

# English Ministry Update

Toronto Chinese Baptist Church

also available on [www.tcbc.on.ca](http://www.tcbc.on.ca)

January 2010

Looking Forward to 2010

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:23

## English Ministry Committee December Meeting

The English Ministry Committee (EMC) met for their monthly meeting on December 10, 2009. During the first hour of the meeting, a question and answer session on the Harbourfront Outreach Initiative (or HFI) was held. This was open to anyone who wished to attend. Henry Hung, Yuk-woo and several members of the Harbourfront Outreach Planning Committee were present and gave a brief overview of the initiative. The purpose of the HFI is to reach for Christ those living in the large number of condo developments concentrated along the Harbourfront. The session proved to be a time of good discussion and a chance to bring up concerns, expectations and the anticipated timeline. At this stage, the HFI initiative requires a representative from each congregation to move forward. The session was followed by a time of prayer. After the session on HFI, the EMC continued its meeting. The first item discussed was a review of the Advent Conspiracy. We were all encouraged by the program led by Jaynelle and Katy and impressed with the participation of the congregation. Also discussed was the budget for the coming year. Most of the budgeted items for 2010 were the same as 2009 with the exception of an increase in the budget for small groups/fellowships in order to subsidize study materials. The hope is to have our small groups and fellowships studying from the same material this coming year. We then went on to discuss the summary and analysis of results gathered from the November 14 EMC Retreat, and discussed items we should start, stop or continue. We then went on to discuss being prepared to share each person's commitment to EMC for 2010 in our January 2010 meeting.

Happy New Year and happy new decade! In 2010 we hope TCBC and the English congregation will continue to move God's kingdom forward both in our own hearts and in the community around us. The English Ministry Committee (EMC) continues with its role of support and accountability of all ministries conducted in English. Late in 2009 we had our first ever day-long leadership retreat. In 2010 we will continue a process of articulating the English-speaking congregation's values and priorities, and engage in greater dialog and communications with all parts of TCBC. We will have to prioritize the many programs we have (worship, Sunday School, fellowships & small groups, prayer meetings, retreats, Urban Promise, sports, etc) and of course our search for an English pastor. But more importantly, we need to have dialog on our values- which drives our priorities. Some values are clear: relationships and meaning over simply running programs; service to God out of love, calling and concern, rather than obligation, guilt or being "volun-told" to. Less clear is our relationship with our very diverse local community: do we serve the local needy children, youth and families (Urban Promise) or more financially-stable adults (local condos); I suspect we will do both.

To determine God's calling for our congregation and church, we need your involvement. What is God's personal call for you? If your involvement is with a parachurch organization outside of TCBC, we celebrate in your personal understanding of God's will and cherish your fellowship in our mutual church home. We of course also need your involvement within TCBC. Most ministry areas could use more help: Sunday School teachers for all ages great and small (especially adult and preschool!), worship teams, youth groups, small group leaders, college and university student ministry, retreat coordinators, finance, etc. Within EMC, we could use help in taking minutes or even running our monthly meetings. We could certainly use more EMC representation from different ministry areas. Even if you're not an active leader, your involvement is important as we pray and seek God's will together. Pray with us and for us. Engage in dialog with your fellow congregants on your view of God's call for us as a church. Certainly engage EMC members. I personally would like the opportunity to meet with everyone in the English congregation in 2010. Either individually or in small groups for an informal coffee or a simple meal together, we can discuss God's call for us personally and together as a church. I pray that 2010 we will all grow closer to God and to each other.

## Celefusion

On the evening of Friday December 18, TCBC gathered for a Christmas "Celefusion". After an informal dinner in the church basement, attendees had the option of joining a Christmas pageant in the main sanctuary, an informal coffee house upstairs in the Mandarin chapel or a children's program in the side chapel. The program in the main sanctuary started with a time of singspiration. Then children came out to help sing "Happy Birthday to Jesus", and the pastoral staff cut the birthday cake (which was sent upstairs to the coffee house). There was then a series of performances in Mandarin and Cantonese in the main sanctuary including a violin solo of Christmas songs by one of the children of the Mandarin congregation, a nativity skit using a real baby, the Adult fellowship singing a song to the tune of "It's a Small World", a musical skit involving the congregation, a lively "sister act" rendition of "I Will Follow Him", Chinese opera and much, much more.

A new feature to this year's celebration was that people could leave between performances to join the coffee house. There was a live feed from the sanctuary so that people could still enjoy the events in the main sanctuary too. Chairs were clustered around tables with candles for informal conversation. In the side room were various craft activities, the most popular being cupcake decorating. In the back were refreshments. In the coffee house was also an open mike, where a number of choral groups took advantage of that. Jimmy Leung would occasionally lead the room in Christmas carols and "interview" people in the room. Conversations in the coffee house continued well after the program in the main sanctuary was over. There were more refreshments in the basement after the end of the program in the sanctuary.

Sam Wong

Sam Wong

## Youth Corner

Four of our students at TCBC will be attending Avalanche, CBOQ's junior high retreat, from January 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>. Chris Yan will be attending as their counselor.

Twenty-three of our high school students will be attending Blizzard from January 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>. Brennan Rabbets, Chris Yan and Jamie Yuen will be attending as their counselors. Esther Tiet will be attending Blizzard as an Intern, helping out with all the behind the scenes preparations and set up for the retreat.

## Urban Promise Update

We're thankful for Duane Forrest and him dropping by near the end of our December EMC meeting. He gave us a brief update on the After School Program by sharing some prayer requests with the group: Surgery for cancer for one of his participants' uncle, academic success for children in the program, challenging home life of a specific girl, and wisdom for Urban Promise staff working with her, the need for video equipment for the after school program, and Duane's need for financial support. Please keep this ministry in your prayers.

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## Welcome Esther!

Esther, our new Child-Youth Worker Assistant, took some time to answer a few questions about her new role at TCBC in the coming months. Thanks Esther!

What position will you be starting, when will you be starting and for how long (if you know)?

Assistant Child-Youth Worker- started December, ending in July 2010 (end of).

Maybe tell us a bit about yourself. In what capacity have you worked with children?

God has blessed me with numerous opportunities to work for and with children of various ages whether in church or outside church. I have helped out with Sunday School, singspiration times, special events and of course VBS. Outside of church I have received my degree in teaching and enjoy having these opportunities to utilize the knowledge and skills I have learned.

What will be your responsibilities?

My responsibilities include the coordination and leadership of children's Sunday School, be support to Sunday School teachers, assist in Friday night children's program, assist in the administration and implementation of the Plan to Protect policy, help coordinate special events with the children's department, and coordinate VBS 2010.

How were you lead to this position?

Prior to knowing about this position I had prayed about being able to serve at a higher capacity at my home church TCBC before leaving this summer. When I was approached about this position I was still unsure of whether God had called me into this position, but through prayer and support from family I just knew God will utilize and guide me in this position.

What do you think some of the challenges will be?

For the past month, preparations were mainly made for the Christmas celebrations and I've been blessed with having had so many willing helpers. At first I thought that my biggest challenge would be the number of human resources (something I wouldn't have control over), but after being stressed (for nothing) I see that God REALLY DOES provide and I believe that He will continue to provide whether it be resources or time. Therefore, I cannot really foresee or think of any challenges (for now) as what I thought was my first challenge was not nearly a challenge for God.

What do you hope to accomplish?

Personally, of course I would like to accomplish a lot, but I need to trust in God and really seek His will in what He would like me to accomplish. With that said, I am hoping to (as best I could) build better support for the Sunday School teachers, and knowing that this is a burden placed on many teachers' hearts, I believe God will utilize us to build up one another and ultimately the children.

## Eva's Communique

The following was the November 2009 update from Eva Sham, one of the missionaries that TCBC supports. She is a campus minister with InterVarsity-Christian Fellowship, and ministers to graduate students and faculty on St. George Campus, University of Toronto.

This is the season of thanksgiving. I am grateful to a number of my colleagues (on campus and at the National Service Centre) who helped to advertise for Inter-Varsity's

new group (the Christian Graduate Connective) for graduate and professional students at the University of Toronto, St. George campus. With the help of a very good friend (who created a hospitable environment with a fabulous dinner), the kick-off CGC event had a good turn-out of 15 on September 14. Since then, there are about ten to twelve of us who come out regularly to our Monday gatherings. You may not understand my joy unless you know that we started off with just three of us, Jeff (a post-doctoral fellow) and Sarah (a graduate student) and I.

I am also immensely grateful to two U of T faculty, Eleanor Irwin and Rob Inman and the Rev. Bob Thaler. They have shared in the teaching of the series of discussions of Jesus parables. They contributed much to enlarge our understanding of the Kingdom of God and of what it means to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ and to be Christian leaders in the world.

Thank you, all of you faithful partners-in-ministry, for your prayers, financial support and encouragement. I am learning an important lesson in ministry in recent months. It is to rely on the wisdom and guidance of the life-giving Spirit of God. As we listen to and follow the Spirit's leading, we experience liberty (II Corinthians 3, especially verse 17). Thus, there is much hope in the face of the difficulties and challenges of ministry.

Please pray for...

1. the growth and the strengthening of the community of graduate students at U of T. It also includes one York U graduate student and I hope there will be more. Pray, too, for the emerging leadership for the group.

2. Urbana 09 [www.urbana09.org](http://www.urbana09.org) Inter-Varsity's 22<sup>nd</sup> student missions conference. Pray for Dr. Jon Watts and I as we prepare to lead two seminars at Urbana 09. Please watch out for more Urbana 09 related prayer requests.

3. the Veritas Forum [www.veritas.org](http://www.veritas.org) that we hope will occur at U of T in March 2010.

Sarah and I are involved in this campus outreach endeavour.

A note about finances...

Thank you for your generous financial support. Please pray with me that God will provide new donors to this vital ministry.

Eva