

English Ministry Update

Toronto Chinese Baptist Church

also available on www.tcbc.on.ca

September 2010

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Psalm 90:1-2

FAST – Feed a Student TCBC

Welcome back students! Please join us every on Sunday, September 19 for lunch in the church basement. Get to know fellow students worshipping at TCBC while enjoying the hospitality of our church family. See you at 1230pm in the basement, after Sunday school.

Parking Relief?

The Executive Board is investigating ways to alleviate our parking situation. While we are a downtown church and hope to minister to the local community, the majority of congregation drives to church. We are looking for volunteers to help plan for creative parking solutions. It could be as simple as reimbursement for visitors (who complete a visitor card!) to complex land swaps to build a parking lot! If you are interested in helping draft parking proposals, please contact the EB Chair, Jimmy Leung or any member of EMC.

Ministry Highlights

Instead of a Ministry Fair with booths out in front of our church this September, the English Ministry Committee has decided to feature a ministry area through a five to ten minute presentation during morning service once a month over the next few months. This will serve to highlight the different ministries taking place at our church.

Reflections on Summer Internship

Ian Lee

Twelve weeks have passed. In the past twelve weeks, I have served alongside Hannah Wong as the student interns for Toronto Chinese Baptist Church. And what a wonderful twelve weeks it has been! The summer is coming to a close (*all students may proceed to scream in terror*). Although I am sad to see the summer end, there has never been a summer so fulfilling as this one – a stew pot of joy, stress, planning, coordinating, children, youth, road blocks and go aheads. Amidst all the memories and experiences, I truly got my wish – to serve in the Church wholeheartedly, in and out of my comfort zone. Although a few of the main events that us interns worked on were Teen's Camp, Vacation Bible School, summer Sunday school, regular Sunday school, and Wonderland, each day working at TCBC was a main event for me. They were events of valuable learning experience, mistakes and corrections, accomplishments and high fives. Never before have I been given such responsibility, nor have I been humbled so much. When I first began this internship back in June, I was afraid. I was afraid to fail, make mistakes, to blunder and seem lost. A university student, unfamiliar with TCBC's rich history and complex past – that was me. But God intervened. He blessed me with a coworker knowledgeable with the Word and His church. I met talented individuals who were passionate to serve children and youth. I met youth students of hidden and amazing potential. I met children of innocence and laughter. As I prepare to finish my internship, I contemplate if such opportunities to serve and meet people will disappear. In my mind, I wish I could continue being TCBC's student intern, despite my twelve weeks of temporary employment approaching its end. As short as the summer has been, it has impacted me in ways that 3 months could never amount to. Lessons of faith, prayer, humility, trust, along with fun memories spent with children and youth all rolled into a wonderful summer.

The Difficult Gift

Hannah Wong

A teacher of the law once asked Jesus, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" To this, Jesus replied, "The most important one is this: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Scott Mcknight calls Jesus' response 'The Jesus Creed', an amalgamation of the Jewish Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) and Leviticus 19:18. I later learned that in Jewish tradition, the Shema is recited daily – once in the morning and once in the evening. It was an intriguing idea, so I began to recite the Jesus Creed every morning when I woke up, and every evening before I slept. It's been almost a month and a half since I started this ritual. There have been mornings where I forget. There are nights where I fall asleep in the middle of reciting it. But with each time I do recite the Jesus Creed, I understand more of how little I actually understand of what the Jesus Creed means. The message is clear: the two greatest commands are to love God and to love others. But just as how the name of a product is not what the product is, the particular combination of the words in the Jesus Creed is not what it means. For the past three months, I have been privileged to serve at TCBC alongside Ian Lee as summer interns. We have been part of much – Teens camp, VBS, youth sports ministry, and Children's Sunday school, to name a few. We've seen more files, labels, and forms than we want to for the rest of our lives. As always when serving, there are both joys and sorrows. I've learned the joy of hearing children shout the song "Shout to the Lord" and the joy of welcoming in a new sister in Christ. I've learned the sorrow of lacking the capacity to help the people who are in need at TCBC, and the frustration at the truth in Jesus' words, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."

I have learned much, but grasped little.

Just as I sometimes recite the Jesus Creed out of nothing more than habit, I have sometimes caught myself simply 'reciting' the steps of my internship. Just as I still have yet to learn what loving God and loving my neighbours truly means, I have much to learn about what it means to truly serve my God, in my church, in my community, in this world.

But if you think my experience this summer was therefore ineffectual, then you are sadly mistaken. To be left unsatisfied with the current perception of serving, to be made hungry for more knowledge of God, to long to know what it means to love Him, to be challenged to learn who my neighbours really are and how to love them -- I would call this a gift. It is both wonderful to behold and often difficult to bear. But Jesus does call us to take up our crosses daily and follow Him, to run with perseverance the race marked out for us, and to fix our eyes on Jesus, author and perfecter of our faith.

Sanctuary Softball Success

TCBC Sanctuary's first year back has come to an end. Our final record is 2 wins, 7 losses, and one gracious tie game. This trouble-filled, prayerful season has been a great learning experience for the leadership.

This year's team was comprised of primarily Christians, giving us the opportunity to direct our devotions for the games on the harsh realities of the emergency department, life, and most importantly being a Christian. These harsh realities plagued us from the start – having two very independently busy leaders.

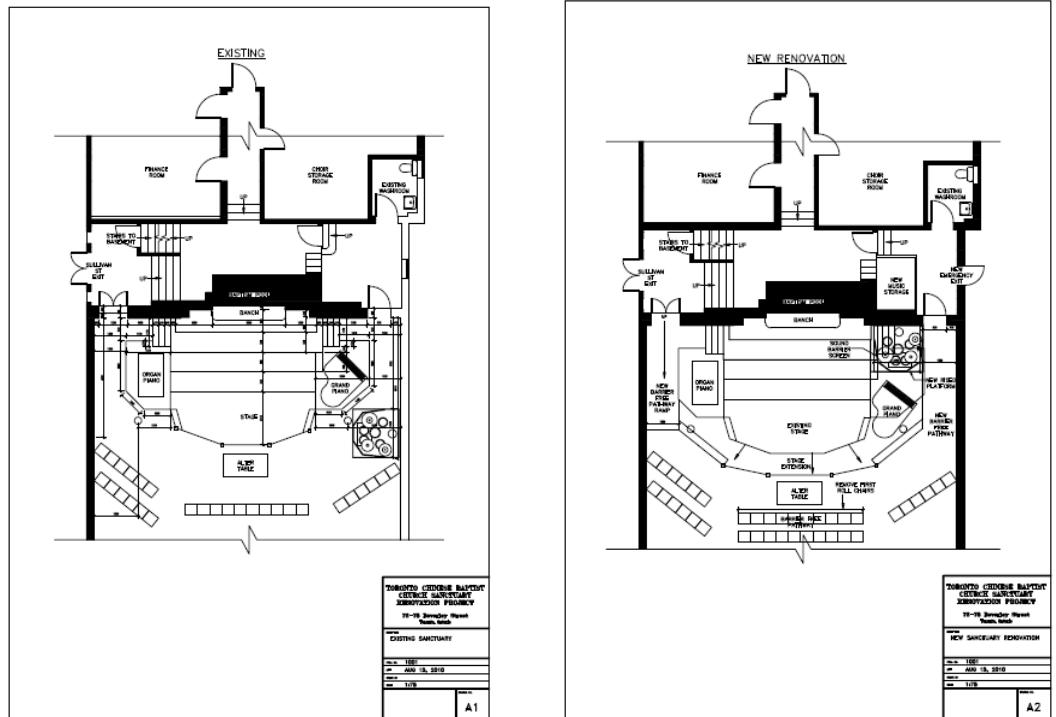
Thanks must be given to God and to all our prayer support for this season. This season could not have gone smoother, considering the challenges from the start. Leadership: Found. Players: Found. Devotions: Done. Season: Finished. Goals: Met. Planning: Has just begun...

Planning for next year starts November 14th, 2010 @ 1245pm @ TCBC basement – bring a lunch. We urge all who are interested in helping out in any aspect of softball to attend (i.e. umpiring, administrative, event organizing, prayer, coaching, governing, etc.) and remember, **NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED!** If you cannot attend, send Ivan Lung an email to stay in the loop ([ivan.lung\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:ivan.lung[at]gmail.com)). We hope to have many returning team members next year, as well as their friends! Final emergency department saying – when we leave after a night shift, we customarily say to each other in passing, "Have a good sleep!" Rest up TCBC, next year's softball season awaits!

Contacts: Sam Wong (English Chair): [samwsamw\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:samwsamw[at]gmail.com)
 Bobby Lau (Vice-Chair): [blau1881\[at\]hotmail.com](mailto:blau1881[at]hotmail.com), James Wu (Vice-Chair): [jamesrwu\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:jamesrwu[at]gmail.com), Norman Tang (Vice-Chair): [norman.tang\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:norman.tang[at]gmail.com), Alicia Chin (Student Ministry, FAST): [alicia-chin\[at\]rogers.com](mailto:alicia-chin[at]rogers.com), Jasmine Yu (Fellowship/SG): [jasmine.ng\[at\]utoronto.ca](mailto:jasmine.ng[at]utoronto.ca), Ron Eng (Adult SS Coordinator): [rke111850\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:rke111850[at]gmail.com), English Pastor Frank Byrne: [francismbyrne\[at\]rogers.com](mailto:francismbyrne[at]rogers.com)
 Tel. 519-651-0992, Senior Pastor Timothy Tam: [timothytam7\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:timothytam7[at]gmail.com)

Proposed Renovations of Sanctuary

The following schematics display proposed renovations for our sanctuary. Some highlights of the plans include a new emergency exit and a handicap ramp as well as a new storage area for musical equipment in the back room. There will be a new permanent location for the drum set as well as plans to extend the current stage further out to improve clearance around the piano and the new emergency exit. If all is approved by our normal processes, work will begin after our church anniversary and the aim will be to complete it before Christmas. The full size schematics are located at in basement, at the bottom of the 'front' stairway.



English Ministry in North American Churches

On Sunday August 8, Rev. Adrian Lim gave a special seminar on English Ministry in North American Churches: Opportunities & Challenges. He opened with a humorous story of someone who became a "Born again Asian" after reading the Joy Luck Club. He then recapped the standard "model" of English Ministry where it is just another ministry.

Beyond the visible conflicts within the church, the bigger concern is with the silent exodus where members of the English congregation leave for what they perceive to be greener pastures.

For example, are we ready as a church to embrace mixed race couples? Our perceptions must change to include this group as a part of our church. It can be thought of as planting a church within a church and we must be open to this church possibly being separate. We must be open to that group being bound not by race but by a shared Canadian experience. We should not be fearful but be grateful. We are called to build a Christian culture, not Chinese or Canadian culture.

It's not their problem or our problem but a partnership. Hopefully we can turn the tide of the silent exodus. Parents may not like the choice of a spouse of their children, but parents inevitably grow to accept their child's spouse.

Rev Lim gave the example of Vision Church in Manhattan and Evergreen Baptist in LA that are multi-ethnic plants from their parent churches. Canadian Chinese churches are probably not ready for this but we need to be at least ready for dialogue. The English congregation must be willing to initiate this dialogue and express what it wants.

We all also must be ready to think outside the box. For example we could partner with another church or even ask the district to help initiate this work.

In his final slide, Rev Lim had "Ultimately the whole earth with worship God."

During the Q&A period, Rev Byrne commented that the silent exodus is not a Chinese problem; Caucasian churches struggle with their own generational gaps. Some adapt by having 2 worship services both in English.