



Easter Sharing Edition

APRIL 2015 VOLUME 23



Editorial	1
A Year of Momentum	K. Tim Law 2
Ethnic Churches in Canada	Rev. Jonathan Kaan 3
Renewal Church Plant Update	Rev. Joshua Wang 5
Families within the Family	Rev. Francis Wong 7
Update from Pastor Cal Fong	Rev. Cal Fong 9
Harvest Herald	Carmen Ewing 11
The Road to Alpha Children Parenting Course — — What's Next Then?	Salina Yan 17
Experience God's Present!	Melody Ly 20
Maturing in Faith Together	Career Small Group 22
Photos of AWANA Car Race	Chinese section 24
2014 Christmas Baptismal Testimonies	
Glorify God with My Life	Julia Chen 23
God leads me to a life of peace	Qing Na Lai 24
Be Joyful in the Lord	Linda Yee 24
God Lifts Me Up	Amanda Liang 25
How Has Jesus Changed My Life	Irene Liang 26
A Really Amazing Night	Sophia Li 28
A New Me	Jiaying Liu 29
My Journey to Believe in God	Yun Long Wang 30
2015 Youth Fellowship Spring Getaway Retreat	
Speak, your servant is listening	Jade Sowden 31
Developing a more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ	Michelle Wang 33

Publisher:	CCCO
Tel:	613-563-3043
Web:	www.ccco.on.ca
Email:	admin@ccco.on.ca
Editors:	Eddie Yan Tin Wing Lau Zhong Chen Yafang Zhu
Layout Design:	Zhong Chen Yafang Zhu
Cover Design:	Calvin Jien
Production:	Richard Ho Karina Ho
Translators:	Translation Team

Seeing

*In the midst of dark nights, stars would keep on shining brightly!
Long nights may seem endless, bright dawn awaits at the other end.
Mountains may look daunting, singing faith would climb over it.
Journeys may be tiring, loving hearts would still reach silver-lining!*

The first time I heard of the song “**Seeing**” by Heavenly Melody was at Brother Michael and Sister Duoduo’s home when we had our cell group gathering. My heart was particularly touched, especially when I heard “God’s heart **sees** the hope within you. May your heart’s eye has His hope.” I cannot help but burst into tears.

When we had our editorial planning meeting for this issue of *CCCO-Konnnect*, our city was still covered under a blanket of snow. I thought to myself: can we **see** that the footsteps of spring are quietly approaching? No matter how cold. No matter how heavy the snow. The snow must, after all, melt! Perhaps you can only find traces of winter in your memory by the time you receive this issue of *CCCO-Konnnect* with the fragrance of fresh printing ink?

In the article “A Year of Momentum”, the Chair of the Elders Board, Brother Tim Law encourages us – not only do we need to **see** that “the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few”, we also need to follow the Lord wholeheartedly in order to be “fishers of men.”

Rev. Jonathan Kaan wrote the piece entitled “Ethnic Churches in Canada”. It lets us **see** a life-long faithful servant of God **seeing** His vision and divine revelation amidst voices of opposition.

Our beloved Youth Pastor, Josh Wang also lets us **see** what he **sees** in his sharing piece. He said, “[a]t this stage, the Sunday service, various logistics and even possible locations are not our primary concern; but to”

In his article on “Household Ministry”, Pastor Francis Wong reminds us to **see** a vision – the importance and urgency to pass on our faith from generation to generation.

The letter from Pastor Cal Fong especially brings warmth to our hearts and enables us to **see**, thought thousands of miles apart, the faith and joy in him and in his family.

In addition, we would like to particularly thank Sisters Anita Yeung and Carmen Ewing (Yan) for contributing articles to *CCCO-Konnnect* right from the first issue until now. Through her articles, Anita’s provides in-depth guidance to us on biblical teaching. With Carmen’s updates, we read about God’s awesome deeds in her mission field.

We entered 2015 with a missional vision, trembling yet excited. By missional, we mean we are sent by our Lord into the world to proclaim the Gospel. For us now, it refers to not only planting a new church to go reach a certain group of people, but also every domain of our church engaging in sharing the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such a vision is therefore daunting and yet exciting as we are to be an instrument of God to accomplish His mission on earth.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a small group of people started considering church planting 9 years ago. Over time the consideration spread over a wider circle among the leaders, but was put on the back-burner for a while because we were waiting for the right people to have the conviction to undertake this mission. Two years ago, Pastor Josh and a number of brothers and sisters expressed strong desire to plant a church to create an environment to better spread the Gospel to their peers. Through prayer, fasting, study and discussion, the Holy Spirit guided us to reach the consensus to plant a new church led by Pastor Josh. He is not alone; he is supported by the Launch Team and by all of us. We will continue to pray and fast for the church plant as she is part of us, like a grown-up son/daughter going out to make disciples of our Lord.

We recognize that church planting will engender tension in human and financial resources. Looking back into our past, we find we had experiences of resource tension. We left the United Church penniless. We were broke in purchasing the 116 Empress property for worship. We were barely making both ends meet nor flush with talents when we started the English ministry or the Mandarin ministry. Every time, however, brothers and sisters rose to the occasion and faithfully followed God to achieve His work. We actually became stronger after we went through the tension. We firmly believe this time will not be different.

All three congregations recognize the essential nature of adult discipleship as the key element for a missional church. The Elders Board has decided to start the process to call an English pastor with the emphasis on developing discipleship among the adults. The English Transition Team have been busy to “sustain, grow and transform the English Ministry”. The goal is to see the emergence of a vibrant and strong English Congregation.

Household ministry is an effort to help families of all congregations to pass our mission torch from generation to generation. Two Sunday services and workshops have been planned to devote to this purpose. The first on conducting family devotion has been organized on March 1, and the second on family serving together will take place later in the year.

With the imminent departure of Pastor Josh, we feel the urgent need to find a replacement to continue the youth and children ministry without interruption. Much discussion have taken place at the recent leadership retreat and at the Elders Board on the vital importance of the ministry for the next generation and the practical reality of our church. We are now leaning towards hiring a full-time youth worker plus a part-time children worker or calling a full-time youth pastor with supervising responsibility on children ministry largely carried out by lay people.

2015 is certainly a year of momentum for us. Let us open our eyes to see that “the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few”; and open our hearts to respond to our Lord to follow Him and be fishers of men. ■

A Year of Momentum

By K. Tim Law

Ethnic Churches in Canada

By Rev. Jonathan Kaan



Canada is a multi-ethnic nation of immigrants. Being settled initially by immigrants from Great Britain and France, English and French have since been established as Canada's official languages. Subsequent immigration from countries speaking different languages has resulted in the establishment of ethnic communities of various sizes. The larger communities were initially able to maintain their native language. However, English and French remain the main languages of the educational system and the society in general, and those born and raised in Canada would naturally lose the mother tongue. As a result, ethnic communities slowly evolved to being bilingual or multi-lingual, using mainly English and French while maintaining parallel usage of the mother tongue. Likewise, ethnic churches initially established using the mother tongue have gradually incorporated the use of English. In time, English is used exclusively, and they become English-speaking ethnic churches. The natural cohesive bond of ethnic identity has resulted in the establishment of numerous ethnic English-speaking churches. This can be seen in large urban centers, where one can find a Ukrainian Baptist Church, an Eastern Orthodox Church, Greek or Russian Orthodox churches, a German Lutheran Church, or an Italian Church. If not for the use of English or French, it would have been difficult for these ethnic churches to continue. This is a special feature of the Canadian ethnic landscape -different ethnic churches all using the same common English language.

Asian immigration to Canada is a recent phenomenon of the last half century. While there have been earlier immigrant workers, they were relatively few, arriving without family members with full expectations of returning to their homeland. Western churches at the time did try to help the Chinese establish their own churches. But these were reactive in nature and unable to address the situation of the time. It wasn't until after WWII and the relaxing of immigration rules that scholars, students, refugees and whole families began to settle in Canadian masse. Like bamboo shoots following the spring rain, Chinese churches in Canada flourished during this period. These early churches naturally used the mother tongue as the primary language. In

time, due to practical needs, English was also used. Actually, English ministries in Chinese Churches have been established since the 60s and 70s. The children and youth of that period have since established families and have entered the workforce. Some have now reached old age. Unfortunately, this large group of English speakers from Chinese churches seems to have disappeared without a trace. Proportionally speaking, more have left than those who have remained. The English ministry of Chinese churches has been following the same model it started with a decade ago, being a dependent of the mother tongue church, unwilling to become independent or possibly, prevented from becoming so by the mother church. It is true that some churches have planned to have the English congregation take over, but only in the future. This is a very negative approach. Why not admit defeat now? Actually, the reality is that the Chinese speaking population continues to grow. This is an indisputable fact. Ministry work to the Chinese is not decreasing and should be expanded. If the English ministry work is not allowed to grow independently, its position five years from now will be the same as it was five years ago. There will be no new development - a sad reality indeed. In English-speaking ethnic churches across Canada, the use of English has been combined with their respective ethnic background to continue the ancestral faith. This is the desirable outcome to model after. If Chinese churches do not allow the English-speaking Chinese to establish their own churches, we will be losing out, not just in terms of timing but talent as well. The English-speaking Chinese form an enormous group that, in the absence of a self-identify to carry on and continue in the faith, would lack the strength to lead a meaningful life forward.

Over the past four to five years, I have written articles and presented seminars advocating for English-speaking Chinese churches. However, there has been little action and such discussions have become tedious. My children at home have suggested that I keep silent on the matter. Last year the Chinese Christian Church



of Ottawa invited me to speak on the subject. While I had replied that it is an unwelcomed topic, they insisted that I speak just the same, and so I did. Those who participated immediately put words into action and held consultative meetings, with an objective to proceed by year-end. This greatly encouraged me and consequently, I will revive the subject again.

[Editor: Rev. Jonathan Kaan serves as an Advisor at Ottawa Chinese Alliance Church and has been planting churches throughout Canada since the 1970's. We are grateful to Rev. Kaan for permitting us to reprint this article.]

Renewal Church Plant Update

By Rev. Joshua Wang

Following the affirmation of the congregation in late 2014, a launch team has been assembled to make the necessary preparations to plant an English speaking church. The team has been meeting every week in a prayerful journey to rediscover the gospel and develop a missional heart. This team is headed by Pastor Josh and is currently comprised of Manson Yan, Vincent Wong, Caleb Hui, Ivan Huor, Oscar Cheung, and Lapkin Ip. Oscar and Lapkin are representatives from the Elders Board and the ministerial team will provide advisory insights. Some other brothers and sisters (and spouses) are participating in this process without having formally committed to being a launch team member. This launch team is flexible and open to additional members as the process evolves, Pastor Josh has received a lot of help and personal coaching from mentor's, church planters across the city as well as the C2C network. This organization is dedicated to equip, support, train and coach people dedicated to plant gospel centered, spirit led and mission focused churches across Canada.

Initial focus

The launch team has agreed that our initial goals are leadership development and discipleship. Our desire is to develop a deep grasp of the gospel and a missional heart for the people around us. Throughout a 16 week process our launch team will be committed to daily Scripture reading, wrestling with personal reflection questions each day and developing greater intimacy through sharing in community each week. Through this process, we are moving towards becoming missional people and challenging one another to begin intentionally reaching our neighbors, colleagues and friends. God has already helped identify some of our weaknesses, fears and failures in reaching the lost. Throughout this process, God has been reorienting how we see others and cultivating a more intentional desire to build strong relationships with those who do not know the Lord.

At this stage, the Sunday service, various logistics and even possible locations are not our primary concern. Our goal is not to immediately establish a 'Sunday service' but to work at building a healthy culture where we are challenged to befriend the people in our influence and intentionally share the gospel with them. Our

initial goal is to focus on this transformative work and build a foundation where our community shapes the people around us. This transformation is a difficult task, but a necessary one if we plan to become a missional people.

All are welcome

All are welcome to participate in the vision of Renewal church. We desire to be a multigenerational English speaking church and hope that every brother or sister intentionally engages in a process of becoming missional. Our team has drafted a proposed budget for this year of preparations where we will invite guest teachers for group training sessions, learn from planting conferences, explore outreach opportunities and other potential administrative fees. We actively discuss logistics as they arise, but are intentional about focusing on discipleship in this initial stage.

Near future

During this phase, we are aware that there will come a time where it is necessary to transition from a sole focus on leadership development to intentional gatherings. Our next phase of meetings will need to address how we will fellowship in a more formal manner as the journey unfolds. Another challenge is that our team must transition out of their heavy ministry responsibilities in CCCO. While we do not know how all of these details will work out, the ministry groups along with the Elders and Deacons will continue working towards a smooth transition for CCCO and Renewal Church. ■



Families within the family

— updates on the family ministry



By Rev. Francis Wong

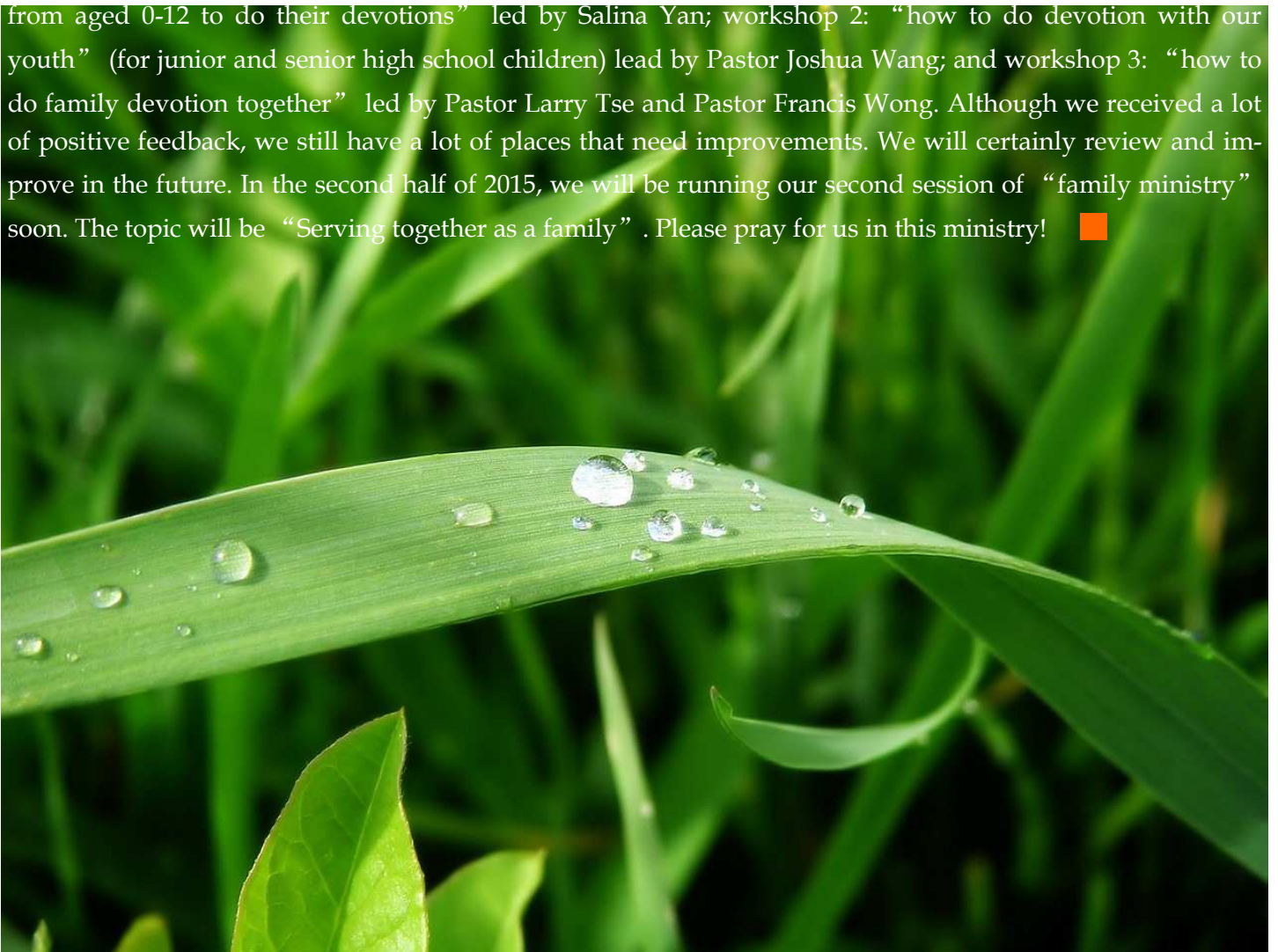
Last year, the theme for CCCO 25th anniversary was “From generation to generation” . Brothers and sisters in all congregations were very thankful for God’s abundant grace and providence to CCCO in the past 25 years. Meanwhile, they have recognized the need of passing on their belief and mission led by the Spirit to their future generations. From Psalm 78: 4-7, “We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.” Our “Family ministry” at church is the channel we use to carry out the goal of passing on our belief “From generation to generation” .

We cannot rely solely on church’s youth and children ministries to educate our next generation about our belief in Christ. According to the teachings from the old and New Testaments, families are in fact the foundation of nurturing the spiritual growth of our next generation. It is the duty of our Christian parents and elders to take up this responsibility so that our children can thrive and bear fruits in the Spirit. Moses commanded the Israelites, “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6: 6-9 ESV). The Apostle Paul said, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6: 4 ESV). In this crooked and twisted world, families should work in liaison with the church in order to serve our Lord by rising a generation of devoted and faithful Christians.

There is a mantra in Africa: “It takes a village to raise a child” . It has well explained the importance of

the involvement of the whole church community on raising and educating our children. Besides their own families, children also need a healthy spiritual group to help them grow. Church is the home of our living God. “You may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth” (1 Timothy 3: 15 ESV). In this household of God, we need believers from all ages and walks of life to care for and to serve each other. Renowned anthropologist Margaret Mead has concluded from her studies on generation gap, “It is true that the continuity of all cultures depends on the living presence of at least three generations,” the early churches were indeed “church of three generations”. The elderly believers should set good examples for their juniors and share with them about their life and spiritual experiences; the young believers should learn to humble themselves to honor their seniors in Christ. Meanwhile, single families will be able to get support from this big church family and the childless empty nesters can adopt their “spiritual orphans”. Our vision is to make CCCO a big spiritual family amalgamated from a multiple number of small families with our goal to pass on our belief from generation to generation.

At the end of last year, the board of directors had appointed three pastors along with delegates from the English congregation, Salina Yan and Tim Law to push and promote this ministry. We had planned to incorporate two Sunday services and two workshops for this agenda. The first one was on March 1st with the focus on family devotion. This workshop was divided into three parts. Workshop 1: “how to teach children from aged 0-12 to do their devotions” led by Salina Yan; workshop 2: “how to do devotion with our youth” (for junior and senior high school children) lead by Pastor Joshua Wang; and workshop 3: “how to do family devotion together” led by Pastor Larry Tse and Pastor Francis Wong. Although we received a lot of positive feedback, we still have a lot of places that need improvements. We will certainly review and improve in the future. In the second half of 2015, we will be running our second session of “family ministry” soon. The topic will be “Serving together as a family”. Please pray for us in this ministry! ■





Update from Pastor Cal Fong

By **Rev. Cal Fong**

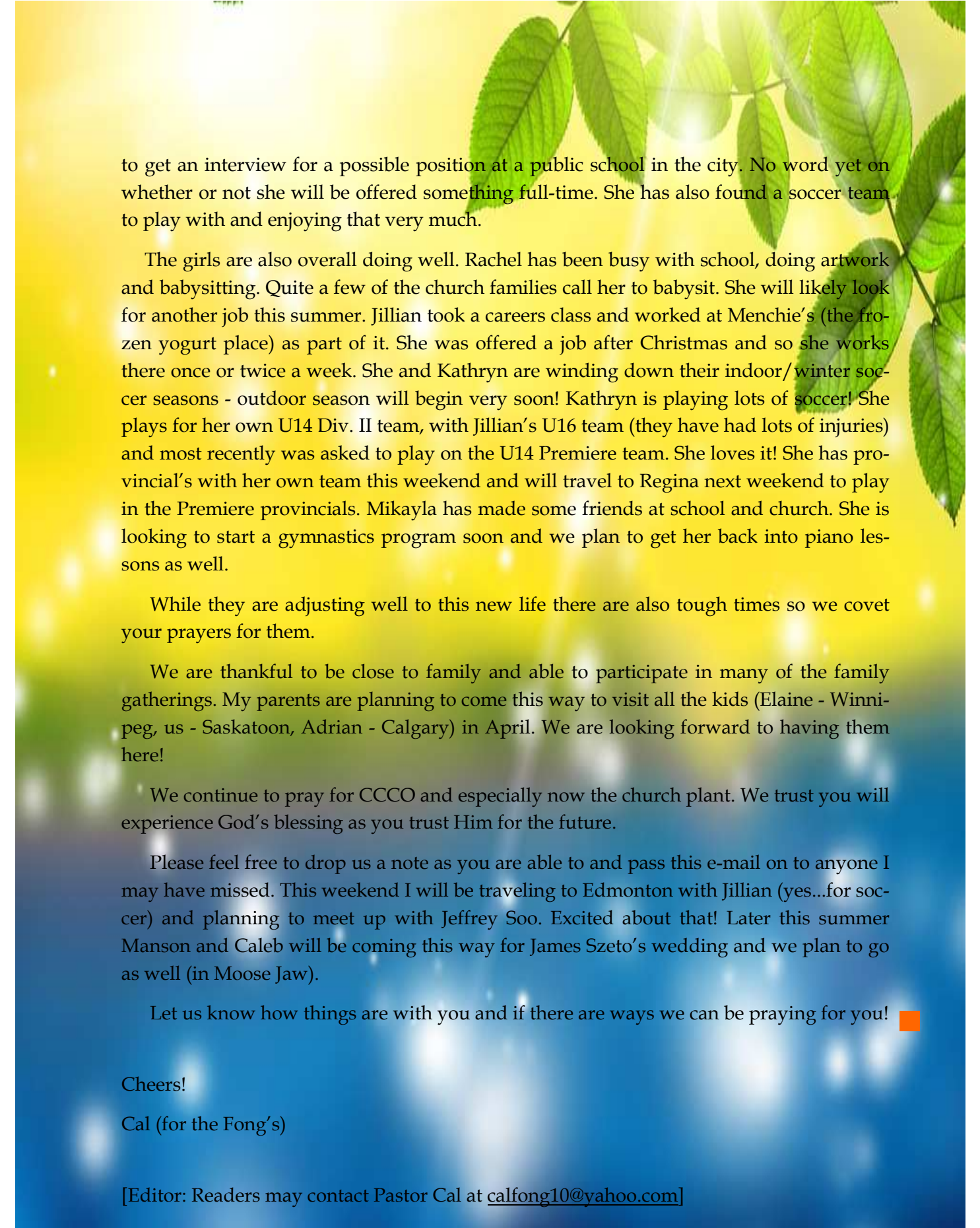
Hey everyone!

Thought I'd drop a quick update letter to you all. I've been hearing the news of some of the goings-on at CCCO and thankful for how God is continuing to lead and use all of you. I trust this email finds you all well.

From out here we are doing well and continuing to adjust to our new life and ministry. While there are still ups and downs God continues to provide and show His grace and mercy to us in so many ways.

From the ministry side I continue to learn in my areas of responsibility. As you have probably heard I have several ministries to oversee and lead and while it has been overwhelming at times I am being stretched and I feel like I am really growing. Mentoring a younger youth pastor and working with our children's pastor has been a real joy and as I have gotten to know more people here I am forming ministry teams for some of the other areas. There is a strong emphasis on team here and there are many wonderful people to work with. I continue to preach approximately once a month and the congregations have been very encouraging. This past Sunday we did a message where for the last half the congregation actually formed smaller groups to study a portion of Scripture together as a ways of experiencing and living out the "devotions" of the early church found in Acts 2. We are journeying through the book of Acts in a series we have titled, "The Mission". I am also part of the Lead Team as we seek God for direction.

Michelle has been able to get on the substitute list for both the school board outside of Saskatoon and the city school board. She is called regularly to sub and she is grateful to be back in the classroom. She has also been able



to get an interview for a possible position at a public school in the city. No word yet on whether or not she will be offered something full-time. She has also found a soccer team to play with and enjoying that very much.

The girls are also overall doing well. Rachel has been busy with school, doing artwork and babysitting. Quite a few of the church families call her to babysit. She will likely look for another job this summer. Jillian took a careers class and worked at Menchie's (the frozen yogurt place) as part of it. She was offered a job after Christmas and so she works there once or twice a week. She and Kathryn are winding down their indoor/ winter soccer seasons - outdoor season will begin very soon! Kathryn is playing lots of soccer! She plays for her own U14 Div. II team, with Jillian's U16 team (they have had lots of injuries) and most recently was asked to play on the U14 Premiere team. She loves it! She has provincial's with her own team this weekend and will travel to Regina next weekend to play in the Premiere provincials. Mikayla has made some friends at school and church. She is looking to start a gymnastics program soon and we plan to get her back into piano lessons as well.

While they are adjusting well to this new life there are also tough times so we covet your prayers for them.

We are thankful to be close to family and able to participate in many of the family gatherings. My parents are planning to come this way to visit all the kids (Elaine - Winnipeg, us - Saskatoon, Adrian - Calgary) in April. We are looking forward to having them here!

We continue to pray for CCCO and especially now the church plant. We trust you will experience God's blessing as you trust Him for the future.

Please feel free to drop us a note as you are able to and pass this e-mail on to anyone I may have missed. This weekend I will be traveling to Edmonton with Jillian (yes...for soccer) and planning to meet up with Jeffrey Soo. Excited about that! Later this summer Manson and Caleb will be coming this way for James Szeto's wedding and we plan to go as well (in Moose Jaw).

Let us know how things are with you and if there are ways we can be praying for you! ■

Cheers!

Cal (for the Fong's)

[Editor: Readers may contact Pastor Cal at calfong10@yahoo.com]



By Carmen Ewing

Dear friends and family,

When I saw the grass re-appearing around us, I figured it was time for another newsletter! These last few months, Spencer and I have been busily engaged with our various work/school commitments. We have also enjoyed growing within our church community & our marriage, and figuring out how to be lights within our physical community also. Above is a photo taken of a recent missions-focused supper night hosted in our home, since the Waltons were out of town. Thankfully, just enough people replied as we could fit into our living room (sometimes up to 25 people attend)! A young couple who are headed to work with a people group in Mexico next month came to share with us, hence the flag draped over our coffee table.

I'd like to use this update to share some more details with you about a few of the wonderful individuals I've had the privilege of meeting over this past year of working as the local Wycliffe missions mobilizer. All pictures & stories are shared with permission, although I decided only to use their first initials :) Each of these people told me they'd LOVE it if you could join in praying for them, so if you're able please take a moment to do so after reading!

Faces of a Few Faithful Followers

Over the past 14 months, God has graciously given me the opportunity to engage with many people at dozens of events/classes where I've shared about Wycliffe's work to the unreached. A few hundred of those people have signed up to learn more through emails and other follow-up. Naturally, however, not all of them are in a place where they sense the King calling them to service in our ministry right away. BUT, a few do, or at least are seriously praying about that possibility!

Here are some of those few. :) As you read their stories, I hope you are as awed by the differences in their backgrounds and life situations as I am! And yet by God's grace, they all seek the same goal: to live

as faithful followers of their King no matter where He might direct them...even if it means difficult tasks & places. The body of Christ, the Church, is indeed beautiful - so very diverse, and yet united by one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all...

H moved to this area just a few months ago with her family from Arizona. Her parents noticed her affinity for languages early on, and prayed for many years that the Lord would give her the opportunity to serve Him as a missionary. In university, her History teacher (not a Christian!) suggested that she look into working with Wycliffe/SIL. So she did some research, and this past January H attended a 5-day course that introduced her to the contours of our linguistic/literacy work (see group picture; H is bottom row, third from left). She just started a job teaching Korean at a school in New Jersey and awaits the right time to proceed with further training to potentially work on translation projects. It greatly encourages me that her posture

is set on sharing the good news of Christ even in the here and now - although her job is located in a rough neighbourhood, in talking with her, I can clearly tell that she is excited to be the aroma of Christ in an area few others desire to work. How to pray for her? H writes, **"Pray that my students will be hungry for the Truth, the Gospel, the cross, which ultimately means Jesus. Since I am not in the position to directly share the gospel, pray that they will see Jesus in me and that I can truly love these children the way God loves me. Pray for some opportunity or way that I can share the gospel with them without breaking any school laws."**

N spent the last few years studying a B.A. in music and anthropology, followed by studies in audio engineering. After working for a while in New York, she became interested in the work that we do with different cultures around the world. The first time I met her was at a supper night last July, when she drove 2.5 hours with her friend from NY to meet us in Philadelphia! That night, the speaker happened to be an ethnomusicologist who had worked in Papua New Guinea. N and I had a number of e-conversations following that meeting, and eventually she applied for the "Master of World Arts" program at GIAL (a training school in Texas for workers in linguistics, literacy, ethnomusicology, etc.). She is currently there in her first semester and, from the sounds of it, enjoying her time greatly. N is considering the potential for using her training down the road to help give people access to the Word (audio Scripture?) or perhaps build up young churches (helping develop musical expressions of worship in ways that are culturally their own). **Pray for excellence in her studies at GIAL, for the building up of good relationships over there, and for her spiritual health &**



growth.

T's heritage is half-German, half-Nigerian, and he hopes one day to serve the Lord in either (or both?) of those two countries. He is currently an international student studying Education at Baptist Bible College, where I've visited twice - once in October and once just last month, February. In October, I was only there for a few hours and didn't meet him, but he passed by the "Wycliffe table" I'd set up in the hallway and signed up to receive informational emails. In February, I was on the campus for 3 days (their annual missions conference). T came to the table every day to look at the literature I had there, to show his friends various things he'd noticed, and to ask me questions! I found out that he loves different cultures & languages and was interested in training to be a "literacy specialist". I told him about the courses I took at SIL-UND during the summer of 2013, and he decided to start the application for this coming summer *that evening*. However, he told me, there were other options yet to be confirmed for this summer. But at lunch the next day, as we were chatting more in the cafeteria, a professor walked over and explained, apologetically, that this year's summer band just didn't have room to take T on as a saxophonist, as he'd hoped...that it was unusual for them to not have space like this, but that was the reality for this year. T grinned and said, "No problem! I'm just talking to this lady right now about another good summer option." And that gave him the confirmation he was seeking about what to do with these summer months! **Pray that his application will be processed smoothly and for provision for funding these extra summer studies.**



C (standing next to me in the photo) first heard about Wycliffe when she was teaching in Kenya amidst a community whose church was planted by a Wycliffe couple (they will celebrate the completion of their New Testament in a few months' time!). She attended The Cross Conference in Dec 2013, and the Lord used that to confirm her calling in missions. We met up at a local coffeeshop (she lived in Delaware at the time) to discuss some questions she had, and then we had the opportunity to spend more time together when she attended the Total-It-Up in June (the same kind of 5-day course H attended), where I was one of the staff members. She came away from that still interested in pursuing this passion further, but unsure if now was the time. God led her to Washington DC over the next few months, where she experienced some challenging life situations (but also grew a lot, as she shared with me). Back in June, I had told C about the biblical counseling classes offered by Westminster, sensing that she might be helped by those. She decided to take one of them online this semester, and in His providence, it is actually helping her work through some of the hardships she has encountered. C is currently applying to the Biblical Counseling program at Westminster, and then perhaps after getting equipped in that, will join the forces of Bible translation workers (or not, depending on His



leading). **Pray for the Lord to continue guiding her steps and granting her wisdom for decisions that need to be made.**

S became a disciple of Jesus just two years ago, and desires to serve Him whatever way he can! He is studying computer science right now, and heard about Wycliffe's need for IT workers after I met up with two of his friends, T and M (They lead a Christian group on a local college campus; I was asking about opportunities to speak at one of their meetings). When S and I met up, I learned that his parents are not at all supportive about his new life direction - they still follow Hinduism. While it was clear that S cared deeply for his parents, he said there was no question in his mind....he will follow wherever the Lord leads, even if his parents are unsupportive. "God has done too much for me, shown me so much grace, for me NOT to want to obey Him," he exclaimed, with much joy in his countenance! We prayed that it wouldn't come down to having to choose sides, that eyes would be opened and hearts changed, that he'd have wisdom to know how to honour his parents even when there is disagreement. S graduates this May and is trying to decide whether to continue studies in this field at a nearby university. **Pray for guidance regarding this decision, for S to grow in faith and in relationships with his local church community, and for his parents.** (No picture of S, but here are his friends T and M, when I met up with them!)



J is a fellow Canadian (woohoo!) originally from Mexico (...woohoo!). She is finishing up a Master of Arts in Religion at Westminster Theological Seminary (same program I did, though I was gone by the time she started). A mutual friend told J about Wycliffe and my involvement with it - thanks Rhonda! - so we met up this past summer to chat and pray. J has a background in financial services, and is now considering extending her student visa to do an internship at one of Wycliffe's USA offices, helping the finance department. **Pray for J to trust in the Lord with all her heart and seek Him as she stands at this life intersection, knowing that He will make her paths straight and provide for her every need.**



S also has a background in finance (accounting and financial analyst), and she has always been particularly passionate about serving those who have been marginalized in society. However, life circumstances kept her from participating in any overseas endeavors...until, potentially, now! Her sons are both getting married this year, and her lease will be up in December. S heard about Wycliffe through a missionary couple supported by her local church in Maryland, and proceeded to explore more about this ministry online. I was notified of her interest when she filled out a survey on the Wycliffe website, and we connected via

Skype. Her excitement visibly grew as we talked, and later that day, she started the official application process to become a member! **S** is the first of all my contacts to take this more formal step, and I am so thankful for it. She is happy to work anywhere, either in the States or overseas, and writes, "I am definitely interested in putting my skills and training in financial analysis in full-time service in ministry/missions. Prayerfully, if Wycliffe finds me fit and it is in our Lord's sovereign plans for my life, I will serve at Wycliffe. " **Pray for S as she proceeds through this application process and starts to consider what this next season of her life might look like.**



Z is currently studying at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and pastors a church as well. He stopped by the Wycliffe table when I was visiting for the school's missions conference last fall, and he shared with me one of the most encouraging things I've ever heard as a mobilizer - "I don't know that I'm called to be a full-time member with you guys, but--what are your greatest organizational needs right now, that I might keep my eye out for people in my congregation who might 'fit the bill' and can direct them over to you? " What an amazing perspective!! We stayed in touch, and when I heard that my fellow mobilizer Janet will be visiting Boston soon, I asked **Z** whether his church might be interested in hearing her share. His response? "So glad you contacted me. This is exactly the kind of partnership I was hoping for. I will introduce your friend Janet to [our missions pastor], and I hope there is a long future partnership between our church and Wycliffe. " Janet will have the opportunity to share with their young adults group on Sunday March 22. Additionally, down the road, **Z** is hoping to participate in our annual summer short-term trips, bringing others along with him. This truly exemplifies the type of gospel partnership that will help complete the task of reaching the unreached with diligence, faithfulness, and effectiveness! **Pray for Z as he continues to spend his life in service to the Church and for more churches to actively participate in worldwide outreach in whatever ways they can.**



Even as I recount the stories behind these faces, I am moved by the graciousness of God's hand in each of their lives. What He saved them from...what He has saved them to; where they've come from...where they are going; what they've already learned...what's in store ahead. Pray that each of them, and the many I haven't even mentioned, would persevere in obedience to the Lord's will, both now and in the future. Pray that they will make wise decisions not just about career paths but also about everyday hardships. Pray that I would be faithful too, in my own work of walking alongside them, praying with them for discernment, helping them take those next steps if it means working with Wycliffe.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of me + what He has me doing. The lives of these brothers and sisters would not have providentially intersected mine apart from your giving and prayers which have brought & kept me here. May the Lord of the harvest grant the increase!

Partner in the gospel for the joy of the nations,

Carmen

Please [also] pray with me...

* for my immigration paperwork to be processed soon, and for the government to grant me permission to leave the country in the meantime so I can soon visit friends and family in Canada. We are grateful to finally have a good lawyer helping us move forward.

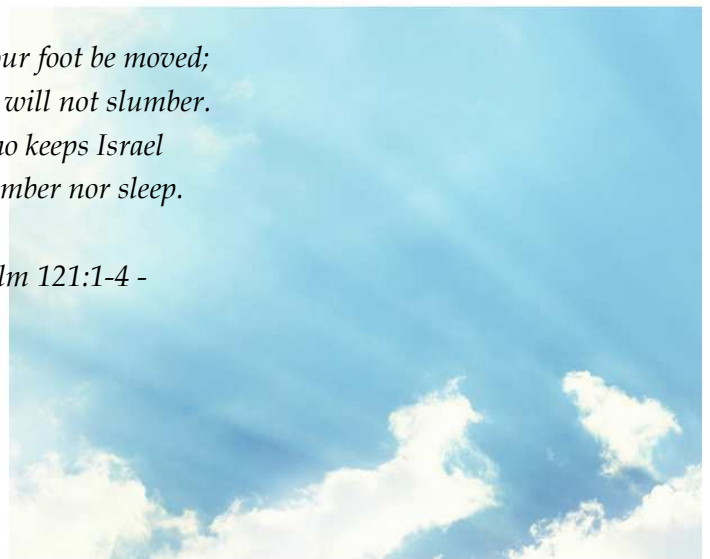
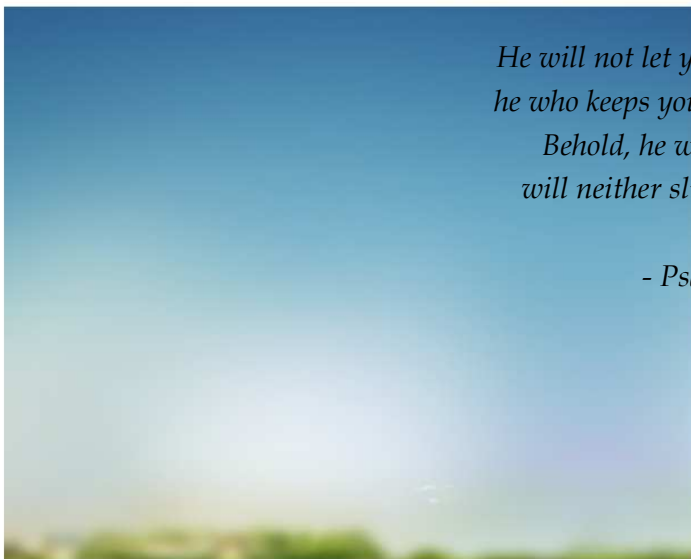
* in thanksgiving for His provision! He has met our needs wonderfully these last two months in the face of the falling Canadian dollar, through the continued faithful giving of monthly financial partners and through special, unexpected gifts. And just as I finished writing this, a family told me that they would like to become monthly partners for the next year, giving an amount that more than covers the gap that has developed!!



*I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.*

*He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.*

- Psalm 121:1-4 -



The Road to Alpha Children Parenting Course — what's next then?



By Salina Yan

God always goes before us, opens doors and paves every step --- and that's my testimony from seeing the start of the Alpha Children Parenting Course at CCCO.

When I was a group leader in AWANA, I always asked myself where would the parents go after they dropped off their kids at AWANA? Can something be arranged for the parents after they dropped off their kids at AWANA?

Finally two years ago AWANA recruited enough leaders that I didn't need to lead a children group. So I started to organize "something" for the parents, inviting them to stay behind after they dropped off their kids. This became the unofficial and informal launch of a parenting group during AWANA time; nothing subtle but very naturally formed. I used this time to chat with parents, to share some parenting articles, to bring up some parenting issues for discussions and eventually we even did a book study on "The Five Love Languages of Children". Ever since starting this group, language had always been the main challenge. There were always one or two parents who couldn't understand one speaking language and I would need to intertwine all three languages during the conversation to make sure everyone followed on. Many times I was exhausted by the time I was home; not from any physical exertion but from the hour long talk using three languages. I was exhausted yet very satisfied because I knew God would be pleased to see parents' participation for the best interest of their kids.

During these weekly parents gathering time I had been searching hard for good, comprehensive, systematic bilingual (English and Chinese) parenting materials for group study. I still remember how excited I was when I discovered the Alpha Children Parenting Course resources. Yet there were still many roadblocks along the way till we launched our first Alpha Children Parenting session on Feb. 13. God knows our weakness and our limitation; He demonstrated his hands on this ministry through the support and encouragement

from our pastors and prayers from brothers and sisters. In planning, we needed to figure out how to best use the DVD resource with only English or Cantonese sound track, no Mandarin; we needed to figure out where to host the group; we needed to consider how to promote this solid resource so as to encourage as many parents to join as possible, we needed to find out where to recruit helpers to set up/food preparation.....Before I knew, God had all these in His hand, through the function of CHURCH, the body of Christ. We had a total of 25 parents signed up for the course and we were all set to start the first class on Feb. 13. The temperature on that day was record low, so cold that only half of the parents showed up. Not without disappointment but God knew my heart. He lifted my spirit by showing me the positive feedbacks from those attended. So we moved on. By the time this article is published, we should have finished the entire five-session course.

Then, what's next?

The Alpha Children Parenting course material is very informative and provides opportunities for parents to exchange experience through the discussion time, which is a good start for those who attended. However, all the information can easily be just head knowledge that will not bring about any life transformation if parents do not apply it. And the application cannot be effective if parents do not persevere on what they learned. Could this lead to the "what's next" step?

How much I want the parents be enriched and equipped with this resource of information, and applied it in their family, nurturing their children with understanding, patience and love. I heard parents honestly shared that it's so hard to control their own mood and temper when it comes to discipline a difficult child. "Parenting is HEART work" -- this is actually the title of a book by Scott Turansky. Just the title would remind me that without the HEART, parenting will definitely ended up being HARD work and that's where all the problems would come up. So, would this be the insight for the step to "what's next"?

I have served in Children's Ministry for over twenty years, my passion still doesn't change even I am now focused on serving the parents. My heart is longing to see the next generation comes to a relationship with Christ Jesus. But we need parents to model and to lead their children to the life saving situation; and I want parents to know this.

I just read from a book "Missing" by Melissa J. MacDonald, a situation she mentioned is so familiar: "Our kids are missing from church, their parents have gone missing, and we as church are missing the mark We're on track to lose a generations of kids." In our church I saw absent parents, disengaged parents, and also good parents. Is our church equipping them, motivating them, resourcing them enough?





Our pastors see it, together with the board they visional it and put forward Household Ministry with the biblical view of “One household with many households”. It saddens me to see lukewarm reception from some congregation referring that Household ministry is only for family with children, it neglects the singles, the elderly, couples without children It takes a village to raise a child. Does this sound familiar? Our next generation needs us, as the church, to walk with them, experience life with them, pass on faith to them. “Hear, O Israel Impress them on your children” (Deuteronomy 6: 4, 7) In here, ‘Israel’ refers to a community. So then, what’s next? Church. Church can’t be excused from this responsibility.

My prayer is that through the Alpha Children Parenting course resources as a start, parents learn and gain positive parenting attitudes, which will enhance and nurture the healthy growth of a child and also a healthy family; we can get contact with the non-church parents and out reach to them; we are able to provide care and support to Christian parents and partners with them at home such that Christian faith formation can happen right there at home in the day-to-day moments of life; church and parents come together to embrace the task of reaching the next generation with the gospel before it’s too late.

Can we learn from what we miss taken before (i.e. mistake) and move forward with the mission to rescue our next generation together? That’s “What’s next” !

EXPERIENCE GOD'S PRESENT!

By Melody Ly

As a Christian sometimes we have to slow down, pause...count down all the blessing. Don't have to wait till Thanksgiving but every single day! God has a reason allowing things to happen, we never understand His wisdom but simply have to trust His will.

(Psalm 37: 5) Commit your way to the Lord. Trust also in Him. And He shall bring it to pass.

(Matthew 7: 7) Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Beginning of November 2014 I once again experienced God's present. My father, who went through a few times of chest pain and breathless...and almost close to a heart attack! After checking up with the family doctor, he was sent for a cardiograph and found that there was blockage somewhere in the chest and needed to refer to Cardiologist for an Angioplasty. The appointment was not even given unfortunately his chest pain attacked him again and it happened frequently....Finally he was sent by 911 to the emergency early in the morning.

When I got that news, we prayed for him and cast the entire unknown problem to God's hands. Watching my father, who was a very healthy and strong man, now lay on the bed breathless and weak. It made me very heart broken! I prayed to God in the heaven to help my father! I sent messages to my friends for praying request. Pray for an enormous strength from above; for wisdom to deal with the doctors and the important part was to pray for his salvation!

We've spent the first day in the emergency room with examined, blood tests. Then the doctor said she will arrange to do the Angioplasty as soon as possible, but probably two to three days waiting. A few hours later I've received an amazing message that they will send him to the Civic Hospital for the procedure the day after. Thanks God for arranging such a quick time!

God knows exactly how much "help" I needed and He provided. I spent two days in the hospital going

through every single procedure with my father. All the help and support from my family, friends. We all took turn to stay behind for company and translate. God sent all the Angels helps that I went through two days smoothly.... God even prepared a Chinese Cardiologist who can speak Cantonese to do the Angioplasty; he explained clearly in Cantonese before the procedure that brought calm, peace and confident to my father.

During the procedure I was sent away from the surgery room, the whole two hours I waited in Tim Horton. I kept praying quietly and sent the text messages and phone calls to all I know for the praying request. Finally they found out he had two big arteries in his chest were blocked and had to insert two stents. Thanks God the procedure went well and could see a big release after he got out the surgery room!

All I did praise to the Father in heaven for walking with me in such a hardship! To let me tell everyone in my family about God's guide and mercy. I had an opportunity to pray with my father talked to him the salvation, let him know God listens to our prayer and not too worry just leave that problem in His hands. Although he hasn't accepted Christ yet but I believe he will! May God spirit is in him and help him to accept Christ soon.

I am so excited to share with you the testimony that I experienced God's present and power! Praying just like breathing, He likes us to talk to Him all day long. He always solves the problem in His good time. He gives me peace and wisdom to deal with it, the big lesson is trust in Him. Let go with our hands and trust in him one hundred percent. He is in control every single life on this planet, He takes care every single detail, issue of my life I believe He does the same with yours. Let us deep dive in His love, know Him, love Him more each day, and live a life that bring Him glory each day. Amen!

Lastly, thanks to brothers' and sisters' love, care and pray! That is very important support! ■





Maturing in faith together

By Career Small Group

On March 13 to 15, 2015 our Career Small Group went on our first ever retreat in Val-des-Monts. It was a refreshing opportunity to literally retreat from the busyness and routines that so often consume many of us. While disconnecting from technology was a challenge, being away from the city gave us the chance to slow down and appreciate the beauty of God's creation. Through this experience, God has also reminded us of how important it is to have fellowship and to live in community, just like the early church in Acts who *"devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers"*.

At our retreat, we had an opportunity to live a full day together; in addition to the fun and games, we prepared and partook in meals together, shared our testimonies, and prayed for one another. It was such a blessing to be able to connect more closely with each other and to share how God has been at work in each of our lives.

Since fall of last year, our group has been studying the book of Philippians with Matt Chandler's To Live is Christ, To Die is Gain video series. Though Philippians is a short four chapters, it has been enriching to read and study Paul's encouragement of the Church in Philippi -- a church that is mature in its faith.

With a group of early careers and post graduate students, Career Small Group has gone through much change and transition over the past three years. From changes in leadership to the "graduation" of members in studies or career paths, one thing has remained constant: the desire to gather and grow in our faith together. It is often observed that one gets busier, especially as career or family responsibilities increase. However, God has continued to amaze us and show that even in our busy lives, there is a need for community. It may not be easy to dedicate time out of our schedules to meet with one another; but it is something that we need to do. We give thanks and all the glory to God our Father for his continuing work in our Career Small Group and other small groups throughout his church. ■

Glorify God with My Life

By Julia Chen



I've always been the type of person who questions everything – in a world where we're constantly bombarded by so many messages and types of information, I always wanted to decide for myself and make sure that my choice was really my own. So I'll admit that most of my journey has been a journey with my doubts. For the longest time, I always felt intensely guilty at retreats and worship nights when I saw my peers and adult leaders being so passionate about God and Christ and the Holy Spirit. Logically, I actually really really wanted to believe in God. But whenever I did that, I questioned myself – “hey Julia just because you want eternal life and have nothing to lose, stop being such a hypocrite, as if you really believe it, stop trying to pretend and fit in with all these people who truly love and believe God and are real Christians”. I would say that that was my first stage of thinking deeply about being a Christian.

My second stage, I would say, was still about me and what I thought about Christianity. I learned that everyone has their own paths to becoming a Christian, that people believe in different ways, that doubt can be used to take faith seriously and that, at least the way I think on a daily basis, it's always a constant fight and choice to make. Here, I'm fighting all the doubts. I accept all the weaknesses that comes with being a human being: the doubts, the sin, the frailties, the inability to trust perfectly, the absolute incapability of understanding and knowledge. All the big questions I wanted answered, all the apologetic lectures and talks I pondered, all that I wanted to be sure I knew – I realized that it's simply insignificant. Yes, there is a lot worth considering. However, that's not even what being a Christian is about. In addition, in the face of eternity, in the face of so much greater than we are, I finally let go of *the importance* of my doubts. They're no longer important to me. Instead, God is.

My third stage – which I hope will still evolve into more and more stages as God constantly is seeking us out and I want to be answering and growing every step – is one where, finally, I want to make it all about God. Every moment of this time that we've been blessed with and given is something I want to use. This next

minute, this next day, this next month. That's all time to be doing something. I suppose there are the small things, which can be just as intensely hard. Actively loving those around us, choosing to be patient instead of mad, bringing that friend to church (because after I truly accepted God, He's actually been so good and giving me opportunities to bring friends to church that I never knew were interested before, and it's just so amazing how He works). They may seem small, but I know I will keep having to work hard and often fail at them because I am human; I just thank God for his amazing grace that has blessed me with every last thing and his constant forgiveness, and I am so thankful and amazed that He is still forever offering a chance of belief even with so much of my doubt and humanness and sin. I believe that I can use my life for God, and I really just pray that I'll be able to figure out how to glorify Him with my life in this world. ■



God leads me to a life of peace

By Qing Na Lai

By participating in church activities, and through contacts with my church friends, I gradually came to learn and understand God's words. Now, I must confess that I am a sinner, and only by believing in my Lord, Jesus, can I be saved. I believe that not only I will be saved, but my family would have a chance to be saved too. I also believe God will lead me to a life of peace and fulfillment even in this present life. ■



Be Joyful in the Lord

By Linda Yee

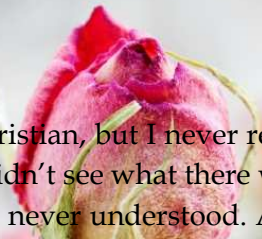
When I was young, I often wonder about where a person would go after his or her death. Later, a fellow student invited me to go to an evangelistic meeting. From there, I learned that anyone who believes in the Lord, Jesus Christ, will be able to go to heaven after death. On that very day, I had decided to believe in the Lord Jesus.

Looking back for the past 30 years, although I had only been to church two or three times, but for every problem that I prayed to God, God had solved the problems for me in a wonderful and mysterious way. In a way, I had experienced God in my life for the past 30 years.

I have decided from now on, I will obey God's command, fear Him, and trust in Him. I will pray to him faithfully, and wait for Him patiently. I will be joyful in the Lord and I will take every opportunity to preach the gospel to those who do not know Jesus. ■

God Lifts Me Up

By Amanda Liang



When I was little I was raised as a Christian, but I never really understood his love, or his reason. As years went by, I walked away from Christ. I didn't see what there was, I always believed in him, but why? Why did I believe in him, because I was told to? I never understood. After time, I did not pray, read the bible, or work on my relationship with God. As years went by, I went through the darkest moments of my life. The time where I needed God most, was the years I had not known him. I walked away from him, when I should have walked towards him. I was being faced with bullying for some years of my life. Even though I was always being reminded of God by the things around me, I always chose to ignore it.

The bullying got worse as years progressed, by grade six, summer then came by, a summer I never want to relive again, but not a summer I regretted. During summer my 3 best friends began to bully me. Everyday I hanged out with them, I came home crying my eyes out, refusing to leave my room. Grade seven now, I lived in a pitch black world with no light. The endless bullying, this is the point in my life where I thought it would be better to be dead than alive at that point. It was too hard for me to get out of my house to go to school. I developed anxiety and suicidal thoughts. Every single day I came home crying. I had enough of this school, it was hard enough to be around the people who said they were my friends. I accepted them as friends, despite all this pain, I wanted to love them but I also wanted to hate them. I decided to act my whole way through school and not to let anyone know how bad I felt. Soon enough, I eventually started self-harm. The only thing was, I couldn't feel any pain. I felt nothing, cause it never hurt as much as I felt. The year continued on like this, never has I felt so unwanted, ugly, hated, stupid and most of all worthless. I believed I was a waste of space.

Finally Grade eight, a new school. Nothing changed, I still got bullied, I still self-harmed. I still cried everyday, I still hoped I would die the next day. This is when more signs of God was appearing. I was being reminded once again but I really didn't care, I felt God couldn't do anything for me, I wanted someone to be there for me physically, not hope for some miracle God can give. My life was too much for me to handle, but eventually after many reminders, I finally decided "Give God a chance." I prayed for someone to get me out of this life in darkness. The same day, my childhood friend messaged me and we talked for hours. I eventually started to smile and I finally laughed then faking all of them. He made my days a lot better and I met my new best friend through him. The both of them helped me open up. They would talk to me for hours until I was laughing and smiling again. They gave me a hope and I had to thank God for that. He sent them into my life when I needed someone.

God helped me realize so many things, I learned how to forgive, and love others even when it is difficult. If I never found God again, I probably would have never been able to forgive the people who hurt me so much, and lived my life in hatred. This is why I am grateful for learning about God and his love. As I learn more, I realized God had a plan for everything. He puts us through suffering to grow in our faith and then help others to grow as well. We can reach out to those who do not know God yet or to those who do. I now understand why I went through this pain, God had a plan of putting people in my lives who will need help and encouragement to be strong and brave. He put me through all those hardships knowing I will become stronger and be an inspiration to others. I understood that moment, when I had many friends appear facing the similar issues to me. I support them, and I tell them about God. I pray for them and also hope they will look towards God for help. Until this day, I still struggle to fight off my depression but with God putting all these people in my life, when I fall down, God lifts me up. He will keep doing until one day, things like depression, won't even phase me. I believe in God, for he had saved my life. ■



By Irene Liang

How Has Jesus Changed My Life

"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away." Isaiah 64:6.

My name is Irene Liang, and I, confess that I am a sinner. If I were a leaf, I'd shrivel up and get swept away like wind by sin. But luckily that's not my whole story. Because, you see, the tree that I grow out is like an overprotective father. He loves me so very much and will try his best to keep me even though I'm not needed. I mean, I'm a dried up leaf. I can't even photosynthesize! Do you see where I am going here? Okay, well enough with my fancy talk, let's get real here. About my life and my saviour Jesus Christ.

I actually came to church when I was little for a few years but because I remember absolutely nothing, let's just say that my first encounter with Jesus was in grade ten, which is one year ago, when a childhood friend of mine, Jeffrey invited me, my sister and a friend to a Christian youth event called Rock the River. After that, I just kept coming and now I'm here!

Now, when I first came, I thought I was literally perfect. How do I say it? I thought that if God had to pick an angel, it'd be me. I was so arrogant! Clearly I didn't fully understand who God was and what He did for me. The fact is that we're all sinners. But just because we're sinful, it doesn't mean we can't try to be better than the day before.

So let me tell you about one of the sins I overcame. As I said earlier, I started going to church in grade ten. However, at the time, I was dating a boy and that started in grade nine. (Yes, I know, that grade nine is a pretty young age to date. And that is why my parents were very against it.) But moving on, one day in a Bible study, I found out that it is a sin for a Christian to date a non-Christian.

"Why?" you might ask. That's what I wondered a lot, too. And everyone I asked all had different answers. Whether it's because that's not the person God has waiting for you, because you share different values, because of the bad influence or etc. I heard all this advice and thought it through many times, denied it and just tried to get away with it. But we all know that you can't serve two masters. You can't just sin and be okay with it if you believe in God. So, it was quite the mountain trip because with every day that passed, I felt

more and more convicted to obey God's words.

Soon enough, I realized how my relationship with my boyfriend made me become so sinful. I realized that I wasn't honouring my parents anymore. I wasn't obeying them, I argued with them and even lied. And not to mention sexual temptation. All this might be considered normal in a teen's life, but just because it's normal, it doesn't mean it's right. This should not be happening!

Of course it was sad to break-up, but, there was brighter side to this event. God was actually protecting me from being tempted to sin any further. This experience in my life showed me that you can't go wrong if you stick to the Bible! Even if you don't see it as good advice, if God put it in the Bible, there's a reason why. And it just takes a little bit of exploring and time before you can discover why.

So how has Jesus changed my life? Well, from the outside it may seem like little change but on the inside, it's huge. You really know how to live your life to the fullest because all your answers are in the Bible. Maybe not your answer to the trigonometry question, or who you'll be when you grow up, but you know what God wants for you.

So when God says, forgive everyone no matter what they've done to you and in turn, love them, odds are, that's probably your best option. No matter how hard and how unreasonable it seems.

So whenever my sister does something irresponsible and I want to just rage at her for the next three days. I have to stop and realize that I can't. I have to forgive her and accept that she isn't perfect, because I'm not either. So if Jesus can show me mercy when I don't deserve it, I should do the same. And this works out because my sister does the same thing for me. Both me and my sister have become really close because we can let go of the silly things that make us fight. I can actually say for the first time in a long time that I love my sister from the bottom of my heart.

Thank-you for listening to my testimony and may God be with you. Remember that God is like a protective tree that wants to keep everyone of it's leave no matter how shrivelled up they are! So you are always loved and never alone. ■



A Really Amazing Night

By Sophia Li




I've been coming to church ever since I was born. I spent 2 years in Fredericton, New Brunswick going to a church with my mom and my dad. My dad got a job in Ottawa but my mom had to stay in New Brunswick to finish her Bachelor degree for nursing so my sister and I ended up going China with my mom's parents. I stayed with my grand-parents for a year and a half, the day when my parents came to get us, according to my parents, I was so happy to see them. My sister and I moved back to Ottawa and started going to CCCO.

I was only 3 years old when I started attending church. When I was little and young, I used to think that church was a place to eat free food and to play with my friends. As I grew older, the age of 12-13 years old, my friends had moved away and it was just me and my sister again. Eventually my sister found some friends to talk to but unfortunately I was still alone. I felt isolated and uncomfortable each time I went to church because I knew no one there and I was too scared to talk to anybody. I guess you can say I was pretty shy back then. During that phase where I didn't want to go to church, it really crushed me parents, especially my mom. I would always try to find a way out of going to Pure Energy or YF, I would make stupid excuses like I would have too much homework or I wasn't feeling well. The homework thing worked for a little while but my mom never really bought it. She would argue with me back and forth to going to church or not to go to church, eventually the fighting began to become too much for my mom.

One night, I gave up the fight against her. I went for one night to YF and I said if I didn't like it then I'm not coming again. That was a really lucky night for my mom and a really amazing night for me. I made new friends and became much more aware that God has always been beside the entire step of the way. March 4, 2014 was the Friday night that changed my life with God forever. Pastor Josh was talking about the book of Daniel, learning the character Daniel had developed in order to stand strong. He was talking about being bullied in believing on your faith and being judged because we are Christians but Pastor Josh said that we, as Christians, must stand firm in what we believe in and we will not be judged and we will not be put down in other people's beliefs. That month was also the month of the annual retreat in March. The retreat has really brought me closer with so many people in YF. And ever since, that month I started going to church more and more.

I am 15 years old, and my life in Christ has begun to kick in. I have a real hunger for Jesus and I'm seeking Him diligently. I realize now that I'm not alone, I'm never alone because He is always here. The environment I build around me is full of spirit, I understand now that only God can bring change into the world and it is the one and only God who can save you from your life of sin. God has saved me from a life of misery and isolation.

Romans 6: 3-4 says: "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." ■



By Jiaying Liu

A New Me

Hi. My name is Jiaying Liu. I am currently a student at the University of Waterloo and I would like to share my testimony on how I became a Christian.

Born and raised in a non-Christian family, I did not have a lot of exposure to Christ from a young age. Since I was a child, I had always been taught to be the kindest that I could be. I made sure I was nice to others, that I would listen to my teachers and that I would respect my parents. I remember having a very happy childhood, I loved my family very much and I had many friends at school. I had everything I needed. Then, high school came and everything changed.

I went to a different school rather than the one many of my friends went to and I had to move since my new school was far away from where I lived. I ended up having very little friends at school and I became very shy and insecure. I would blame my parents for putting me in the situation that I was in and I would disrespect them so much during my high school years. Having very little friends, who at the time I was not close with, hit me hard. It made me feel worthless and that my life had no purpose. At times I felt unloved.

Then in grade 11, I had my first exposure to Jesus Christ. At first, I didn't really give much thought about who Jesus Christ really was but I now had an interest. I would learn more about Christianity little by little, but somehow I could not get myself to accept Christ.

One day, I went to a Christian event called Rock the River. At first, I wasn't really enjoying myself at the event. Everyone there had a great time expressing their love for Christ. I didn't. Then, at some point during the event, my friends took me somewhere more private and told me why they believed Christ. Hearing them talk about why they loved Christ and why they loved church helped changed my views on Christianity. This prompted me to talk to my pastor so I could ask him some questions. He talked about how God sacrificed His one and Son to save us. He told me how God loved me much more than my loved ones loved me and how God loved my loved ones more than I loved them. This talk moved me so much. For some reason, I could see tears slowly tricking out of my eyes and onto the floor. I tried my best to contain my emotions but I finally gave and wept. It was at that time I had finally felt God's love.

From that day, I felt like a different person. I accepted the fact that I was a sinner and that I now desired to be a follower of Jesus Christ. I saw how God was able to have such a positive impact on so many people's lives and I wanted the same to happen to me. So, I changed my ways. I became more open at school and the few friends I had in high school have now become some of my closest friends. I had realized that I had mistreated my parents and I made sure that I would always give them the respect that they deserved. God showed me that there is so much more meaning in my life and that as long as I could depend on Him, all would go well. Accepting Christ made me more appreciative of the things God gave me: my friends, my family, and the community of the church. I've learned to be happy for the things I have and not be sad for the things I didn't have. God was able to fill that void that I used to have in my life and I will forever be grateful for that. ■



My Journey to Believe in God

By **Yun Long Wang**

I have a happy family, a stable career, and my children, my daughter-in-laws and my grandchildren have all accepted Christ as their personal saviour. They have all become part of the church family. I should also give thanks for a harmonious family. Then what do I need to ask from God and why do I need to pray to God to have my sins forgiven. It was after I started to do Bible Study with my son's family and started going to church on Sunday to worship that I began to realize that I am a sinner. It was because Adam and Eve fell for the temptation of the serpent in the Garden of Eden and ate the forbidden fruit, that brought sin into this world. We, as descendants of Adam and Eve, inherited their sinful nature. As the most senior elder in the family, sometimes I neglected the responsibility of having good communicating with the younger generations. I often fell into a temper tantrum and caused misunderstanding and confusion. Now I know that I have sinned and I need to pray to God for forgiveness.

My journey to discover God was a long one. 1. In my youth, I heard that Jesus was a good man. He performed many good deeds and preached the gospel. But he was treated unjustly; 2. My Chinese middle name belongs to the "cloud" Generation. Our family tree in the Central Plains only existed for five generations. At the end of the Yuan Dynasty, the Mongolian invaded the Central Plains. The locals were either killed, or fled south to the southeast coast or Taiwan. We became the "Hakka" people. That generation was led by a family benefactor. We have to recite a poem that was passed down from that generation: "Evergreen phoenix from the cloud, His poetry passed down many generations. Follow the Lord to learn about righteousness. We can gather to witness the light of this world." I always wonder who this benefactor could be who led our forefathers to safety. I was very thankful for a pastoral visit from Pastor Gary Tse three months ago. During that visit, he analyzed the poem's wording, and identified that our benefactor was most likely a pastor. I really want to thank him for the enlightenment.

Lord Jesus Christ, the Father, and the Holy Spirit is the true God of the Trinity. Our Lord Jesus was born from a virgin. His precious blood cleansed all our sin. He gave up his life for our atonement, and he resurrected after death. I ask my Lord to forgive my sins and send the Holy Spirit to live in my heart. I also ask Him to be my Lord and my guiding light. I will be diligent in reading the Bible, be consistent with my prayer life and talk to God often. I want to interact with other Christians, to share my love, care and spiritual knowledge. I want to ask the Holy Spirit to descend upon me so that I can have the strength to witness for the Lord who is in heaven. I would like to thank Pastor Tse for his visits. He solved a big puzzle in my life. I also want to thank Lapkin and Esther Ip who led the weekly Bible study. ■

By Jade Sowden



Speak, your servant is listening

It was an amazing privilege to attend the 2015 Spring Retreat. This was my last year attending and I treasured every single second of it. This retreat meant a lot to me personally and I know it meant a lot to everyone else as well. YF is like a second family to me and I love them so much that sometimes it's hard to describe my feelings towards them because there is so much love and care that is being put in by everyone. I could go through an entire dictionary and never be able to find a word that describes what they mean to me. During the retreat, many relationships were built through free time, late night talks and that's why retreats are so memorable. It's because of the relationships that are built and the conversations made.

This retreat, we talked about hearing God's voice and living with our ears open. In our daily lives, there are so many distractions around us that draws us away from God. He tries to reach out to us through His Word but we constantly have headphones in our ears, cell phones in our hands, and these things block out God's words. *Sometimes we need to unplug the distractions and plug into the Bible.* Pastor Josh mentioned that we only hear what we are listening for. Imagine walking down the street hearing "Free ice cream!" What would your reaction be? Happy? Excited? Would your reaction be the same for the Gospel? That really stood out to me the most because it's true, our reactions should be the same or not, even more! We should be excited for the Gospel just as much as we are for free ice cream. We are always so caught up with social media, friends, society, etc, that sometimes we tend to push away God from our daily lives. Also, we pray to him asking for his presence and help but we can't even hear him. That's why it's hard trying to see what God wants us to do. I struggle with that too. In the past few months I've been asking him for guidance to which university I should go to and I can't see to see which path he wants me to go to. Just a thought to think about. As youth, it's hard trying to hear what God has to say to us because we can't hear him at all and it's hard to deal with that. We try to hear God through people, our daily lives, but we forget we can always hear him through the Bible.

In Matthew 13: 10-15 talks about how we need to open our hearts to hear, seek, and respond to what God has already revealed. Instead of waiting for God to do something, we need to open our hearts and seek Him through the Bible. All this time he has already given us the answer, we simply need to live with our ears open so we can hear God with open hearts. For me, I feel that God speaks to me through music and from the lyrics. I feel that that is how I hear what God has to say and it stays with me for a very long time.

Something else that touched me was that we are never alone. God is always there for us and ready for us to take off our earphones. All we need to do is press the stop button on our iPods. On Sunday morning, we had an open mic where anyone can go up and share what God has been doing in our lives. It was a very meaningful time for YF because we can see what other people are dealing with and we can relate and encourage each other. From that, we all experienced God's presence and how all this time He was always there for us, we just needed to realize it. We always try to push him away and he is always trying to grab us back. He loves us so much that he can never let us go.

Overall, we need to live with our ears open to hear God and what he has in store for us. He speaks through us in many different ways and sometimes God will do his part, but we also have to do ours. He is always there for us, even in our darkest moments (Romans 5: 8) and all we have to do is press stop, take off our earphones, and live our life with an open heart to hear, seek and respond to what God has already revealed. Speak, your servant is listening. ■





Developing a more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ

By Michelle Wang

This year for our spring retreat, we went to Galilee Bible Camp with another church youth group (OCBC). The theme for our retreat was “Speak, your Servant is Listening”. We arrived Friday evening and left the camp Sunday afternoon. I learned so many things and I had a great time spending it with my friends.

During the retreat, I learned about how to listen to God and to listen when He speaks to us. One thing that really hit me was that it is hard to listen to God when I’m shutting out the world. For instance, I often spend too much time watching Netflix, or listen to music on my earphones for countless hours, or checking the feed on Facebook. I’m so attached to social media and I don’t spend that time like I should with God. I tend to put things before God because I have so many distractions around me. Sometimes, it’s difficult to perceive when God speaks to me; and it becomes even more hard to listen. In the morning sermon, Pastor Dan talked to us about how sometimes when people grow up in the church, they tend to become snoozers. In other words we become spiritually callused. This impacted me because very frequently, I would hit the snooze button and not listen to God. I also learned about what kind of ways can God speak to me. For example by nature, music, visions, prayer, or by reading the Bible. I recall Pastor Josh telling us in his sermon, sometimes a breakdown is actually considered a spiritual breakthrough. When we have a breakdown, we are at our weakest and most vulnerable moment, so that is when God comes and saves us. At that moment, He turns our life around and the Holy Spirit leads us to Jesus Christ. Likewise it’s kind like a way out of a dark and never-ending whirlpool. During the Saturday evening sermon that Pastor Josh gave us, he said, “If the Gospel’s not worth dying for, then it’s not worth living for either”. That had a huge impact on me because I often take God’s Word for granted. The Bible just sits there on my shelf, untouched while the Christians on the other side of the world are dying everyday for being a Christian. The Bible is one form of how God communicates with us. If we don’t read it, chances are we won’t get to know who we’re praying to. Recently, my prayers have been like an agenda. I told God about the things wanted and then I hoped to receive them as if they were gifts. I soon

realized that prayer isn't about listing things we desire to God. It is about having an intimate relationship with God through communication and that is vital. I was very touched to hear that even the worst of people are capable of being saved by grace through faith. Many evangelists only want to share and preach the Gospel to the well-dressed and rich people. However, if we don't preach the good news to the poor and the naked they will never know about Jesus and ultimately, that is our loss. So all the Muslims, the Atheists, the Satan worshipers, the non-believers, every one of them is greatly capable of being saved. Therefore, it is our job to spread the good news to every nation and to every extremity of the world.

Throughout this retreat, I have made so many wonderful long-lasting memories and built strong relationships with friends. Furthermore, this retreat has really strengthened my faith. I have developed a more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. I hope to listen attentively when God speaks to me and to obey Him when he does.

