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By Pastor Daniel Shih

The Annual BoE Retreat

On the last weekend of June, the Board of Elders went away on their annual retreat to reflect, pray, and discuss the long-term plans of our church. For the fourth straight year, as we arrived, we all joked with each other that we have to stop calling this a “retreat,” because all we do, apart from eating our meals together, is have long meetings.

We joke about how many long meetings our church has, but the reality is that our church is large, complicated, and has many diverse needs. This leadership team is responsible for everything from the maintenance of our property to the spiritual care of each member of our church.

A Shepherd’s Heart

The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ - Matthew 25:40

Our lengthy discussions are not without purpose; they are out of a heart for the sheep that God has placed in our care. I am truly thankful for each co-worker here, be they an elder, pastor,

or deacon. This group of men left their families and took days off work in order to serve the church out of their own free will, and I believe they deserve our respect, even though they are doing it for Christ and not for humans.

Prayerful Planning

Over the course of the retreat, we had three main discussion topics. We also spent a lot of time in the mornings praying together. The main discussion topics were:

- The future of CCC Milsons Point: Network or Local (two sessions)
- CCC Milsons Point Renewal: Building project discussion
- Church planting strategy and model

Honest Self-Reflection

In our last session, we had originally scheduled a planning discussion about church planting, but God had different plans for us. Before we could get into the topic, we felt led to do a reflection on who we are as a Board of Elders, our leadership style, and the culture of leadership that we have fostered together. We asked tough questions of ourselves, such as:

- “Are we out of touch with our people?”

- “Do we lead with a shepherd’s heart, and truly care for our people?”
- “Can we sometimes be a bit too domineering with our plans?”

I truly believe that in this session, God took control and led us to do some important soul-searching. It became something of a “self-therapy session” where we reflected on the mistakes that we’ve made as well as the ways that God has used us mightily despite our weaknesses.



Serving with Humility

My personal reflection from this last session was that God, in His wisdom, has chosen to use the weak and flawed to serve Him so that His glory might be made known through their weaknesses (1 Corinthians 1:27-31). Our pastors and elders are not without failings, but every single one of them sees themselves as stewards of God’s Church, and from the bottom of their hearts love CCC, and have made tremendous personal sacrifices to take care of us. Our leadership style comes out of the strengths and gifts that God has given us, and we don’t do everything well. But out of this final session together, we prayerfully resolved to continue serving the church selflessly, tirelessly, and humbly, always being ready to repent for our mistakes, and making a better effort to listen to and understand our people.



Committee Members

Acting Chair	Rev. Jeff Wang
Secretary and Prayer Coordinator	Swee Yeo
Treasurer	Jonathan Yeung
Promotions and Mandarin Rep	Enyi Lin

By Jonathan Yeung

What Is Our Role?

The committee meets quarterly, or as needed, to review new missionary candidates and provide recommendations to the Board of Elders (BOE). We also help communicate updates from missionaries and provide support as needed, while working with congregations to raise mission awareness and invite missionaries to share at CCC.

How Does A Person Become A CCC Supported Missionary?

Most of the new missionary candidates are either members of CCC, connected through our branch churches, or referred through our network. After assessing their applications, conducting interviews with the pastoral team (when necessary), we will then make recommendations for BOE to make the final decision.

What Is the Mission Fund Used for?

The fund is primarily used to support overseas missionaries, with the rest use to support those serving in cross-cultural ministries within Australia, and individuals undertaking theological studies.

Any Significant Challenges the Ministry Has Faced?

As with other ministries at CCC, committee members often serve in multiple roles in the church, which means we sometimes lack the time and energy to pursue all our ideas. We warmly welcome new members to join us for providing fresh perspectives on how to better serve the church and our missionaries. While we strive to be faithful stewards of the mission fund and thanks for the generous contribution from the church members and attendees, we often face the difficult task of

distribute limited resources amid growing needs. This is especially the case when based on the current level of contribution from the members, and our existing final commitments for the missionaries, we estimate the fund's deficit to be approximately 37K this calendar year. Nevertheless, we rely on God's wisdom, the gracious understanding of our missionaries, and trust that our generous God will make us more generous in all aspects of our lives.



**The Dicksons
Serve in
Thailand**

How Can the Church Pray for the Ministry?

- Thank God for His faithful provision in financially sustaining the missionaries and in nurturing the spiritual strength of our missionaries.
- Pray for new individuals to be raised up to join the Committee
- Pray that our church will deepen our desire for outreach, and remains generous in supporting those who called to spread the gospel to the “unreached”.

**James &
Carolyn
Webb
Serve in
Spain**



**Our Mission Newsletters are available at the following link: <http://tiny.cc/MissionNews>
To receive a copy direct to your mailbox, please fill in the form: <http://tiny.cc/MissionPrayers>**



Introduction:

We continue sharing the beautiful moment from our Cantonese Easter Sunday service on 20 April 2025! It was a privilege to witness seven young people publicly declare their faith in Christ through baptism. In this edition, we are delighted to bring you two more testimonies to end this series.

Christopher Lu

A Child's Understanding of Faith

At a very young age, I was already exposed to Christianity due to the influence of my parents. I always thought that if I prayed to God, I would receive what I wished for, from toys, video games, good grades, to even superpowers. Of course, some wishes came true, most definitely not the superpowers, but most didn't. I was confused; I always questioned and thought to myself, does God not love me? And if He loves me so much, why doesn't He give me what I wished for? I was naive, and as a child, my ambition was off the charts. I didn't grasp the deeper meaning behind Christianity and the role of a follower of

Jesus. I was young and immature, but you wouldn't expect a child to prioritize something that is not visible to them, right? As a result, I became more distant from God as I aged; His presence started fading from my life, and all the things that were happening in my surroundings distracted me from something that I should prioritize. School, crushes, video games – His crown was no longer present in my priorities.



The Weight of Responsibility & Relocation

Throughout primary school, whenever exam blocks were right around the corner, my mother would sit me down and assist me in studying. There were always objections and personal opinions that ultimately led to arguments and fights. Studying was something I despised the most, followed by relying on other people. I always escaped from my responsibilities and replied with “I got this, don’t worry,” but deep down I was incapable and just hated being corrected; I was foolish as a kid. The responsibilities from school piled up, and stress hit me heavily. I started stress eating and played even more games; my mental and physical health was rock bottom, and the result of no exercise and eating an absurd amount of food ultimately made me put on at least 40 kg. But what added fuel to the fire was the news of our family moving to Australia.

A New Beginning and Deepening Isolation

I still remember when I first landed in Australia. My dad didn’t join us until the year after due to work back in Hong Kong, so I was the man of the family. I remember vividly that I was wearing a white t-shirt with one of those plane cushions wrapped around my neck. Back then, it still didn’t hit me that I would be staying here for the rest of my school years and that I would have a complete restart in my life. I just appreciated



Tiffany Wong

A Foundation of Truth

I’ve known of Jesus as long as I can remember. I was raised in a Christian environment, in a Christian family that taught me all the Bible stories beside my alphabet. My parents raised me up in a nurturing environment that incorporated God into most if not all things, regularly bringing me to church and teaching me all the Bible stories. I praise God for this, as this means I grew up knowing the truth. Because I was blessed with this solid foundation, I never really had to question the existence of God or the purpose of my life.

the fact that I could game all day and all night because my dad wasn’t here to stop me. I was living the dream until I first attended my new school, then I realized that I had no friends, no one to talk to, and that I was all alone. Being a male, my masculinity covered up my vulnerable self; old Christopher’s logic on being a male and a temporary head of family meant that I would not experience any emotions and would prioritize physical labor. I underestimated the responsibilities that I would hold, and it accumulated and piled up on me. Depression hit, and I had so many insecurities that led to me avoiding invitations to church events, and moreover, activities with friends. I would shut myself in a room, play games, and gain weight, turning away from all socials and most definitely not acknowledging the presence of God.

A Sudden Transformation & God’s Guidance

Now, skipping from two years ago to now, it was so sudden. Two of my friends named Tom and Andrew were worked through the Holy Spirit. I noticed the sudden change in their mindset and doings, and it struck me so hard that it influenced me and motivated me into changing. I was deeply interested in the word of God and started listening in Bible studies, asking questions and questioning myself: “How can I be better?” Moreover, “How can I influence other people to acknowledge God?” The damage to my mental health was lifted, and the motivation enabled me to lose 30 kg in less than a year. I was healed mentally and physically, and it was all God’s doing. I truly believe that God was pushing me and holding my hand, guiding me through the journey of change and touring me around the word of God.

Shallow Faith and Outward Appearances

However, I think my faith in this time was quite shallow. I saw the gospel as something else to know and master, rather than one that could save me. I didn't fully understand the meaning of Christianity and what it meant to be Christian.

I saw Christianity as a label for someone who would go to church and was a "good person," rather than one that meant I was a friend of Jesus and knew He was my Savior. My actions also did not reflect my beliefs. I would call myself a Christian yet act like any other person, trying to fit in by compromising my beliefs. I would pray to God, yet mostly out of routine, or when I needed comfort from the Lord.

The Weight of Unworthiness

It wasn't until around the first years of high school that I started to understand the depths of this situation. I was not deserving of God's love and salvation, nor was I someone who could ever deserve what God had done for me. In fact, it was a blessing that I knew of Jesus, as no one is truly worthy of knowing God.

Fear of a Hardened Heart

I remember reading the story of Moses and Pharaoh and seeing that "God hardened his heart." This terrified me, as I was worried it was not in His will for me to know the Lord. I think this brought a time of distance, as well as immense fear of judgment, which ultimately led me astray for a while. This also led to me feeling quite anxious and discouraged as I heard about others' experiences with Christianity; I was terrified that I would never be able to know Jesus at that level.

Inventing an Unapproachable God

In this time where I felt really distant from the Lord, I thought that in order to be a Christian, I had to have a perfect relationship with the Father. Because of this, I did not consider myself a Christian yet. I was distancing myself further because I felt distant. Yet I never realized that I was inventing another version of God, one that was unapproachable and that didn't love me, because I thought I was too unworthy—one that would not love me because my sins were too big, and I was not "close enough" to Him.

While I am still learning as a Christian the basic habits of reading the bible in the morning, praying before meals and before bed and reading the bible with family still hasn't changed, yet the



ways I go around these habits have changed. Before making a conscious decision to follow Christ, reading the bible was something that I didn't want to do in the morning, and when I did, I read the passage and forgot it almost instantaneously. Now, I try to read and digest the content, seeking to find somewhere in my life where this knowledge can be applied, and I do my best to act in accordance with the bible. Praying has also changed from being something I spurt out before going to bed to trying to find something to thank God for and trying to pray for relevant topics instead of a memorised prayer.

The Deception of Feelings Over Faith

This was a byproduct of the belief that feelings equal faith. I was under the impression that because I felt distant from God, He no longer cared for me, nor would He ever want anything to do with me. This is a lie, of course; in fact, all over the Bible are verses proclaiming God's unconditional love for me. At this time, I was also struggling to read my Bible consistently, thus it was easy for the devil to feed me these lies and for me to believe them.

Reclaiming the Simplicity of Faith

Following a long period of distance, I began to talk more about my struggles as a Christian to my friends and youth leaders, realizing that my experience was not one that was unique to me only, rather one that some of my friends were also struggling with. I realized that by thinking I was not a Christian because of the distance I felt from the Lord, I was discrediting His death on the cross, in that I thought I could not be saved. I was reminded of the simplicity in the Christian faith: all we must do is accept it. This helped me realize that faith and a relationship with God does not come straight away; it is a process.

Faith Beyond Feelings

Throughout my journey in Christianity, I've realized that faith is not feelings. Faith, by definition, is a complete trust and confidence in someone/something—our emotions do not define the state of our relationship with God.

In terms of Christianity, faith is knowing that Jesus lived on Earth 2000 years ago, He was crucified and rose again, and most importantly, He beat death. Faith is believing that He is the Savior of your life, trusting in His plan for you. I now know that the distance I felt was not because He has given up on us, rather the complete opposite. As Deuteronomy 2:8 says, "The Lord goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave nor forsake you." Growing closer to God is a journey that cannot happen overnight; the ups and downs are part of it too. The devil wants us to believe that at our lowest, God has given up on us and our salvation is rebuked, but the truth is the opposite: He will always love us and is waiting for us to turn back to Him.

Gratitude for Unconditional Love

I am eternally grateful for the unconditional love the Father has shown me in every season, and I find great comfort in the fact that while I cannot earn His love, He will always [give it]. His guidance and support have carried me through every season of my life, and I pray He will continue to guide me through all the days of my life. I am so grateful for the opportunity to be saved and loved by Him.

