



## From the Senior Pastor

### “Four Potential Dangers in Building a Christian Life”



Recently, I have heard many discussions amongst brothers and sisters regarding the methods and issues of spiritual growth and life building. Each year, the church hosts several spiritual cultivation conferences, revival meetings and topical seminars to help believers further commit themselves and revive spiritually. There are also voluminous Christian publications on the subject of spiritual formation. People seem to be very eager in trying out different schools of theory, hoping to find a path that is most suitable for them. These are all good. However, during our fervent pursuit, we also need to be vigilant. Are we heading towards the right direction? Are we employing the proper method so that we won't end up in a painful void?

#### Demolish and Construct

Congregations in North American Chinese churches have a higher percentage of intellectuals than their Caucasian counterparts. These Chinese Christians are academically proficient, efficient in absorbing new information and capable of reasoning by analogy and drawing parallels by inference. Some of them can listen to a sermon in the morning and go out preaching in the afternoon, even doing a better job than their pastors. Such people think that the essence of spirituality and life is to gain knowledge, learn skills and add more to the existing life.

Actually, the most important factor of life building is not to add to it, but to remove from it. The first thing the Holy Spirit does after entering our lives is to convict us of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. We often claim that we are the vessel; however, we do not wish to be cleansed but instead we want to be powerful. Such mentality is against the teachings of the Scripture and is insulting to the Holy Spirit. We must first be cleansed and then be filled. We need to let God work in our lives so He can work through us.

#### Trellis and Life

The use of trellis is vital for grapevines to thrive, blossom and bear fruits. Grapevines grow and spread along the wooden trellises, but it is the vine that bears fruits, not the trellis. A

trellis can be seen as the metaphor for the church buildings, equipment, by-laws, regulations, organizations, agendas, systems, holidays, etc. A grapevine, on the other hand, is the life of a Christian believer. Regrettably, many pastors and church leaders nowadays spend a great amount of time constructing the trellises but give minimal effort to building the Christian life –cultivating life, teaching the truth, witnessing, establishing relationships, showing love and care, and keeping each other accountable. It's a pity that we see more of the construction of trellises than the cultivation of vines.

#### Partial and Whole

A normal body is balanced internally and externally. The human body is comprised of the right and left hands, right and left feet, right and left eyes, right and left ears. All parts are proportionally balanced in order to be considered normal and pleasing. The same applies to Christians and churches. If someone in their fervent pursuit lost their balance and became great in a certain area, it would certainly make them stand out more and noticeable. Suppose your left eye is three times the size of your right eye, would the people around you not notice? Some Christians and churches deviate in their spiritual pursuits, making themselves conspicuous with complacency. Beware! Having balance is of great importance in building Christian life.

#### Experience and Life

Some Christians consider themselves to be spiritually superior because of their supernatural experiences. The Bible also has records of people, of flesh and blood, who experienced supernatural blessings from God. However, their experiences had no direct correlations with their spiritual maturity; an amazing encounter does not necessarily mean a matured spiritual life. A matured spiritual life is seen in the manifestation of the characters of Christ, commitment to Christ's commands, brotherly love to fellow Christian disciples and coveting the revelation of Christ.

*-Pastor Albert Lam*



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## NEW BEGINNINGS



Many brothers and sisters were **baptized in March!** 3 from North Campus, 5 from Main Campus and 8 from Central Campus.



Praise the Lord Temecula Valley Campus had **5 baptisms** in the past 4 months.



Praise the Lord! The **first baptism** was held in Tijuana's "Casa de la Gracia del Señor". Two sisters were baptized by Cantonese **Pastor Paul Ho**. Senior **Pastor Albert Lam** was present and gave a speech. People from San Diego and Tijuana witnessed the memorable event.



## MINISTRY UPDATES

**FEB**

The 4S Campus' Seniors Fellowship had a **Lunar New Year event** at the 4S Ranch library. Nearly 150 people attended, many of which have not been to church before.

A North Campus member, **Wei Zhang**, passed away after suffering a stroke and falling. The church prepared for her a **memorial service** where her family and friends from Oceanside senior apartment attended.

**MAR**



In March, the English congregation held their second **Bible Quiz Challenge** focused on the Book of Acts.

Beginning March, the **monthly joint prayer meeting** has been changed to meet in the afternoons on the 3rd Sunday of each month. Thank God that the new schedule has allowed for more brothers and sisters to attend the meeting.



# MINISTRY UPDATES (...Continued)



**MAR**

(...Continued)



Cantonese congregation is thankful to have **Rev. Francis Choi** share about the **Holy Land** in March and concluded with a **Passover Feast** attended by 150 brothers and sisters.

On Easter Sunday, Central Campus held an outreach event for the community. The adults listened to music and the Easter message, while the children had face painting, egg hunt and crafts. There were also booths with snow cone, popcorn and snacks for everyone to enjoy.



**APR**

North Campus started a 3-month series of **Health Seminars** where 4 speakers have been invited to discuss healthy living.

Praise the Lord, TVC has come to a historic moment of establishing a **deacon ministry**. The first TVC deacon board meeting was on Sunday, 5/1.



The English Congregation hosted the APCON Spring 2016 **Apologetics Conference** with speaker **Dr. Fazale Rana** presenting "Who Was Adam?"

Lord's Grace held a **Welcome Dinner** in April for newcomers to learn about the English fellowship groups and ministries.



**Dr. Su** gave a **family seminar** at main campus in April and also led a **writing workshop**.



## NEXT-GEN MINISTRY UPDATES

Mini **Easter Egg Hunt** on Easter Sunday.



After much prayer, Central Campus' **Light of Hope Student Fellowship** came into existence in April. This fellowship is for Mandarin-speaking students (junior high and up). They meet every Sunday from 1pm-3:30pm, and there are 10-12 who regularly attend. Recently, four have decided to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.



## MISSIONS UPDATES

There will be **7 short-term service teams** going to Mexico, Cambodia, East Asia and local places from May through July.



Wonderful cross-culture **Nepal STS** led by **Pastor Paul Ho** in February with 16 members from different congregations. They treated and ministered to over 1,000 Nepal locals.

The first **Kairos Missions Class** in San Diego was completed on 3/5. Nearly 65 brothers, sisters and missionaries received the training.



Nearly 35 brothers and sisters participated in the **Tijuana short-term service trip** on 3/12.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ **JUNE 18:** Over Father's Day weekend, Dr. Daniel Sher will be leading the **Mandarin Men's Retreat**. The theme is "The Glory of Being a Father." Registration is available online.
- ◆ **JULY 11-15:** This year's **Vacation Bible School** will be "Deep Sea Discovery."
- ◆ **JULY 22-24:** **Mandarin Family Retreat** at Murrieta Conference Center.
- ◆ **JULY 29-31:** **Lord's Grace Summer Retreat** at Big Bear Lake Christian Conference Center.



### Comments or Feedback?

If you have any comments or feedback, please email either Pastor Albert Lam ([pastoralam@gmail.com](mailto:pastoralam@gmail.com)) or Andrew Poon ([andrewgloria@gmail.com](mailto:andrewgloria@gmail.com)).

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