

# English Ministry Update

Toronto Chinese Baptist Church

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August 2010

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I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

Psalm 9:1-2

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## Survey Results

In July we conducted a church-wide bi-lingual survey to determine the congregation's expectations of our next English Minister. We had about 70 respondents. Beyond the basic demographic information, the survey had 4 main sections regarding our next English Minister. Ministry skills and gifts we believe our next English Minister should possess are: Preacher, Shepherd, Teacher, Bishop, Apostle. These were the top 5 responses out of 10 possible selections, in order. Leadership Characteristics we believe an English Minister should have that would be particularly important for our church at this time: Biblically-oriented, Spiritually Mature, Adaptable, Leader, Developer of Lay Leadership, Person of God, Communicator. These were the top 7 responses, which at least 50% of the respondents identified, in order. Ministry priorities we believe our next English Minister should focus on: Discipleship, Preaching, Teaching, Leadership Development. These were the top responses which at least 50% of respondents identified, in order. Personal Attributes and Character Priorities that would help engage our church congregation in effective future ministry: Communication Skills, Truthful, Trustworthy, Approachable, Enthusiastic, Compassionate. These were the top 6 personal characteristics. Thanks Davin and Alicia for tabulating the results and thanks to everyone who responded. More details will be presented in a townhall on Aug 1. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to approach any member of the English Ministry Committee. If you still haven't responded, it's not too late. Please return your survey to any usher. Thanks!

## Reflections on VBS 2010

Hannah Wong

I didn't realize how tired I was until class time on Friday, the final day of VBS. After telling my grade 3 class the Bible story, I lay down on the carpet, closed my eyes, and let the kids cover me with the scrap paper they had found on the floor. I could hear their giggles and their tiny hands patting me on the head as they attempted to shape my paper-fied form into that of a mummy. I could hear the boys in the background yelling -- and likely wrestling. I could feel my eyes starting to close... Then, with a sudden pang, I realized that camp was essentially over. I had given them their last Bible story of the week, for some of them, perhaps their last exposure to the Bible unless they returned to camp next year. I was suddenly overcome with a feeling of worry and inadequacy -- what if it had not been enough? What if I had not taken full advantage of the week to tell them about God -- perhaps the only chance for them to know about God? "Hey guys..." I got up suddenly, scattering all the papers. The kids squealed in delight and several jumped on me, trying to hold me down. "Guys...I want you guys to do something for me, okay?" I felt like I was talking to a brick wall. A screaming moving brick wall. "I'm giving you homework..." "EWWWWW HOMEWORK!!!!" But at least I had their attention now. "This week we learned about how to be a hero for God. But I want you to promise me that you'll try to be a hero everyday of your life, even when you're old and wrinkly." "Everyday?" Their eyes were wide with astonishment. "Everyday," I said firmly, "Can you do that for me?" They were silent for about half a second. And then one girl threw paper at a boy and the screaming and paper-throwing resumed. I taught for the first time in my life this year at VBS, and I experienced both the joy of seeing kids learn and the discouragement that comes when you feel as though they have heard nothing you said. But as the week wore on, I became increasingly amazed by the grace of God, how He takes our half-baked offerings and transforms them, how He uses our reluctant selves to fulfill a purposeful cause. Going into VBS, I was quite the exact opposite of a willing servant, and I could not see how I would bring any good to the kids I would be teaching. I doubted the effectiveness of my teaching and fretted over the adequacy of my leadership over my two young teaching assistants. But as always, God reminded me that it is in our own weakness that His power is made perfect (2 Corinthians 12:9). On Friday evening, one of the girls in my class who was new to the church, who had come in not even knowing the Christmas story, sat up in her chair and told everybody that they needed to pray before eating their dinner. Small miracle. But a miracle all the same. I realized that that was enough -- if the result of my entire week working with kids was only to see that one girl slowly become so enraptured with the idea of a relationship with God, then that was enough. And more often than not, God's blessings really do overflow. Among many other things, I was also privileged to see one of my teaching assistants give her life to Christ. Need I say more? Our God is loving, our God is good. And I am overcome with joy and honour to do His work.

## Reflections on VBS 2010

Ian Lee

Vacation Bible School Hero Headquarters lasted for only five days. Five wonderful days of hyperactivity, smiles and laughs, silly games, hand-washing checks, and the occasional bump and scrape. It was a week of planting and nourishing the seeds of God's Word into the lives of children and volunteers. And what an awesome week it was! Hannah (my fellow intern) served as the grade 3 teacher of Team Supreme while I served as the grade 4 teacher of Team Force. In previous years of VBS back in Ottawa, I had only served as a group counselor and overseer, but never as a teacher. Thankfully, I was supported by two of the most incredibly helpful teaching assistants, who remained tireless (to some degree) throughout the entire week! How do children have a source of endless energy? And how does their energy recharge on such a small lunch? Their boundless spirit made me enjoy the same things that they do. I enjoyed it so much that most campers and volunteers unfamiliar with me thought I was sixteen years old! (I am actually 21 this year). My most memorable experience of the entire week happened on the second day of the week. The theme for that day was "Heroes take action", which was accompanied by the story of how shepherds in the field heard the good news about the birth of Jesus from the angels and immediately went to go see Him. The emphasis I had spun upon the lesson was to whom could we spread the good news? After providing each camper with an index card and pen, I requested them to each write down people that they would want to witness to. Their answers were not what I had expected. More than half of my class expressed the desire to witness to their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and their close friends. I had entered VBS under the assumption that the immediate family of each camper knew about the Message! I was incredibly humbled at the moment. Each answer they gave struck me like a blow - their struggle to live as a child of God in a home that was not familiar with God, while I was born into a Christian nuclear family. VBS is difficult to summarize into just a few, simple sentences because of all the numerous little details and moments. However, if I had to do a quick condensation, it was the most rewarding and enjoyable vacation bible school I have participated in. I hope to be involved in it again next year!

## Teens camping trip 2010

This year, the teens of TCBC, along with Ming Wong and family and few other little campers went on a 5 day trip to Pinery Provincial Park camping grounds. The bus ride took three hours. When the teens got to their camping ground, they could tell that this week would be full of adventures. The teens took no time to put up their tents. By the time they were finished, dinner was alright started. Everyone had a goodnight's rest. But they weren't used to waking up 6 to 8 in the morning by the sound of clashing pots. They especially didn't like taking a 45 minute hike to the showers and back. It was worth the walk though. The teens did activities like going to the beach (everyday), canoeing, star gazing, watching the sun set, building sand castles, roasting s'mores, worshipping God, devotions, camp fire ghost stories. Well, let's just say that we had LOTS to do. We saw God great works and creations in action, close up. We were all sad to leave Pinery. At least everyone made three or four new friends that week. They were all going to miss not having parents boss them around (just kidding), sleeping to the sounds of crickets chirping, the peaceful silence, the fresh summer air. The bus ride home was quiet, everyone was tired that day. When they all got back to the church, everyone knew that day, God was there, watching them, caring for them. They all felt him touch their hearts in some way.

One of the campers 2010-07-29

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## Youth Sports Ministry

Cameron So

Summer is a fantastic time of the year to hang around, make new friends, go on vacation, take a break, and learn new things. This year, the TCBC Youth decided to create an on-going Sports Ministry that is intentionally for Youth Groups but is open for anyone to join. It is interesting and amazing to see how many people actually did show up to our Sports Ministry Program. Our total amount of campers who have signed up for this drop in program rounds up to thirty six campers including our counselors, Ian Lee, Chris Yan, Hannah Wong, and Joshua Ng. It all began like a "Spark" that turned into a burning fire. After two years of pondering to create a sports ministry from several individuals like Jaynelle, a specific individual finally decided to tally the number of people who would possibly be interested into creating the program. Amazingly, not many rejected. After weeks of planning, leaders of the to-be Sports Ministry were gathered while Sports and locations of places to play them were chosen. Equipment was retrieved and forms were handed out. Our Sports Ministry is registered at different locations around the neighbourhood. We currently run sporting events and miscellaneous events such as Scavenger Hunts, Barbeque Days, and Beach Days. In the remaining month of our summer, we are currently planning to play the following sports: Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, Football, and Ball Hockey. Two weeks ago, our program involved an intense game of Soccer. It was held at the soccer fields on the University of Toronto Campus. We are glad that the space was not taken and we were able to take it. Last week, the Sports Ministry played a game of Volleyball at the local gym at the Toronto Chinese Presbyterian Church. Thank you to those who have been able to attend our Sports Ministry Programs so far. To those who haven't, we respectfully invite you to join our friendly and fun programs! The Sports Ministry looks forward to a fantastic summer and is still able to accept recipients who are willing to join us. For more information, please contact our leaders! They are; Joshua Ng, Ian Lee, Hannah Wong, and Chris Yan. T-Shirts and Forms are being distributed soon! Best Regards & Thank you for the Prayers.

## Update Report on Harbourfront Outreach Initiative July 2010

TCBC has long had the vision and heart to reach out to those in the urban downtown core. Due to our own English pastor search situation, Harbourfront Outreach Initiative (HFI) committee has slowed down the push since late last year and our meetings with our partner church, RHCCC, have been reduced to joint prayer meetings only. However, we have not forgotten the needs of the large number of urbanites living in the Harbourfront area who appear to have all the worldly privileges but are completely lost without Jesus. We prayed that our Lord would provide and lead us in this initiative within the confines of our capacity and capability. Recently, there are some new exciting developments that we would like to share with the congregation. Firstly, the congregation at RHCCC commented that they were too far away and wished to obtain some firsthand information. In response, RHCCC organized an information "bus tour" of Harbourfront specifically for those who were interested to assist in this initiative. To both our surprise and to RHCCC's surprise, 92 people signed up and they had a wonderful tour with a prayer meeting afterwards, and were able to get an idea of both the Harbourfront area and TCBC. Next, Thank God for potentially giving us another stepping stone to moving forward in our initiative. We have known since the beginning that, to be successful, we need more than just a group of part-timers and we must have a devoted person to spearhead this initiative. Once again, due to our situation, we have not been actively seeking such a person but God has recently gotten us in contact with an individual who has many of the qualities that we were looking for. He literally came from nowhere - in fact, he was merely visiting TCBC and none of us knew him at all. It was during the "greet newcomers" that we learned that he has the vision and passion on urban outreach and his "target area" is downtown Toronto. Both TCBC and RHCCC have met with this person and we all feel he is God-sent. He possesses what the HFI committee feels is the most important attribute for our initiative - passion for spreading God's kingdom in an urban, downtown environment. He also has extensive experience as a church-planter in USA which is tremendously helpful. We have invited this person to come to Toronto for further discussion and explore how we could move forward with him. Up to now, we only have basic info and we need to find out more on what exactly are his plans, his vision and his needs. On the other hand and more importantly, the pastoral team from both churches must be satisfied with his faith. This is just an update for the congregation to know more about the HFI and news of our progress. We will keep you informed as to future opportunities to help out and any future developments. In the meantime, we wish to ask our congregation to join hearts to pray for God's provision and guidance including provision of a suitable English pastor. Other prayer items are: Strengthening our church, our people through the process of the HFI ministry; Cross-denominational Kingdom visions - focus on TCBC and RHCCC partnership; Unified support (in all forms) for the HFI vision; Praise God for all He has done and provided for the joint Harbourfront ministry initiative to date.

Harbourfront Outreach Initiative Committee

## News and Notes in Brief

Chiu, who was baptized last Easter at TCBC, is still recovering in hospital from his cancer surgery. He thanks everyone for their well-wishes and prayers and sends the following written note:

*Thank you*

*Chiu*