

## One Lord, One Church, One Mission (2)



**P**raise God, He has led our church through a historical milestone in 2007. In the past two years, after much prayer, research, discussion, consultation and preparation, God has guided the Elders Board to adopt the Multi-Site Church Model (MSCM), as the approach in planning and implementing the future ministries of our church. Reflecting on the past year, the pastoral staff and our brothers and sisters were adjusting very well to the structural changes and working harmoniously to build up a healthy body of Christ under the MSCM. I strongly believe that it is all God's grace, because...*He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.* (Phil. 1:6)

Our church theme for 2007 was "One Lord, One Church, One Mission." The purpose for the Elders Board to use this theme is to emphasize the essence of MSCM. The basic concept of the MSCM is one church meeting at different locations in order to spread

"From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." (Ephesians 4:16)

the gospel to communities & neighbors who have never heard the good news. Presently, although we have two separate locations, we still worship the same God, belong to the same body of Christ, and evangelize the same gospel. Therefore, the main goal of MSCM is to have more opportunities to spread the gospel, expand God's kingdom and glorify God.

The Elders Board has decided to keep the same theme in 2008: "**One Lord, One Church, One Mission**". On the one hand, we want to emphasize the unity and the importance of one spiritual family under the MSCM. On the other hand, we want to encourage our congregations to work diligently as a faithful steward of utilizing the rich resources that God has bestowed upon us to build up a new site, so that we can share the goodness of the gospel with many people around us.

As I think of the theme of "One Church", it truly warms my heart. I also recall the major theme of the Church in the book of Ephesus, when Paul tells the Ephesians that God has a wonderful plan for His church - to be the bride of Christ, filled with honor, glory and purity - to reveal God's glory on this earth.

In Ephesians, chapters 1-3, Paul reminds us that we are adopted as sons by grace, and redeemed by His blood. Christ is the head of the church,

and each of us is like a member of one body. Together we form a spiritual family. According to chapters 4-6, since we are redeemed by grace, Paul urges us to live a life worthy of the calling we have received. In all areas of our lives, we must reflect this grace and be a good witness for our Lord.

Concerning Paul's exhortation for us to live a life worthy of the calling we have received, Paul first emphasizes the area of body life within the church, each of us must do our part to build up the church and live in unity with one another (Ephesians 4:1-16). Paul raises a few important factors contributing to the building up of a united church.

### 1. Serving in a Team

*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace* (Ephesians 4:2-3). Paul reminds us that we are part of the body of Christ, each of us need to do our part and live up to a life worthy of the calling we have received. With a humble, gentle and patient spirit, we learn to love one another in an inter-connected community. Paul points out the importance of love and communication in a team ministry: when the team manages to be affectionately connected, this team can move forward in a united front. When faced with adversities, the whole team can complement each other to carry the burden, work

towards a resolution and make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. This is the primary factor needed in building up a healthy church.

## 2. Keeping a Common Goal

*There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* (Ephesians 4:4-6) In a spiritual community, unity is of utmost importance. From the above verses, Paul points out seven factors of spiritual unity, which share the common goal of glorifying God. This is how Paul concludes his second prayer in Ephesians...*to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.* (Ephesians 3:21)

Paul reminds us that the common goal of serving together in a team ministry is to glorify God. Therefore, no matter whether we serve in the areas of Sunday school, choir, ushers, fellowship, small groups, Alpha, evangelism, missions, caring, visitation, facility care, finance, etc....we offer our best to God in order to glorify Him. As the Psalmist reminds us, "Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness." (Psa.115:1) The biblical teaching cannot be clearer: Glory belongs to God, not to us.

## 3. Maximizing the Spiritual Gifts

*But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up* (Ephesians 4:7, 12). Paul is well aware that every single Christian is a part of the body of Christ and each has a spiritual gift. Therefore, we should all be responsible for identifying God's very gift for us. Paul also encourages all parts in Christ's body to maximize our spiritual gifts faithfully, so that the entire body can grow in a healthy way.

None can possess all the spiritual gifts mentioned in the Bible, *for all these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.* (I Corinthians 12:11) For this reason, a team approach in service is inevitable - we need to complement one another. Today, we serve together as a team according to our spiritual gifts, in order to function more effectively in building up the church. This is the purpose of God's gifts for each of us.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul uses the human body as an analogy to exemplify how we are all inter-related and connected. *But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.* (I Corinthians 12:18) God leads different people into this spiritual family not according to their preferences, but according to His will. God has given a unique gift to everyone, and guided each to belong to the spiritual family, so that we can complement each other to build up the church.

It is, therefore, not by coincidence that God has led each one of us to this spiritual family. He has a unique plan for every person. It is by God's guidance for us to join this body of Christ and build up this church together. This is why we should faithfully deploy our gifts to accomplish what God has planned for us in our lives. Let us all become faithful servants, each in our own capacity, to serve each other in order to build up a balanced and healthy multi-site church.

## 4. Sharing the Fruitfulness

*From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.* (Ephesians 4:16) Paul also points out that when each part performs his/her task faithfully, according to each specific function, the final outcome is a growing united body of Christ. When the church matures in such a manner, all parts

will rejoice and the individual parts will be edified.

In today's sports, be it the NBA, NHL, soccer or volleyball, a championship is the epitome of teamwork. A few star athletes without a proper team spirit does not win the trophy for the team. Only when each player participates and collaborates fully with one another will the team win to enjoy the fruit of triumph.

Likewise, the spirit of serving is the same. Billy Graham is a faithful servant of God. For over half a century, his evangelistic work has borne much fruit. In his autobiography "Just As I Am", Billy Graham writes, "My effective ministry in the past fifty years is the result of a team serving together, I will not share the fruitfulness abundantly in my ministry".

Looking forward to the New Year, let us continue to look up to our Lord Jesus, the Head of the church, to guide us through the various challenges in 2008. Let us unite our hearts together to build up a balanced-healthy, mature multi-site church according to God's given vision. Let us remember to bring glory and honor to our Heavenly Father.

"I lift up my eyes to you, to you whose throne is in heaven. As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he shows us his mercy." (Psalm 123:1-2)

**The vision for our church is: to be a worshipping, growing, and loving community that reflects the beauty of Jesus Christ to transform our community and the world.**

Blessings,  
Pastor Ivan Leung