

English Ministry Update

Toronto Chinese Baptist Church

also available on www.tcbc.on.ca

November 2009

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; 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 terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:8-9

See you at the Pole

Peter Ko

See You at the Pole began with a simple prayer meeting of several high school students around their school's flag pole in spring of 1990. This flagpole acted as a rally point for others to join in the prayer. This prayer meeting was soon reported as the "most spectacular [display] of faith the world has ever seen". Today more than 45,000 students (US) take part in sharing their faith around their school's flag pole. See You at the Pole extends all the way from the United States to Australia.

Although SYATP officially starts September 23, I along with my Christian fellowship at my school gathered around our main flagpole on the day before because of conflicting dates. At first we were a bit tense but then the magic happened when a friend's computer erupted in a familiar song. Then one person slowly began praying as the song continued to play. The rest of us shook off the tension and we prayed. It was absolute solidarity and unity of faith when we prayed for just about anything. People passing by in cars and walking stared at us as if we were crazy but when God is with you, you feel like everything has evaporated from you and you just want to talk to Him personally. I really hope that everyone can forget that you will be judged when praying publicly. People WILL turn their heads. LET THEM. In the end who is going to be closer to God?

Advent Conspiracy

Have you done your Christmas shopping yet? We know it's only November but... what are your plans for this season? Quite often the first thing we do is create a "To-buy list" → family, co-workers, boss etc. Then we brainstorm gift ideas: scarf, tie, jewelry, chocolate, wine, gift certificate and gifts sets... It's the same thing every year. It's time to put the meaning back into Christmas!

This season, we, Katy and Jaynelle, and the entire English Ministry Committee, want to challenge you and provide an opportunity for our congregation to give intentionally. This means to give with purpose and not out of obligation. With the goal of supporting people in need local to TCBC, please consider honouring one or more of your regular "giftees" with a donation to one of the local agencies TCBC supports- Urban Promise, Scott Mission or Settlement House. Through this, we hope to get our congregation involved in community living as well as following and worshiping fully in the unselfish ways that Jesus gave. By holding a clothing and household item drive, people are able to give something that they have in excess to someone who really needs it. Due to various constraints, we understand that not everyone can give financially, but for the most part we can generalize that the majority of our church is blessed enough to have at LEAST one shirt lying around in their closet that they never wear!

For November and December, we want to challenge you to meet the specific needs identified that will directly aid and benefit needy men, women, children and families in TCBC's local area. From contacting these 3 charities, a specific list of necessities and other items has been produced that we hope to share as a church so that we can be a light and "helping hand" in our own neighbourhood.

For more information, and to see our current list of to-be-met needs and their timing targets, go to: www.tcbcac.blogspot.com OR e-mail us at [katywt\[dot\]mok\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:katywt[mok[at]gmail.com) or [jaynelle\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:jaynelle[at]gmail.com).

Seminar on Church Leadership

On Saturday October 17, members of EMC, Executive Board and Deacon Board had the opportunity to meet informally with Rev Stephen Chin, Senior Pastor of Boston Chinese Evangelical Church. That church has approximately 1000 people across 2 sites and 6 congregations. Their church is quite diverse and even their suburban English congregation differs markedly from their downtown English congregation. Even their format of communion differs (e.g. one congregation uses the "dip" method instead of the traditional cup & wafer). It is especially challenging for Rev Chin, who is unilingual English speaking and must minister to a larger Cantonese congregation.

Rev Chin shared with us John 17:20-23 on the importance of unity. He gave us a handout on "Cultural Differences" with two columns "More Asian" and "More Western". Attributes are contrasted between the cultures, such as indirect/direct, group/individual, relationships/issues, organism/organization, etc. He then gave us "TEAM" as the acrostic Together Everyone Achieves More. He suggested church leaders need to have a church-wide focus, practice servant leadership and we need to be wise in our selection of leaders rather than just filling positions. He gave the example of their hiring of a youth director which took 3 years and 50 applicants. (As an editorial comment, English Ministers are harder to find and we've only been at it for a year!) Attendees had a very good Q&A session with Rev Chin and we thank him for all the insights into his ministry and the wide variations in possible organizational structure.

Which Ship Are We?

Jasmine Ng

When Reverend Nolan Lee came back to preach in August, he passionately asked us "What are you about, church? What are you about?" I knew we could not take this challenge lightly. What a great opportunity we had, as we gathered on the Saturday of the TCBC's 42nd anniversary weekend, to think and share about our vision and mission for TCBC. The first half of the session was a time for brothers and sisters to reflect and share their own positive past experiences at the church and the personal core values that motivate them to attend or serve in our church. Then, we reviewed the four ships Reverend Lee used in his sermon as a metaphor for the different types of churches: Cruise Ship, Cargo Ship, the Bluenose, and the HMSC Fredericton. We then asked ourselves "Which ship is TCBC" and "Which ship do we want to be?".

The perception of "what TCBC is about" varied greatly. Almost every person who attended picked a different ship for a different reason. Even though it was obvious that nothing concrete came out of the discussion, the time we spent together was very valuable. We started a dialogue and conversation about church vision and mission. Although we could not unanimously say what ship our church is, it was more important that we committed to no longer be in the state of idleness. It's time to move the ship forward.

With respect to "which ship do we want to be", the only conclusion was that we need to start asking ourselves, "If God were the captain, what kind of ship would He lead?" Much more prayer and conversation needs to happen before we will be able to answer this question. Our hope is that all of you would be able to join us in discovering the answer and together, help build this ship and move it forward.

Spiritual Health Checkup

Sam Wong

On the afternoon of Saturday October 17, our anniversary guest speaker, Rev Chin lead a seminar on Spiritual Health Checkup. Rather than making us feel guilty with us failing surveys on how often we do devotions, pray or tithe, Rev Chin directed us to our spiritual goals instead. In the story of the prodigal son, the elder son may have been doing the right things but he had the wrong attitude. The Great Commission is about making disciples, and that includes on-going teaching, not just the initial conversion. Disciples involve their head, heart and hands for God. Rom 12:1-2 is the ultimate spiritual health checkup: is God in complete control of our lives?

News and Notes in Brief

Pastor Tanya will be the 186th Anniversary speaker for Kingsville Baptist Church on November 22. She will also be on vacation from November 24 to 28.

EMC Retreat

The English Ministry Committee will be having a retreat on Saturday, November 14. Please pray for the committee as they meet to reflect on the past year and look forward to the year ahead.

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The following was a devotion lead by Pastor Tanya at our most recent English Ministry Committee meeting at the beginning of October.



Ephesians 4:17-5:21

Are you living as a child of light?

N Nurture (Dependence)

Do you know Jesus more intimately today than yesterday?
Are you more in love with Him now than last year?
In what ways are you cultivating a more intimate relationship with Jesus?

E Everyday Living (Priorities)

Are you investing your time on things that matter or wasting it on useless busywork?
Do you choose to make the most of each moment of each day?
Does that amount of time spent on your daily activities/responsibilities reflect the things that are most important to you?

S Servanthood (Attitude)

Do you love others like Christ loves you?
Do you use people for what you can get out of them or do you look for every opportunity to serve and extend grace?

W Walk (Character)

Can others see the difference of Christ in you?
Are you the same person in front of 'church' people as you are in front of 'normal' people?

Visit to the ROM and the Dead Sea Scrolls

On Sunday October 4, 2009, after Sunday School and a pizza lunch, a group of about 35 youth and teachers, along with Pastor Tanya, and Rev and Mrs. Byrne visited the Dead Sea Scroll exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum. Our group was divided into two and each was lead by a ROM guide. The tour began with an introduction to the area close to where the scrolls were discovered, Khirbet Qumran, on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. The culture and customs of the time were discussed and we had a chance to view a variety of Jewish and Roman artifacts from Qumran, Jerusalem and the Second Temple, Sephorris and other parts of Judea and Galilee.

A brief video in the exhibit gave an impressive overview of the kingdoms that rose and fell around the area over the past thousands of years, of which Israel was the centre.

Hidden for over two thousand years, the scrolls were discovered by accident in 1947 by a Bedouin goat-herder who was said to have been searching for a stray goat. He threw stones into a cave and proceeded to investigate upon hearing the sound of a breaking clay jar. Over the next nine years, close to 900 documents were discovered in a series of eleven caves. Dating from around 250 Before Common Era (BCE) to 68 Common Era (CE), the Scrolls include some 207 biblical manuscripts representing nearly all of the books in the Hebrew Bible (Christian Old Testament). Some scrolls were almost entirely preserved and others in fragments and are a collection of biblical writings, apocryphal manuscripts, prayers, biblical commentary and religious laws. Prior to the discovery of the Scrolls, the oldest known copies of biblical texts were written 1,000 years later. Despite over 60 years of research by dozens of scholars, there are still questions about who wrote the scrolls and the circumstances surrounding how they ended up in the caves.

On display when we visited the exhibit were excerpts from the books of Psalms and Isaiah, along with Greek texts of the Minor Prophets. There were also non-biblical documents on display including a commentary on Isaiah, a war scroll which describes the final apocalyptic war between good and evil after which a new world order will reign, a scroll about a covenant renewal ceremony, and a lease agreement