

Loving our Fellow Brothers

Pastor Ivan Leung



We have the great blessing of living in Canada, a multicultural society. God has provided us with many opportunities to share the Gospel with different ethnic groups who live amongst us in our communities. In fact, we are able to fulfill the Great Commandment of making disciples of all nations right on our very own doorsteps.

In mid-October, I had the opportunity to take the course, Expository Preaching, at the Western Seminary where I graduated from. On the first day of class, a Caucasian pastor sitting next to me conversed with me in Mandarin. This not only gave me a sense of instant connection, but also a curiosity to understand the reason behind this pastor's motivation for learning Mandarin. I learned that a few years back, he had started taking Short-Term Missionary trips to China every year. He wanted to utilize his position as an English professor to share the Gospel with his students in

China. For the sake of the Gospel, this pastor wanted to master Mandarin. As I listened to his sharing, I was deeply moved and thankful for the actions he had taken to express his love for my fellow Chinese brethren.

I thought of the many missionaries to China, including Robert Morrison (1782-1834), James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905), The Cambridge Seven (1885), Robert Alexander Jaffray (1873-1945), Ruth Howe Hitchcock (1892-1984) and David Adeney (1911-1994). They too had given up the comfort and familiarity of home to travel the dangerous seas to China; conquering the barriers of language and culture, all for the benefit of the Gospel to our fellow nationals. Truly, these missionaries had left beautiful footprints to follow and encourages us today to love our own people as they did.

In the past, Paul responded to God's call to spread the Gospel to the

gentiles although, inside his heart, he loved his own people dearly. *"For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race..."*

(Romans 9:3). Paul spread the good news to his own people first before he reached the gentiles. Paul's fervent love for his people reached such an extent that he was willing to be separated from Christ for their sake. Like Moses who asked God to forgive his people, *"But now, please forgive their sin - but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."*

(Exodus 32:32). Paul also loved his people to an equal extent. In Romans 9:1-3, he had used "I" three times to express his sentiment of love for his people:

1. (Romans 9:1) *"I speak the truth in Christ - I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit"*

Paul shared his heart's struggles and feelings with the Roman churches with no restraint.

2. (Romans 9:2) *"I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart."*

Paul expressed great sadness because the Jews had forsaken Christ and rejected the Gospel.

3. (Romans 9:3) *"For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race..."*

According to original Greek manuscript, Paul's grief and worry for his people's salvation spread from the past to the present. Although Paul had suffered great persecution and imprisonment, he was willing to cut off from Christ for the ultimate salvation of the Jews.

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Why did Paul love his people so much? The saddest thing in life is to be misunderstood, bombarded and pressurized by people you love the most. Paul had treated the Jews as his next of kin, but the Jews had considered Paul as a plague (Acts 24:5). The Jews avoided and hated Paul so much that they wanted to destroy him as soon as possible. But Paul's love for them was incredible and surpassing all love. This bears some resemblance to the scene when Jesus Christ was being rejected by the Jews, hung on the cross, and used his last strength to pray to His heavenly father. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34) Is there greater love than that?

In Romans 5:5, Paul disclosed the reason why he had such deep love for his people, "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us". Paul knew that it was God's love bestowed through the Holy Spirit that drove him to love his people with such fervor.

Praise the Lord, although we are living in Vancouver, there are numerous opportunities to serve our Mandarin-speaking nationals. When we look at the immigration

statistics, we know that this is our golden opportunity. Every year we send short-term missionary teams to different parts of China to serve our Chinese nationals. In the past decade, there are many immigrants from China settling in Vancouver, who may be our neighbors, classmates, colleagues and clients. We should grasp this opportunity to share with them God's unfailing love.

In the past, God has blessed our church. Through the Knight Street ministry, we have served the Cantonese congregation since 1966. In 1975, we started the English ministry. Recognizing that our congregation had outgrown the capacity of the premises, we started to expand our service to the Fraser Lands area by renting the Champlain Heights Community Centre in 1991. The Fraser Lands campus was completed in 1994, with the Cantonese worship at 9:15 am, the English service at 11:00 am in full operation. The Mandarin worship was started in the Fraser Lands Church in 1997, while the Mandarin service began at Knight Street in 2007. With a gracious heart, the first Mandarin service of the VCAC - North Burnaby was inaugurated on September 28, 2008. This is a milestone of our church;

applying the Multi-site Church Model to spread the Gospel to many.

Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make use of my rights in preaching it. Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. (I Corinthians 9:16-23)

May the Holy Spirit fill our hearts with love, so that we can seize the opportunity to save more souls for the sake of Jesus Christ. "For in just a very little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay." (Heb. 10:37)

VCAC - North Burnaby

Sunday Ministries currently being held at
Brentwood Park Elementary School
1455 Delta Avenue, Burnaby

Prayer Meeting	10:00 am
Mandarin Adult Worship Service	11:00 am
English Children's Sunday School	11:00 am

Fellowship Meeting on Fridays @ 7 pm
Currently meeting at
Brentwood Presbyterian Church
1600 Delta Avenue, Burnaby

Photo: Inaugural Sunday Service on Sept. 28th, 2008



Retreat Reflections

Teamwork can make dreams come true. As emphasized in Scripture: *“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”* Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

We thank God for the Staff & Elders Retreat held on September 19-20 which involved our pastors, support staff, and elders. We drew back from our busy lives to get closer to God to seek His will for our church. At the same time, the retreat enabled us to better know one another through times of sharing and prayer, so that a wonderful spirit of teamwork and trust could be forged to build up a healthy multi-site church in unity to glorify our Father God in heaven.

God had indeed blessed us at this retreat. Our hearts were drawn closer through praise and worship, team building activities, listening to messages, group sharing, communion and prayer. We can sing with *“One Voice”* together and make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit. Unity is an essential factor through which God blesses churches. May God continue to bless us as His vessel of blessings to share Christ's love with many more!

One Voice

Father we ask of You this day
Come and heal our land
Knit our hearts together
That Your glory might be seen in us
Then the world will know
That Jesus Christ is Lord

Let us be one voice
That glorifies Your name
Let us be one voice
Declaring that You reign
Let us be one voice
In love and harmony
And we pray O God grant us unity

Now is the time for you and I
To join our hearts in praise
That the name of Jesus
Will be lifted high above the earth
Then the world will know
That Jesus Christ is Lord

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Meet the Staff

We are happy to welcome the newest members to our pastoral staff who has joined us recently. Here's an opportunity for you to get to know them a little better:



Pastor Raphael & Pauline Chow

Pastor Raphael Chow

North Burnaby Assistant Mandarin Congregation Pastor

Pastor Raphael Chow was born in Southern China, grown up in Hong Kong and received his university education in Simon Fraser University, Vancouver. Some 12 years ago, he and his family immigrated to Vancouver. Before he answered his calling to be a full time pastor, he had worked as an Information Technology manager and a business process redesign consultant for 19 years. He has always been an active participant in church taking many different roles including Sunday school teacher and choir conductor. He sings too, as a bass baritone. When he received his calling in 2002, he left his own field of work and went into Regent as a full time seminary student for about three years. Upon his graduation, he started his ministry in Vancouver. He joined the VCAC pastoral team since September of this year. He is leading the VCAC North Burnaby Site. Pastor Raphael loves reading books about science and many kinds of non-fiction. He also enjoys music particularly classical music and blues. His favorite sport is badminton. When it comes to food, he likes it hot and spicy like food from central and northern China. His wife, Pauline, is now serving in the caring department and children's ministry in the North Burnaby site. They have two boys and one girl.



Felix Chu

Felix Chu

Knight Street Administrative Assistant (Part-Time)

Born in Lima, Peru, Felix came to Canada at the age of 12. He grew up in a non-practicing Catholic family with Chinese Buddhist traditions. Over the years he has worked in various establishments in the service industry ranging from washing dishes to selling toys. Convinced by a friend to attend BSF almost 7 years ago, Felix started down a path that led him to accept Christ in the summer of 2006. Shortly after, he started attending Fraser Lands and got involved in a couple of small groups, Kidz church, BSF leadership, and various events such as An Evening in December and Community Day. Now, as a member of the English Congregation's support staff at VCAC's Knight Street campus, he is looking forward to God's providence and wisdom as he performs God's work. As well as the blessings of seeing the kids and young adults grow into the future leaders of the church.

Baptism Celebration

Sunday December 7, 2008 @ Fraser Lands

English Baptism Celebration 3:00 pm

Cantonese & Mandarin Celebration 7:30 pm

Come and join us in celebrating together as a church family as our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ will be getting baptized this December. All are welcome to this joyous special event.

