an amazing adventure. I want to classify this retreat as an adventure because throughout the time there, you discover where you stand with your relationship with God. For some it was a heartbreaking and painful adventure which in turn, became a joyful and pleasing one.

Before Getaway, I was stuck at a place where I had no idea where I was in my relationship with God. For the past year I have been wrestling with this and it truly feels like you're stuck in a hole without anywhere to go or talk to...I had so many questions, struggles and concerns. I wanted answers but God was staying silent. Yet, there was this consoling thought that I kept at the back of my mind. That maybe, somehow, God would have an answer for me at Getaway. Nevertheless, I never once sat down to meditate or even think about this; it just slipped by like the rain, here today and gone tomorrow.

The retreat quickly came and on Friday night I decided to grab a handful of the youth from our church to have a sharing. We discussed all the problems and struggles we were encountering at school and with our Christian walk. More importantly, we shared about how we felt we were treating each other as a body of Christ and the things we needed to change in order to be a body. It was a time of mourning and a time of laughter but the difference this time was that we mourned and laughed together, which hadn't happened in a very long time...

The following night, Paul Racine was speaking based on John 21: 15-17; when Jesus asks Peter if he loved him, three times. To conclude, Paul asks us to take three minutes to imagine if Jesus were to ask us, "Do you love me?" three times and we would have to respond. In those three minutes all I could respond to Jesus was, "I want to love you, but I don't know how anymore..." After, I decided to talk with Pastor Josh and I felt as though God was using him to give me the answers I've been wanting for so long. It was like the answers were all flooding in because a gate that had been closed for so long had opened. At the same time, I was reminded of what Paul had said, "God can meet you where you're at." The past year, I've thought that it was me who had to run and find God but that's not the case. God can meet me where I am at, wherever I am, because this isn't a one way relationship; it's a two way relationship between me and God.

The retreat was an amazing adventure and you'll only know how great it is until you yourself have experienced it. The relationships that were built and what happened during those three days are priceless. God worked through so many of us and it really is such a joy knowing that. At the moment, I'm still struggling but I now have a clearer understanding of it all and I won't ever give up on this relationship because I know God won't. ■



Fire continue to burn

Peter Zhou

Two weeks ago, I attended an event called Getaway. It is a Christian youth retreat for all of the Chinese churches in Ottawa, the purpose of which is discipleship. This year's Getaway was the first for me, and promised to be a great experience. Going in, I had many expectations for it- having lots a fun and bonding a little with my fellow youth. However, the things that I felt and experienced were far greater than any of my expectations.

On the first night, our speaker, Paul Racine spoke to us about changing the way we think, and that will transform the way we live. We are called to love, which is the core of His teachings. Paul's way of speech and intense eyes were captivating, which really made me reflect on what the message meant and to try and apply it to my life.

After the session, our church had some bonding time. We shared with each other about the things we were going through, opening up to each other about some challenges in our life. This experience drew me closer to YF more than ever before. Being able to share things with people who genuinely love and care about each other was truly a blessing. Seeing that everyone has such a passion for God in their everyday lives also motivated and encouraged me to do the same.

The final session of Getaway was life changing. Because we are saved by grace, we can go from failure to victory. We are free to live for Christ and apart from sin. However, Paul Racine shared with us that a storm will come, and that we need to build our house, our story on a rock. Of course, we fail and cannot keep promises made to God, just like the apostle Peter. What struck me the most came next. Jesus asked Peter, "do you love me", and Paul challenged us to genuinely respond to Jesus. During deep reflection and meditation, I couldn't bring myself to say "I love you" to God. My soul was searching for him and wanting to see him, however I didn't know how to respond. I spoke to Pastor Josh, and he told me that Jesus will meet me where I am and take me for what I am. And that even though I can't say I love you to God, he will always love me. My whole being was full of peace after that and was committed to further search for the Lord through prayer and reading the Bible.

Getaway taught me many things, helping me to grow in my relationship with Christ and my youth fellowship. My prayer is that the fire that was burning in all of us after Getaway will not be extinguished after we leave, but will continue to burn in us and we can be witnesses for Christ in our everyday lives. ■



Fearless

Elizabeth Chen

My name is Elizabeth Chen and I am 11 years old. God gave me the blessing of being born into a Christian family. So, every day, ever since I could remember, I went to church. I was brought up listening to the stories in the Bible.

When I was little, even though I was obviously too young and carefree to fully understand the concept and responsibilities of baptism, I had already set my mind on waiting another decade or so to get baptized because I couldn't submerge my head in water.

As I grew a little older, I changed my mind about the water part but I knew I wasn't ready for a while because I could never tell my friends without flinching that I was a Christian. I always mumbled my words when we neared the border of discussing religion, carefully skirting the edge of having to defend Christianity. Every Christmas and Easter, I watched as other people shared their stories with interest.

About half a year ago, when I considered getting baptized and I had no problem with talking about my religion, I still felt too scared.

A chain of random events deepened my relationship with God; it didn't happen overnight. Starting to read the Bible was one of them, and it helped me deepen my understanding of what God did for us. Strangely enough, one of the books of the Bible had a large impact on my decision. Job was all about a man who did everything for God, but then suddenly his children were killed, diseases inflicted on his skin and whatnot...but he still praised the name of God. After I read that book, I started feeling ashamed. Other verses that helped were mostly along the line of what people need to do, and what God did. Reading a little bit of His' word was one of the things that helped me to become a Christian. Some events that happened in my life drew me closer to him in prayers, helped me love Him more.

I decided to get baptized because I want to tell people that I'm a Christian, and nothing anybody does can change it. I recognize that I am a sinner, but God can save me wash away my sins. I'm not afraid to tell anybody I'm a Christian anymore.

Forgiveness and Rescue

Raymond Chung

I attended a United church when I was growing up as a child but went because my family wanted me to go. I found it to be a bit hypocritical as my parents, at the time, didn't attend church and wasn't very religious.

Church didn't appeal to me as I grew older and walked away. During that time I struggled with my studies at school but managed to graduate to a post-secondary education.

At this point, my friends were starting their careers in the real world. I felt a little left behind and didn't have very much motivation. I eventually found a contract position, though a friend, and was hoping it would lead to a promising career.

My relationship at home with my family was starting to deteriorate. I felt it was time to move on and start a life of my own before things at home became irreversible or worse. When I thought things couldn't have gotten any worse, it did. The weekend after I moved out, my contract wasn't renewed and was now unemployed. I was determined to be on my own for at least as long as I could before considering moving back to my parents. With all this time on my hands, I started to feel depressed, alone, lost and lacked motivation.

One day a friend asked me to attend an after work function with him. I was introduced to Fay. Little did I know at the time that that meeting would be the start of a new friendship and adventure for the both of us.

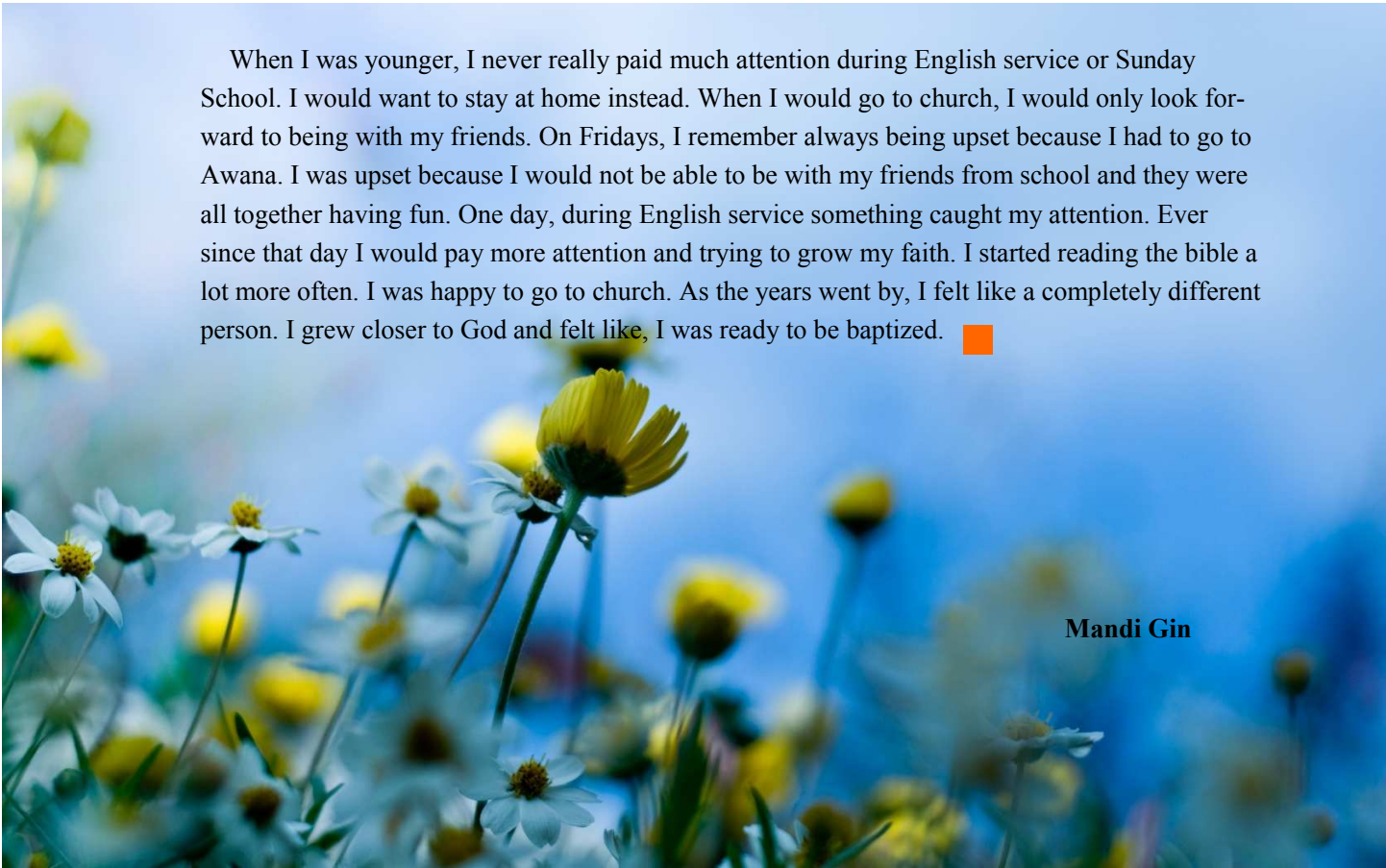
Still I didn't feel very good about myself or my situation. I knew if I got a job, I would start to feel better about myself and help out the situation that I was in, so I started to apply myself to the task at hand. I eventually found a job with a high-tech company.

Things were starting to look up. I had a job, a car, a place of my own and a girlfriend. What else could a man ask for??? Well, let me tell you, after courting Fay for awhile, I was ready to ask for her hand in marriage. I did, she said yes and the rest was history. I was now married, a home owner, and employed. What could go wrong?

The tech bubble burst and found myself unemployed. With a mortgage and Fay to help support, I took on a job that I didn't want to make a career out of. I struggled with the job physically but pushed on, even though it took a toll on me. There were times when I would wake up in the middle of the night aching from the job and wanted to quit but knew that people were depending on me so I kept going. I tell you, it was a character builder.

I would end up landing a contract with the Federal Government. During this time, Fay and I started a family and had our first child, Kayla. Shortly after Kayla was born, the contract would eventually lead to full time position. Shortly after that, Evan came into our lives.

Continue on P27



When I was younger, I never really paid much attention during English service or Sunday School. I would want to stay at home instead. When I would go to church, I would only look forward to being with my friends. On Fridays, I remember always being upset because I had to go to Awana. I was upset because I would not be able to be with my friends from school and they were all together having fun. One day, during English service something caught my attention. Ever since that day I would pay more attention and trying to grow my faith. I started reading the bible a lot more often. I was happy to go to church. As the years went by, I felt like a completely different person. I grew closer to God and felt like, I was ready to be baptized. ■

Mandi Gin

Continued from P26 Tragedy struck in my life in the summer of 2010. My mom had been in and out of the hospitals for months with her illness. When she wasn't in the hospitals, she would spend her time under care at home, under the watchful eye of my father and homcare nurses. We knew that she had little time left. She eventually had entered a hospice and a week later she was gone. It was devastating and life altering.

I started a deep depression shortly thereafter. I was reflecting about how my life was and why things were the way that they were. I felt that I needed something more in my life. I felt that there was some form of guilt and doubt in my life that I couldn't overcome by myself. I knew, at that time, I needed to seek some spiritual healing so I called Cecile Toye. I knew that she was a Christian and a believer. I told her that I believe it was time to seek something that was missing in my life and she invited me to come to CCCO. There was a lot of despair. I needed to ask God for forgiveness in my life and admit to him I was wrong. I wanted to be rescued.

Everyone at CCCO were very welcoming. I had other family members encourage me to come before to CCCO but had declined their invites. I sort of felt at home with the amount of family that had attended CCCO, with uncle, aunts and cousins on both sides of my family attending.

I found myself crying after each time I had attend service. I felt the Lord reaching out to me though Pastor Cal. There were messages that hit home after each time I had attended that I could apply to my own life. It was a bit of a wake up call and knew I had to try to follow the good Lord to become what I wanted to become. I wanted to become a better father, husband, brother, friend and person in general. Eventually a Christian.

There was still doubt and guilt after attending CCCO for a bit and having asked God for forgiveness. I had to forgive myself but it wasn't until after one service, I did just that. There was message that Pastor Cal had in his service that freed me from my chains. He said, in not so many words, God has forgiven those who have asked for forgiveness and that you need to forgive yourself. That was when I knew I was rescued. ■



Michael Gong

I was brought up a Christian family with two amazing parents and no siblings. I attended church regularly at EACO. They were a loving and close community which I enjoyed being a part of. Then my family moved to the east side of Ottawa. I moved from church to church before going regularly to Life center. Somewhere along this process, I lost my faith and passion. It was a very gradual process, which culminated to a genuine belief that I would be one at the 80% that would abandon their faith after high school. I went to church just to please my parents. I knew everything that I had to say and do, but lacked a true relationship. The process of revival started with pastor Rob McKee. His messages struck me, and helped me to reconnect with God. He helped me develop my relationship immensely, but the transitional on from youth ministry sometime in my grade 9 year. After this, I struggled to remain connected to God. Then Jack invited me to CCCO and both Eric and him helped me to feel welcome CCCO youth has provided me with the community and support to develop a strong and real relationship with God. I am taking this step in obedience and to further develop my relationship with God.

Changchun Ren

When I was in China, I did not get in touch of Christianity. When I arrived at Canada in 1999, I met many kind-hearted Christians who were very willing to help people. For example, they helped my son when he was in trouble. After this incident, I started having interests in Christianity. In 2007, I followed my daughter-in-law to go to church and was found by God. Afterwards, I attended the church in Alpha Course, Bible Studies and Sunday Worship. I started to realize that Christianity is not a superstition; God is real. God is omnipresent and omnipotent. Man is not perfect; I am a sinner. I need to repent and ask for forgiveness from God. After these few years, from the continuous guidance of God, I have been transformed from a non-believer, to a seeker, and to finally make a decision to believe Christ. Now, I commit my life to Jesus and decide to get baptized, and become the children of God. I am the God's servant and am willing to listen to him. I will follow the teaching of the Bible in my life and be a faithful Christian.

As a child, I lived happily and with no concern. My mom excepted Christ in 2004 and got baptized during Easter, that's when our family started coming to church. My mom signed me up for Awana, and I loved it. During Sunday school, I learned about God, and what he did. I always paid attention during lessons, and would tell my mom what I learned afterwards. I started to love church more and more every time I went, because I made friends and everyone was nice to me. I always believed there was God, but I didn't know how powerful he was, until one Sunday I walked into auntie Ester's Sunday school class. She raised up her bible and poured out her love for God, at that moment I understood that God's love, was the greatest love that I've ever seen. From that day on, I was curious about God, and wanted to know more about him. I went into pure energy in grade seven, and throughout the two years in P.E. I really started to love God myself. During middle school, I was tempted to hang out with bad company, but because of church, I knew that I would fall into temptation, so I decided not to stick around bad company. Instead, I wanted to talk to them about God. I really love talking to people so I decided to join a lot of clubs and groups that talk to students and be the role model that students look up to. Going into high school, I also went into YF, and I love the company. At school, I joined student council, and I have blast with helping out and organising events, but I don't ever forget church. I love God and I know God loves me. Everyone at church was placed in my life to shape and form me into a godly person, and I want to continue to love God and be shaped by him.

Peter Zhou

I was raised in a Christian family, going to church since I was very young. At church, I would learn about the Bible and conducts such as praying. All throughout that time, my knowledge of the Bible was pretty strong. I was able to memorize Bible verses and remember the stories that were taught. However, I didn't really know God what it meant to love him and obey his commandments meant. I was a trouble maker and didn't live out any of the things that I learned at church.

In grade 7, I attended Pure Energy. There, I went to a city wide youth conference-No Other Name. There, I was really hit by the fact that Jesus, God's only son was sent to die for my undeserving self. It was perhaps the first time a really understood what it meant for Jesus to die for my sins and how I am forgiven. In grade 9, I went to Youth Fellowship. Everyone was extremely kind and loving towards me, and I was able to experience the warmth of God's love through the fellowship. Their love and support encourages me to grow in Christ every day.

2013 Easter Membership Transfer

Qiwen Liao

On September 26, 1999, I got baptized by Elder Lau at Rockville Evangelical Mission Church in Maryland USA. In 2009, I came to CCCO, the family of God whom I love. I believe Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. By the grace of God, my sins are forgiven. Because Jesus Christ died for me, I am willing to live for Christ, to praise Him and to worship Him. I am cleansed by God and become an instrument to be used by God. I wholeheartedly believe God, love God and listen to God. Studying the Bible, praying, and attending the Sunday Worship draw me closer to God and let me rely on Him and be submissive to Him. I am willing to spread the gospels to my friends and relatives. By the power of the Holy Spirit, I will serve my Lord for the rest of my life.

Xuefen Nie

In 1999, I went to Maryland USA from China to live with my daughter. She brought me to Rockville Evangelical Mission Church where many brothers and sisters in Christ welcomed me. The church loving environment was very different from the environment when I was in China. I could sense that church is a loving community and started to read the bible to understand Christianity. I knew that Jesus Christ is my Savior; while I was still a sinner, Christ died for me. After listening to Pastor Bingcheng Feng's sermon on "Faith, Science and Life," I made the decision to get baptized. Afterwards, I went to Canada and attended the church CCCO. CCCO is a spiritual family with a loving fellowship for seniors. I love CCCO and my fellowship in CCCO, and thus I decide to become the member of CCCO. I am willing to serve my Lord in CCCO; I will continue to strengthen my faith and rely on Christ. Praise the Lord; I am the children of God.



G o d ' s W i n g s

Anita Yeung

After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree.

Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick. When he gently struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings.

The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies.

Then the blaze had arrived and the heat had scorched her small body, the mother had remained steadfast....because she had been willing to die, so those under the cover of her wings would live.

"He will cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you will find refuge." ~ Psalm 91:4