

Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell (CBCGL) English Congregation Community Newsletter

WINTER / SPRING 2010

197 Littleton Rd
Chelmsford, MA 01824
Tel: 978-256-6275

Inside This Issue

- 1 **A Message from the Pastor**
- 1 **CBCGL Missions Conference**
- 2 **Reflections on Deaconship**
- 2 **Empower Fellowship**
- 2 **Young Adult Fellowship**
- 3 **Baptismal Testimony from
Carson Tran**
- 4 **Children's Ministry Activities**
- 5 **Fall LYF Retreat**
- 5 **Winter Teen Conference**
- 6 **The "Essence of Christmas"**
- 6 **Prayer for Summer Missions**
- 6 **Weekly Schedule**
- 6 **Upcoming Events**
- 6 **EC 10th Anniversary**

A Message from the Pastor

What is the cost of discipleship, of following Jesus? You see, Jesus taught his disciples to count the cost of following him before setting out to do so. But what is that cost? Jesus said that in order to follow him we must 1) deny ourselves and 2) take up our cross (die) daily. In principle, this is what it means to accept Jesus as Lord. But, in practice, we find that this is easier said than done. We all are learning each and every day of our lives that what we assented to with our minds is hard for our hearts and our wills to follow.

This year, the English Congregation vision is that we seek to focus on obedience to God's Word. We cannot follow Christ unless we obey his Word. We cannot fulfill our vision to be a channel of grace, unless we follow him. But, this dream will never happen unless we practice self-denial on a daily basis, unless each learns to die to self each day.

When HsiaoFang and I were married, I had my grandiose ideals of how I was going to make her happy, to serve her, to always apologize, and to put our relationship above who is right. Then I kept running up against the big thick wall of myself. Unfortunately, I found that I am all too easily consumed by self rather than self-denial. But, over time I have slowly learned to take up my cross so that I might serve my wife. May we all daily learn to deny ourselves that we may learn to obey God's Word.

CBCGL Missions Conference, October 16-18, 2009

In October, CBCGL held its annual Missions Conference, a joint effort by all three congregations. We were happy to have Pastor Jamie Taylor, the great-great-grandson of Hudson Taylor, the founder of China Inland Mission as the main speaker. Pastor Taylor is currently serving in Taiwan and he speaks Mandarin fluently. Pastor Taylor gave all of his messages in Mandarin, with volunteers translating his words into English. He did deliver one message in English – to the youth group on Friday night! One of Pastor Taylor's main themes was a challenge for Chinese Christians to consider missionary service to non-Chinese. As a contrast, he mentioned that South Korea sends out the second most missionaries, 2nd to the United States, while the overseas Chinese seem to concentrate mostly on reaching other overseas Chinese.

Besides Pastor Taylor's sessions on Friday night, Saturday afternoon, Saturday evening, and Sunday morning, there were missions programs for the children and youth on Friday evening, and various workshops on Saturday afternoon. One of the workshops, "The Impact of Mammon", by Todd Engelsen focused on how micro-financing in 3rd world countries helps individual entrepreneurs start or expand businesses. Small amounts of capital can go a long way to make people self sufficient and contributors to their country's economic growth and have greater long term impact than purely relief efforts.

Reflections on Deaconship by Bob Lin

“Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.” - 1 Timothy 3:8-13

It has been a great privilege to serve in the past few years as the English Ministry Deacon. There is much to do in the church because of what the Lord has entrusted to us in the ministry vision. I am thankful for the Lord's faithfulness in providing for us Pastor and Mrs. MacDonald and blessing us with Minister Nathan Willems and his wife Angie. It is such an encouragement to see how the Lord has brought each of you, who are precious in His sight, to this ministry and for the many who have been ministered to when they have spent time with us in the past. One of the greatest joys has been to serve with those who are equally passionate for the Lord. They live out their love for Him by serving all of us in various ministries, e.g. PLOW, Worship, Administration, etc. In addition, to see those who have grown up in CBCGL find their own faith in the Lord and their place in worshipping Him with us is a wonderful testimony to God's handiwork.

I have, as many of you know, fallen so short of what is required to be a deacon as expressed in 1 Timothy 3. However, He has used the time to shape and mold me in preparing me for eternity with Him. Sometimes this is painful, other times it is filled with a deep sense of joy. For me, I could not have served you without the help and prayers of my wife Kathy, who used all her talent for the ministry. In addition, I am thankful for all the faithful prayers, including those of Elder Sam Cheung and Deacon Tom Wong, which sustained me throughout. Above all, He is teaching me that it is only in trusting and obeying Him through His Word that I am able to draw close to knowing our Lord. For this I am deeply grateful to be His bondservant alongside each of you.

I urge all of you to keep in prayer those who serve, that they may always yield to the Lord so that they may see ever more clearly His perfect will and His faithfulness towards us. Please keep our Deacon and faithful servant Tom Wong in your prayers. Pray especially for the Lord to protect him in his marriage, in his family time, and in his job; and pray for the Lord's wisdom to guide him in his service. We are blessed to have his leadership in the EMC.

Empower College Fellowship

The Empower college fellowship had its annual Thanksgiving Dinner hosted by Bob and Jenny Chen and close to 30 people attended. Besides all the great food prepared by volunteers, it was a great time of fellowship and fun, including sharing about the reasons why we are to give thanks to God, singing songs of praise, and playing Wii games.

As we look forward to this coming summer, pray for those who will become our summer student leaders, for the Empower retreat, and for the discovery of appropriate service and outreach opportunities.

Young Adult Fellowship

Currently, we have a core group of 6-9 young adults that meets on Tuesday evenings at church for topical discussions. They also meet for Bible Study during the Sunday school hour on Sunday's. They recently completed the book of 1 Peter, and are starting the Gospel of Luke on March 21.

Some of the young adults are attending graduate school locally or are in transition, job hunting, so pray for that God would open the right doors for them. Their commitment to encouraging one another in their faith and mutual accountability is their highest priority.

Baptismal Testimony from Carson Tran

Let me begin by telling you about who I was before I came to know God. I am a Chinese American, and I grew up in what I think was lower middle class. However, I think my siblings and I had a healthier childhood than most kids because my mom and dad worked so hard to support the three of us during our younger days. No one would look after us as diligently as my dad did; that was something he really felt convicted to do. Thus, my Dad was my hero. I thought he was just a perfect man. I thought that my family was so close and loving because he loved my mom and the three of us so unconditionally. I feel like most of my personality and morals before I came to Christ was directly influenced by my dad.



Anyway, I was an obedient and hard-working kid that followed exactly what my dad had taught us. He told us to study hard because in order to make it in life, you have to have an education. He said that his situation had limited his potential. Life with my Dad as a mentor was going to be good enough for me, I thought. However, my Dad, while visiting his dying mother in LA, passed away in his sleep in June of 2002. Finding that out was definitely the most traumatizing moment in my life. So for the next 6 to 7 years, I studied hard for the remainder of High School years and went on to Notre Dame for college to study chemical engineering. I was a machine. I used my dad's advice to accomplish academically what I did.

However, during the summer of 07, everything changed. At that time, I felt like trying to be a loving and selfless person like my dad got me nowhere. My sister and mom were on their month long vacation, and I felt lonely and worthless. That was when I started going to church regularly. I enjoyed the companionship of guys like Josh Feng and Eric Hsu at the Empower fellowship.

I think Eric told me recently that sometimes our walk with Christ is one in which we take a few baby steps forward and a big step backward. During my final year at college, I didn't care about my relationship with God. All I was aiming for was security and stability after college in the form of a job. And after getting job rejection after rejection, I was lost again. I was beginning to realize that nothing is for certain, and that in this life of ours we can't count on anything. Not success, not people, nothing.

I came home this summer very distressed about my job situation after graduating in May. I was expecting a miserable, miserable time as this was the first summer in a long time being jobless. It was a very shameful time initially. But at the end, I was glad that I didn't land a job offer in which almost all of my classmates received. You see, I had spent life living by the words of my dad going from one goal to another without ever stopping to look for purpose in life.

Realizing that nothing is guaranteed made me feel that I must turn to Him as he's always there for me. He has shown to me that any loved ones can be temporal. Nothing such as credentials in academics or a job is guaranteed, so that we can realize how amazing His love is for us. That he sent his only son to die for us even though we are full of sin and can't be dependable, and he loves us for eternity. That's just amazing, and I am forever thankful for Jesus and His grace.

Awana Bible Quiz Team



Awana Grand Prix



VBS 2010 Logo



Children's Ministry

Awana Bible Quiz:

On Saturday, February 6th, 200 people from 8 different churches gathered here at CBCGL for an Awana Bible Quiz! Seventy-three children competed in 3 areas; oral multiple choice, written multiple choice, and an oral speed quiz...with electronic buzzers! CBCGL had 5 teams made up of 12 children registered. As team coach I was extremely impressed with our kids; Samuel He, Anthony Zhu, Angela Xie, Evelyn Chen, Phil Lee, Abigail Bowman, Matthew Wong, Wesley Chung, Ken Ngai, Julia Deng, Felicia Deng, and Carissa Mok. All 5 of our teams placed (1 3rd place, 2 2nd place and 2 1st place)!

Awana Grand Prix:

CBCGL's 2nd Annual Grand Prix was held on Saturday, March 6th and 22 families participated! 23 cars were registered and competed against each other in 2 categories; speed and design. This year we separated Sparkies (K – 2nd co-ed) and our Truth & Training (3rd – 6th co-ed). All the children showed amazing sportsmanship and a GRAND time was had by all. Our 1st place Spark's winner for design was Timmy Ye and for speed was Kevin Zhu. Our 1st place T & T winner for design was Jason Ding and for speed was Amber Li. Special thanks to Raymond Xie (start line judge & photographer), Tom Wong (finish line judge), and Ken Hoffmeyer (race commissioner).

Vacation Bible School, Coming in August, 2010:

CBCGL's 2010 VBS is already rolling...on the High Seas as we begin exploring the Mighty Love of God! As VBS Director I have already attended 2 VBS meetings and am excited to have virtually all the key leaders in place. We are anticipating close to 150 children again this year and hope they all have a wonderful time here getting to know and love God better.

We are also anticipating 80 coworkers to join together in showing Jesus love to these children and teaching them more about Him. If you are interested in serving during this year's VBS, please contact Minister Steven Bowman via sbowman.cbcgl@gmail.com or 978-256-3889.

Fall 2009 LYF Retreat, by Christine Cho

It's hard to believe that the Fall 2009 LYF Retreat was our ninth one! It was memorable for a number of firsts, such as being our first (and last) time at Camp Sentinel, the first hike to a "Sermon (and worship) on the Mount", our first medical emergency (handled well, but turned out not to be serious), our first winter chill (especially for high school boys in unheated cabins with bathrooms in another building!), our first time with five new counselors, and our first small group devotional time.

Yet there were also repeated themes such as having an unheated meeting room (like 2001!), Assassin angst, peer relationships built through 1x1s, drifting away in boats, early morning and late night prayer times, jumping worship, posters, skits humorously acting out the speaker's personal stories, games involving creativity, enjoying God's handiwork in nature, and most importantly, hearing from God in his spoken and written word.



The theme for 2009 was "Wall Fall Down" - we have been praying for peace and unity in LYF and the retreat committee focused on Ephesians 2 in planning and prayer. Our speaker, Ben Pun, also expanded on the theme in his messages to talk about how we put up walls between us and God, and between us and the needy in our condescension. It was wonderful to see some of these walls come down during free time while watching a 1x1 take place between an unlikely pairing, and hearing a waft of worship music mix with screams from football (and an unlikely quarterback). Please pray for our youth that the lessons learned would not just be memories, but a part of daily life lived in those truths and that LYF will be a place of peace, unity, accountability and growth. Lastly, be praying now for LYF Retreat 2010 that God will do even greater things in our midst.

Winter Teen Conference (WTC), February, 2010, by Eric Hsu

The highly anticipated annual Winter Teen Conference (WTC) that took place at Brookwoods Conference Center in Alton, NH was filled to the brim with the sounds of fun being had - and a little mischief, friendships forming and growing, preaching, prayers, and praises rising from the hearts of youth not only from CBCGL, but also from our sister churches, BCEC, CGCM, and CGCW.

This year's WTC was truly Christ-centered; our hearts were intimately awakened to the presence of the Holy Spirit and the Lordship of Christ. Pastor Ian Ma, a former youth minister at CBCGL, delivered five messages centered on the adventures of the disciple, Peter, whose life was certainly a "Rocky Road" - the theme for the retreat. By unraveling the highs and lows of the life of Peter, the "Rock", Pastor Ian touched upon obstacles and opportunities that students encounter in their walks with Jesus, from doubts and diversions to disappointments and decisions. Praise God that many students found Pastor Ian's sharing of God's Word to be particularly relevant.

The youth also participated in a wide array of activities. From meal mixers to hypes to free and organized rec times and games such as Alaskan Baseball! - there was no shortage of fun and fellowship. Furthermore, students attended counselor-led workshops that gave them an opportunity to explore a variety of topics such as discerning God's will, "Questions of Darwin and Genesis", "Fussin' over Cussin'", and what God thinks about art. Spread throughout the retreat weekend, 'huddles' were meaningful times when students met one-on-one with his or her counselor to share and pray about life. On the last night of the retreat, the youth participated in Prayse Fire (PRAYer+praiSE), a memorable time of testimony rooted in recognizing and giving glory to God by openly sharing what He has done in their lives and eagerly and spontaneously sharing with and praying for one another. It was like James 5:13-20 in action!

The “Essence of Christmas” Celebration

The English Congregation's held its 2nd annual “Essence of Christmas” celebration on December 5, 2009. Through this event, the members of our congregation were able to share the true meaning of Christmas with family, friends, neighbors and each other in a fun, festive, and entertaining gathering. The Homebuilders fellowship groups provided a wide assortment of delicious homemade dishes for dinner and dessert, while the youth and young adults staged a play which demonstrated that, as Christ gave himself for us, the spirit of Christmas is about helping others.



Pray for our Summer Mission Trips

This summer, God has blessed our congregation with a couple of Summer Missions Trips. The first trip will take place from July 2nd to July 12th in Liberia, Costa Rica. The second trip will take place closer to home in Dorchester, MA from July 18th to July 23rd. Please pray that God will use both trips to expand his kingdom, that we would be a blessing to our brothers and sisters in Christ who are serving full-time in these areas, and that we will grow to know and love our Lord Jesus Christ better through these times of service. Pray also for all the planning and details to come together according to God's timing. Thanks for praying!

Weekly Activities

Sunday Worship	Sunday, 10:00-11:20am
Sunday School (Adults and Youth)	Sunday, 11:30am-12:30pm
Children's Sunday School & Worship	Sunday, 10:00am-12:30pm Bldg B
Young Adult Fellowship	Tuesday, 8:00pm
Adult Prayer Meeting	Wed, 7:45-9:15pm Rm A218
Youth Prayer Meeting	Wed., 7:45-9pm, Youth Min. Office
Friday night Youth (LYF) activities	Friday, 7:45-9:30pm, Rm A215
AWANA children's program	Friday, 7:45-9:30pm, Bldg B, flr2

Upcoming Events

55 th Baptism Ceremony	Mar 21
Easter Worship Service	Apr 4
Iron Sharpens Iron (Men)	May 15
2010 Missions Conference	Jun 4 – 6
Costa Rica Mission	Jul 2 - 12
Boston Project	Jul 18 - 23
Vacation Bible School	Aug 9 - 13
Summer Picnic	Aug 21



CBCGL English Congregation 10th Anniversary Celebration

On November 29, 2009, CBCGL's English Ministry celebrated its 10th anniversary with a special retrospective following the worship service. Bob Chen and Sam Cheung shared about our brief history, while Josh Feng, Angie Bowman, Esther Chiang, and Spencer Li gave testimonies. We also had an amazing photo slide show of many of our events over the years. We can only praise God for his faithfulness and look forward to the work he will do our midst in the future.