

# 3 Devotional

1985

# "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

John 10:10b

# **Foreword**

We thank the Lord for giving RHCCC thirty years of mission and grace. We must remember His faithfulness, unfailing love, and presence with us, and always thank Him and praise His name. After the Israelites crossed the Jordon on their way to Canaan, God commanded Joshua to take up twelve stones from the middle of the river, and put them down at the place where they stayed that night and in the middle of the Jordon where the priests once stood. These stones were set up as memorials for them to explain and teach the generations to come (Joshua 4). The first pile of stones testified WHAT God had done and the second pile of stones testified WHERE God had performed the miracle.

This devotional is our testimony of how God has blessed us in the past thirty years. The spiritual journey, blessings, and lessons God gave our church are recorded not only for the purpose of remembrance and thanksgiving, but also for the next generations to recount God's great deeds amongst us. It is our hope that from generation to generation, we will continue to revere the Lord, love Him, love people, and love sharing the Gospel of Peace.

**Rev. Sam Chan** Senior Pastor



1985 -1994



"... anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep." ... "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

—John 10:1-18

## RHCCC: A Church for the Unchurched

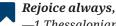
"When RHCCC looked for land to build a church, our leadership team, through prayer, understood that God called us to establish an evangelistic church that focused on spreading the gospel. In the summer of 1987, our Heavenly Father led us to purchase a lot and build the first Chinese church in Richmond Hill. Rapid development in the area in 1989 led to about 700 Chinese families taking residence in our neighborhood. We knew then that God called us to establish "A Church for the Unchurched". Who are the Unchurched? There are two groups of Unchurched people. The first group is non-believers who have never heard or may have heard the gospel. The second group is those who have accepted Christ, but their faith has grown cold and they no longer regularly attend worship services. Our goal is to help people find their ways back to God."

This vision statement thirty years ago is essentially the core belief of 'missional' church that we often speak of today. This is another way of expressing God's will. Indeed, our Lord is the same missional God yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

- 1. What does this scripture tell you about God?
- 2. What does this scripture tell you about human nature?
- 3. "Mission exists not because of the church; the church exists because of Mission." Do you agree with this statement? Why?

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-1 Thessalonians 5:16

Lord, thank you for the salvation and hope in life. Lord, thank you for your Word as it is promising. Lord, thank you for your Spirit as it is living. Lord, thank you for your constant love as it is imminently present.

Lord, thank you for giving me the pivotal year of my life and that these pivotal moments are life changing.

Lord, thank you for a new mercy in every morning.

Lord, thank you for bearing all my worries.

Lord, thank you for giving us gladness and strength to face tomorrow.

Lord, thank you for your calling as it gives meaning to my daily tasks.

Lord, thank you for the many little sorrows, for every kind hand, and for guidance.

Lord, thank you for family and friends and their amazing encouragement in my life.

Lord, thank you for the enemies that you enable me to forgive.

Lord, thank you for your love to all people, those both far and near.

Lord, thank you for making me feel so glad and thankful.

In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

In 1981, the Lord led me to RHCCC (previous site at Yonge & Lawrence). I was compelled by the joy in the worship service. I was revived by the excitement in the Word that was preached. I was also embraced by the love in the youth fellowship.

Our discipleship task was to outreach to the young adults in high school and university. There were 30 visa students in the fellowship. We learned to share generously. We shared our time to read the Scripture and to pray for each other. We also shared our "pocket money" to pay for school tuition. We shared the journey with each other.

# Reflections

"Happiness keeps you sweet; Trials keep you strong; Sorrows keep you human; Failures keep you humble; God keeps you going."

What's your favourite worship song? Why does it mean so much to you?

Life is a journey full of surprises.

We can reach up to God, reach in to examine our inner thoughts, and reach out to friends.

Reach up and pay attention to God's presence.

Give thanks to Him because God is watching over you.

Reach in and pay attention to God's work.

Give thanks to Him because God has not finished with you yet.

Reach out and pay attention to the people that are beside you.

Give thanks to God because God is in between you all.

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# **Calvin Lam**

Associate Pastor & Pastor-in-charge of Celebration



But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

-2 Corinthians 4:7

In 1985, our church moved from Yonge and Lawrence to the Yonge and Drewry area. This was our first migration to the north of Toronto and we called ourselves the Yonge North Church. We were a small church, like a small jar of clay, with about 100 people. With a subsequent move to the Bayview Secondary School and the purchase of land of our current site, we have since grown to a big church, some might even call us a megachurch. It is something that RHCCC should celebrate and give thanks to God. We are not to be proud of ourselves but to glorify God. It is the treasure, which is the gospel of God that gives us power and wisdom to build up the church. It is Jesus who lives in our lives and gives us the vision to be his disciple and be a PEACE person. All surpassing power is from God. This is how we learn that the absolute insufficiency of man will always reveal the total sufficiency of God, both in church growth and in our spiritual development.



# **Bring it Home**

Think about a time in your life when you really needed to trust God. How did you learn to relinquish your control and allow God to provide what you need?

- 1. What do you know about humility? Do you think you are a humble person?
- 2. How do you rely on God so that his treasure will fill you up?

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# **Linda Shum**

Associate Pastor & Pastor-in-charge of Church Planting



By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

—Hebrews 11:8

When our church met in the Steeles and Yonge area in the spring of 1987, we were praying for God's guidance to find a place where we could build our church. One day, Pastor Sam proclaimed that he believed God had provided us with some land in Richmond Hill. At first, we were bewildered and full of questions, "Where?" "Richmond Hill?" "But where is Richmond Hill?" "Somewhere up north?" "How far north?" "Could we get there by bus?" "Are you sure this is the place?" A few months later, a group of us finally got a chance to visit this "future church site" in Richmond Hill. As we looked around, all we saw were fields of grass. It really took some imagination to picture a church in the middle of this no man's land. We continued to pray for the confirmation of the Lord's leading. In September of the same year, we bought the land for a very good price. Everyone was excited! One and a half years later, by faith, we moved to a school near the site in Richmond Hill. Fast forward thirty years, there are now over 4,000 worshipers on this land every Sunday. Our life lesson is that when we are willing to take a step of faith in following God's leading and move out of our comfort zone, He will surely reward us with amazing blessings along the way.



# **Bring it Home**

When your children face challenges in life that can scare them or make them feel uncomfortable (e.g. meeting new people, trying new things, visiting new places), you can use Abraham's example and RHCCC's story to encourage them that God will look after them as long as they obey His leading. Affirm that God is all knowing and He loves them very much. When they do not have faith, walk and pray with them and help them see God's grace along the way.

- 1. Do you have the desire to experience the blessings of Abraham? What are the obstacles that prevent you from taking a step of faith as Abraham did?
- 2. Have you ever experienced the blessings of God in your life? How do these experiences help you trust in God?
- 3. If God calls you to move out of your comfort zone in order to accomplish something for His church or His people, what would your response be? Why?

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Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water ... Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.

-Exodus 15:22-27

In the early days, the RHCCC team was like a group of wanderers. The office and fellowship meetings used spaces offered by TCCC at 2230 Birchmount Road. Sunday schools and worship services were located in the high schools every Sunday. The small groups and committee were meeting regularly in homes. On June 1990, the ground breaking ceremony started the construction of our Phase 1 and ended by June of the following year with a Dedication Service. When creative evangelistic activities were offered in our community, many came to know Christ and Christian were motivated. A lot of people were baptized and joined the church.

When life is on the move, anxiety level is heightened. However, if we seek God's wisdom in quietness, stress becomes an agent to cause growth and maturity in individual and communal life. When we have to move all our equipment around and set them up every Sunday, we discover unity among members and everybody grows in maturity in the process.

The Jewish people experienced the life of a wanderer in the wilderness. Life was uncertain. When drinking water became the problem (Num. 20:12), complaint was the number one issue and it did not please God. In the end, all who escaped Egypt were not allowed to enter the Promise Land and died in the wilderness! What a sad and great warning to all followers of Christ.

- 1. What has agitated your emotions so that you are angry and disappointed and you have a complaint in your heart?
- 2. What kind of behavior do you observe when your children have a complaint?
- 3. How do adults express their discouragement or disappointment? Cursing? Addiction? Work unceasingly?
- 4. Other than complaining, what other way of behaviour has been expressed or as replacement? What will be your action?

Note	



# Virginia Yong

Pastor of Communication, Cantonese Ministry

"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

—Joshua 1:7-8

Joshua fellowship, the first ever family fellowship of RHCCC, had their debut meeting on March 9, 1991 in the Methodist Church next door. Joshua fellowship was evolved from a couple fellowship which once consisted of mainly newly-weds. In times this fellowship became fruitful and multiplied with children. Thus Joshua was formed. God used the inexperienced Joshua fellowship to serve a fast growing community of families. God's grace was sufficient. He encouraged the fellowship through Joshua of the Bible. Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed. If we obey His word, God promised to be with us wherever we go.

Joshua lived victoriously not because of his intelligence or strategies but because of his humility and obedience before God. Joshua knew that the Lord was the only Sovereign God. Perhaps Joshua fellowship was inexperienced in its early days. However, the brothers and sisters who served understood that ultimately God was the commander. Their service was not to satisfy men, but to point to the all-powerful God and His amazing works!



# Bring it Home

Share your fear and worry with your children. Ask them if there is anything that makes them feel scared or insecure. Encourage them through Joshua to have faith in God's never failing love, so that they will not be overwhelmed by hardships and loneliness.

- 1. What must we hold on to when we face challenges in life?
- 2. Is there anyone walking with you in your life journey?

Note	



# **Calvin Lam**

Associate Pastor & Pastor-in-charge of Celebration

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither whatever they do prospers.

—Psalm 1:1-3

The best way to read this text is to read with John 15:1-8. Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." He used the parable of the vine and the branches to describe the togetherness, the relationship, and the bond between Himself and His followers. Jesus in us and we in Him. What is the best way to experience this relationship? Psalms 1 gave a clear direction to achieve this: by reading the word of the Lord with delight. The word "delight" means loving it. When you love music, you listen to it all the time; you learn how to play music and even promote it.

RHCCC moved into our first sanctuary in 1991 and we were delighted. Many things happened. For example, Rev. Sam Chan became our Senior Pastor, Rev. Maak and Dr. Wan were invited to be our consulting pastors, Rev. Simon Wong was ordained, Rev. Kai Mak became our English pastor. We were delighted at God's word so we grew our church through teaching His word and reaching out to our neighbours. Just like a prospering tree planted by streams of water, so was our church.

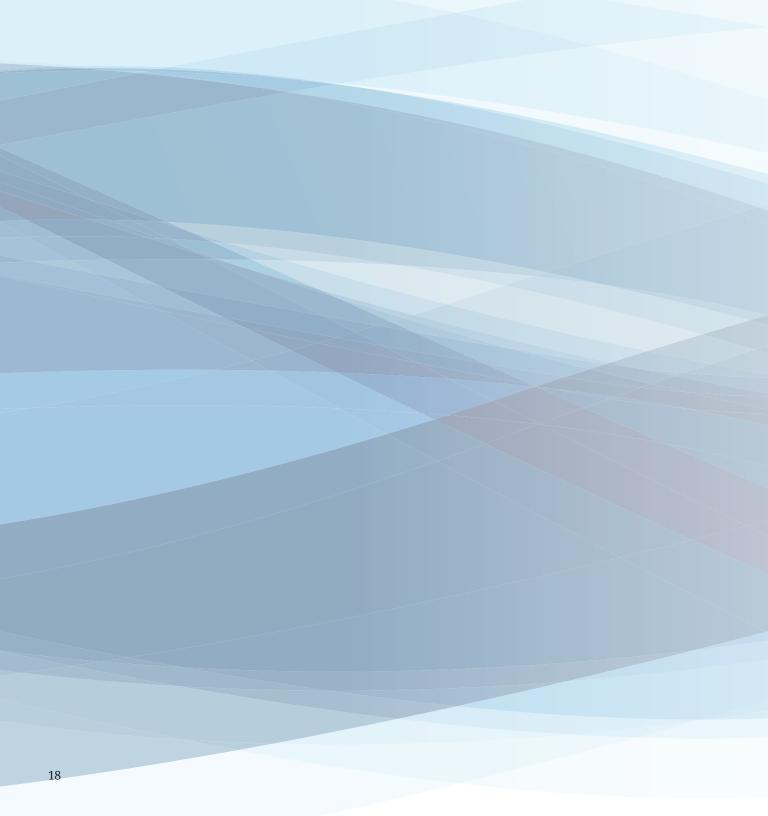


# Bring it Home

Celebrate the things in your life! Who are some amazing people that God have brought to you? What are some amazing things that have happened to you? How can these things bring glory to God?

- 1. Are you delighted at God's word? Would you read it daily?
- 2. Do you believe that you will prosper through reading the Bible?
- 3. Will you influence others to read the Bible as well?

Note	



# 1995 -2004

# Sam Chan

Senior Pastor

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

—John 3:1-10

# How to persevere in our service to God

Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." (Acts 3:6)

Why do people who gladly serve the Lord in accordance to His will often end up being fatigued or discouraged? The words Peter spoke to the lame and poor in front of the temple gate (Acts 3:6) gave us insight into this issue. Peter said that he could only give what he had in the name of Jesus. This reveals the fact that our spiritual service/width can never exceed our spiritual reality/depth. If we lack spiritual intimacy with God, then rich serving experience, good knowledge of biblical truth, sincere commitment and dedication are not sufficient for continuous effective ministry. If we rely solely on our own strength and abilities, we will end up struggling to maintain our service. Peter knew his abilities to serve came from God, and only through reliance on His power could he live out his apostolic calling, give signs and perform miracles. Having received mercy from God, Peter was then able to show mercy to others. All these were based on his relationship with God, which was developed through daily prayer, scripture reading, waiting, and listening to God.

- 1. In what areas have I relied solely on my own strength and abilities, to the point of forgetting to wait upon the Lord and draw close to Him? What hinders me from getting close to God?
- 2. What attitudes or serving mentalities must I show in my repentance?
- 3. What commitments do I need to renew?

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# **Irene Cheung**

Pastor-in-charge of Young Life Development

Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. Then *Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat* down with his disciples. The Jewish Passover Festival was near. When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"...When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

—*John 6:1-13* 

In the story of Jesus' feeding the five thousand, he asked Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" It was getting late and a big crowd of 5,000 men and many more women and children to feed. It was an impossible task.

Although they doubted, the disciples obeyed Jesus' instruction to have all the people sit down in groups. They witnessed the miracle that all had enough to eat. They even filled 12 baskets of broken pieces that were left over.

Phase II of the church renovation was completed in June 1997. This created more rooms in Zone B that facilitated the development of various ministries. God brought many new families to RHCCC, creating a bigger demand on Children's Ministry. During

this season, it was a time with mainly female volunteers, who rotated to serve once a quarter. There was also limited contact with parents who simply dropped and picked up their children from the rooms every Sunday.

Jesus told us in Luke 10: 2: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." While praying for His provision, we obeyed His calling to give our best to serve His beloved children.

Looking back all these years, we always have been able to provide a God focused and child-centred children Sunday program. Praise God that many brothers and sisters are now serving with us yearly to deepen their impact in the children's lives. Parents are more involved as the primary spiritual nurturers of their children and work closer with YLD teams. Our great provider is a promise-keeper!



# A Bring it Home

Ask your children to imagine they are with the big crowd wanting to see Jesus. They all feel hungry and hopeless without any food. Because of Jesus' miracle, they receive plenty of loaves and fish to eat. They also experience Jesus' compassion for the whole family. Let your children share their feelings from hopelessness to abundance. Remind them that they are all part of God's Big Story.

# Reflections

- 1. Have you ever encountered a challenge that seemed to have no solution but then received abundantly from the One who promises to meet all your needs? Can you describe this journey of trust and obedience?
- 2. All of God's commands flow from His heart out of love for us. What is He asking of you today? Are you willing to commit yourself to do whatever He wants you to do?
- 3. Talk with your child about the boy who gave all his five small barley loaves and two small fish to Jesus. What does your child have that he/she can offer to Jesus to bless many other people? (Or ask yourself this question.)

# Dear Lord Jesus,

I can do nothing on my own; help me live a life of obedience to you. Thank you for loving me and providing abundantly to me without finding fault. I have decided to follow you and commit to serve you where you want me to serve and do it in your strength. I love you and give myself to you. In your Name I pray,

Amen.

Note

# **Linda Shum**

Associate Pastor & Pastor-in-charge of Church Planting

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. —1 Corinthians 12:12-14

On March 8, 1998, RHCCC held the first Mandarin worship service. Among the 140 people who attended, there were fewer than 40 whose first language was Mandarin. The rest came from the English and Cantonese congregations to support this new ministry. They saw the need to reach out to Mandarin-speaking people, and were willing to move out of their comfort zone to help in whatever way they could. Quite a few people took lessons just so they could converse in Mandarin. Others left their growth group to join the Mandarin ones. It was not easy for them, but they went with loving hearts and smiling faces. Through these years, they have touched and changed the lives of many Mandarin-speaking people. Our life lesson is that, just as different body parts function together in order to achieve the greater good for the body, people will see love among us and our testimony will be blessed by God to do great things for Him. In order to benefit the whole body, some parts have to pay the price, including giving up one's rights and benefits, just as Christ did for us.



# A Bring it Home

If you have similar experience in serving the needy, a PEACE trip or church planting, you can use your experience to explain to your child why you did it. If you plan to serve God's body in the future with your family, you can start with a small project that shows love through action such as participating in Operation Christmas Child, helping another growth group to look after their children while they study the Bible, or helping out a new church plant.

- 1. If God gives me an opportunity to make a difference in people's lives, am I willing to commit, even if it means I have to move outside of my comfort zone?
- 2. What are the needs around me today? What does God want me to do about them? How can I please Him?
- 3. To accomplish God's plan for me, how do I adjust my priorities and lifestyle to follow?

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# **Steven Folts**

Pastor-in-charge of Mandarin Ministry



Jesus replied, ".... Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."

-John 12:23-24

I still remember in June 1999 when I was a fresh graduate of the Theological Seminary, and had just committed to serving in the Richmond Hill Mandarin congregation. I was cognizant of the fact that I was at a critical juncture: leaving a familiar and sheltered campus environment, with nurturing teachers and fellow students, and stepping into an unfamiliar community milieu and church culture. My heart was filled with angst and uncertainty. Yet when I thought about how God had planted in my heart a deep love for my fellow Mandarin-speaking countrymen, I was determined to immerse myself in their service, without ever looking back.

When Jesus said, "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds," it is not hard to imagine that Jesus' heart was filled with a true love from above. Hence, it became easy for Him to serve and to give all without reservation, even to the point of sacrificing His own life. Is this the kind of genuine love driving you to serve and move forward?



# A Bring it Home

If everything we do today is driven by a pure and true love for God and man, we would do the same thing with much more joy and without feeling that it is a chore. Let us think of what we can do today to demonstrate to our parents, siblings, friends and teachers that this is an act of love we do for them.

- 1. Let us identify one task that we have to perform routinely in our daily life. It may annoy us to do it because it feels like a grind at times. Is this because we have forgotten who are we doing it for? How can we re-ignite our passion for doing it?
- 2. Are there times when your enthusiasm to do something has been mired by overthinking, which caused you to miss the opportunity to get involved and later led you to feel remorseful? Are you bogged down in this kind of vicious cycle today, even though your heart is moved? Maybe today is the day that you need to muster your courage like Jesus did and respond with a full commitment.

3. We can immerse ourselves in God's service again by readjusting our focus and allowing ourselves to see clearly the long-range vision ahead of us. Let us be encouraged by Paul, who wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." Dear fellow workers of the Gospel, may God give us the vision of Jesus and faith to see that our investment today will produce numerous seeds which will someday turn into a bountiful harvest.

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# Kin Wah Ho

Pastor of Cultivation, Cantonese Ministry

Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

—Joshua 1:8-9

At the membership meeting of June 2000, a proposal to purchase three adjacent properties on the south side of the church building was approved. This allowed us to embark on Phase III of our construction project. This new phase in the history of our church parallels the challenges Joshua encountered on the eve of crossing the Jordan River, which was soon followed by his entry into Canaan, God's Promised Land for the Israelites. Likewise, when we embark on new phases in our life journey, we can also benefit from God's advice to Joshua: that is, to follow everything written in the Book of Law and we will be prosperous and successful. In addition, God encouraged Joshua to be strong and courageous and not be afraid because God would be with him wherever he went. Therefore, when we step into a new stage in our life, we need to look to God and follow His words. His presence and promises would empower us to cope with all kinds of challenges, large and small.



# A Bring it Home

We will face many changes and transitions in life such as going to a new school, and transitioning from high school to university. The uncertainties can be frightening. But when we pursue God wholeheartedly and follow His path, we can go forward boldly without fear because God will be with us no matter where we go.

- 1. What kind of life changes and challenges are you facing now? What have you learned from the Bible verse?
- 2. How can you experience God's presence and the courage it brings? Have you gained any new insights of your future?

Note	

# **Maymie Lau**

P.E.A.C.E Pastor



For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

—Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

This was one of the key verses that my cell group memorized during our first 40 Days of Purpose campaign in 2002. It was a great statement of purpose, and most of us diligently and faithfully sought some of the "good works" that we were supposed to do.

Over the years I've gone back to this verse time and again. What still strikes me is not the fact that we should find something to do in the church, but the fact that we are God's workmanship. We are God's masterpieces as we are individually designed in heaven and destined to fit uniquely into his Creation! We're designed not as robots to do the dirty work on a polluted and strife-torn planet, but to be part of God's grand restoration plan that is accomplished through Jesus Christ. He is transforming our individual lives, our relationships and institutions, and he wants us to enjoy being a part of that process.

We're his partners, even in the boring stuff like daily work and house chores! God himself is at work, but he graciously asks us to chip in here and there to encourage and assist someone in need. His Holy Spirit invites us to forgive others and to receive forgiveness. In the process we find reconciliation. We discover the myriad ways in which God is blessing us. We take comfort in God's provision and we can share this good news with others.

Instead of trying to do more for God, learn to pay attention to what he is doing in our families, neighborhoods, schools, workplaces and churches. You'll be amazed. Enjoy the journey.



# A Bring it Home

Gather your family and assembly a puzzle together. During the game, you can explain to your children that each piece has different shape and colors. You can't complete the picture if you are missing one piece, so you must be careful when sorting them. Likewise, we are God's masterpieces! He made each of us to be unique. He made us to fit uniquely into his master plan. The pieces can't make themselves fit together to form the final product, but each one is valued just as highly as the other.

- 1. Why do you think it's sometimes so hard to see God's work in our daily lives, especially in our workplaces and schools?
- 2. What do you understand by the "good works" that is mentioned in this scripture? How do you "walk" (i.e., get involved) in these good works?
- 3. Ask God to reveal to you what he is doing in your environment every day. Give thanks, and ask for strength to obey.

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# **Ray Lee**

# Youth Pastor, Young Life Development

"When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away." Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven...And so you will bear testimony

— Luke 21:9-11, 13

to me.

In 2003, our YLD Grade 7 and 8 BASIC Fellowship began to prepare, pray and promote our Bubble Tea outreach night scheduled for March 28. The annual event provides our students with an opportunity to invite their friends to come and hear the gospel message presented in song, drama and message, and to receive a free BBT drink.

This was a memorable time because in February of that year, Health Canada began to report suspected cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in the Greater Toronto Area. Also, in March, an international coalition of combat troops began the invasion of Iraq that began the war to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and to free the Iraqi people from the reign of Saddam Hussein.

In the midst of these unique world events, our fellowship and our students continued to trust in the power of the good news of Jesus Christ to bring hope to young people in a world and community where hope was fading.

We praise God that over 70 youth attended our Bubble Tea Night and eleven students indicated that they accepted Jesus as their Saviour!



# A Bring it Home

Have you ever encountered something in your life that was going downhill and completely out of your control? Reflect on this time period in your life and see how God's hand was with you!

- 1. What does this passage mean to you?
- 2. What life events are happening with you or your family that may be causing you to be afraid or fearful?
- 3. Who can you tell "the good news" today?

Note	

# Gloria Luk

# Pastor in Charge of Care Ministry



I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

—Psalm 119:11, 105

What sorts of things find their way into our hearts and minds? Are we aware of them? We are not taking full responsibility of our lives when we expose ourselves to a constant barrage of ungodly words, music or images. On the other hand, we can fill our hearts and minds with God's Word, and therefore, create a defense against some of the evil messages the world sends our way.

The psalmist declared: "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you". Hiding God's Word in our hearts means memorizing and meditating on the Bible, which God uses to speak to us and show us how we ought to live.

Why is hiding God's Word in our hearts a powerful tool in keeping us from sinning? Just as the ability to recall math facts from memory is a basic skill for mastering more difficult math problems, all Scripture is helpful for us to deal with our life problems. Some Scriptures teach us the character and the promise of God, and some protect us by warning of dangers or temptations that lies ahead. Some share with us the experiences of others who have succeeded or failed, as a guide along the path of life. Hiding God's word in our hearts fosters our spiritual growth by helping us guard against those things that displease God.

It is never too late to start memorizing Scripture. Besides hiding God's word, we must put His Word to work in our lives, making it a vital guide for everything we do.



#### A Bring it Home

Today, start memorizing one or two Bible verses that are familiar to you.

Let each family member select a favorite verse and share that verse with the family.

Encouraging one another to hide God's word is the first step and obeying what God says must follow.

- 1. Do we guard our hearts and keep track of things that we have hidden inside? What is going on inside of us right now?
- 2. Is studying, pondering, and applying God's Word a joyful experience to you? Share your thoughts with others.
- 3. How can we encourage and hold one another accountable to implant God's truth firmly in our hearts and minds?

Note	

# **David Lau**

Pastor of Cultivation, Cantonese Ministry

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place

and get some rest."So they went away by

themselves in a boat to a solitary place.

-Mark 6:30-32

It's tempting to think that working solely on church ministry while neglecting our own needs is a definite sign of faithfulness. Mark's gospel places today's passage between Jesus' sending out the apostles (Mark 6:7–13) and the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:33–44). As you read it again, try to feel the excitement of being commissioned by Jesus himself; the thrill of short-term missions, the stunning impact of the gospel, and healing of the people that you meet. You sense that this is truly the moment. Keep up the momentum!

Then we report back to Jesus, and he tells us to drop everything! It's almost anti-climactic. Mark is the most action-oriented of the four gospels, yet the writer carefully notes that even Jesus seeks prayer in solitude (Mark 1:35). Like Simon Peter, we don't understand, and we say, "Master, people are looking for you. There's much work to be done, sermons to preach and patients to be cared for." But Jesus has his own ideas. Yes, there are ministry needs everywhere, but we are not going to be able to meet them all. Nor is anyone supposed to. What we must do is stay close to the Master to find out what He is up to. Then, when he makes a move, we follow.

Sure enough, as soon as Jesus and his students got off the boat, they realized that their retreat was over (Mark 6:33–34). The Master isn't turning a blind eye to the hungry because He knows what's best in any situation. But do we? Are we close enough to hear Jesus' invitation to take a break? And are we sensitive enough to feel his compassion for people—especially when we're not doing ministry and in vacation mode?

May the Lord stir our hearts to yearn for his wisdom to know when to work and when to rest in the presence of his Holy Spirit.



#### A Bring it Home

Ever have a friend that loves to talk but doesn't really listen? Sometimes we are that friend to God. We talk to Him, ask Him for things, and then guickly end our conversations with an "amen". But the problem is that we don't ever sit and allow God to respond. We are terrible listeners! Spend time to reflect and rest in the presence of God. Tell Him of all the joys and pains in your life...they sit back and listen for His voice.

- 1. Jesus himself was careful to observe the Sabbath—God's commandment to acknowledge our human need for rest and his sovereign power to keep the world functioning. Do you observe the Sabbath? How do you make sure that you can hear the Master's voice even on your day off?
- 2. How is your regular Sabbath different from your annual vacation?

Note	

# 2005 -2015

# **Ho-Ming Tsui**

Pastor-in-Charge of English Ministry

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables ... So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

--Acts 6:1-7

Acts 6 gives an account of one of the first internal issues facing the church—the ministry was expanding so fast that the needs had outgrown the capacity of the leaders.

Every leader faces this issue because the pastor starts off as the primary caregiver. He's the guy who visits every sick person, conducts every wedding/funeral, and has coffee with everyone. He's the one who preaches and teaches at every function. But sooner or later, he or she becomes incapable of doing all other things. If he is good at it, the church may grow to 100–150 or maybe 200 people. But if that's all he does, he'll end up disappointing people because he can't be everything to everyone, and be at every event and help in every ministry.

So all leaders have a choice to make. They either (1) keep creating false expectations and center the ministry on their own personal capacity and giving, OR (2) do what the apostles did in Acts 6—produce other leaders so the ministry can grow and thrive AND they prioritize their calling as spiritual leaders.

The apostles managed to turn a crisis in the church to an opportunity for the gospel. The way the apostles led the church in Acts 6 gives us a vivid picture of what the church was designed to be, and what it is capable of. How did they turn a crisis into an opportunity?

- 1. They had the faith to see the vision. The apostles understood that the vision they had received from Jesus (Acts 1:8) was so big they couldn't depend on their own personal capacity to fulfill it. That's why they prioritized making disciples who made disciples.
- 2. They had the humility to entrust the ministry. A servant is one who does not own—rather, he is entrusted. We're entrusted with the ministry—we don't own it. It is God's ministry, and we are stewards of what he has given us. One of the ways God reminds us of our servanthood posture is to put us in a position where we have to entrust the ministry to others.
- 3. They empowered the next generation of leaders. They put their hands on them and prayed for them. The apostles saw the character and capacity of these men, and they empowered them by releasing them to do the ministry. That's what we want to see happen at RHCCC. We want to be making and training quality disciples so that when God tells us they are ready, we pray for them, release them to do ministry, and trust them to do a great job at it.

This is a little story in Acts. But it's a huge cause for celebration and encouragement, because God takes this in-house problem and turns it into a breakthrough for the spreading of the gospel and for the continuation of the mission.

At RHCCC, we have some godly great leaders, but the mission is too big and too important to have only a few. We have friends, family, and a city to reach, and that means we need everyone on mission. Jesus never just intended for the 12 apostles. He discipled them to disciple others, so that the cities and nations could be reached. As we celebrate our 30th year as a church, let us pray, dream, and give our lives to disciple the next generation so that future generations will come to know Jesus as Lord.



#### **Bring it Home**

Being a leader isn't just left up to the adults.
You are a leader where you are! What are some of the things that are happening at your school or home that you can step up to? Do you have a younger sibling or cousin that you can be a positive role model to? Are you a leader in your Christian Fellowship? What kind of things can you take up to contribute to the community? Ask God to show you how you can be a significant impact to the people around you!

- 1. Are there obstacles preventing you from seeing God's grand vision? Follow God in His mission!
- 2. What are some characteristics to look for when selecting leaders? Do you desire to become a person God can use?
- 3. Are you willing to entrust and empower others with ministry? Is there someone you can disciple?

Note	



# **Shu-Ling Lee**

Pastor of Cultivation & Celebration, English Ministry

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

-Matthew 28:18-20

In the summer of 2006, I began attending RHCCC and quickly learned that our church has a deep passion for spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. Almost 10 years have since passed and I can personally testify to the many lives that have been saved and transformed by faithful brothers and sisters who have shared that gospel passion. Our P.E.A.C.E. trips especially have been an example of our obedience to gospel sharing to all nations. However, in recent years, I have been sensing a "revival" of sorts for disciple making in our local neighborhoods and relationships. The mission of God includes the proclamation of the gospel, but it also includes Jesus' command to make disciples both at home and abroad...to all nations. If our everyday lives are prayerfully surrendered to our King Jesus for the purpose of making and maturing disciples for Him, this passion will overflow to making disciples of all nations! Pastor Matt Chandler of the Village Church in Texas says it well:

"We multiply the kingdom by living with the purpose to make God known and enjoyed. Those who have been reconciled to God through the gospel have ample opportunity to enter into the work of gospel-centered multiplication. From missional living in interacting with neighbors and coworkers to missional outreach or short or long-term mission trips, our lives have been infused with purpose and meaning. The disciple's call is multiplication and replication through the gospel—for the glory of our God."

I am praying and looking forward to the revival of local mission at RHCCC. I hope that in our small groups, we would not only gather to mature current disciples in our midst but to also make new disciples. To do this, we must join God in His mission in our everyday lives as we share the gospel to those in our workplaces, our neighborhoods, and other relationships. May the mission of making disciples for Jesus continue to grow beyond our wildest expectations! O Lord, may Your kingdom come, may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...



### Bring it Home

Is there a friend in your life that God has given you a lot of time to spend with? Whether this friend is a Christian or not, maybe God has been blessing you with this friendship so that you can pray for them or invite them to hang out with your church family. In any case, take some time to pray for your friend so they can draw closer to Jesus and know His good news.

- 1. Have you considered and counted the cost of discipleship and following Christ? Read Luke 14:25–35.
- 2. Read John 8:31–32. What is the specific order that Jesus tells us should occur in the life of a disciple in this passage? Is this actually happening in your life?
- 3. How can your small group participate together in the multiplication of disciples at RHCCC?

Note	



Consulting Pastor & Pastor of Communication, English Ministry

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.

—2 Timothy 2:2

In February of 2007, Dr. John Hull, from the EQUIP Leadership Training Center, a training recognized world-wide for its transformational leadership principles, was invited to conduct a church-wide series on leadership at RHCCC. Not only did this training have wide impact among our own people, but others from the community joined in. The training has helped further equip leaders for our church. It has also become an important part of our Short Term Missions Team's training of leaders in other parts of the world.

Leadership training is considered to be of strategic importance in the development of the church. Jesus established a model of training for the church by mentoring key leaders into disciple makers with transferrable principles. The disciples adopted that model and whole societies were changed by their ministry, and churches planted and sustained.

This has always been God's strategy for sustainability. We see this in Deuteronomy 6:1–2, Psalm 78:1–7, Jesus' command to "go make disciples of all nations", and adopted by the teaching of the apostle Paul in 11 Timothy 2:2.

It has been said that "it only takes the failure of one generation for the church to die." A critical mandate of the local church leadership is to ensure that the Word of God and the gospel is passed on to each generation. The Mizo Church in the little state of Mizoram, India, recognizes the need to evangelize and disciple every generation. Today, Mizoram is the most Christian state in the world. The whole society is governed by the Word of God and the church is the central point of each community. This church has sent out more missionaries per capita than any other state in the world.

Every river has a source and an exit point. God wants every believer to take what they are learning about the gospel and Word of God, and make sure they pass it on to the next generation. That is at the core of God's call on our lives. As I look back on God's call on my life and the fruit of my ministry, this has been, and continues to be the primary focus.

We encourage all of our people to take advantage of training opportunities and to commit themselves to ensuring that the next generation will know the Lord, want to serve Him, and in that training, be equipped to transmit the truth of the gospel to future generations.



## Bring it Home

God wants you to be a canal! A canal joins two bodies of water so that life-sustaining resources can be transported to many people. Your life can be a canal. God wants to teach you His life-saving truth, and then open opportunities for you to transmit these truths to many others.

- 1. Who have you adopted to disciple and train in the truth of the gospel?
- 2. What plans do you have to equip yourself to be more effective as a disciple maker?
- 3. For what do you want to be remembered at the end of your life?

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# William Yip

## Pastor of Caring, Cantonese Ministry

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,"declares the Lord."As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

—Isaiah 55:8-9

Soon after the completion and occupancy of Phase III, the committee for the elderly ministry began to plan for a Golden Age Activity Centre to reach out to the retirees of the community. After a series of vision-sharing meetings, prayer meetings and promotional activities in 2007, God laid the burden of this ministry in the hearts of brothers and sisters. Over 10 of them responded to the call and committed to serve as core members.

Consequently March 5, 2008 was set as the opening day. After much hard work and preparation, everything was on track. We were upbeat and anticipated over a hundred guests. However, our plan was derailed by a severe snow storm. Our high hopes were dashed. We were demoralized by the low turn-out of about 30, which included the committee members themselves. Needless to say, we were discouraged and disappointed, and our faith was a little shaken. We began to question God's plan.

Since that day, our whole team has learned to submit ourselves and our plans to God, to pray with one heart and to wait on the Lord to lead us forward This spring, we entered the seventh year of our ministry. We are full of praise and thanksgiving when we look back and see how God has led us with His superior plans and ways.

Indeed, the way that God thinks is not the way that we think, and the way that He works is not the way that we work. Instead, His thinking far surpasses ours. It is better than what our eyes have seen, better than what our ears have heard and better than what we have imagined. This is the way that God blesses those who humbly obey Him. In the last seven years, we have led 130 seekers to Christ, maintained an average weekly attendance of 600 people and recruited 90-plus volunteers to serve on our team. What a wonderful picture it is! Praise be to God!

- The wisdom of God far exceeds what any human being can grasp
- God's love is much wider and deeper than what we can comprehend
- God opposes the proud but bestows His blessings on His faithful and humble servants
- God lets us learn how to depend on Him before we can accomplish great things for Him

- 1. How do you rely on God's promise when facing difficulties in life?
- 2. "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." What does the verse remind you?

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# **Anna Chen**

Pastor, Mandarin Ministry

Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.

—2 Corinthian 5:5-6

In 2005, when I was actively searching for a church, God led me to RHCCC. At that time, I was nominally a "Christian" but was unclear about my faith. It was only after my baptism in 2007 that I knew for sure that I was born again.

Since then, I have longed to serve God and have prayed for His guidance to help me find a role that is suitable for me. God's reply to me was: "Your work is to do the work where no one else is doing it." I was at a loss as to how I could identify such a niche. A few days later, a deacon brother shared with me that he was about to move to Hong Kong for an extended period of time, and would need to find a replacement to fill his place overseeing the welcoming of newcomers. It dawned on me then that was what God wanted me to do. I volunteered immediately, without any hesitation.

I have served in this role since 2007, regardless of whether I was doing my internship in Vaughan or in Richmond Hill. While there were challenges, I was able to overcome them through God's help. For example, it requires great wisdom and discretion to engage newcomers in meaningful conversation and make them feel comfortable. Paul's teaching of 2 Corinthians 11:6 was especially useful to me: "I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way." Paul deliberately did not use his eloquence and lofty words to share the Gospel to such an extent that his well-educated audience thought he was unrefined and crass. Even though Paul was highly educated and could have easily impressed his listeners with polished speeches and high sounding philosophy, he chose to forfeit his highly cultured and sophisticated persona so that he could let the message of Christ shine through, for the sake of the Gospel. This is a good example that I learned from Paul.

- 1. What approach are you going to use in talking to others about the Gospel?
- 2. What was Paul trying to demonstrate in proclaiming the Gospel?

Note		



Young Adults & Communications Pastor, Cantonese Ministry

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves....who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

—Ephesian 1:3-14

I came to this church to serve in April 2009. I thank God for the opportunity to be able to serve with a great team at RHCCC. I particularly thank God for the many blessings He has bestowed on us. There have been many memorable events that have occurred in the past six years. I still remember the 25th anniversary in 2010, when many fellowships and groups celebrated together to count the blessings from God at the gala show. It reminded me of Ephesians 1:3, where it says we must give praise to God the Father because He has blessed us with many spiritual blessings.

Reflect more on the passage from Ephesians 1:3–14. God reminds us that we are His privileged children of God and He has chosen us in love; we are to be holy and blameless before the creation of the world (4–6). I thank God that we are His precious children for whom God has sacrificed His only begotten Son

to redeem (7–10). I thank God that we are living with purpose according to His perfect will (11–12). Finally, I thank God that we are protected by the Spirit because all blessings are secured in Him (13–14). My past six years at RHCCC have been a wonderful journey with all of my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are all privileged, precious, and protected by the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. May all glory be to God.



#### **Bring it Home**

Count your blessings exercise. For each blessing, each person can take a turn to thank God for one another. Parents, pray first to show your children how to do it. Give a small gift to your children and ask them to put it on the table. Take the gift away from them while they are not paying attention. Wait for a moment, and then repeat the same exercise again using a string and tie the gift around their hands. This exercise is to symbolize that their gifts bestowed upon them by God are secure.

- 1. Recall the blessings from God which recently have struck you the most and thank God for that.
- 2. As privileged and precious children of God, how could we live for God?
- 3. Are there any areas in your life you want to shine in for Jesus?

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# **Kelly Tam**

Youth Pastor, Young Life Development

No, O people, the lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

—*Micah 6:8 (NLT)* 

In August 2009, I had the opportunity to take 25 students and 4 other adults with me to Urban Promise Toronto. It was a different type of missions trip, and one that you may not necessarily think of when you first think of missions.

Urban Promise (www.urbanpromise.com) is a Christian organization that seeks to help children, youth, and their families in their need. They situate themselves in communities that most of us would rather avoid, they reach out to those people in need when the world probably shuns them, and they want to love those who think that they are unlovable.

I say that this missions trip was different than the many you have heard about because it was local. It's something that our church has been pushing recently with the PEACE Plan and I truly believe in this local missions attitude. Our city has people who are living in poverty and despair, and it has been dying from hunger each day. While it is important to help those in need in our third world countries, let's not forget about those needs that we have in the heart of Toronto.

If there is one thing that I have learned from this missions trip, it is that we are not to go expecting that we will change lives, that we are to convert, or even call for a repentance. In situations like these, where people are in need or hurting, we are simply called to love. Jesus didn't have to say that He was

the son of God, He didn't always preach that He was the way, He didn't always claim to be the Messiah. But what He always did was love. He loved those around Him, He loved those who were in need, He loved those that the rest of the community deemed unlovable. He was love.

Who will care for those around us if we just to care for those abroad? Who will help alleviate the pain and suffering caused by drugs, alcohol, and abuse in the projects of Toronto? Jesus commands us to care for the widows, take care of the poor, and love the orphans. If we just take a look around our community, we will see that it needs the love that Jesus had as well. We are the ones to bring it.



#### Bring it Home

Read Micah 6:8 together and ask your children to name one person in their class that they can show an act of love to. Discuss the actions that they can do to help people who are less fortunate than them.

- 1. Reflect on our good and gracious God. How have you adopted this characteristic in your life as a reflection of Christ?
- 2. God calls us to act humbly as we follow and serve Him. Think of the ministries that you are serving in and ask God to show you how you can serve Him with gratitude.
- 3. Pray for the people of our beautiful city of Toronto/GTA.

Note	

# **Karen Tam**

#### Children Pastor, Young Life Development



Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.

—Psalm 127:1

In January 2013, I was asked to start a new Children's Ministry on Sunday afternoons. This was meant to be a partnership to enhance the growth of our Mandarin ministry as they moved their Sunday Service into Sanctuary 1 and changed the time from 9 am to 2 pm. Although I had been serving as a lay leader in our Children's Ministry for many years, as a novice full-time minister, this was definitely not smooth sailing for me. I had to recruit and train an entire new team of children's ministry co-workers from scratch.

Psalm 127:1 reminds me of my experience in our Sunday afternoon ministry over the last two and a half years. Our God is faithful. He promised me in His calling that He will be with me wherever I go. Indeed, He has not abandoned me. With such a big group of children and few experienced childcare workers, at times I felt I was fighting this battle alone. Yet time and again, I experienced His hands at work together with mine. In times of need, He provided colleagues to work with me. Through these years, I have learned what it means...

- to focus on God—my Provider, rather than His provision;
- to enjoy a partnership with God rather than just setting my eyes on the result of ministry; and
- to serve as a part of God's ministry rather than doing God's ministry.

This bible verse also reminds me not to take credit or blame over how our ministry has developed to this day. Rather it is our Sovereign Lord who builds and watches over His ministry.



#### Bring it Home

Count with your children the blessings that God has provided in your family. Focus not on materialistic provision, possessions or achievements out of our own efforts, but on God's presence, grace, and protection in your lives. For example, how have you experienced God's presence at difficult moments? Take this as a teachable moment to point your children to Jesus; He is not just our Savior but also Lord of our lives.

- 1. Back in the times of monarchies, consider the extent of the authority of a king over his people.
- 2. If you see yourself as people in God's Kingdom, what is God's role in your life?
- 3. Are you focusing on your joy and purpose in serving God?

Note		



Pastor for Youth & Young Adults, Cantonese Ministry



He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

-Micah 6:8

In 2013, we went through the "40 Days in the Word" program through weekly meetings with our small groups. I really enjoyed the experience. What touched me most was that each group prayerfully explored what we could do together to live out God's word. God placed different projects upon the hearts of each group to apply their learning.

For my small group, we had a member whose co-worker was going through a tough time because their spouse was ill and their child had special needs. We found out that the family was in need of help with groceries and house supplies. As a result, we made a gift basket with items that were needed to show our care for that family.

Through studying, meditating, memorizing, and reflecting on God's words, we learned "what was good". This passage tells us that God "requires" us to respond to what we learn from His word by living in ways that "act justly, love mercifully and walk humbly with God." Knowledge of God's word needs to change both our attitudes and actions. "To act" is about action, "to love" is about our heart attitude, and "to walk humbly" involves both action and attitude. Learning to live out His word helped our small group experience what it means to work with Jesus by extending our hands, showing our love, and caring for people in need.

May we continue to grow in love for God's word by learning and living out His word!



#### Bring it Home

Gather your family together and have each of family members to share some lessons that they have learned from the Bible about what is good? (e.g., it is good to love one another) After learning about what is good, it is important to put their learning into action. What are some action items that they can do to be good?

- 1. Do you seek to know what is "good" according to God? Practice loving and learning God's word.
- 2. In order to "act justly and to love mercifully", we need to pay attention. Do you know the needs of those around you and the needs of those around the world?
- 3. To live out God's word is to imitate Jesus by "walking humbly". Do you keep a humble attitude and follow God? Or do you just try to be "a good person"?

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# Lydia Zhang

Pastor, Mandarin Ministry

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe.

—1 John 1:5-7

During Christmas 2014, our Mandarin Congregation organized an evening musical event called "The Lovely Voices of Richmond Hill Community Church." The choral group, made up of about 40 brothers and sisters from the Isaiah Fellowship for seniors, sang with one voice and in unison the hymn "You Are the Light of My Life." They sang out their faith and offered praises for our Heavenly Father. The lyrics proclaimed that God is Light and that there is no darkness in Him. This Light has rejuvenated them and made them stand tall. It is the light of their lives, which illuminates their paths, and which allows them to walk in the light. It enables them to have fellowship with one another, to be rid of their sins through the blood of Jesus Christ, God's only Son, and to enjoy His wonderful grace of redemption.

I thank God that this light not only allows us to see God's love and grace, but can illuminate the true state of humanity. Even though the choir members may be "old" in the eyes of others, and their physical condition may be deteriorating day by day, their new lives in Christ grow stronger by the day. No wonder they succeeded in winning the "Lovely Voices of Richmond Hill Community Church" grand prize!



#### Bring it Home

Gather your family around the table with a tea candle or small lamp in the middle. Read 1 John 1:5-7 together. We have struggles against our sinful nature, but Jesus died and set us free from sin. We do not have to live in darkness when we have Jesus in our lives. Be brave and stand firm in our faith, because you were made to shine God's light. Share with the family how you have let your light shine.

- 1. Why did they say God is light?
- 2. Are you walking in the light of God?

Note		

# **Lynn Ye-Chin**

Youth Pastor, Young Life Development

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

—1 Timothy 4:12

I joined the Young Life Development team in June 2014. In the last year, I worked with counselors to impact junior high students through our BASIC fellowship every Friday evening. It is amazing to see how fast they grow in their faith and maturity at this age. When I first met the Grade 8 students last summer, they talked and behaved like children. However, when I look at them now, I see that they can confidently express their love and faith in Christ through Bible studies, worship, and evangelical outreach events. On May 1, 2015, we held our Bubble Tea Outreach night. The students spent two months preparing the various ministries that made this event a success: AV, decoration, T-shirt design, promo, drama, MC, worship and welcoming and ushering, etc. It was a wonderful experience to walk with these young people who demonstrate who they are in Christ through their speech, life, love, faith, and purity. Their devotion, born out of their faith and love for Christ brought glory to God and encouraged us, the adults, to learn from them that God rewards those who are pure hearted. They did all this with their whole hearts without doubt, and they were able to witness the fruit of their labour when over ten junior high students answered the altar call that night.



#### Bring it Home

Gather your family together and talk about who is Timothy in the New Testament. Where did he come from? What did he do in the church? Consider the kind of pressure he was constantly facing in his ministry.

Ask each person to share how he or she might feel if they were in Timothy's shoes: young but with great responsibility. Today's youth are faced with many forms of pressure in their lives. Use this Bible verse to encourage them not to look down on themselves because they are young. As a person, a unique being created in the image of God, a follower of Christ, they are part of the body of Christ along with the adults. They can even set a good example for adults in their faith out of purity and love for Christ.

- 1. Do we examine ourselves constantly to see if we are serving God with a pure heart, without doubting His faithfulness?
- 2. How can we grow with the youth and learn from their strength(s)?
- 3. Besides treating the youth as our children, can we see their special roles in the family, in the church and in the Kingdom of God as the followers of Christ?

Note		

# **Reuben Foncardas**

Pastor of Care, English Ministry

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. ... Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

—1 Corinthian 12:12-31

The move to Alexander Mackenzie High School in April 2015 has given the English congregation the opportunity to see themselves as a family of believers working together as one in Christ. By God's design and will, he stretched our faith as we faced new challenges as a church. Our people responded by giving their precious time to serve in different ways. Some served as ushers, greeters, and engagers to help create a welcoming atmosphere. Many young adults stepped up and served in the children's Sunday School. A few good men served as traffic personnel. Our small groups took turns contributing food to the Chat-and-Snack ministry. The celebration team faithfully set up and stored away our equipment every Sunday. The leaders planned and worked together to make our time at the school a fruitful one.

God in his infinite wisdom has designed us to grow best when we are together, worshiping and working for the only true and living God. "No man is an island" is a universally accepted adage. At creation, God declared that "It is not good for the man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18). At the advent of the Church, "all the believers were together and had everything in

common" (Acts 2:44). Needless to say, if we are to blossom in Christ, we must belong to his Church.

The passage gives three important truths about the importance of being actively involved in the church:

- 1. You are Needed!—A Question of Significance (vv. 14–20) Therefore, I will not DEPRIVE other people in the church of the benefits of my services. Stop assuming that others are okay.
- 2. You need Others!—A Question of Sustenance (vv. 21 24a) Therefore, I will not DESPISE other people who are also God's gifts to the church. Stop pretending that we are okay.
- 3. We are One!—A Question of Solidarity (vv. 24b-26) Therefore, I will not DETACH myself from other people in the church where I belong. Permit others to caution and correct us when we go astray.



## **Bring it Home**

Changes in our lives always present opportunities for God to use us, stretch us, and make us better. Have there been any recent changes in your life that you feel are hard to endure? Share what they are and then ask God to lead you through open doors as you walk into this next stage of your life.

- 1. What are some ways that I can bless others with my services?
- 2. What prevents me from being a recipient of others' services?
- 3. How can I deepen my relationships with others in the church?

Note	

# **Michael Seto**

Pastor of Young Adults, English Ministry

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

—1 Corinthian 12:12-13

At the beginning of 2013, the 4PM English service moved to Sunday mornings. This "Second Service", comprised mostly of English-speaking young adults and young families, was founded upon making and maturing disciples in Christ. As this group moved to Sunday mornings, there came a renewed sense of unity within the English congregation. Although the two services (9AM and 11AM) had distinctive personalities and makeups, they were part of the same body - the body of Christ! There was no more Second Service, but an English congregation that was unified in its vision to be a family of disciples devoted to Christ.

We are called to have unity within the body of Christ. Each of us has a distinct identity, gifting, and calling from God. At the same time, God calls us to the same purpose; that is, HIS mission to make disciples of Christ. It is often easy to focus on our differences, but focusing on ourselves and our differences divides us. God calls us to look not only at ourselves—our individual identities, giftings, and callings—but also calls us to focus on who we are in Him.

We are all His children. Our identity comes not from ourselves but from God, who calls us to join together in His mission. Our differences should not divide us, but instead should strengthen us as we embrace God's mission together.



#### Bring it Home

Look at the people around you, those you see on a day-to-day basis. What are they like? There is no doubt that they are different from you in their own ways. Our friends and relatives have their own identities, gifts, and callings from God. Sometimes we can only focus on these things. God wants to remind us that we are ALL His children—each and every one of us. God has made us into a big family, where He is our Father.

- 1. Do you see your brothers and sisters as your extended gospel family? Why or why not?
- 2. What are some ways that you can focus on your identity with others in Christ instead of the differences between one another?
- 3. Is there someone in your life whom you struggle with seeing as family? What can you do to embrace them in this manner?

Note		



Pastor, Mandarin Ministry

I love you, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies. —Psalm 18:1-3

Psalms 18:1, "I love you, LORD, my strength" This verse is very shocking. David actually said to the LORD, "I love you."

With my wife and children, it is not very difficult to say, "I love you." However, it is a different story with my own father. Honestly, there might even be a lack of love for him. Many fathers are absent from their homes due to work, leaving much of the childbearing tasks to the mother. Fathers usually appear when kids are in need of discipline. It is very rare to see a father's love, especially when they don't communicate much. Because of this, many Christians keep a distance from God, as they do their fathers.

Let's try to approach God with a different attitude today. Try saying to him, "I love you, Lord; I love you Jesus."

I realized the reason my own father rejected the gospel was because he didn't feel my love for him. If he can't even experience a relative's love, how can he understand God's love?

Lord, my strength! I love you! This verse allowed me to repent. I really need to put my father in my heart. In addition to prayer, let us love practically.



#### Bring it Home

Dear children, God loves you very much. To take care of you, God has given you your earthly parents. Your parents take care of your daily needs and work very hard to help you grow. They also help guide you towards God. Be sure to respect them, thank them, and say, "I love you" to them!

Be aware that your parents are only humans and they make mistakes as well. Even so, they still try their best to love you. Now imagine the love of the all powerful and loving God! He is your strength. Tell God you love him in the morning and thank God at night for helping you get through the day.

- 1. Have we projected how we feel about our earthly father onto our heavenly father? Does your perspective of God need adjusting?
- 2. Brothers, how can we live out God's glory in our family? How can we better serve our children?
- 3. If you parents are not Christians, think of 2-3 ways to show God's love to them.

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